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*P. B. Taffey*

*3/1/77*

Signature/date

*Mr. John, Pacific Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*

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# OPERATIONS OF U. S. MARINE FORCES

## VIETNAM

### OCTOBER 1970

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

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## SUMMARY

III MAF units, including Combined Unit Pacification Program teams and 2d Combined Action Group, killed 175 NVA/VC in low-intensity, infrequent fighting during October. Additionally, 17 prisoners and 76 weapons were captured. Marines continued counter guerrilla endeavor in Quang Nam province—including Operations TULARE FALLS, IMPERIAL LAKE, NOBLE CANYON, and HOANG DIEU—as stormy weather, floods, and weakened enemy forces contributed to the diminished level of combat. Notwithstanding these factors, numerous Vietnamese territorial and regular army units participating in HOANG DIEU met with measurable success, not only in terms of enemy killed but also in demonstrated ability to conduct operations throughout the populated lowlands.

The weather and minimal close air support requirements affected the tempo of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing operations. Fewer missions were flown than in recent months despite the significant number of helicopter flights logged to evacuate flood victims and continuing out-of-country fighter escort requirements.

Although III MAF logistic effort included improved malaria control measures, redistribution of excesses, and routine logistic functions, completion of KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA redeployments highlighted operations. Thus, by the end of the month, III MAF remained with a materially reduced headquarters, a streamlined Force Logistic Command, 1st Wing with but two aircraft groups, 2d Combined Action Group, and 1st Division reduced to two regiments with requisite combat and combat service support.

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**COMBAT OPERATIONS**

October decreases in all statistical measures of combat results in III MAF operational areas reflected the tenor of combat, influenced in part by extreme, late-month flooding of the lowlands. Despite fewer enemy troop losses, significant accomplishments were achieved. Foremost was an RVNAF-inspired lowland saturation operation--HOANG DIEU--which was supported by III MAF and Korean Marines. Also, although the amount is incalculable, the enemy suffered ordnance and food losses in the piedmont area, as many of his troops fled to the western mountains leaving caches for destruction by allied operations and flood waters. Nevertheless, the enemy continued to exercise a stand-off attack/harassment capability, as slightly increased mortar and rocket shellings were recorded in the province. Most were in the vicinity of Thuong Duc where elements of the 38th NVA Regiment were engaged frequently by RVNAF troops.

Enemy and friendly losses attributed to III MAF counter guerrilla and reconnaissance operations are displayed below.

**III MAF OPERATIONS: OCTOBER 1970**

COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS		RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS	
NVA/VC	USMC	NVA/VC	USMC
99 Killed	5 Killed	53 Killed	2 Wounded and
57 Weapons	87 Wounded and evacuated	6 Weapons	evacuated

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On 2 October, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines--the final USMC infantry contingent of the KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA redeployment--stood down from combat operations and prepared to leave for CONUS on the 13th. The remaining two regiments of the 1st Division continued committed to the counter guerrilla campaign. First Marines was deployed to cover the region eight miles south of Danang in the Horseshoe Lake area, west to Charlie Ridge, and north to the Hai Van pass. Fifth Marines coverage in southern Quang Nam included northern Nui Loc Son basin and the Que Son mountains, with Antenna Valley and portions of the An Hoa basin also encompassed in their area of responsibility. Within these regions during the month, most counter guerrilla activity was conducted as named operations--IMPERIAL LAKE, TULARE FALLS, NOBLE CANYON, and HOANG DIEU.

In all, more than 9,200 small unit patrols, ambushes, and search operations were tallied during the month, up from 8,863 registered during September. Conversely, 1st Marine Division contacts (149) declined for the second consecutive month to the lowest level in over four years. Likewise, the 99 NVA/VC killed was a new low this year. Pointing up further the general decline in infantry engagements, 49 of the 99 were killed by 11th Marines artillery, with 27 of these first detected by Integrated Observation Devices. While typhoons Iris (4 October) and Joan (15 October) and tropical storms Kate (25 October) and Louise (29 October) deterred some enemy operations, the battlefield results are consistent with recent trends and tend to substantiate a scaling down in the scope and tempo of enemy offensive operations in Quang Nam. Intelligence sources indicate motivation for such declines are linked to a marked deterioration in NVA/VC morale, brought on by inadequate food and medicine, opening of a new front in Cambodia, increasing cultural/ethnic friction between NVA and VC

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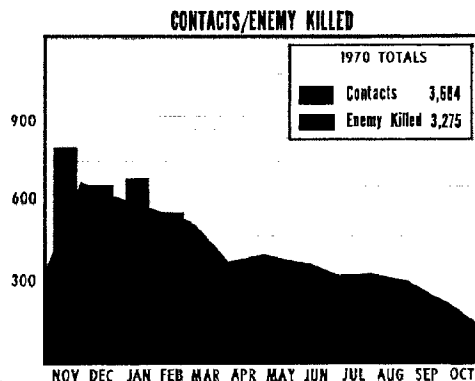
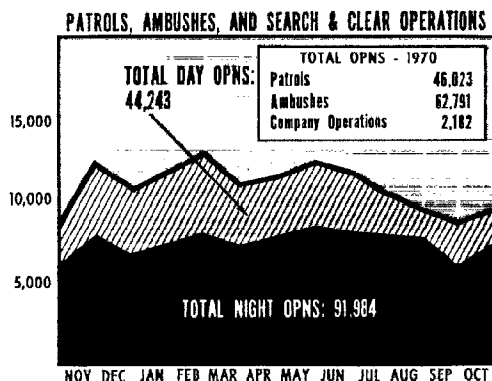
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soldiers, and disillusionment from repeated lack of success.

Infantry engagements during the month, limited in number as well as in intensity and results, were mostly insignificant, usually involving brief exchanges of small arms fire followed by enemy flight and friendly pursuit. One 11th Marines fire mission, however, did achieve noteworthy results. Just before midnight on the 15th, a Battery D liaison team with a Popular Force platoon near Que Son called for an illumination mission to light a small arms contact. The artillery flares revealed a platoon of VC in hasty retreat. High explosive shells fired in coordination with the illumination fire mission resulted in 18 VC killed.

The following graphs compare October counter-guerrilla activity and results with monthly totals since November 1969.

#### MARINE SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS: NOV 1969 - OCT 1970



Operation HOANG DIEU, primarily an ARVN venture supported by III MAF, was aimed to exploit the steadily disintegrating enemy situation in Quang

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Nam--attributed to increased withdrawals of NVA units to frontier sanctuaries and continued combat attrition of remaining forces (1,200 NVA/VC killed, captured, or rallied since 1 August). The concept of the operation entails saturating the lowlands with ARVN regular and territorial units for a concerted drive to neutralize specific VC-sympathetic villages/hamlets, conduct extensive patrol and ambush activities, and interdict enemy lines of communication. GVN agencies were tasked to conduct concurrent civilian control, screening, and classification operations.

The focus of III MAF support for HOANG DIEU was in the Que Son mountains (IMPERIAL LAKE and reconnaissance patrols) and the western territory located between Charlie Ridge and Elephant Valley. Primarily, III MAF support consisted of air and ground operations on the fringes of populated areas aimed at interdiction of base camps, infiltration routes, and logistic/liaison centers. Accomplishment of these tasks required almost no change to existing Marine operations, except RVNAF units were provided greater tactical latitude throughout the lowlands. Also, with a greater concentration of friendly maneuver units in the field, III MAF instituted more stringent restrictions on use of supporting arms fire.

All III MAF combat units were placed in support of HOANG DIEU which commenced on the 22d. Although primary support was directed against population fringe areas, those Marine elements normally deployed within the RVNAF designated operation areas continued to provide small unit coverage at places not physically occupied by Vietnamese elements, coordinated through the local district chief/military commander.

The map on the following page depicts the HOANG DIEU operating areas for USMC, RVNAF, and ROKMC units.

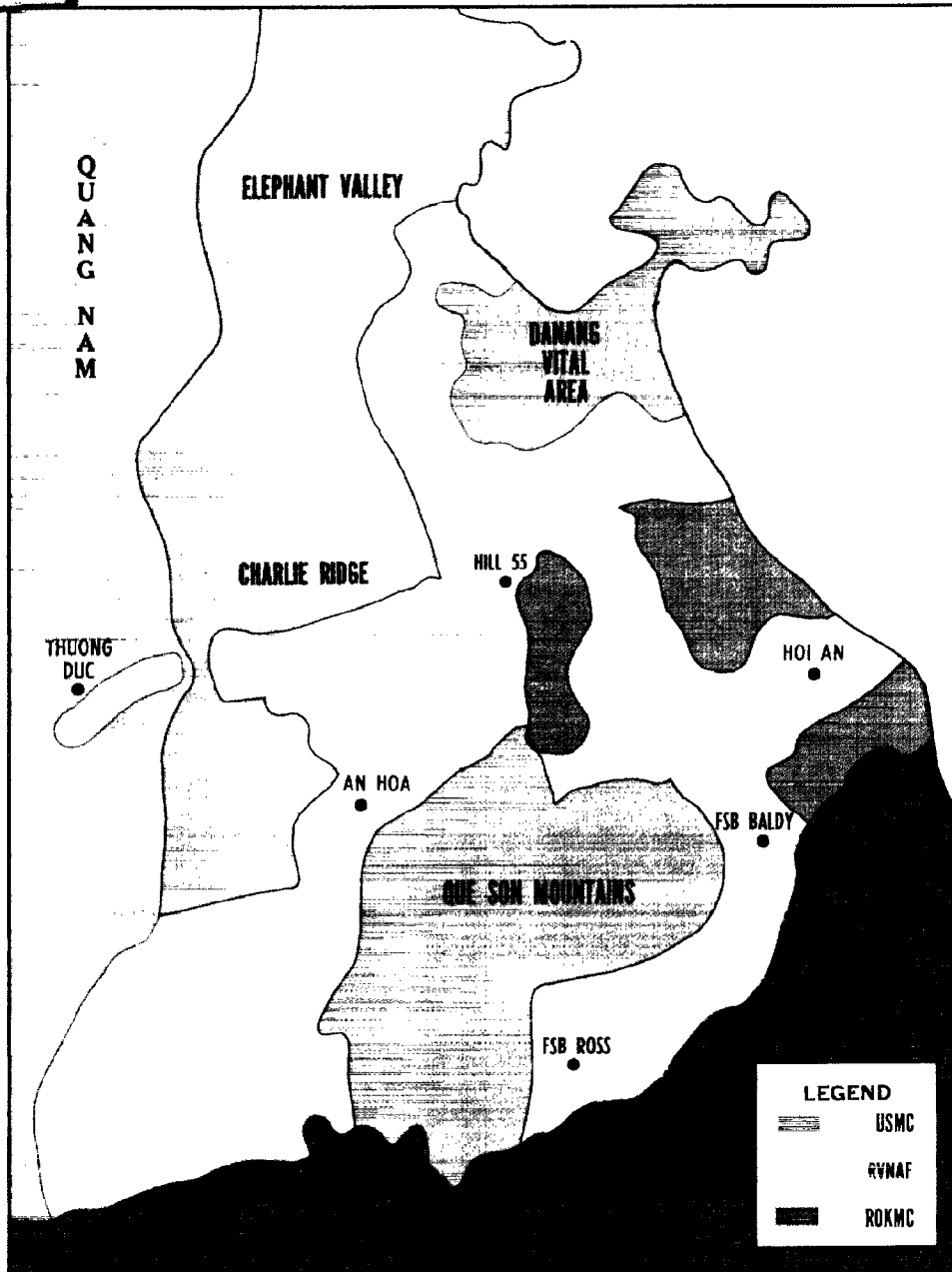
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# OPERATION HOANG DIEU



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Through the end of the month, III MAF tallied 18 NVA/VC killed, 20 detained, and one weapon captured in support of HOANG DIEU. RVNAF operations (discussed in the Rural Development and Pacification chapter) likewise obtained limited results, due primarily to the restrictive nature of the floods and adverse weather at end-month. In another light, however, the floods were beneficial. High water in the lowlands channeled large numbers of the population to isolated spots of high ground, where, along with aid to flood victims, the GVN and RVNAF continued population screening.

Operation IMPERIAL LAKE, continuing since August, was taken over on 2 October by 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. Seventy-four NVA/VC killed, six detainees, and 34 weapons captured were added to the operation totals during the month by the Battalion, bringing the cumulative results to 104 enemy killed, 77 detained, and 71 weapons captured.

TULARE FALLS (2-15 October) was unusual in that the 5th Marines assumed operational control of Task Force Saints, Americal Division, comprised of 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry; 1st Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry; an air cavalry troop; and a 105mm howitzer platoon from 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery Regiment. Also included in the operation was an ARVN force consisting of 1st Battalion, 51st Regiment; 39th Ranger Battalion; and 1st Armored Brigade. The two-week maneuver was mounted to preempt an anticipated surge of enemy activity in Dien Ban district west of Route 1, primarily against the Go Noi Island resettlement villages. The ARVN force conducted operations in the district, while the US Army task force struck at the primary enemy avenue of approach in Duy Xuyen district--the northern slopes of the Que Son mountains fronting Phu Loc Valley, four miles south of Go Noi Island. The desired goal was achieved; enemy activity was thwarted, with the operation claiming 32 NVA/VC killed, 21 VC suspects apprehended, and six weapons taken.

On the 22d, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines converged on the finger of high ground with Hill 441 in the center, extending along the Quang Nam/Quang Tin

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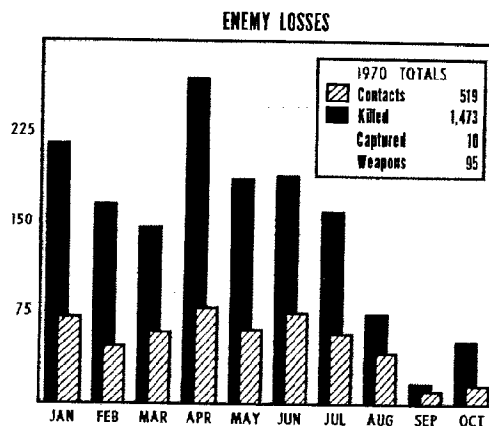
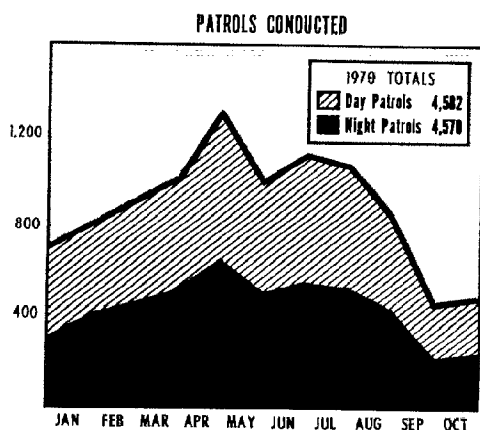
boundary four miles southwest of Fire Support Base (FSB) Ross, to commence Operation NOBLE CANYON. Though a prime staging area for attacks against Que Son, Hiep Duc, and other GVN targets in the basin, the hilly region was essentially void of enemy elements; firefights were scattered, with but one VC suspect apprehended by end-month.

### Reconnaissance Activity

First Reconnaissance Battalion employed an average of ten patrols daily during October, concentrating mostly on coverage of the Que Son mountains. While results of these operations represented a three-fold increase over the year's low registered last month, they remained well below the 1970 monthly average. III MAF continued exercise of a long-range patrol capability--even with assets reduced by two companies--requires the enemy to restrict the size of units and loads moved, use alternate lines of communication, and maintain security near base areas as well as to employ forces for counter-reconnaissance missions.

The following graphs compare October operations and results with monthly totals since January and are followed by some noteworthy reconnaissance actions.

### RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS: JAN - OCT 1970



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On the 4th, reconnaissance team WAGE EARNER detected an enemy squad 200 meters distant, moving toward the lowlands four miles north of FSB Ross. While the patrol maneuvered to intercept the enemy, it relayed information of the sighting to a supporting OV-10A aircraft which attacked the target and killed three NVA. A short time later, the team engaged the remainder of the force and killed six more before departing the contact site under cover of fixed wing strikes. On another mission two weeks later, WAGE EARNER was reconnoitering four and a half miles northwest of Ross when the team heard small arms fire nearby. Investigating, the patrol observed and took under fire a group of VC, killing two. Prior to being extracted from the area, the Marines directed an OV-10A aerial rocket strike against the enemy and accounted for another six killed.

Enemy counter-reconnaissance activity, while not a serious threat, was evidenced during October. On the 17th, patrol RUDDER attempted a number of helicopter insertions along the southern boundary of Quang Nam three miles northeast of Hiep Duc. Heavy enemy fire was received each time, preventing insertion. Nevertheless on one attempt, the unit returned fire and killed three of the enemy. Two days later, team ROAD TEST, supporting Operation IMPERIAL LAKE, encountered a platoon searching with dogs eight miles southwest of FSB Baldy. Target description was transmitted to an aerial observer, who controlled artillery and armed helicopter strikes which killed seven of the enemy and scattered the remainder while the patrol evaded.

For immediate exploitation of reconnaissance sightings and engagements in the Que Son mountains, elements of 2d Battalion, 5th Marines were placed on stand-by with a package of CH-46D and AH-1G helicopters. This quick reaction force was employed on 26-27 October. Just after noon on the 26th seven miles north-northwest of FSB Ross, reconnaissance teams PRIME CUT and CAYENNE observed approximately 15 enemy in a small base camp. The teams enveloped the site and assaulted; five NVA were killed, and blood trails leading to a nearby cave complex were found. A

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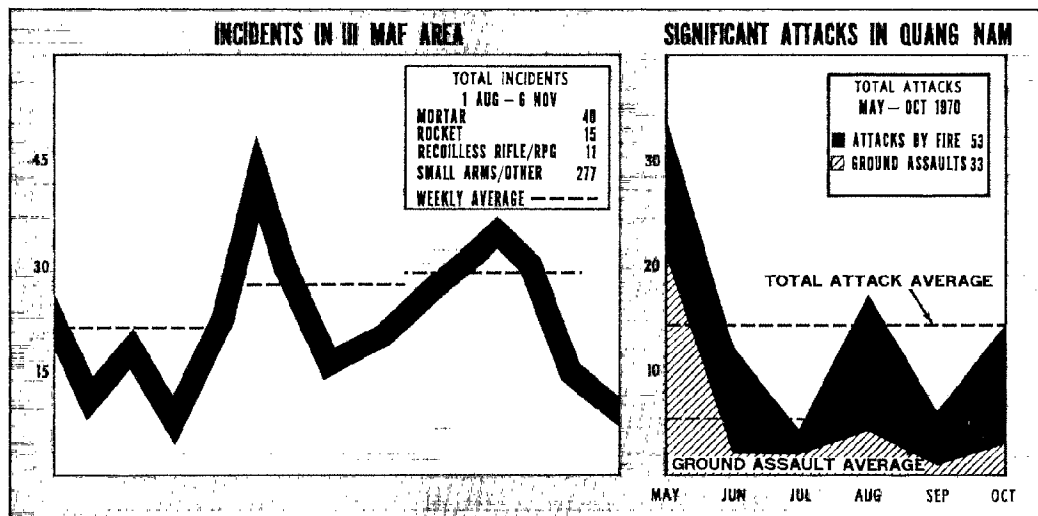
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Company F patrol was inserted a mile southwest of the area, where on the following day it engaged a VC element in another camp, killed four, and trapped at least one other (subsequently killed) in a nearby cave. Another enemy element above the cave opened fire and wounded three Marines. The fight continued, supported throughout by artillery fire and air strikes, and finally resulted in two more VC killed before contact was broken.

### Enemy Activity

Enemy combat activity rose somewhat above the low level registered in September; however, the increase was an accumulation of low-intensity, isolated incidents. A modest surge was recorded across the province on the night of 3-4 October. Throughout the month, there was heightened activity around Thuong Duc, where elements of the 38th NVA Regiment continued to harass outposts. Enemy failure at more aggressive activity, predicted from captured documents, was due in part to severe weather conditions, plus logistic and morale problems. In all, there were some 120 enemy-initiated incidents in the III MAF operations area, and 14 ground and indirect fire attacks of varying significance tallied for all of Quang Nam. The following graphs reflect the October statistics and compare them with past enemy efforts.

### ENEMY-INITIATED ACTION



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A good part of enemy activity during the month was directed at curing logistic and morale ills affecting his capability to battle. Lack of adequate food supplies to support lowland operations in rear and forward areas remained of paramount concern and required continued assignment of infantry units to logistic roles. Money and supplies collected during the first eight months of 1970 were below the prescribed yearly goals, and immediate needs were not being fulfilled. This problem was such that daily rations for the individual soldier were decreased by 40 percent. In this regard, local force units at province level were directed to be self-sufficient for eight months of the year, while district-level units are to provide for themselves the entire year. Individual VC in villages and hamlets have been assigned food production requirements, and emphasis on urban food and money collection has been stressed. Further complicating the problem, the October floods inflicted a serious setback to the enemy, destroying stockpiles of food and supplies.

Low morale, primarily attributed to inadequate amounts of food and medicine, has tended to raise the NVA desertion rate. Other factors prompting desertion have been increasing economic difficulties, disaffection with communist party policy toward older soldiers, the NVN bombing halt, the Paris talks, Ho Chi Minh's death, and recent setbacks in Cambodia.

Despite these problems, captured documents continue to reveal plans (often unrealistic) for future campaigns with directives to prepare for them logistically. Subordinate districts, units, and agencies have been exhorted to initiate an extensive propaganda campaign aimed at cadre, soldiers, and the civilian population to counter hopes for an early peace, declaring instead that protracted war is the only road to victory.

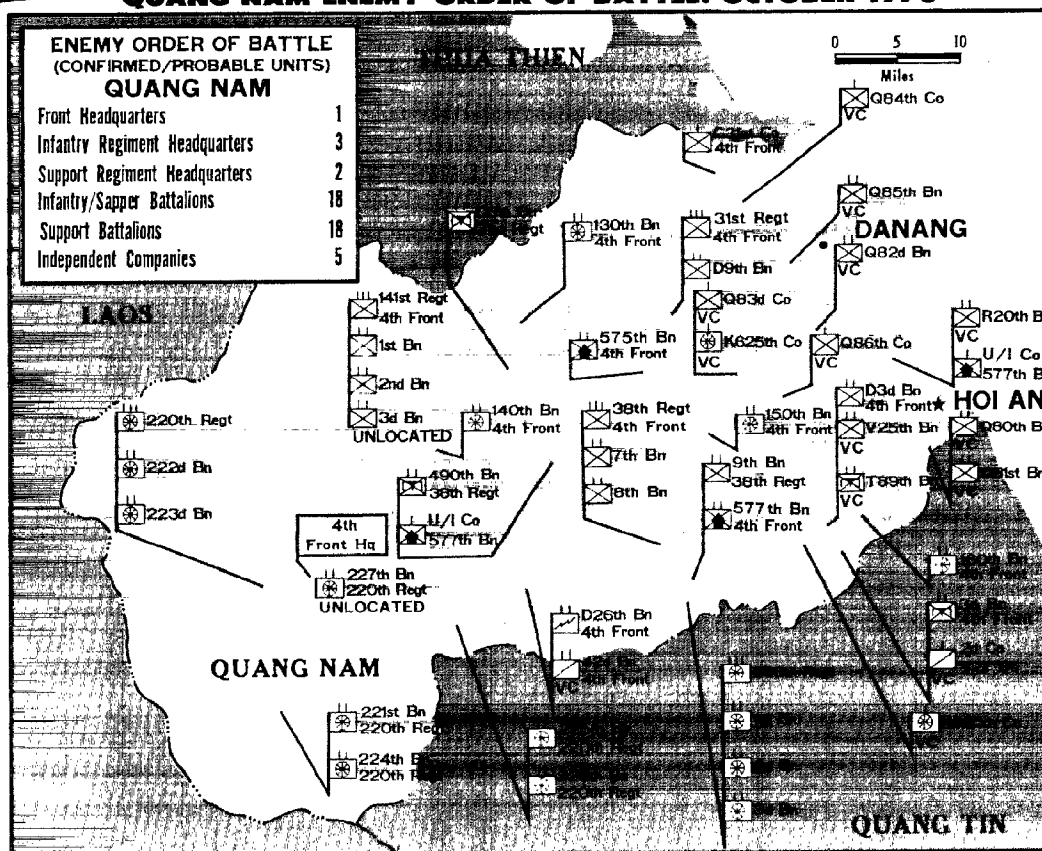
The map on the next page plots end-October enemy order of battle for Quang Nam. The accompanying chart compares the province enemy statistics with the rest of MR 1 and the DMZ.

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## QUANG NAM ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE: OCTOBER 1970



★ Province capital

PROVINCE	TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT/SUPPORT UNITS		GUERRILLAS	COMBAT BATTALIONS				SUPPORT BATTALIONS	
	NVA	VC		INFANTRY		SAPPER		ROCKET/ ARTILLERY	OTHERS
				NVA	VC	NVA	VC		
DMZ	6,600	0	0	3	0	1	0	6	8
QUANG TRI	14,900	500	800	21	0	5	0	1	3
THUA THIEN	9,900	300	700	13	1	4	0	2	0
QUANG NAM	7,900	1,500	3,800	9	5	3	1	2	16
QUANG TIN	1,300	3,100	1,800	0	3	1	2	0	13
QUANG NGAI	2,500	2,100	2,900	6	3	1	1	1	9
TOTALS	43,100	7,500	10,000	52	12	15	4	12	49

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## RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION

Nationbuilding in Quang Nam province came to a virtual standstill as a result of October floods. Effort and assets intended for resettlement and community development projects were directed to relief and evacuation operations, putting a slight crimp in the GVN development timetable. In Quang Nam, approximately 50,000 Vietnamese left their homes to escape the floods, adding a considerable--albeit temporary--burden to province officials already coping with more than 75,000 war refugees.

Construction of resettlement villages along Route 4 in Dien Ban district was to begin in October; however, the floods not only disrupted completion of the Route 4 pavement project but also inundated the resettlement sites. The recently completed project on Go Noi Island was among the first areas cleared by receding waters. Although the permanent structures appeared to be in good condition, there was no detailed assessment of flood damage at end-month.

One bright spot was commencement of Operation HOANG DIEU, a saturation operation intended to garner maximum cooperation from the local citizenry in identifying and destroying Viet Cong. A cooperative effort by all Free World forces in Quang Nam, HOANG DIEU had begun to gain momentum, when it also was interrupted as a result of the storms.

ARVN Operations in Support of Pacification

Continuing from the previous month, Operation HUNG QUANG 1/35 progressed through the first three weeks of October in the region west of Liberty Bridge. Participating units--elements of the 51st ARVN Regiment--directed their efforts toward rice denial and pacification, winding up the operation on the 22d with 38 enemy kills and 13 captured weapons to their credit.

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To recapture the national momentum and unity of effort (seemingly dimmed during the first half of 1970) which characterized the previous year's pacification program, the GVN established a special pacification and development campaign to run from 1 July to 31 October. In response, ARVN forces in Quang Nam launched Operations VU NINH 12, HUNG QUANG 1/32B, and HUNG QUANG 1/32D in the westernmost sections of the province, deep in enemy base areas. Concurrently, Regional Force (RF) and Popular Force (PF) activity expanded, as district-controlled territorial units intensified local security operations. Nonetheless, contact was limited; enemy forces chose to yield to GVN pressure, avoiding confrontation when possible and directing their energies toward disruption of pacification and, more recently, hamlet infrastructure reconstitution.

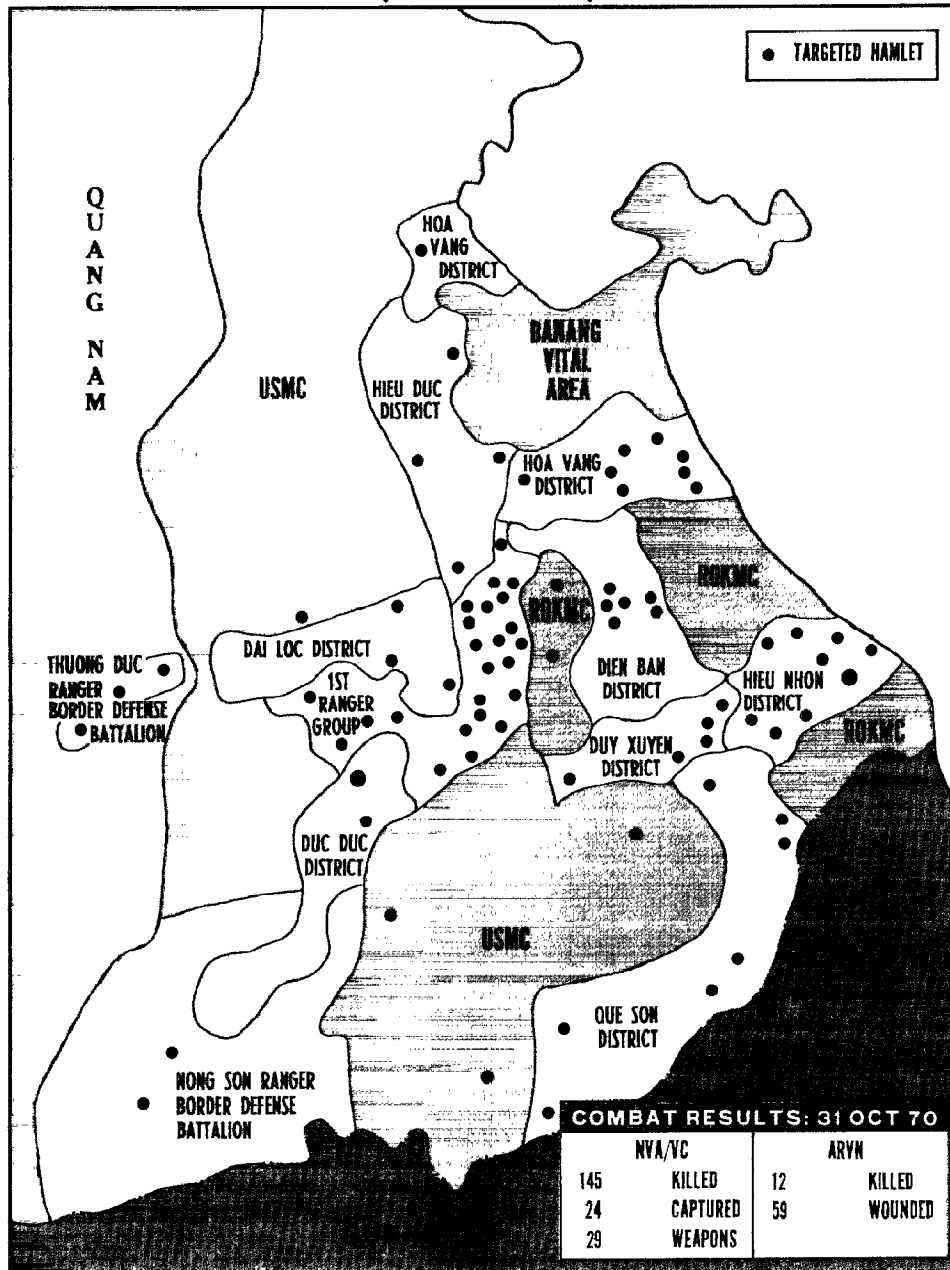
Recognizing this intent and determined to block it, the GVN launched an extensive operation in the populated lowlands of Quang Nam. Conceptually, Operation HOANG DIEU--initiated on the 22d--featured maximum coverage of inhabited regions with small unit maneuver to blunt enemy antipacification initiatives. Participating units included 51st ARVN Regiment, 1st Ranger Group, 2d and 3d Troops of the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron, and some 300 RF and PF platoons. In addition to III MAF support discussed in the preceding chapter, 2d ROKMC Brigade is participating in HOANG DIEU with operations in its area of responsibility.

Specific operating areas have been assigned to districts and tactical units; for example, both the Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen district chiefs have areas of operation comprising portions of their districts, as shown on the following map. Further, 80 hamlets (shown in red) have been targeted for special attention with the goal of heightened government presence and improved security in each at the conclusion of the operation.

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# OPERATION HOANG DIEU - ARVN AREAS OF OPERATION (22 OCT-CONT)



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These boundaries are not restrictive, and mutual cooperation with adjacent organizations permits adequate freedom to meet operational demands. Based on intelligence information, units were employed within specific hamlets or villages to locate and capture known or suspected Viet Cong. Throughout the operational region, ARVN units interdicted enemy infiltration with patrols and ambushes. Concurrently, the GVN employed a number of shifting checkpoints to inspect vehicles and identification cards. Random cordon and search operations sought VC infrastructure members. To facilitate processing of detainees, two combined holding and interrogation centers were established. These proved their value by providing expanded intelligence gained by timely interrogation of VC and suspects, which pointed up additional objectives for combat elements.

Shortly after the operation started, there was a marked increase in the number of ARVN-initiated contacts. Despite late-month flooding, GVN forces had killed 145 NVA/VC and captured 24 more by the end of October. HOANG DIEU is expected to continue for at least 30 days.

#### Combined Unit Pacification Program

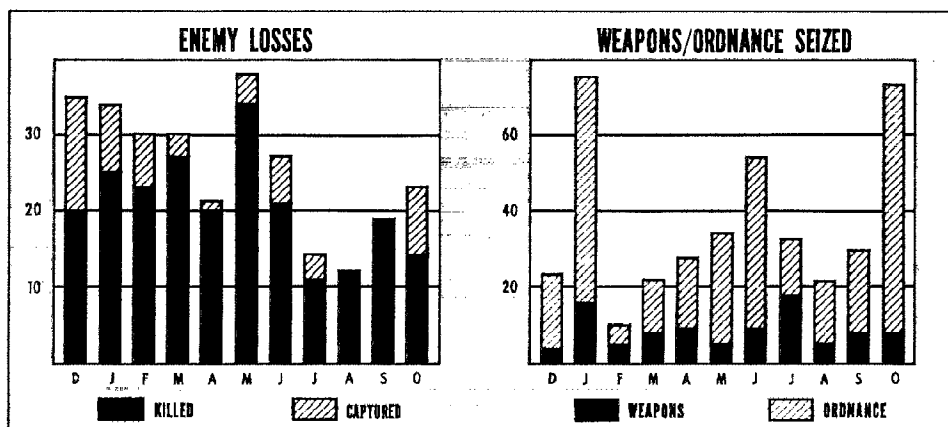
Combat with the enemy continued at a low level, with the most significant clashes occurring in the Que Son area, as in the previous month. HOANG DIEU's wide-ranging saturation operations by ARVN forces consigned Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP) teams to constricted operating areas--generally the assigned hamlet proper. Nevertheless, CUPP teams provided security through limited patrolling while intensifying local pacification efforts. In the latter regard, simple medical care continues as a significant contribution to village welfare. Throughout the month, US Navy hospital corpsmen serving with CUPP units treated 3,555 Vietnamese requiring minor medical treatment.

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On the 10th, the 1st Marines CUPP team at An Ngai Tay hamlet was disestablished, because the collocated Popular Force unit had attained the requisite level of proficiency for independent operation. All other CUPP locations remained unchanged, although four other hamlets enjoying CUPP-enhanced security registered improvement in Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) ratings. The month's combat results, compared with those since the program's inception, are reflected below.

#### MARINE CUPP RESULTS: DECEMBER 1969-OCTOBER 1970



#### Combined Action

During October, 2d Combined Action Group (CAG)--five combined action companies (CACO) with a total of 34 platoons (CAP)--continued deployed in the same general areas as last month. Contact with the enemy (eight incidents--seven initiated by CAP elements) was at an all-time low, despite an upswing in operations. Also, the flooding on the 29th necessitated relocation of almost all CAPs and complete cessation of military operations; nevertheless, these Marines and PFs continued their usefulness by assisting in flood relief activities.

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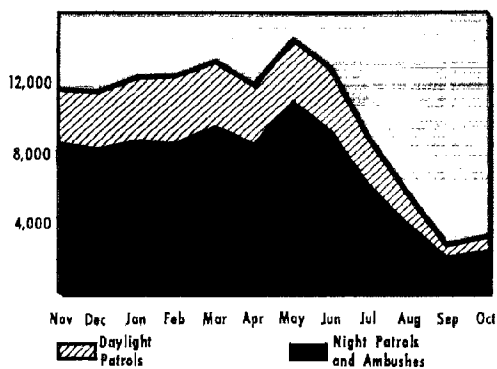
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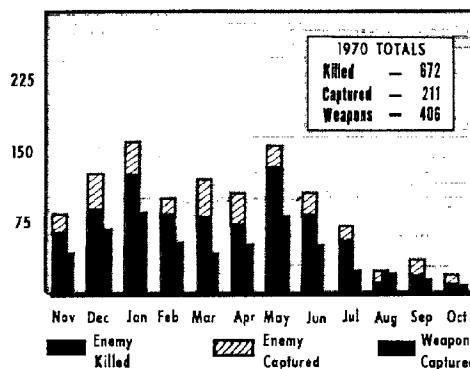
CAP participation in Operation HOANG DIEU was generally restricted to their assigned tactical areas of coordination. Combined action activity and results are shown below with trends for the past year.

**COMBINED ACTION ACTIVITIES: NOVEMBER 1969 - OCTOBER 1970**

**OPERATIONS CONDUCTED**



**ENEMY LOSSES**



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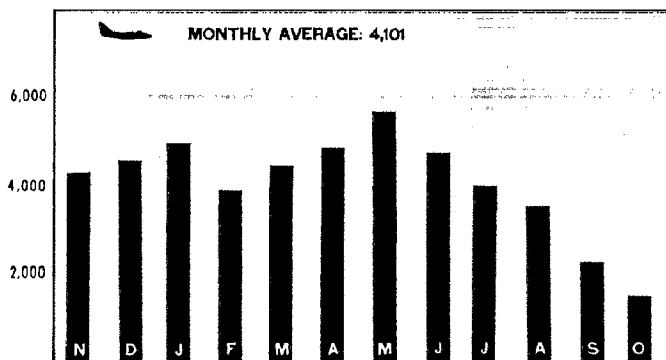
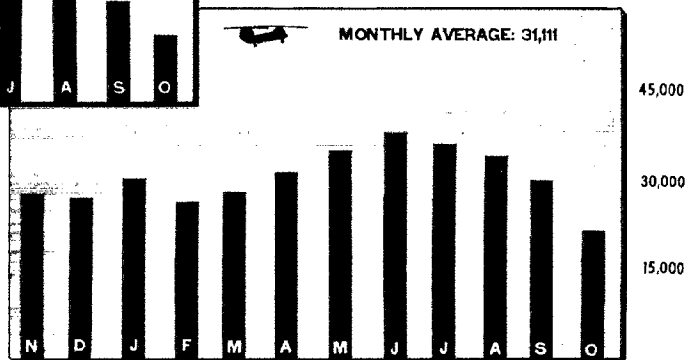
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**AIR OPERATIONS**

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing supported forces in MR 1 during October with 1,166 of the 1,503 fixed wing offensive air support, antiair warfare, and visual reconnaissance sorties logged. Air operations were curtailed due to a lack of significant action and bad weather from four tropical storms, the last of which passed through Danang during the evening of the 29th.

Rotary wing operations by Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-16 decreased for the fourth consecutive month, although 1st Wing helicopter operations provided emergency relief in response to the devastating end-month floods, rescuing thousands of Vietnamese civilians. The 22,895 helicopter sorties by the Group transported more than 49,000 passengers and 3,800 tons of cargo this month.

The following graphs reflect fixed wing and helicopter sortie totals since November 1969.

**MARINE AIR OPERATIONS: NOV 1969 - OCT 1970****FIXED WING SORTIES****HELICOPTER SORTIES**

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In-Country Fixed Wing Operations

Restrained by a sortie limitation, typhoons Iris and Joan, tropical storms Kate and Louise, and limited enemy activity, the four Marine Aircraft Group-11 squadrons registered a low in fixed wing operations with 1,166 sorties. The preponderance of these missions, 482, was close air support for Free World forces in MR 1, while the remainder was interdiction, combat air patrol (CAP) missions, and direct air support (for example, landing zone preparations or strikes against enemy positions not close to friendly troops). Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-115 flew 71 in-country CAP missions, which, when combined with the 65 out-of-country combat air patrols, represented 50 percent of the month's F-4B sorties--a definite shift in employment of F-4B assets to a fighter/air defense role.

Other support missions were also hampered by the storms as evidenced by a 43 percent reduction in TA-4F and OV-10A flights. TA-4F pilots flew 40 visual reconnaissance (VR) sorties during the month, and OV-10A aircrews logged 314 missions for escort, forward air controller (airborne), photography, and VR purposes.

Even though flight operations were sharply curtailed during October with more than 480 sorties cancelled due to foul weather in target areas, several MAG-11 flights reported significant bomb damage assessments. On the 5th just before noon, two F-4Bs struck a transshipment point in the Da Krong Valley 22 miles southwest of Quang Tri City. Ten 1,000-pound bombs demolished six bunkers and started a secondary fire. Three days later, two A-4E Skyhawks hit six miles to the west along the same infiltration route, dropping napalm and 500-pound bombs which caused two secondary explosions and destroyed a bunker. Shortly after noon the same day, a single A-6A delivered 22 500-pound bombs against an NVA bunker complex nine miles north-northwest of the

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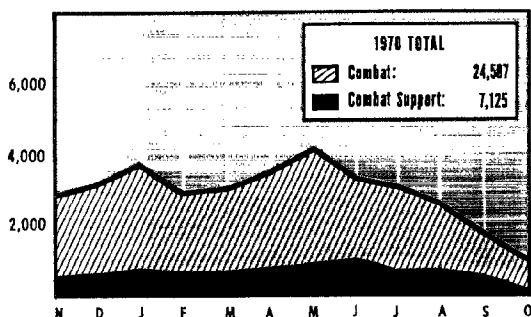
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Rockpile and just south of the Ben Hai river. An airborne controller counted ten bunkers destroyed by the strike.

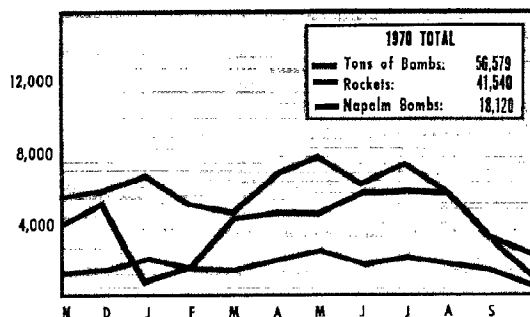
Ordnance expenditures and fixed wing operations for the past year are compared on the following graphs.

### IN-COUNTRY FIXED WING SUPPORT BY MARINE AIRCRAFT NOVEMBER 1969 - OCTOBER 1970

SORTIES FLOWN



ORDNANCE DELIVERED



### Helicopter Operations

Continuing the four-months trend of decreasing helicopter operations, MAG-16 sorties dipped 25 percent from September. Notwithstanding, operations at end-month to support disaster relief added significantly to helicopter utilization.

During the afternoon of 29 October, the littoral south of Danang flooded as a result of several days of almost continuous rain added to saturation accumulated from other storms during the previous 25 days. With many low areas inundated, rising waters necessitated evacuation of military personnel and civilians to higher ground. Flying under hazardously low, 500-foot ceilings with visibility reduced to less than one-half mile by driving rain, MAG-16

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helicopter crews worked until after midnight, when zero visibility conditions forced them to cease. The relief operations, utilizing all available assets including US Army and VNAF helicopters, continued through the 31st with similarly difficult flying weather over hostile territory. During the two and one-half days, more than 11,000 people were moved to safe locations, and tons of food and clothing were delivered--a successful civic action accomplishment.

The CH-46D squadrons flew over 12,000 sorties that lifted 26,866 passengers and 544 tons of logistic items. In addition to 3,996 tactical and logistical transport sorties, the tandem-rotor aircraft conducted 1,717 medical evacuation, 480 reconnaissance, 1,056 command and control, and 973 search and rescue missions. More than 800 of the latter flights were logged during the last three days of the month in flood relief operations.

Because of their ability to move large groups of people, CH-53D Sea Stallions made an important contribution to flood relief operations. The 18 Sea Stallions of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-463 moved 41 percent of the passengers and 86 percent of the cargo transported by USMC helicopters in October. Additionally, millions of dollars were saved by the 19 tactical aircraft recovery sorties that reclaimed salvageable helicopters downed in III MAF operational zones.

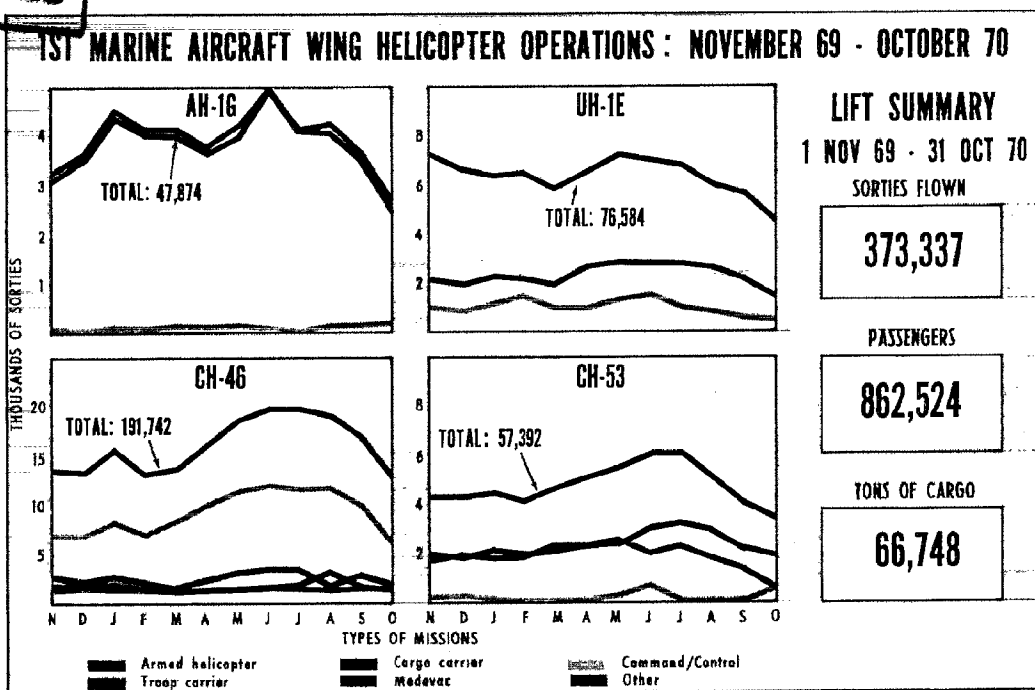
Tactical armed escort was the role of 4,247 UH-1E and AH-1G flights, as they accompanied transport helicopters on missions into landing zones where enemy fire was probable. The UH-1E was also used extensively for command and control tasks, and 2,329 such sorties were logged during the month.

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

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### Out-of-Country Operations

Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-115 flew all of the 65 out-of-country missions logged during the month. Scheduled for four six-hour barrier combat air patrol periods in October, VMFA-115 flew 32 sorties during the first three periods. The last barrier patrols, slated for the evening of 29 October, were cancelled because of poor weather at Danang.

Since departure of Chu Lai-based F-4B squadrons, VMFA-115 has maintained two aircraft daily on an air-defense alert pad. These aircraft have also been used to provide airborne fighter defense in case North Vietnamese MIGs attacked B-52s on Laotian strikes or other Free World aircraft operating in areas contiguous to NVN borders. Commencing 14 October, flights of F-4Bs were launched almost daily for these operations; a total of 33 sorties had been flown by end-month.

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KC-130F Operations

Recently, in a move associated with redeployment of 1st Wing units, KC-130F Hercules assets, operated from Danang Air Base by a detachment from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR)-152, were reduced from four to three. These aircraft were deployed to Vietnam early in the war, primarily to refuel planes on extended flights such as BARCAP or attack aircraft poised on airborne alert for close air support requests. Plans call for a fourth aircraft (from Okinawa) to augment the three remaining in-country when BARCAP assignments necessitate.

For barrier combat air patrols, KC-130F crews maintain an orbit east of the controlling US Navy ship and refuel the fighters 10-40 minutes after they arrive on station, depending on intended BARCAP duration. Tanker periods are scheduled to ensure a KC-130F is enroute to/from or in the refueling track. This arrangement requires three KC-130Fs, each flying two sorties, to support a normal six-hour BARCAP cycle. In addition to scheduled tanker periods, the VMGR-152 detachment usually maintained one KC-130F in a 30-minute ground alert status to meet any emergency requirements for airborne refueling.

In addition to refueling barrier combat air patrols, the KC-130F has been used elsewhere to extend time on station or range for Marine fighter and attack aircraft. During periods of highest combat activity, an airborne flight of A-4Es or F-4B/Js was maintained over Hue during daylight hours for quick reaction to requests in MR 1 for immediate air support. KC-130F tankers were part of this package, refueling on-station aircraft or any others needing extension of flight time. In another instance of KC-130F refueler utilization, the tanker/transports were an integral part of operations at Chu Lai when wind conditions dictated launching A-4Es with reduced fuel loads from the short crosswind runway. Shortly after take-off, these planes received additional fuel from the orbiting tanker and proceeded on their missions.

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Although the primary mission of the detachment is aerial refueling, other type missions to support III MAF were included in more than 5,400 sorties flown during the past year. Full utilization of KC-130F tankers during periods of minimal refueling requirements was realized by using the Hercules for delivery of materiel to combat bases, shuttling of personnel, and flare drops. The plane's capability to remain airborne for long periods of time with large payloads of flares proved to be invaluable. Whether the flares were provided to light the battlefield for support of ground engagement, medical evacuation, reconnaissance team emergency extraction, or other situations, the illumination increased the effectiveness and facilitated the tasks of ground combat units.

On occasion, KC-130F aircrews have been called upon to provide air-delivered emergency resupply. When Khe Sanh was occupied by the 26th Marines, supplies were paradropped at low altitude, limiting exposure to hostile fire while ensuring delivery. Parachute resupply also has been used at mountain landing zones when foul weather prohibited normal helicopter delivery. In these instances, the AN/TPQ-10 operated by an air support radar team vectored the KC-130F to the appropriate release point.

#### Aircraft Losses

Three MAG-16 helicopters were destroyed as a result of direct enemy action during October. An AH-1G was burned by the enemy one hour and 45 minutes after an engine failure forced the crew to abandon it in an unsecure area. The second aircraft, a UH-1E section leader in a reconnaissance team extraction, crashed in mountainous terrain while attempting to locate the patrol in minimal weather. The third loss occurred late in the month, when a CH-46D on an emergency medical evacuation was destroyed after an engine failure during a hover extraction.

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Distribution of Aircraft

The following chart details distribution of aircraft and reflects minor assignment changes since the end of September. Continuing redistribution of TA-4Fs transferred two more out of RVN during the month. Seven aircraft shown in the "Other" column are involved in various modification or repair programs in-country.

**STATUS OF 1ST WING AIRCRAFT: 31 OCTOBER 1970**

Unit	Aircraft Model	Total Assigned	PAR	Damage Repair	Other	Total In-Country
<b>MAG-11</b>						
H&MS-11	C-117D	3	0	0	0	3
	TA-4F	6	1	0	0	5
VMA-311	A-4E	23	1	1	0	21
VMFA-115	F-4B	23	6	3	2	12
VMA(AW)-225	A-6A	13	0	0	0	13
VMO-2	OY-10A	19	0	1	3	15
<b>TOTAL FIXED WING</b>		<b>87</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>MAG-16</b>						
H&MS-16	CH-46D	0	0	0	0	0
HML-167	UH-1E	39	6	2	0	31
HML-367	AH-1G	24	0	1	0	23
HMM-262	CH-46D	28	6	1	1	20
HMM-263	CH-46D	27	6	2	1	18
HMM-364	CH-46D	30	10	2	0	18
HMH-463	CH-53D	19	1	0	0	18
<b>TOTAL HELICOPTERS</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>128</b>

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## LOGISTICS

In addition to daily provision of supply, maintenance, transportation, and medical support to Marine combat units, III MAF logisticians continued with retrograde of equipment, transfer of facilities, and disposition of excess materiel during October. However, two events dominating the month's logistic picture were completion of the fourth redeployment increment and the cumulative results of four tropical storms/typhoons which brushed Quang Nam province.

The northern coastal regions of RVN generally receive heavy rainfall this time of year, as the northeast monsoon moves in from the Gulf of Tonkin. This year, normal rainy weather, coupled with an accumulation of water from the four successive storms, resulted in floods causing the most serious life and property losses since 1964. On the 29th, the lowlands of Quang Nam became inundated from a mile south of Da-nang to LZ Baldy and from Hoi An west to Thuong Duc. ARVN, CAG, and ROKMC operations came to a halt, and personnel in low areas were moved to higher ground to escape the rising waters. To coordinate assistance efforts by operational units, III MAF established a Disaster Relief Control Center which directed evacuation and relief operations throughout the storm. In affected areas of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai, more than 240,000 Vietnamese were displaced; 14,000 houses were damaged or destroyed; over 200 lives were lost; and almost 55 percent of the rice crop was destroyed, the latter representing ten percent of the annual harvest in Quang Nam. Route reconnaissance revealed significant damage to lines of communication, although considerably less than anticipated. No large bridges along National Route 1 suffered major structural damage; thus at end-month, it appeared that this key route would soon be useable, at least to single lane traffic. Nonetheless, a considerable construction effort will be required to return tactical roads to proper standards, although all areas were accessible by using alternate routings.

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UNCLASSIFIEDKEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA Redeployments

The sailing of the USS Saint Louis (LKA-116) from Danang harbor on 13 October brought to a close the fourth incremental redeployment of Marines from RVN to destinations in the United States, Okinawa, and Japan. III MAF strength was scaled down to approximately 25,000--less than 30 percent of the 85,000 high point registered in 1968. Throughout the KEYSTONE increments, combat, combat support, and service support units have been redeployed in relative proportion to their in-country ratios. Additionally, headquarters elements have been cut back where possible; for example, III MAF headquarters has been reduced 42 percent since commencement of the KEYSTONE series.

This latest relocation of forces commenced on 9 July and included 15 embarkation units numbered 1 through 14, excluding 10 and adding 13(A) and a special un-numbered unit, reflecting schedule modifications during the course of the shift. In total, 2,501 personnel, 397,267 square feet of vehicles (a measurement of occupied deck space), and 966,046 cubic feet of cargo were moved out of Vietnam by Pacific Fleet amphibious shipping. Additionally, another 14,520 Marines were translocated by air. The final distribution of Marines throughout Pacific Command as a result of KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA is shown on the following page (614 US Navy personnel who served with redeployed III MAF units are not reflected).

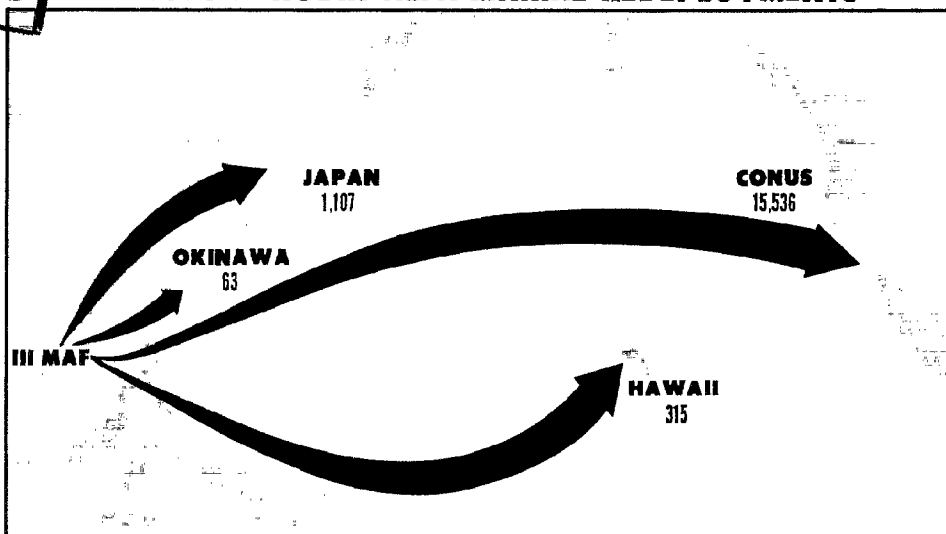
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**KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA MARINE REDEPLOYMENTS**

On 4 October, Embarkation Unit-11 sailed for CONUS from Danang on the USS Ogden (LPD-5) and the USS Manitowoc (LST-1180) with 9th Interrogation-Translation Team; 1st Counterintelligence Team; Marine Air Traffic Control Unit-67; Company C, 1st Medical Battalion; 1st Dental Company (-); and detachments from Force Logistic Command (FLC) and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

Two days later, the USS Page County (LST-1076) loaded detachments of the 7th Marines and Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-13 organized as Embarkation Unit-12, destined for CONUS. Also on the 6th, the USS Washoe County (LST-1165) and the USS Terrell County (LST-1157) embarked other MAG-13 detachments designated Embarkation Unit-13(A) for movement to California.

Following closely on the 8th, the USS Westchester County (LST-1167) took on an undesignated embarkation unit consisting of 148 personnel at Chu Lai for transportation to Okinawa and Iwakuni. At

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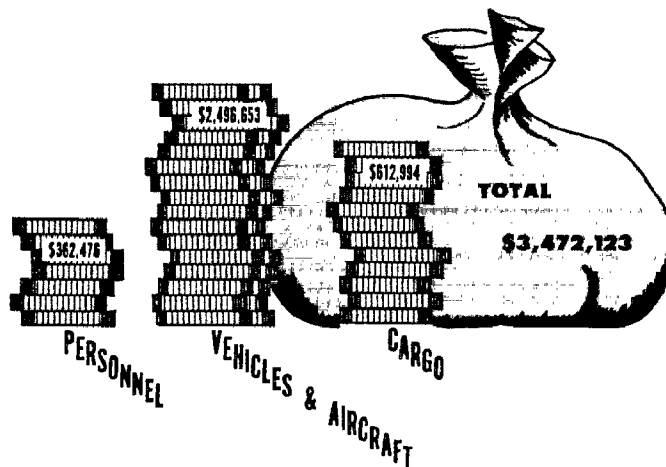
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the same time, 7,500 square feet of retrograde vehicles were embarked for Okinawa.

The next day, Embarkation Unit-13 (4th Battalion(-), 11th Marines and a detachment from FLC) departed Danang on the USS Frederick (LST-1184) and arrived in San Diego on the 28th. The last embarkation unit (14) loaded remaining elements of the 7th Marines; MAG-13; and 3d Battalion, 11th Marines together with detachments of 1st Motor Transport Battalion and 1st 175mm Gun Battery on the USS Junau (LPD-10) and the USS Saint Louis (LKA-116), both of which steamed for Long Beach, California on the 13th.

Excepting the majority of personnel (who were airlifted), use of US Pacific Fleet amphibious shipping--already on the scene for operational purposes--resulted in a considerable saving of commercial transportation costs, as shown below.

**ESTIMATED SAVINGS REALIZED BY AMPHIBIOUS SHIPPING  
UTILIZATION IN KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA**



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Engineer Operations

The extreme weather conditions dominating October established the tenor of the month's engineer endeavor. Road construction on Route 4 (scheduled for October completion) came to a standstill, as Marine engineers coped with flood-damaged lines of communication throughout Quang Nam. Crushed rock, culverts, and bridging materials were positioned for rapid application in those areas most heavily hit. On Route 545 (linking Elephant Valley and Danang), emergency installation of five 36-inch culverts and extensive use of rock (to thwart the cutting action of the flood waters) by Company A, 7th Engineers provided sufficient drainage to save the road from wash-out. Elsewhere, small paving repairs were completed, where possible, in high, well-drained areas. In general, damage to roads in the III MAF tactical area of responsibility was considered moderate, although certain routes will require major rebuilding.

On the 15th, Marine engineers accompanied by 13 bulldozers returned to their parent organizations following completion of dismantlement of excess An Hoa combat base facilities. Simultaneously, Vietnamese forces took over the An Hoa base area and security for Liberty Bridge.

Vertical construction continued to be focused toward rehabilitation of existing structures in III MAF and ROK Marine cantonments--a project considerably expanded by the results of the month's sequential storms. With 165 of 185 Southeast Asia huts refurbished at end-month, the 2d ROK Marine Brigade rebuild project was nearing completion.

Ordnance

October redeployment of the 1st 175mm Gun Battery (a late addition to the KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA list) marked the last of Marine 175mm gun support in RVN. Arrangement for in-country disposition of

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excess 175mm and 90mm ammunition (the latter brought about by the September redeployment of the last Marine tanks in RVN--also an addition to the original KEYSTONE ROBIN ALFA schedule) was under study at end-month.

At the request of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, a new lot of belted 20mm ammunition employing a modified projectile ratio was introduced. This lot, belted with one round of armor piercing-tracer for every nine rounds of high explosive-incendiary ammunition, is for use in the OV-10A lightweight 20mm gun pod (GPU-2) and is considered more effective against unarmored targets than previous lots belted with a higher density of armor piercing-tracer projectiles.

Aviation ordnance expenditures fell to the lowest recorded since the beginning of the war; the month's total of 2,421 short tons was down nearly 50 percent from September expenditures (4,651 short tons).

#### Medical Support

Several strains of malaria exist throughout the III MAF operational area; however, the most severe--sometimes fatal--variety is falciparum or malignant tertian malaria. While experience and medical technology have provided US forces with improved malaria prophylaxes and vector control measures, the menace continues to affect a number of III MAF Marines each month. Programs to reduce malaria incidence, while all employing the same general principles, require specific tailoring to the area and nature of operations. First Marine Division (the major ground combat element of III MAF and therefore most exposed) has isolated the specifics of the threat in Quang Nam province and directed its efforts accordingly.

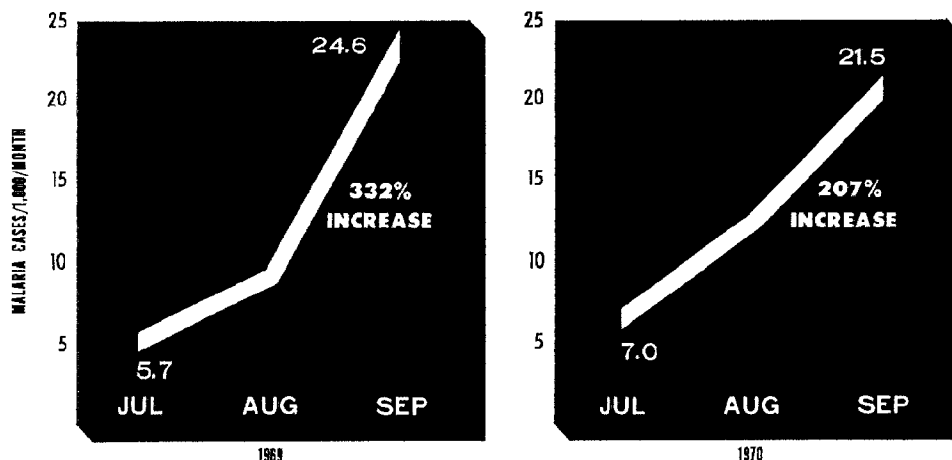
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Each year, malaria incidence in Quang Nam builds to a seasonal peak occurring in September, shown for the past two years in the accompanying chart. As can be seen, the rise for both years is

**1ST MAR DIV MALARIA TRENDS: JUL - SEP 1969 & 1970**



significant, although a reduction in percentage increase during 1970 is apparent. On the surface, this decrease in malaria would seem attributable to corresponding personnel cutbacks due to redeployment. Actually, the incidence rate has more direct correlation to the intensity of operations in the Que Son mountains and their immediate environs. Due to the presence of enemy forces possessing an extremely high malaria rate and the density of primary vector mosquitoes, US malaria incidence in the area has been common. For example, of the 346 malaria cases reported in September, 73 percent occurred in units operating in or near the Que Sons. Despite reduction of in-country strength, it has been tactically necessary to maintain a considerable presence in the Que Son mountains; thus, the number of man-days exposure in that area has not been significantly reduced during the past year.

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To meet the challenge, 1st Marine Division undertook a three-part program characterized throughout by intensified command attention at all echelons. To assist commanders in identifying opportunities for improvement, a malaria prevention medical contact team was formed in May and continues to work directly with combat units during operations to gain firsthand knowledge of local problems associated with malaria prevention. Following up, a preventive medicine detachment is employed full time with regimental units (previously the 7th, now the 5th Marines) operating in the Que Sons. This detachment conducts entomological surveys, mosquito fogging, larviciding, and a continuing antimalarial training program for units committed to operations in this high threat area. Based on problem isolation, vector control measures, and training conducted by these two teams, a third--the field malaria indoctrination team--provides reinforcing training and direct assistance to commanders in enforcement of sound antimalarial discipline for combat units in the field.

This approach has met with measurable success; 265 malaria cases occurred in units operating in the Que Sons during September, a reduction of 48 percent compared with the 551 cases attributed to organizations operating therein during September 1969.

#### Aviation Logistics

October marked completion of the SACE (Semi-automatic Checkout Equipment) modification and A-6A wing reinforcement projects begun last month. Also, one OV-10A and two helicopter modification programs commenced.

On the 11th, a special team of civilian technicians from US Navy aviation repair facilities at Alameda and North Island, California completed rework and update modification on the SACE complex at Danang. Rehabilitation of this aviation ground support installation (used for analysis and diagnosis of malfunctioning A-6A aircraft systems) enhances significantly availability of Intruders with fully operable electronics systems.

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As a result of wing cracks discovered on several A-6As this summer, all A-6As were inspected by ultrasonic and x-ray means and subsequently were structurally reinforced. This month, the airframe change was completed on all 1st Wing A-6As, and the temporary operational restrictions previously imposed have been removed.

A new program begun this month was retrofit of AH-1G helicopters with the improved T53 engine. By the end of October, 16 engines had been installed, and engines are on hand for the last eight installations. The improved engine will permit resumption of full operational capability.

In another project launched this month on the 20th, electronics equipment (KY-28) permitting secure air-ground communication was installed in three OV-10As. Inasmuch as this observation aircraft functions in continuous contact with ground combat and air support elements, this modification will permit free exchange of essential information without fear of compromise. Sixteen aircraft have yet to receive this new equipment.

The 19th marked commencement of on-site installation of hydraulic closet armor on CH-46Ds in 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The hydraulic closet is located directly behind the pilot's seat and houses the focal point of the aircraft's hydraulic-assisted controls essential for flight. Fifty-eight helicopters require modification, completion of which is estimated for mid-January.

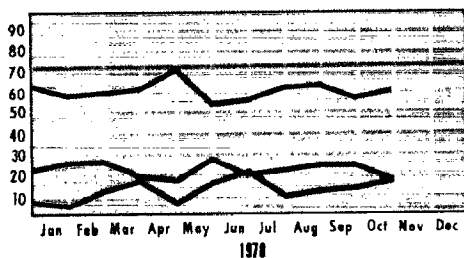
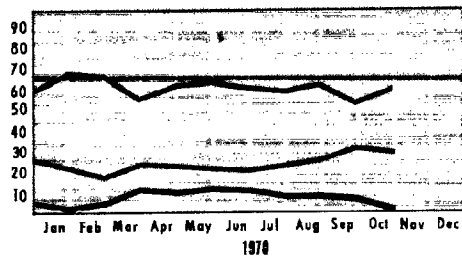
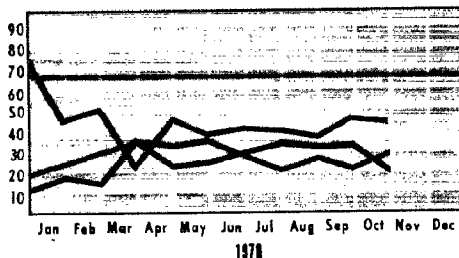
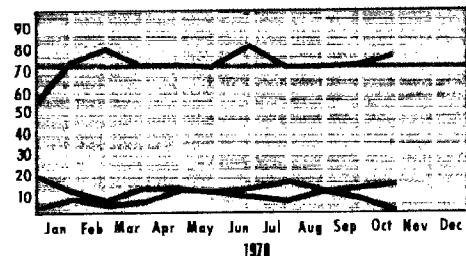
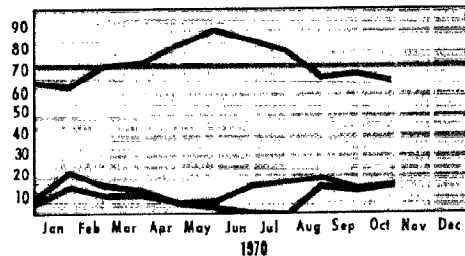
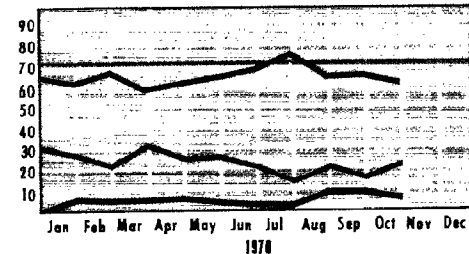
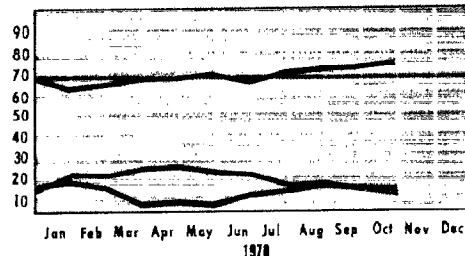
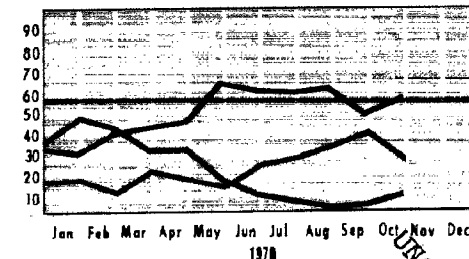
#### NORS/NORM/OR

The NORS/NORM and OR (not operationally ready due to supply/maintenance and operationally ready) trends for major categories of III MAF aircraft since the first of the year are shown on the next page.

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**NORS/NORM RATES - 1ST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING****A-4E (ATTACK)****F-4B (FIGHTER-ATTACK)****A-6A (ATTACK)****OV-10A (RECONNAISSANCE)****AH-1G (HELO)****UH-1E (HELO)****CH-46D (HELO)****CH-53D (HELO)**

READINESS OBJECTIVE

NORS

NORM

READY

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