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NAVMC HQ 335h-CMC (REV. 11-63)

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REMARKS (Entries to be dated and signed)

**A03022-jub**  
**AUG 18 1965**

**ACTION:**

1. Attached is a draft of a historical study on "U. S. Marine Corps Operations in RVN, 1964." This document is a sequel to a previous monograph covering Marine activities in Vietnam, 1954-63. Addressees are requested to review the attached proposed historical study and submit comments thereon, particularly within their areas of cognizance, to A03D by 31 August 1965.

G-3 DIVISION			
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1 DEFH 8/19/65 (9)

X 8/18 RC/16

2. Any additional significant information is also desired. Chapter IV, an analysis and lessons learned compilation, will be expanded after comments are received. The final study will also include illustrations, maps, charts, and diagrams not included in the attached draft manuscript.

3. The study is being routed for comment to WestPac activities, COMUSMACV, selected participants, and within MACV to DC/S(Air), DC/S(S&P), DC/S(ES&S), (Opstal), G-1, G-2, G-3.

(For additional remarks attach plain paper)

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4. Captain H. D. BRADSHAW (A03D) is designated as Project Officer, Tel Ext - 42846.

*R. C. Hilliard*  
R. C. HILLIARD  
By direction

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO  
 A03D22-jeb  
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 17 Aug 1965

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From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
 To: Distribution List

Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Operations in the Republic of Vietnam, 1964"

Encl: (1) Subject manuscript

1. Enclosure (1), describing U. S. Marine operations in Vietnam during calendar year 1964, is a sequel to a previous study covering Marine activities in Vietnam, 1954-1963. It is a draft manuscript, (less illustrations, maps, charts, and diagrams,) which will be revised and distributed when comments from Headquarters, Marine Corps agencies, field activities, and selected individuals have been received and incorporated.
2. Comments should be addressed to the particular areas of interest in which your activity participated. In addition, any new information deemed significant to the study, in particular, lessons learned, should be submitted.
3. Comments, along with the manuscript, should reach the Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D) by 13 September 1965 for CONUS addressees and by 22 September for all others.
4. This letter is declassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

*R. C. Hilliard*  
 R. C. HILLIARD  
 By direction

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Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S.  
Marine Corps Operations in the Republic of Vietnam,  
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U.S. MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 1964

by

Captain H. D. Bradshaw, USMC

Historical Branch

G-3 Division

Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps

August 1965

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*COPY 11 OF 45*

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## U. S. MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 1964

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UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIEDAdministrative Notes

This is the second in a series of historical monographs prepared by the Marine Corps covering its operations in Vietnam. The first, entitled United States Marine Corps Activities in Vietnam, 1954-1963, was completed in June of 1964 and provides a detailed account of operations during the period covered. It is classified SECRET-NOFORN. This study is a sequel to the first history and covers calendar year 1964. To facilitate understanding of the situation at the beginning of 1964, a summary of events from 1954 through 1963 is presented in Chapter I.

Sources cited are located within Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. unless otherwise indicated in footnotes. Standard abbreviations, except NF for NOFORN, have been used to show the security classification of each source. Although sources with an overall classification of TOP SECRET were used, no information classified higher than SECRET was included in this history.

Distances are given in nautical miles.

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This is a first draft prepared for submission to the staff agencies of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, field commands, and individuals for comment. Appropriate comments will be incorporated into a final version of the history, which will be distributed for use in training and for reference, as was done with the 1954-1963 monograph. This draft, however, does not include the command structure diagrams, flight statistics tables (including a summary of aircraft losses), and photographic illustrations referred to in the narrative. USAF Pilotage Charts, scale 1:500,000 may be used to locate the points designated by grid coordinates. These charts, plus maps of RVN provinces and ARVN Corps tactical areas and the other items noted above as not included in this draft, will be incorporated into the final study.

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U.S. MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 1964

(1)

CHAPTER ISUMMARY OF USMC OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM, 1954-1963

On 21 July 1954, a multi-nation Geneva conference placed a cease-fire agreement in effect in Vietnam and divided the nation, generally along the 17th parallel, into two countries, commonly known as North and South Vietnam. The northern nation, under Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh Communist organization centered in the capital city of Hanoi, was officially known as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). It ruled about 16 million people and 62,000 square miles of territory.

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(1) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: United States Marine Corps Activities in Vietnam, 1954-1963 (S,NF) dtd 27 June 1964. A Historical Monograph Prepared for the Secretary of Defense, hereafter Vietnam Monograph; General Chronology of Events in Vietnam 1945-1964 (TS), 0003D27964, dtd 9 October 1964, hereafter Vietnam Chronology; LtCol Archie J. Clapp, "Shu-Fly Diary," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, v. 89, no. 10 (Oct63), hereafter Shu-Fly Diary.

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The southern nation, with its capital in Saigon, was named the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). It encompassed approximately 15 million people and an area of 65,000 square miles. Ngo Dinh Diem had been appointed premier on 15 June 1954; after power struggles and reorganizations, he became president of the republic on 26 October 1955, maintaining that office until his assassination on 1 November 1963.

In July 1954, there were 13 United States Marines in the new Republic of Vietnam--12 security guards at the American Embassy in Saigon and one naval attache/naval attache for air.

(2) In addition, Lieutenant Colonel Victor J. Croizat was en route to Vietnam to become the first adviser to the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC), an organization still in the planning stage.

From 1954 onward, the Republic of Vietnam sought to establish a stable government, struggling against disorder within and a growing Communist threat from without. French forces, which had been steadily withdrawing since the Dien Bien Phu disaster in May 1954, were nearly gone from South Vietnam by 1956. By that time President Dwight D. Eisenhower had ordered U.S. advisers

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(2) The 12 security guards were assigned to the Embassy in 1953; in 1955, this number was increased to 15; in October 1963 it was raised to 19.

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under the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to assist in training the Vietnamese armed forces (RVNAF). About 770 advisers were assigned in 1956, and U.S. aid stood at 500 million dollars per year.

In mid-1957 Communist infiltration, subversion, and armed activity began to increase. Thousands of South Vietnamese, who had gone to North Vietnam after the French withdrawal, returned, after intensive training, there to wage guerrilla warfare against the Diem government. This terrorism often took the form of planned murder of government officials, mostly province chiefs, district chieftains, and hamlet village leaders, and teachers. More than 13,000 officials had been slain by the Communist Viet Cong (VC) guerrillas by 1959. <sup>(3)</sup> Fearing for his nation's independence in the face of stepped-up attacks, President Diem appealed to the United States for increased assistance.

In response to this appeal, and as part of an overall U.S. buildup, more Marines were sent to the country. Many of them served as advisers to the growing Vietnamese Marine Corps, which had been formed effective 1 October 1954 with an authorized strength of 1,137 officers and men. By the summer of 1955, VNMC strength had jumped to 1,837 and three USMC advisers had

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(3) Bernard B. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, A Political and Military Analysis (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 360.

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been assigned to assist and train the Vietnamese, who were organized into two battalions with a mission that included an amphibious assault capability. In 1958 VNMC officers began receiving training at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, while enlisted members attended courses of instruction at Okinawa, San Diego, Camp Pendleton, and other USMC installations. There were two attempts to abolish the VNMC, between 1956 and 1958 but by 1959 its combat record was such that it was expanded instead--to a Marine Corps Group of 2,276 men, with three landing battalions.

During 1960 and the following year the numbers of government officials murdered by the Viet Cong grew alarmingly; 250 to 300 deaths per month were reported by June of 1961. Recognizing that South Vietnam was now faced with full-scale guerrilla warfare, President John F. Kennedy committed the U.S. to a more active role. He increased the total American adviser strength from less than 800 to 2,000, delivered propeller-driven attack aircraft to the Vietnamese, and authorized U.S. personnel to accompany Vietnamese troops in the field.

On 11 December 1961, two U.S. Army helicopter companies with 40 helicopters and about 400 personnel arrived in RVN, and four days later President Kennedy pledged still more aid. By the end of the year, the U.S. Army had 16 C-123 twin-engine transport

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aircraft in place, available for combat airlift support within RVN (Operation MULE TRAIN). Headquarters, signal, and maintenance units arrived late in December. When 1961 ended, the authorized strength of the MAAG had risen to above 4,000, the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) had announced an increase in strength from 170,000 to 200,000, and the first American had been killed in combat operations. The war had moved into a new and more critical phase.

On 1 January 1962, the VNMC was expanded once again, this time into the Vietnamese Marine Corps Brigade, with a strength of 6,109. New elements formed an Amphibious Support Battalion. The U.S. Marine adviser organization was also enlarged to become the Marine Advisory Division which was made up of 18 officers and NCOs. The Division formed part of the Naval Advisory Group, a component of MAAG. During 1962 and 1963 the brigade was heavily committed to the field, always accompanied by U.S. Marine advisers. It was in contact with the Viet Cong one day out of every three. It established a kill ratio of 3.5 enemy dead for each Vietnamese Marine killed in 1962 and raised this ratio to 5:1 in 1963. Observers rated the brigade as the finest ground combat unit in the RVNAF, marked by high morale and an aggressive spirit, both reflecting efforts of U.S. Marine advisers.

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In February 1962, President Diem put his strategic hamlet program into operation, Washington announced that American pilots were flying combat missions, and clear and hold ground operations got underway. On 9 February the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV), commanded by General Paul D. Harkins, USA, assumed direct responsibility for all U.S. military policy, operations, and assistance in RVN. The MAAG, composed primarily of advisers, continued to exist, but as a subordinate unit of MACV. The Chief of Staff for MACV was Major General Richard G. Weede, USMC, who had just relinquished command of the 1st Marine Brigade in Hawaii. Twenty other billets on the staff (six percent of the total MACV staff strength) were allocated to Marines. General Weede's opinion was that "...we are spread thinly, but in the right places."<sup>(4)</sup>

Early in 1962 the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CinCPac), and Chief, MAAG (CHMAAG), Vietnam all agreed that a requirement for additional helicopter units in RVN existed. On 6 March the Secretary of Defense approved CinCPac's recommendation, subject to the Government of Vietnam (GVN) concurrence, that the Army provide

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(4) Vietnam Monograph, p. 49.

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a rotary-wing transport unit for operations in the Mekong Delta. The Army 33d Light Helicopter Company at Fort Ord, California was alerted for the move and assigned a departure date of 18 April.

Two days earlier ChMAAG and ComUSMACV concurred in recommending to CinCPac that Marine helicopter pilots be assigned to Army helicopter companies, in South Vietnam on a temporary duty basis for periods of 60-90 days. The purpose of these assignments would be to familiarize Marine pilots with the nature of operations in Vietnam and to provide them transitional training in the H-21, a tandem-rotor transport chopper not used by the Marine Corps.

Lieutenant General Carson A. Roberts, USMC, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (CGFMFPac), when asked for his opinion of this proposal by CinCPac on 28 February, made a counterproposal. He recommended that a complete Marine helicopter squadron of 24 UH-34Ds<sup>(5)</sup> (single-rotor medium transport helicopters) with support elements, be committed.

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(5) Designated HUS-1 until November 1962.

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On 14 March, after consultation between all commanders concerned, including the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), CinCPac and ComUSMACV recommended to JCS that a Marine squadron be deployed to the Southern Mekong River Delta region in the ARVN III Corps area (See map. p. 7a). It was understood that the Marines would move at a later date northward to Da Nang, in the I Corps area, where their supply route from Okinawa would be shorter and from which they could be better utilized if certain contingency plans were activated.

JCS approved the CinCPac-ComUSMACV recommendation on 16 March. On 9 April the leading elements of Task Unit (TU) 79.3.5, codenamed SHUFLY, arrived at the small airstrip near Soc Trang, 85 miles southwest of Saigon in the heart of the rice-rich Mekong River Delta. Men and equipment were airlifted in by the KC-130F Hercules of Marine Transport-Refueler Squadron-152 (VMGR-152), which hauled 20,000-pound loads into the rough 2,850-foot strip with ease.

Colonel John F. Carey, TU commander, had touched down first, piloting a C-117D twin-engine transport with his staff aboard. This aircraft remained with the unit permanently. Aboard the KC-130s, which followed at 30-minute intervals, rode the officers and men of Sub-Unit #2, an organization from Marine

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Air Base Squadron-16 (MABS-16) on Okinawa, detailed to set up and operate airfield and base facilities at the remote and isolated Soc Trang strip.

Within five days the camp was operating smoothly, with all personnel housed in a tent city, and the field was fully operational. Messing, medical, dental, sanitation, and recreation facilities were functioning, and communications with the command echelon had been set up. Administrative procedures had been modified to meet the situation, and security measures put into effect. On the field, a leaky hangar (the one usable building on the base) had been readied, a tactical airfield fuel dispensing system (TAFDS) awaited use, a Marine Air Traffic Control Unit (MATCU) handled air traffic, and ground-controlled approach (GCA) radar combined with tactical air navigation (TACAN) station gave the field a night and all-weather operational capability.

At first light on the morning of 15 April, the 24 UH-34D helicopters of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-362, (HMM-362), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Archie J. Clapp, lifted from the deck of the amphibious assault ship Princeton (LPH-5), cruising 30 miles offshore, and flew to Soc Trang, carrying squadron personnel and equipment. Within 10 hours HMM-362, assisted by

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sister squadron HMM-261 in making shuttle runs, landed more than 200,000 pounds of cargo. Three O-1B fixed wing observation aircraft, attached to the helicopter squadron for this operation, also flew in from the deck of the Princeton. TU 79.3.5 was ashore in Vietnam.

During the remainder of 1962 and all of 1963, Task Unit strengths, both in men and equipment, remained essentially at the initial levels. These were: 8 officers and 6 enlisted men in the headquarters detachment task element (TE 79.3.5.0). 63 officers and 196 enlisted in the reinforced helicopter squadron (TE 79.3.5.1); 18 officers and 193 enlisted in the Sub-Unit (TE 79.3.5.2); and 24 UH-34D, three O-1B, and one C-117D in the aircraft inventory. Total strength stayed at less than 500 officers and men throughout the period.

From mid April to mid-September 1962, TU 79.3.5 operated under operational control of ComUSMACV in direct support of the ARVN III Corps in the Mekong Delta. The overall chain of command in the area of operations is shown on the diagram, page 8a.

The basic reason for introducing transport helicopter squadrons into Vietnam was to provide mobility, flexibility, and speed to ARVN and VNMC units in their efforts to combat the elusive Viet Cong. TU 79.3.5 flew its first combat support mission on 22 April, lifting 399 troops in 16 choppers.

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The months that followed saw an intensive campaign take place in the Delta as Marine helicopters adapted to a new role in counter-guerrilla warfare.

On 1 May, all 24 choppers of HMM-362 took part in a single lift, demonstrating extremely high aircraft availability--in this case 100 percent--which became characteristic of squadron operations. Eight days later 9 helicopters sustained a total of 18 hits from small arms fire during a landing, but all returned safely. One, forced down by a hole in the oil system, was repaired in the field and flown out. Similar emergencies soon became almost commonplace, and a detailed plan for security while such work was accomplished was established and implemented.

A UH-34, on 23 May, evacuated a severely wounded Vietnamese officer at night, in extremely poor weather conditions, after having been guided to the pickup point through the rain by a bonfire. Such incidents boosted ARVN morale, for they soon learned that help was only a few minutes away, day or night, in any weather.

In June, fixed-wing attack aircraft--usually modified T-28 single-engine, propeller-driven trainers and A-1 Skyraider attack bombers--flown by Vietnamese pilots, became available

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to escort the helicopters. Their effectiveness was limited, however, due in part to the language barrier and coordination difficulties. By this time the Marines had devised and were using a new tactic, called Eagle Flight, to trap more of the evasive Viet Cong. Consisting usually of a flight of four helicopters loaded with 48 ARVN troops, Eagle orbited above the area of operations seeking targets of opportunity. If Viet Cong were spotted slipping away from friendly forces on the ground, Eagle quickly landed its troops in a position to block or cut off the enemy. This tactic proved very successful, and subsequently the flexible force was often committed several times in one day. It frequently captured or killed more VC than the much larger main ground force.

On 10 July, 968 troops were lifted in a one-day operation, a record up to that time. The first large lift carried out completely during the hours of darkness was accomplished on 20 July. The UH-34s flew in 3-plane divisions, holding their positions in formation by the glow from the engine exhaust stacks of the flight leaders.

HMM-163, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Rathbun, relieved HMM-362 on station on 1 August. The aircraft

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and equipment remained--only the personnel changed. The new squadron faced both the heavy summer monsoon weather and the threat of a large Communist offensive. It responded by flying 2,543 helicopter hours in August, a Marine Corps record for the UH-34D, while helping the Vietnamese thwart the Viet Cong drive. An average of 22 out of 24 choppers were in commission for the entire month--a phenomenal accomplishment, as were the totals of 3,650 sorties flown and 22,188 passengers lifted.

In August, as guerrilla small arms fire increased in volume and accuracy, the Marines fitted an M-60 machine gun to the forward edge of the cargo compartment hatch. This weapon, fired by the crew chief, could cover the right side of the aircraft and was used for defensive fires only. U.S. forces were not allowed to initiate offensive action at this time. For protection on the left (co-pilot's) side, an M-14 rifle was positioned in a mounting bracket, butt down, between the pilot and co-pilot for the latter to fire through the left side window of the cockpit. The M-14 proved too long and unwieldy in the confined cockpit space, however, and was replaced by the shorter and lighter AR-15 (later designated M-16) Armalite, when that weapon became available late in 1962.

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By late 1963 experience had shown that the co-pilot should devote his full attention to flying--particularly to being ready to take over control of the helicopter instantly if the pilot was hit--so a second M-60 was fitted to the left side of the cargo compartment. This weapon was fired through the port window by an additional crewman. The AR-15 remained in the cockpit, for the use in extreme emergencies.

During 1962 and 1963 other developments in equipment included armor plating for the vulnerable helicopter engine and oil system, a 300-foot rescue hoist for use in the dense northern jungles, a field-fabricated step to aid the small Vietnamese in boarding with heavy packs and weapons, and body armor for flight crews. The O-1Bs were used for photo and weather reconnaissance, tactical air control, and radio relay, proving valuable in each mission and especially in the gathering of current intelligence--one of the biggest problems encountered in RVN.

On 15 September 1962, SHUFLY moved north from Soc Trang to Da Nang, despite strong pleas for retention from the III Corps commander and his U.S. Army senior advisor, who felt the performance of the Marines could not be equalled by two

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U.S. Army helicopter companies. Men and equipment were transported entirely by Marine KC-130s, while TU aircraft flew to the new field. (6) Da Nang (called Tourane by the French) lay 375 miles north of Saigon and just 84 miles south of 17th Parallel. Instead of the flat, canal-laced rice paddies of the delta, the terrain in the north consisted of rugged, jungle-covered mountains rising swiftly from the sea to elevations of 6,000 feet and above.

In this terrain, where the Marines supported the ARVN I Corps, (See chain of command diagram, p. 15a) the complexion of the operation changed drastically. Instead of large operations with abundant landing zones (LZs), the Da Nang area offered mostly outpost resupply sorties and strike missions into crude jungle clearings. Other missions included unit displacements, necessary because of nonexistent surface roads to the interior, evacuations, and strike missions (troop assault landings) into small landing zones often located in

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(6) The Army helicopter companies had 20 aircraft vice 24 for USMC Squadrons, but the lower lifting capacity of the H-21 vs the UH-34D, plus lower aircraft availability in the Army companies, made the major difference.

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steep-walled valleys and river bottoms. The high altitudes involved, coupled with the high temperatures and humidity, restricted the loads that the choppers could carry to 6-9 combat-equipped Vietnamese soldiers. In the delta the normal load had been 12-13.

Another factor--the weather--assumed added importance in the north. Here the monsoon season came in the winter, between September and March, and with it low cloud ceilings, reduced visibility, fog, high winds, and rain. At Hue, halfway between Da Nang and the 17th Parallel, rainfall averaged 128 inches per year. These weather conditions, combined with the mountainous terrain, slowed and sometimes halted all flying, fixed-wing and helicopter..

In the south the summer monsoon season, which came between May and October, never did seriously hamper flight operations. The helicopters simply picked their way through the areas of heavy rainfall or waited until the local showers moved past. The reverse monsoon season in the north was caused by the close proximity of the Annam Cordillera mountain range to the sea, plus the prevailing north easterly winds. The moisture-laden coastal air mass was forced aloft by the rising terrain, forming heavy clouds. The cooler air condensed the moisture in the

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clouds, resulting in large amounts of precipitation.

The lack of mountains in the delta, plus a change in the prevailing winds from northeast to southwest during the summer, resulted in the heaviest precipitation in these regions from May to October. The winters here were more favorable for both surface and air operations; the opposite was true at Da Nang.<sup>(7)</sup>

The air base at Da Nang, in sharp contrast to the short strip at Soc Trang, boasted an 8,000-foot runway (since lengthened to 10,000), a permanent control tower, hangars, meteorological facilities, radar, and other services of a major installation, all operated by the U.S. Air Force (USAF). Here the billeting area of the Marines, located in a compound built by the French, was some three miles, by extremely primitive roads from the flight line, causing transportation problems. Three old busses, increased vehicle maintenance, and road improvement solved the transportation problem.

A critical summer water shortage presented another problem. A Naval Construction Battalion (Seabee) detachment, which had been requested by the Marine unit to drill a deep well, struck

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(7) CinCPac ComHist, 1964 (TS) 5750 Ser 000152 dtd 23 April 1965, Appendix F, gives a complete description of the weather in Southeast Asia. The weather portion is classified CONFIDENTAL.

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water 450 feet down and piped it to the USMC compound. Deteriorated electrical power lines and heavy usage taxed the capacity of the TU generators, so extra generators, flown in by KC-130 on the regular twice-weekly resupply/liaison flight from Japan via Okinawa, were added. The security of the entire area, made more critical by the physical separation of billeting and working areas, gradually became more acute at Da Nang. In April 1963, a reconnaissance platoon of one officer and 46 men arrived from the 3d Marine Division to provide additional security.

HMM-163 flew its first combat support troop lift from Da Nang on 18 September, 1962, utilizing 14 UH-34s to transport I Corps soldiers to landing zones 35 miles south of the field. Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) A-1H and T-28 aircraft bombed and strafed the LZs just prior to touchdown. The next day 10 helicopters evacuated an outpost, lifting out soldiers, equipment, weapons, families, animals, food, and personal belongings. During the next 15 months entire villages and battalions were relocated in this manner.

On 6 October, the Marines lost their first helicopter in South Vietnam, an operational crash on a hill south of Da Nang near Tam Ky.

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(8) See Annex I p. 8a, for a summary of aircraft losses.

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SHUFLY, SQUADRON, AND SUB-UNIT COMMANDERS

15 April 62-31 December 64

( )

SHUFLY COMMANDERSDATES

Col John F. Carey	15Apr62-31Jul62
Col Julius W. Ireland	1Aug62- 5Nov62
LtCol Aiton W. McCully	6Nov62-28Jan63
LtCol Harold F. Brown	29Jan63-17Jul63
Col Andre D. Gomez	18Jul63-14Jan64
Col Robert A. Merchant	15Jan64- 9Jul64
Col Hardy Hay	10Jul64-16Oct64
Col John H. King, Jr.	17Oct64-31Dec64

SQUADRON COMMANDERSDATESSQUADRON

LtCol Archie J. Clapp	15Apr62-31Jul62	HMM-362
LtCol Robert L. Rathbun	1Aug62-11Jan63	HMM-163
LtCol Reinhardt Leu	12Jan63- 7Jun63	HMM-162
LtCol Frank A. Shook	8Jun63- 10Oct63	HMM-261
LtCol Thomas J. Ross	20Oct63-31Jan64	HMM-361
LtCol John H. Lavoy	1Feb64-21Jun64	HMM-364
LtCol Oliver W. Curtis	17Jun64- 70Oct64	HMM-162
LtCol Joseph Kolser, Jr.	80Oct64-31Dec64	HMM-365

SUB-UNIT COMMANDERSDATES

LtCol William W. Eldridge, Jr.	15Apr62- 3Aug62
LtCol Ralph R. Davis	4Aug62-15Jan63
LtCol George H. Linnemeier	16Jan63- 4Jul63
LtCol Earl W. Cassidy	5Jul63- 6Feb64
LtCol Samuel G. Beal	7Feb64-26Jun64
Maj Marion R. Green	27Jun64-14Dec64
LtCol Thomas E. Vernon	14Dec64-31Dec64

( ) SHUFLY was designated Task Unit 79.3.5 from 15Apr62 until 6Nov62; Task Element 79.3.3.6 from 6Nov62 through 31Dec64.

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Annex II

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The difficulties of rescue on the densely forested hillside-- a doctor and corpsman were lowered by hoist through 100-foot trees into the site--emphasized the ruggedness of the terrain and the critical nature of high-altitude, high-temperature helicopter operations.

One month later, on 6 November, the Task Unit was re-designated Task Element 79.3.3.6, but the operation remained substantially as before. Supporting personnel were rotated individually about every four months, and the squadrons rotated as units at approximately six-month intervals. On 11 January 1963, HMM-162, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Reinhardt Lou, relieved HMM-163. Subsequent reliefs took place in June and October by HMMs 261 and 361, respectively.

On 27 April 1963, the only Marine helicopter credited to enemy action during 1962 and 1963 was shot down 22 miles southwest of Tam Ky during Operation BACK PHUONG XI. The cockpit area sustained five hits and the crew suspected that the tail rotor control cable had been cut by enemy gunfire.

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(9) (See Annex II, p. 18b, for a summary of SHUFLY, squadron, and sub-unit commanders).

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Fragments wounded the pilot and the ARVN helicopter team leader aboard. The aircraft was stripped of usable parts and destroyed by burning. All crew members and passengers were evacuated safely.

Also in April, six U.S. Army UH-1B Hueys, turbine-powered light helicopters, were attached to the Marine Task Element. These maneuverable choppers, armed with 7.62mm machine guns and 2.75-inch rockets, proved valuable in transport helicopter escort roles and in suppressing fire in the landing zones. The Marine TE commander became the coordinator, exercising operational control over all U.S. aviation in the I Corps area, with the status of a MACV major component commander. Improving weather in April allowed a step-up in the tempo of operations, and in May more than 2,000 helicopter hours and 4,600 sorties were flown.

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(10) The UH-1B, originally designated HU-1B, acquired the nickname "Huey." Its official name is Iroquois, but this title is seldom used. Hueys without external armament are referred to as "slicks".

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The Vietnamese continued to fly fixed-wing support, but in July the Commander, Task Element (CTE), in evaluating helicopter tactics and techniques for the previous quarter, asked for air cover flown by Marine or other U.S. pilots. During 1963, VNAF H-34s, 10 of which were based at Da Nang, began to participate in lifts with the Marines, utilizing as many helicopters as their aircraft availability allowed.

Through the summer and fall, outstanding performances in aircraft availability, flight hours, sorties, pounds of cargo lifted, evacuations, and search and rescue operations continued. In August, 1,300 ARVN troops under enemy fire were lifted out of a remote area without losing a man. The operation involved thorough planning, close coordination, and all available components of the U.S. and Vietnamese armed services. This operation marked the first use of the Marine doctrine of a Tactical Air Controller, Airborne TAC(A) and Forward Air Controller (FAC), in a joint USMC-USA-USAF-VNAF-ARVN effort in Vietnam.

On 1 and 2 November, the confusion and uncertainty that accompanied the fall of the Diem government slowed operations to a standstill. CTE took great care that no U.S. aircraft were involved in flights of a political nature.

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Operational flights were back to normal on the fourth day after the coup, but torrential monsoon rains came in November and December, causing the cancellation of many missions, and the tempo of activity continued at a reduced rate as 1963 drew to a close.

From 22 April 1962 through 31 December 1963, a period of just over 20 months, SHUFLY helicopters logged 32,357 hours, an average of over 1,600 per month. The three O-1Bs added 4,267 hours, and the C-117 1,516, for a grand total of 38,140. They averaged 2,600 sorties, 7,300 passengers (3,000 combat troops), 140 medical evacuees, and 500,000 pounds of cargo lifted per month. Top months saw 2,500 hours flown and more than 2 million pounds of cargo lifted. During the period operations took place in the delta and the mountains, day or night, in good weather and bad. There were 222 hits by hostile fire recorded, and one chopper lost to enemy action in Vietnam. Seven other UH-34s were lost in operational use, two on one day during a high-altitude search and rescue mission for a downed Army OV-1 Mohawk, a twin-engine turboprop attack aircraft. Two other Marine UH-34Ds crashed together on 8 October 1963, near Talon, 37 miles southwest of Da Nang.

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The cause of this crash could not positively be determined since inaccessible terrain and enemy activity prevented a thorough investigation. Investigators found evidence of enemy fire in the wreckage, however.

At the end of 1963, 23 USMC personnel had been killed in Vietnam, and 12 wounded in action. Overall U.S. casualties were 77 killed in action (KIA), 411 wounded in action (WIA). In 1962 these figures had been 31 KIA, 74 WIA; in 1961, 1 KIA, 1 WIA. U.S. aid had risen to an estimated 1.5 million per day by the end of the year, and U.S. advisers numbered 21,000. (11) Besides the helicopter TU/TE, Marine advisers to the VNMC, Marine MACV/MAAG staff members, and Embassy Marines, there was other USMC participation in the overall U.S. effort in the Republic of Vietnam through 1963. This participation included: (1) amphibious equipment given as part of the military aid program; (2) training for Vietnamese Marines at U.S. Marine bases, noted previously, (3) research and development (R&D) activities, which contributed the idea for a styrofoam boat and a system of watercraft identification, both of which

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(11) U.S. News and World Report, 28Jun65, p. 39. (Source listed as Department of Defense).

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proved valuable in river operations; (4) mobile training teams--groups sent to RVN for a limited time for a specific or technical purpose (one team studied the suitability of the DUKW for RVN operations; another analyzed the operations of Father Hoa, a Chinese Catholic priest whose village successfully withstood every Viet Cong attempt to take over); (5) orientation tours, including on-the-job training (OJT), job-related-orientation (JRO), and Department of Defense (DOD) familiarization trips by USMC officers to familiarize Marines with RVN operations; and (6) communications training, provided by Detachment "A", 1st Radio Company, Fleet Marine Force, attached to a U.S. Army communications organization at Pleiku, in the central highlands.

The previous monograph covered all these activities; the part that similar operations played in 1964 will be found in subsequent chapters.

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CHAPTER II (1)  
GROUND OPERATIONS

During 1964, an average of less than 700 United States Marines served in the Republic of Vietnam at any one time.

(1) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: "Historical Review of Naval Advisory Group Activities, CY 1964" HQUSMACV, (S) dtd 1Jan65, hereafter Naval Advisory Group History, 1964; MACV Strength Reports, Vietnam (S) monthly, Jan-Dec64, hereafter Strength Reports; MACV Monthly Evaluation Reports, Jan-Dec64 (S), hereafter MACV Monthly Evaluations; MACV Quarterly Review and Analysis, (S) Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, and Oct-Dec64, hereafter MACV Quarterly Review; CinCPac Command History, 1964 (TS) Ser 000152 dtd 23Apr65, hereafter CinCPac Command History, 1964; Defense Intelligence Agency Infiltration Report S-3648/AB-2 (S) to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, HQMC, dtd 29Dec64, hereafter DIA Infiltration Report; CGFMFPac On-Job-Training, RVN, monthly reports, Jan-Dec64 (S,NF), hereafter OJT Reports; MACV Lessons Learned Reports (C) published periodically, numbered sequentially, hereafter MACV Lessons Learned No. \_\_\_\_; Debriefing Report, Major General Charles J. Timmes, USA, Chief, MAAG 6Mar62-15May64, (S,NF) Ser 00217 dtd 10Jun64, hereafter Timmes Debriefing.

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Of these, approximately 500 were assigned to TE 79.3.3.6, the medium helicopter squadron and supporting sub-unit operating at Da Nang. The remaining 200 were divided among: USMC advisers to the VNMC; Marines on the MACV/MAAG staffs; Embassy Marines; a communications detachment; and officers and enlisted men on temporary duty--OJT, JRO, and other similar assignments. The activities of the helicopter unit are covered in Chapter III--Air Operations. The remaining USMC contributions to the overall U.S. effort in South Vietnam during 1964 are covered in this chapter.

U.S. Marine Advisers

At the beginning of 1964, the personnel strength of the Vietnamese Marine Brigade (VNMB) was as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>On Board</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Officers	288	271	107%
NCO	812	992	82%
Enlisted	4,491	4,846	93%
Total/Average	5,591	6,109	94%

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At the end of 1964, comparative figures were:

<u>Category</u>	<u>On Board</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Officers	316	325	97%
NCO	959	915	105%
Enlisted	6,123	5,315	116%
Total/Average	7,398	6,555	112%

The figures for the end of 1964 represented a significant growth in strength during the year, even taking into account the fact that they included 1,095 recruits in training at Thu Duc Training Center and 258 other new recruits not yet joined administratively. The 1964 recruiting program enjoyed excellent results, providing an overall increase of almost 1,800 personnel and enabling the brigade to bring the newly-organized 5th Battalion up to authorized (T/O) strength by 1 December.

The greatest problem to face the USMC advisers at the beginning of 1964 was the deterioration of morale in the VNMB that followed the November 1963 overthrow of Diem. Colonel Le Nguyen Khang, Brigade Commander, had supported the Diem regime, at least in name. Immediately after the coup, he left for the Philippines. A shakeup in the command echelons followed, and the new government placed other

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officers in most of the top billets.

Four months after the fall of the Diem government, however, Colonel (later Brigadier General) Khang was recalled and reinstated as VNMB Commander. This caused a second about-face and placed officers who had opposed the coup in charge once again. Desertions rose to a disastrous peak of 500 in the month of February. Colonel Khang and his officer corps, assisted at every conceivable turn by USMC advisers, focused their attention on the number one problem--morale.

Increased attention was given to liberty, leave, and promotions, as well as the needs of dependents. Battalion rotation was closely supervised, as was training. The spirit and example of leadership was instilled at all echelons. The results spoke for themselves--in October there was not one deserter, and morale was not a problem as 1964 ended.

Besides the addition of the 5th Infantry Battalion, the major organizational changes during 1964 included: in the Artillery Battalion, the two 75mm batteries of 8 howitzers each were reformed into one battery of 8 weapons,

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while the one 105mm battery of 8 howitzers was reorganized into two batteries of 6 howitzers each; in the Amphibious Support Battalion the Training Company was deleted and a separate Training Center was formed; and in Brigade Headquarters the strength was reduced while adding two Task Force Headquarters. The Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) was revised to reflect the organization changes, resulting in improved utilization of equipment as new items were phased in.

In the motor transport field during 1964, first and second echelon maintenance improved at least 50 percent. Major items of equipment, not previously used due to lack of knowledge, were put into full-time operation. Two such items were the high pressure steam cleaner and the M-108 wrecker, which were not used until the motor transport adviser gave instruction on their maintenance and employment. Tools and test equipment previously kept in storage were placed in daily operation.

In the communications area, the greatest progress made was in the revision of the TO&E. The new tables provided modern test and repair equipment and eliminated obsolete and impractical items. The third echelon repair capability of the

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Brigade Signal Company increased accordingly.

The G-4 supply organizational system still needed improvement at the end of 1964, but progress was apparent. At the beginning of the year, each battalion requested supplies as an autonomous unit directly from ARVN logistical support units, without control, assistance or staff supervision from the brigade G-4 Section. In April, when the USMC supply adviser suggested that the battalions be made supply-administered units, neither the brigade commander nor any of his staff agreed. By the end of the year, however, the brigade Supply Officer, the G-4, and the Finance Officer/Acting Chief of Staff all agreed with the USMC adviser, and were preparing a proposal for the Brigade Commander which would place the battalions under the desired system.

The USMC engineer adviser acted also as facilities construction adviser during the year, and saw considerable progress made. Five new semi-permanent buildings, one permanent chapel, and 20 dwelling units for dependent housing were all completed by the Vietnamese Marines. In addition, contractors completed 4 grease racks, 3 ammunition bunkers, and one warehouse. The Vietnamese Joint General

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Staff (JGS) listened to the requests for construction funds with a sympathetic ear, doubling the appropriation for 1965 over 1964. The Marine adviser estimated that the more urgent facility needs of the VNMB would be satisfied by the end of 1966 at the planned rate of construction.

The primary training effort during 1964 was aimed at individual and small unit training, especially in marksmanship and weapons. During six months of the year, the Brigade was committed to a large pacification program in the area surrounding Saigon. With the requirement for nightly ambushes and patrols, and the resulting need for rest during the daylight hours, little time was left for training, particularly for large-sized units.

Training, refitting, and short recuperation leaves were all conducted simultaneously by units between major operational commitments. In addition, the Training Center graduated 1,464 recruits during 1964, while a total of 718 officers, NCOs, and enlisted men completed in-country (within RVN) training. Besides these, 52 officers and NCOs participated in OJT training in Okinawa, and 42 officers and NCOs completed training in the United States as part of the continuing program begun in 1958.

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The outside RVN training was referred to as "off-shore" training.

The Vietnamese Reconnaissance Company received thorough six-week training program at Vung Tau in September and October. A Marine NCO adviser, after extensive planning and preparation, conducted detailed instruction, with the help of a Navy interpreter, in all phases of reconnaissance operations, with emphasis on map reading and use of the compass.

Summary of VNMB Operations

During 1964, the Vietnamese Marine Brigade were employed in major combat operations in II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZs), which comprised the southern three-fourths of South Vietnam. (See map, p. \_\_\_ for the Corps Zones). U.S. Marine advisers accompanied every move. The brigade was the main force in the initial phase of the pacification of Go Cong Province on the coast just southeast of Saigon, a mission strongly supported by the senior Marine adviser. Other missions, however, included the providing of security for Saigon and the Vung Tau area, which were strongly discouraged by the same officer.

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Normal employment of Vietnamese Marines was as battalion-sized units, attached to an ARVN corps or division, to be used as the unit reserve. Task forces, consisting of two infantry battalions and supporting elements of the Artillery and Amphibious Support Battalions, were formed to conduct Operation DAN CHI 39, a search and destroy operation in An Xuyen Province (See page \_\_\_ for a map of Vietnamese provinces) at the southern extremity of RVN. The same organization was employed in similar search and destroy operations in Operation PHONG HOA (Hau Nghia Province, northwest of Saigon, bordering on Cambodia) and in the pacification effort in Go Cong Province previously mentioned.

Amphibious, helicopter, and conventional land warfare techniques and schemes of maneuver were used in these operations. Most of the amphibious-type maneuvers were landings made from Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel (LCVPs) and Landing Craft, Medium (LCMs) on river shores. Helicopters transported units that ranged in size from squads to battalions, usually to areas inaccessible by other means. Normal land warfare techniques were exercised in search and destroy and clearing operations,

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usually used prior to and during the initial phase of pacification. Finally, some battalions were utilized as static security forces for extended periods.

In a majority of the operations, fire support was rendered by units from platoon to battalion (-) size of the Artillery Battalion. Combat operations consumed 1,229 (84 percent) of a possible 1,464 infantry battalion days during 1964. Of the 1,229 days, 215 consisted of security duty in Saigon and Vung Tau. The remaining 235 days were devoted to rest and refitting periods and to training.

#### Embassy Marines

During 1964, U.S. Marines continued to perform security and guard functions for the American Embassy in Saigon. As the political situation remained unstable and frequent changes in government and riots resulted, the authorized strength of the Embassy Security Guard Detachment was increased twice--in April and October--from 22 to a total of 30 Marines. This gave Saigon the second largest such detachment in the world, behind Paris, which had an authorized strength of 37 USMC personnel.

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In June, Staff Sergeant William D. Kerakos took over as Non-Commissioned Officer-In-Charge (NCOIC) of the Saigon Embassy Detachment. As commander of the detachment, he was responsible for the control, discipline, morale, and effectiveness of the guard, as well as internal security, public relations, and custodial responsibility for government property. His men protected both the Embassy and the U.S. officials in Vietnam, including the Ambassador.

During the summer of 1964, crowds estimated at 500,000 to 750,000 people demonstrated for hours throughout Saigon and in front of U.S. buildings. The Marines utilizing pre-briefed defensive plans and thorough training, managed to maintain the security of the Embassy and U.S. property, while local police and ARVN soldiers attempted to control the rioters. By fall the threats of terrorist bombs and grenades had been added to the periodic riots. A bomb exploded in the Eden Theater, located across the street from the USIS Building, and still another bomb destroyed a portion of the Caravelle Hotel, one block from Marine House, the barracks building near the Embassy in which the guards lived. Telephoned bomb threats occurred frequently, each one necessitating a search of the threatened

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building. On at least two occasions Marines detected bombs-- one outside the Embassy and one inside--that were removed and disarmed without further incident. Two fires of unknown origin were discovered in and near the Embassy Annex by Marine sentries, and each was harmlessly extinguished.

At the end of the year, Marines continued to provide security to the U.S. Embassy while threats against it, the Ambassador, and the South Vietnamese government continued to grow.

#### On-Job-Training Marines

During 1964, the 3d MarDiv and 1st MAW sent approximately 10 company grade officers and staff NCOs monthly to RVN. These officers went into the field with, and observed the counter-insurgency operations of, units of the VNMC or ARVN for a period of 30 days. At the conclusion of their on-job-training, the officers reported their experiences and observations to CGFMFPac, whose standard foreword to the monthly compilation of reports follows.

"In view of their value in providing an insight to the conditions and type of warfare now being fought in the Republic of Vietnam, these reports have been compiled by

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the G-2 Section, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, for distribution to other U.S. Marine Corps commands. No attempt has been made to correct or otherwise to change their content, nor to comment upon opinions expressed.

The material should be treated with careful perspective. Wherein observations may be critical of friendly forces, they should be considered as lessons learned by our forces rather than as criticism of the efforts of a friendly nation seeking to preserve its freedom under the severe tests of a resourceful enemy, strong international pressures, and a history of internal stresses."

Annex I to this chapter (p. \_\_\_) contains the complete report of a USMC captain who observed units of the Vietnamese Marine Brigade in the Saigon area during March. Annex II (p. \_\_\_) contains a report for the same month, submitted by a first lieutenant who observed ARVN units operating in the Da Nang area.

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CHAPTER III (1)  
AIR OPERATIONS

In 1964, air operations continued within the pattern set the previous year. Marine Task Element 79.3.3.6 (TE 79.3.3.6), consisting of a small headquarters section, a medium transport helicopter squadron, and a supporting sub-unit, operated from Da Nang Air Base. The nearby port city of Da Nang (called Tourane by the French), with a population of 110,000, was the second largest metropolitan area in South Vietnam (after Saigon, which had nearly two million people). Located on the coast 84 miles south of the 17th Parallel, Da Nang lay within Quang Nam Province in the ARVN I Corps area of operations. (See map, p. \_\_\_ for the ARVN Corps areas).

Commanded by Colonel Andre D. Gomez, the Task Element personnel strength stood at less than 450 officers and enlisted men early in 1964, following the departure of the security platoon in December, 1963. While the security unit (1 officer, 46 enlisted) had been attached to TE 79.3.3.6, total strength had averaged just under 500. (2)

(1) The security platoon was attached to TE 79.3.3.6. It was withdrawn in late 1963 and replaced by a security platoon.

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(1) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: CTE 79.3.3.6 ComdD 1Nov63-14Jan64, 15Jan64-14Apr64, 15Apr64-9Jul64, and 10Jul64-16Oct64; CTU 79.3.5. ComdD 17Oct64-14Jan65; CinCPac ComdHist 1964, 5750 Ser 000152 dtd 23Apr65 (TS), hereafter CinCPac Command History, 1964; MarCorps General Officer Symposium, 1964, Ser 007F18864 dtd 6Jul64 (S) Tab G, Marine Aviation (C); CTE 79.3.3.6 Weekly OpSums 1Jan64-8Jul64, (S).

(2) The security platoon had arrived in April 1963. It was withdrawn in an overall cutback of U.S. forces in December.

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As 1964 began, HMM-361, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Ross, operated 24 Sikorsky UH-34D helicopters and 3 O-1B fixed-wing light observation aircraft, while CTE exercised direct control of the one Douglas C-117D twin-engine transport assigned to the Task Element. The helicopters flew daily missions in support of I Corps (and occasionally II Corps to the south), mostly in the rugged, jungle-covered mountains that dominated the northern third of South Vietnam. Typical missions included outpost resupply, casualty evacuation, unit displacement, and strike (airborne assault). The O-1Bs were used for weather, terrain, and photographic reconnaissance, radio relay, and as a platform for the TAC(A). The C-117D flew in fresh rations from Saigon every few days, and performed other logistic, personnel transport, and liaison trips as required.

Sub-Unit #2, MABS-16, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Earl W. Cassidy, continued to perform supporting functions for the task element during 1964. In mid-January the strength of this unit was 204, including 10 attached Marine officers and 9 enlisted men in South Vietnam for OJT.

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Regular sub-unit personnel totalled 15 Marine officers, 2 Navy officers, 161 Marine enlisted, and 4 Navy enlisted. The Navy personnel served in the medical, dental, and chaplain sections.

The sub-unit provided the following: camp maintenance; communications; motor transport; medical and dental services; religious activities (chaplain); food services, postal services; bulk fuel handling; Marine Exchange facilities; special services; and industrial relations.

The tasks of the camp maintenance section included: the upkeep and repair of the generators and electrical wiring; maintenance of refrigerators; maintenance of air conditioning units for electronics equipment; water purification and processing; plumbing repair; and laundry services. The communications section, operating with 9 men, handled heavy message traffic while standing 12 hours on, 12 off watches. In addition, the section kept ready an alternate communications site within the Marine compound. An AN/MRC-87 radio jeep stood by to provide emergency long-range radio communications, while AN/PRC-6 and AN/PRC-10 radios awaited use, if needed for internal security.

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The motor transport section operated and maintained a wide variety of vehicles and equipment--jeeps, 6x6 cargo trucks, M37 4x4 3/4 ton trucks, busses, refueler trucks, and forklifts. Battery life was short in the hot, humid climate and the primitive roads required constant improvement. Parts resupply was generally good and the vehicles averaged 25-30,000 miles per month.

The medical department treated 300 to 400 patients per month, mostly Marine but some Navy, Army, and Air Force, as well as Vietnamese in emergency situations. Normal treatments were divided into physical examinations, X-rays, laboratory procedures, and immunizations. Total dental department sittings per month averaged about 100.

Protestant and Catholic chaplains held worship services/mass, counseled, handled Red Cross cases, conducted Bible classes, printed a daily paper, hosted parties for Vietnamese orphans, scheduled tours, conducted liaison with local U.S. missionaries and other religious leaders, and ministered to the spiritual needs of the command. Some chaplains flew combat missions in helicopters in order to gain the increased confidence of their men.

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The mess section prepared an average of 450 rations (1350 meals) per day during early 1964, utilizing 21 cooks, bakers, and stewards. Previous commanding officers had commended the mess for serving the finest food in all Vietnam. The postal section received and dispatched mail twice weekly via Marine KC-130F. These VMGR-152 turboprop transports, based in Japan, flew regular runs via Okinawa, hauling personnel, supplies, and equipment as well as mail. The post office also provided money order facilities.

The bulk fuel section operated TAFDSs at Da Nang and Hue, pumping about 100,000 gallons of 115/145 aviation gasoline (avgas) per month into TE helicopters. In addition, about 7,000 gallons of vehicle fuel (mogas) and 6,000 gallons of diesel fuel were issued per month for vehicles, generators, and other engine-driven equipment.

The Marine Exchange offered a complete line of comfort items and averaged \$15,000 monthly in sales receipts during the first months of 1964. Special Services showed nightly movies, issued athletic equipment, organized sports competition, and provided a wide variety of recreational facilities, including handball courts and a bowling alley.

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The Industrial Relations section, while concerned primarily with Vietnamese civilian employees (of which there were 90 in January), handled a gamut of other areas also. Among these were: interpretation, translation of documents, liaison with regard to dry cleaning and bowling alley construction, investigation of thefts and disputes between U. S. personnel and local civilians, investigation of ARVN sentry laxness, and use of sentry dogs. The section also arranged for English to be taught to security officers and others of the 5th ARVN Regiment, and arranged as well for Vietnamese classes for Americans.

#### January Flight Operations

The tempo of flight operations remained at a reduced level --a condition brought about originally by the coup of 1 November 1963 when the Diem government fell--during the early weeks of 1964. Both the weather and the political instability of the country tended to reduce flight activity.

On 3 January 1964, a UH-34D was lost to enemy ground fire--the second such loss in Vietnam. The aircraft was on a medical evacuation flight, attempting to reach a patrol deep in the mountainous jungle at (YC 902 582).<sup>(3)</sup>

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(3) See map\_\_\_\_. Map coordinates will designate all locations because of the lack of place names in the remote areas.

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Just prior to touchdown the helicopter sustained at least six hits from automatic weapons. The enemy rounds sheared the tail rotor drive shaft, causing the loss of anti-torque control. An uncontrolled landing followed, and the tail cone separated from the aircraft on impact. All crew members evacuated the helicopter safely and were picked up, along with the wounded patrol members, by a second Marine UH-34D. Due to the extensive damage, the inaccessible location, and the concentrated enemy activity, CTE 79.3.3.6 directed that the chopper be destroyed by U.S. Army Special Forces personnel.

Six days later 14 UH-34Ds lifted 199 troops and 2,100 pounds of cargo on a troop rotation mission from An Diem (ZC 078 572) to LZ (YC 917 574). Heavy ground fire forced the flight leader to abort the mission, as two helicopters were hit three times each and two crew members received minor injuries. The mission was completed on a second attempt, using an alternate LZ (YC 905 565).

On 12 January, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, visited SHUFLY. He inspected and was briefed on operations, facilities, and personnel. Before departing he presented personal decorations to members of the command.

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During the next three weeks three significant changes took place in TE 79.3.3.6. Colonel Robert A. Merchant relieved Colonel Gomez as TE commander on 14 January; HMM-364, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John H. Lavoy, relieved HMM-361 on station on 1 February; and Lieutenant Colonel Samuel G. Beal relieved Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy as commanding officer of the sub-unit on 7 February.

Monsoon weather caused the cancellation of all flights on some days in mid-January. On 24 January, 16 UH-34Ds lifted 280 troops and 800 pounds of cargo from An Diem (ZC 080 572) to LZ (YC 900 550) on a troop rotation mission. Ground fire hit one helicopter during the approach to the landing zone causing an uncontrolled landing. There were no injuries to the crew, and the aircraft was repaired and flown to Da Nang the same day.

On 30 January, Major General Nguyen Khanh, RVN Prime Minister, conducted a "housecleaning" (unofficial coup d'etat) in the RVN Military Revolutionary Council. During this period of political readjustments CTE took all measures available to strengthen local defense and security and to improve TE readiness posture.

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Flight operations were suspended for the day, but resumed 31 January with no unusual incidents having been recorded.

VNAF Pilot Training Program

On 4 February TE 79.3.3.6 added another task to its overall mission--that of conducting an operational pilot training program designed to upgrade 25 VNAF pilots to first pilot status in the UH-34D. In addition to the pilot training program, an on-the-job helicopter maintenance training program was conducted concurrently, with an average of one maintenance officer and 64 enlisted trainees assigned on a rotational basis. Both programs were aimed toward giving the VNAF the capability to operate and maintain a squadron of UH-34D aircraft by 30 June, the date that the Marine Task Element was scheduled to depart RVN. The original concept had been that the Marines, and other U.S. armed forces as well, would provide assistance, technical skill, and equipment only until the Vietnamese were able to perform these functions for themselves. When the five-month training syllabus was complete, the Marines planned to turn over the 24 UH-34D to the VNAF 217th Squadron.

The first class of 8 VNAF pilots began their training

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syllabus 4 February, with each programmed for 50 hours of flight instruction in transition, night and instrument flying, formation work, and rough area landing practice. It had been stipulated that each student would already be a qualified co-pilot, with at least 25 hours in the UH-34, before entering the program. Progress was very satisfactory, and the three classes of 8, 8, and 9 students, respectively graduated on 9 March, 11 April, and 15 May. All students were highly motivated and well qualified. The training was conducted concurrently with normal operational tasks, taking about 250 helicopter hours per month (out of the 1,200-1,600 hours total flown by the squadron. Under this concept VNAF pilots went directly into operational flying, a practice which allowed them to acquire a knowledge of tactics employed in providing helicopter support to the ARVN. It also allowed the USMC unit to maintain its integrity, assured unity of effort, and guaranteed the least degradation of effort in support of I Corps.

Return of the USMC Security Platoon

During early March, incidents increased in which the Marine camp was fired on from an adjacent native village. The primary target area seemed to be the 75KW generators,

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where the high noise level prevented sentries from hearing the weapons when they were fired. After incidents occurring during March, more than 15 holes in the generator building were found, made by 000 buckshot and 9mm bullets. At 2300 on 15 March a "Molotov cocktail" (Vietnamese beer bottle filled with gasoline and a rag fuze) was thrown at the door of the Staff NCO quarters. It shattered on the ledge above but failed to explode.

The village that was the source of the incidents was located about 10 yards beyond the barbed wire fence surrounding the base, and was inhabited by dependents of ARVN personnel and some indigenous laborers employed at the Marine camp. The camp perimeter was floodlighted and patrolled by ARVN sentries, but the incidents continued and increased, even after repeated complaints to ARVN officials, who were responsible for base security.

The extra security measures required to combat this harassment over sustained periods jeopardized the operational efficiency of the Task Element, so on 16 March Colonel Merchant requested the return of the Security Platoon from the 3d Marine Division, which had been withdrawn in December. This unit, with one officer and 52 men, arrived

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at Da Nang on 24 March. Security drills were held to test the base defense plan and to sharpen the combat readiness posture. All members of the Task Element participated in these exercises.

#### March Flight Operations

On 1 March, 6 UH-34D and 2 U.S. Army UH-1B armed Hueys (part of the six attached to TE 79.3.3.6) provided support for the Honorable Henry Cabot Lodge, United States Ambassador to RVN, and Major General Nguyen Khanh, RVN Prime Minister, in ceremonies at Tam Ky Province, southwest of Da Nang.

At 1155 on 5 March, an armed Huey escort helicopter struck a tree, sustained rotor damage, and made a forced landing at (YC 695 405). The Huey had been part of a flight of 10 Marine UH-34Ds, 2 VNAF UH-34Cs, 4 Army UH-1Bs, and 4 VNAF T-28s lifting 54 ARVN troops from An Diem (ZC 085 572) to LZ (YC 635 365) for patrol action. Two Marine helicopters rescued the crew and weapons of the downed Huey under moderate enemy automatic weapons fire, and all aircraft returned to Da Nang. At 1546, one O-1B, with Colonel Merchant aboard as TAC(A), led 15 Marine choppers with 64 troops aboard and 2 armed Hueys to the crash site.

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The troops established a perimeter defense, while two other Marine UH-34s--the maintenance and search and rescue (SAR) aircraft that normally accompany each strike mission--delivered replacement blades and rotor assembly. Under aerial and ground protection the Huey was repaired in the field. All aircraft departed the LZ at 1830 and reached Da Nang safely at nightfall.

An armed Huey was shot down 24 March while providing escort on a resupply mission. The chopper was hit by ground fire, caught fire and crashed one mile southeast of Phuoc Cam (BT 095 210). All six occupants were evacuated by Marine UH-34D to the Marine dispensary at Da Nang and then to the U. S. Army Hospital at Nha Trang by USAF C-123. One Marine aboard as gunner suffered a probable broken arm and lacerations. All aircraft weapons were recovered.

On 30 March, TE helicopters lifted Lieutenant General Harold K. Johnson, USA, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Department of the Army, and Brigadier General Xung, ARVN, CG, I Corps and party on a tour of the I Corps area. The next day 12 UH-34s, 4 armed Hueys, and CTE in an O-1B as TAC(A) air-lifted 45 ARVN soldiers from Tam Ky Province Headquarters to (BT 378 052) as Tiger Flight. Tiger Flight was the name given to Eagle Flight operations modified for employment in I Corps Tactical Zone.

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Eagle Flight, which was conceived in Delta operations in the summer of 1962, was an airborne ready force which landed as a blocking force to intercept fleeing Viet Cong or to hit targets of opportunity. In the north, the extremely limited landing zones made the Eagle concept impractical. Tiger Flight became a ground alert force, ready for instant launching and based on quick reaction for its effectiveness.

#### April Flight Operations

On 6 April, a combined operation lifted 42 ARVN from Tam Ky to LZ (BT 370 015). Ground fire shot down one armed Huey escort helicopter. A Marine UH-34D rescued the crew and weapons, and Marines assisted in disassembly of the aircraft, which was then lifted externally to Da Nang for repair.

During a medical evacuation mission from (YC 720 640) on 14 April, a Marine UH-34 under intensive ground fire experienced loss of power during the takeoff from the site and crashed, dropping approximately 150 feet down the side of a hill and coming to rest in a stream bed under a heavy jungle canopy. The engine disintegrated but did not catch fire. The portside cabin gunner suffered a broken leg, but

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the crew and passengers evacuated the chopper and climbed to the LZ. Heavy thundershowers delayed the rescue attempt for nearly two hours, but all personnel were evacuated safely. An investigation revealed that an enemy round had hit the engine, causing the power loss. The remains of the aircraft were destroyed 15 April.

Four days later Operation LAM SON 115, a battalion heliborne assault, was begun, utilizing the full breadth of men and equipment available to CTE in the I Corps area. Troop transport helicopters included 20 Marine and 4 VNAF UH-34s; 5 Army Hueys flew armed escort; 3 Marine O-1Bs performed weather reconnaissance; 2 Army L-19s (similar to O-1Bs) conducted visual and photo reconnaissance; 14 T-28s and 4 A-1H VNAF aircraft accompanied the flight to provide air cover/close air support; 5 VNAF L-19s served as forward air controllers, airborne (FACA); and one USAF U-10 (a twin-engine utility aircraft with communications equipment capable of contacting each type of aircraft participating in the mission) with Colonel Merchant aboard as TAC(A). The transport choppers lifted 200 ARVN troops from Aloui (YC 380 996) to LZ (YD 140 120), then took 300 more Vietnamese soldiers from Ta Bat (YC 421 942) to LZ (YD 177 210).

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Two UH-34s were hit by ground fire--one Marine and one VNAF--but were not seriously damaged. The Marine helicopters flew 157.2 hours in the highly successful one-day operation (almost 8 hours per aircraft), and the O-1Bs contributed 20.6 hours.

On 21 April, during a medical evacuation mission from (BT 022 107), the Viet Cong used a yellow smoke signal in an attempt to lure the helicopters into an enemy area. Three days later the VC demonstrated another trick they had learned. On a morning evacuation mission to pick up a U.S. Special Forces (USSF) man at (YC 806 494), the armed Hueys made the first low reconnaissance pass over the pickup site a normal procedure. They drew no ground fire. When the first of two transport choppers hovered over the site, however, using its hoist in an attempt to lift the passenger, enemy automatic weapons opened up.

The Hueys then delivered suppressive fire on suspected enemy positions, after which the UH-34 made a second hoist attempt. A hydraulic line on the hoist ruptured, foiling this effort, while more ground fire began, one round hitting the aft section of the fuselage. Again the Hueys made suppressive fire runs, firing their 7.62mm M-60 machine guns and 2.75-inch rockets. A second Marine UH-34 then made a successful pickup, by hoist, of the USSF soldier. One dead man in the

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zone was not picked up due to excessive enemy fire.

The next day (25 April) the 300-foot hoist, tested and installed for use in the tall jungle vegetation, was used. The trees and terrain forced the rescue helicopter to hover 120 feet above the ground--too high to use the old 100-foot hoist--but the evacuee soldier killed in action was successfully extricated.

Operation SURE WIND 202

On 26 April, the task element commander, helicopter squadron commander, and MACV J-3 Marine representative flew to Quang Ngai (BS 607 718), on the coast about 55 miles south of Da Nang, for a planning conference with ARVN II Corps officials on the upcoming Operation SURE WIND 202, scheduled to get under way the next day. Meanwhile, back at Da Nang, there was a maintenance stand-down (no flights while maintenance personnel attempt to get all aircraft into an "up" status) for a maximum effort the following morning. This would be the most heavily opposed and difficult assault conducted by Marine helicopters in Vietnam up to that time. For that reason, and because it demonstrates the full spectrum of a typical major operation, the Marine commander's description follows.

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## SUMMARY

Operation SURE WIND 202  
Do Xa, Quang Ngai Province  
27 April - 25 May 1964

Mission: SURE WIND 202 was a major troop assault of the highest priority in the II Corps area. The Task Element's mission for the assault was to lift 420 troops to LZ BRAVO at (BS 168 785) from Quang Ngai while Army II Corps helicopters lifted 2 battalions from Gilang (BS 280 645) to an LZ at (BS 065 685).

Planning: On 16 April, the Task Element was advised by ComUSMACV that the resources of the I Corps helicopters, including the UH-1Bs, were assigned to the II Corps on a top priority basis to support an operation scheduled for 22 April. Planning was initiated at a conference at II Corps headquarters in Pleiku on 17 April where the general plan for the operation was explained. The operation as originally planned required the staging of a TAFDS at Tam Ky and the lifting of 2 battalions (460 troops) into an LZ to be selected. The II Corps was advised of the timing conflict of this operation and the I Corps Operation LAM SON 115, scheduled for 19 April, for which the available TAFDS had

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already been pre-positioned on 17 April. In view of this conflict it was decided to proceed with LAM SON 115, conduct aerial reconnaissance for an LZ to support SURE WIND 202, and conduct the operations as soon as fuel could be positioned.

A second planning conference was held on 20 April, which was to be a final conference. However, upon being advised that no suitable LZs were available in the area requested for survey, additional reconnaissance was requested to determine the closest landing zone available for our portion of the operation. This reconnaissance was flown on 21 April and a third conference was held at Pleiku on 22 April.

Since the only suitable landing zones were too far from the original objectives, General Tri, the II Corps commander, changed the entire scheme of maneuver and assigned one of the two landing zones to be used by the Army helicopters in the southern area of the operation to the Task Element. A firm D-Day was to be established at a final conference on 24 April.

This complete change in concept required the TAFDS to be located at Quang Ngai instead of Tam Ky and the flying of additional photo reconnaissance since the Army had no photo coverage of the new landing zone.

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On 24 April a final conference firmed D-Day as Monday, 27 April, with an H-Hour of 0930. The Army was to lift 960 troops from Gilang to an LZ at (BS 065 685), while the Marines lifted 420 troops from Quang Ngai to an LZ at (BS 169 785). Since the two landing zones were geographically separated and involved two different helicopter units they were treated as separate operations for the purpose of pre-strikes and air control. A total of 20 A-1H aircraft were made available for air support. 6 A-1Hs were scheduled for area neutralization, 6 A-1Hs for pre-strike in the landing zone, 4 A-1Hs on call after the pre-strike and 2 A-1Hs on strip alert at Da Nang for use as required. Overall coordination and control of air in the Marine area was vested in CTE utilizing an Air Force U-10B as the control aircraft. The U-10B was an ideal control aircraft because it had 4 seats for representatives of all air elements involved, including a VNAF representative, and provided UHF, VHF, and FM communications.

Execution: The operation was initiated 27 April 1964 on schedule without weather delays. An excellent pre-strike was conducted by 6 A-1Hs in the landing zone. However, when the 5 armed UH-1Bs conducted their low reconnaissance of the

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the zone prior to the troop landing heavy 50 and 30 caliber automatic weapons fire was received. The UH-1Bs conducted rocket and gun attacks on all spotted positions but were unable to silence known VC weapon emplacements after expending all their ammunition. Additional A-1Hs were directed to the zone and unleashed a heavy rocket and bombing attack. During this attack one A-1H was severely damaged by VC fire and diverted to Quang Ngai. It subsequently crash landed .7 miles west of Quan Ngai. All helicopters returned to Quang Ngai to rearm the UH-1Bs and await another air strike.

At 1210 another air strike was conducted by 2 A-1Hs followed by a low recon by UH-1Bs. Despite heavy ground fire the first assault wave of 17 USMC UH-34Ds and 2 VNAF UH-34Cs began landing at 1230. All helicopters returned suppressive fire with crew chiefs, port side gunners, and co-pilots firing during approach, landing, and retirement. Several UH-34Ds sustained hits, forcing one UH-34D to land at Gilang due to loss of its primary servo system. Another UH-34 received critical battle damage in the oil cooler during its approach. After a controlled landing in the LZ the crew evacuated the aircraft and was rescued by the Marine

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maintenance aircraft which had been orbiting the LZ in case of such an emergency. Following additional air strikes by A-1Hs the second assault landing was made at 1354 under diminished ground fire. However, several aircraft were hit. Again preceded by A-1H air strikes the third assault was executed at 1540. This time the VC again opened up with heavy .50 and .30 caliber automatic weapons fire. Several Marine helicopters were hit caused loss of tail rotor control. The crew was evacuated by the Marine maintenance helicopter.

On 29 April a flight of 3 UH-34Ds landed a maintenance inspection team, and a Marine rifle squad for protection, in the landing zone to assess damage to the two choppers one USMC and one VNAF, downed by enemy fire 27 April. On the Marine aircraft, one 50 caliber round had deflected off the leading edge of the armor plate designed to protect the oil cooler and demolished the oil cooler. Three other hits on the aircraft probably occurred after the crew had evacuated. The VNAF helicopter was found riddled by 29 hits, but the one that caused the crash was a 50 caliber round that severed the tail rotor control cable. The other hits were believed to have resulted after

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the aircraft was on the ground. Both aircraft were beyond economical repair and destroyed in the zone.

The fourth and final assault landing of the day was made at 1728 with the 11 troop lifting helicopters that remained in a flyable status. A total of 357 ARVN troops were landed in the objective area during the first day. A recap of hits during the day showed that 15 of the 19 Marine helicopters participating sustained a total of 27 .50 caliber and .30 caliber hits which substantiated that this was the most heavily opposed and difficult landing conducted by USMC helicopters in Vietnam to date.

On 28 April the assault helilift was conducted with 14 UH-34Ds, 4 Army UH-1B troop carriers, and 4 UH-1B armed helicopters again being subjected to automatic weapons fire and with one UH-34D receiving two hits. A total of 131 troops were landed.

During the assaults on 27 and 28 April the Marine UH-34Ds flew 207.5 hours and expended 5,140 rounds of .223 caliber and 16,960 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition while the Army UH-1B armed escort expended 85,800 rounds of 7.62mm and 314 rockets for suppressive fire.

During original planning for this operation it had been anticipated that Task Element helicopters would be released from II Corps support after the assault landing. However, due

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to the Army II Corps inability to adequately support the continuation of the operation, MACV directed that the USMC helicopters continue to support II Corps on a priority basis as required. To accomplish this continued support a USMC liaison officer was assigned to the operations headquarters at Quang Ngai to coordinate daily requirements. This support for Operation SURE WIND 202 continued until 25 May.

A summary of support rendered by the Task Element follows:

OPERATION SURE WIND 202 - SUPPORT BY U. S. MARINE CORPS

27 APRIL - 25 MAY 1964

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>CARGO</u>	<u>EVACS</u>	<u>AC/HITS</u>
27 April	103	166.3	357	6300	2	15/27
28 April	34	78.9	131	400	7	1/2
29 April	3	15.1	24	0	0	2/2
30 April	1	.5	12	500	0	0/0
1 May	24	20.7	18	0	0	0/0
2 May	33	32.2	37	3800	0	0/0
3 May	53	38.8	54	17000	0	0/0
4 May	36	30.8	31	17200	1	0/0
5 May	31	27.6	15	6500	6	0/0
6 May	30	16.5	12	0	0	0/0
7 May	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
8 May	18	58.0	89	38200	0	0/0
9 May	94	30.2	71	15380	5	0/0
10 May	96	44.7	35	32500	0	0/0
11 May	18	15.0	9	620	0	0/0
12 May	21	16.4	15	6330	0	0/0
13 May	39	15.0	22	4065	0	1/1
14 May	44	27.7	13	11500	0	0/0
15 May	20	36.8	32	9200	0	0/0
16 May	62	25.4	45	5650	2	0/0
17 May	30	26.2	81	600	0	0/0
18 May	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
19 May	152	51.9	79	30170	0	0/0

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>CARGO</u>	<u>EVACS</u>	<u>AC/Hits</u>
20 May	16	8.2	11	1500	0	0/0
21 May	7	6.9	0	0	0	0/0
22 May	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
23 May	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
24 May	0	0	0	0	0	0/0
25 May	18	11.1	1	4950	13	0/0
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>983</u>	<u>800.9</u>	<u>1194</u>	<u>217815</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>19/32</u>

On 30 April, a mission delayed five days by the higher priority SURE WIND 202 was executed, in which 78 ARVN Special Forces personnel were lifted out of LZ (YC 754 655). Seventeen UH-34D, 2 Army Huey transports and 2 armed Hueys, 2 O-1B for weather/radio relay, one VNAF L-19 (FACA), and 2 VNAF A-1H strike aircraft participated. A pre-planned strike on the area surrounding the LZ was not accomplished because the A-1Hs were late and the time-on-station of the armed Hueys was limited. After a low reconnaissance by the armed UH-1Bs, the transport helicopters moved into the landing zone for the pickup. Extremely heavy ground fire met the first chopper. Six hits were sustained, and both the pilot and the crew chief suffered severe leg wounds. The co-pilot took control of the aircraft and, despite a round through the main oil pressure line of the engine, completed the flight to Nam Dong (YC 877 847) escorted by an SAR helicopter. Later in the day this UH-34D was repaired and flown back to Da Nang.

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The leader of the second division (4) assumed command of the operation and called in the armed Hueys, which delivered suppressive fire on the suspected location of enemy weapons. Again the transport helicopters approached the landing zone and began picking up troops. The fifth aircraft reported receiving fire, but continued the mission. During climb-out a long burst of automatic weapons fire struck the chopper, causing complete engine failure. The pilot made a successful autorotation into an area surrounded by high trees, resulting in one minor injury. The crew of four, plus five passengers, were rescued under fire by the maintenance helicopter and the eighth aircraft in the flight. The downed UH-34D could not be recovered and was destroyed by the armed Hueys.

Meanwhile, the sixth aircraft into the zone took four hits, one round passing through the center overhead plexiglass and lodging in the circuit breaker box, causing the loss of most of the instrumentation and injuring the pilot slightly. In spite of the heavy resistance, however, the retrograde movement was completed and all troops returned to Da Nang. Injured personnel were flow to the Marine dispensary for emergency treatment, and the serious cases were later taken by Air Force

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(4) In aviation, a division is a flight of three or four aircraft controlled and led by the division leader. A section is a flight of two, with a section leader.

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G-123 to the Nha Trang Army Field Hospital on the coast of central RVN.

The ARVN Special Forces personnel evacuated on this mission had been under a continuous heavy Viet Cong attack for five days while all Marine helicopters were committed to SURE WIND 202. They were demoralized, had set up no perimeter defense of the landing zone, and a large majority refused to fight. Many VC troops were visible in the LZ after the lift-out of the last helicopter, but the support aircraft had expended all their ordnance by that time.

#### May Flight Operations

During May TE 79.3.3.6 flew daily support missions for SURE WIND 202. On 3 May, 8 UH-34D and 2 UH-1B conducted a resupply mission in the II Corps area, lifting 54 troops and 17,000 pounds of cargo from Gilang to various landing zones. One UH-34D lost RPM and made a hard landing on the downhill edge of LZ (BS 645 590), breaking off the starboard landing gear strut, rupturing lines to the main fuel cell, and causing extensive damage to the starboard clamshell door and lower fuselage. The aircraft flew back to Quang Ngai and landed on sandbags readied for it there. It was subsequently repaired.

Within the next few days Marine helicopters rescued the crew of a Vietnamese Patrol (PT-F) boat disabled and drifting

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35 miles north of Da Nang, evacuated 16 cholera victims from Tien Phuoc (BT 115 140), and transported VC prisoners of war.

On 13 May, during an ammunition resupply flight to a II Corps LZ, two UH-34Ds encountered heavy ground fire, with one sustaining a .50 caliber hit through the tail pylon and tail rotor pitch change beam. The helicopters returned the fire and pinpointed the enemy positions. A flight of Army UH-1Bs, diverted to the scene, commenced rocket and machine gun attacks on three spotted positions--one .50 caliber and two .30 caliber. VNAF T-28s followed with an air strike, and the mission was accomplished.

On the same day, in the I Corps area, a UH-34D had an engine failure during a test flight and landed hard in a marshy area, breaking the port main landing gear and damaging the underside of the fuselage extensively. Meanwhile, at Gilang air strip, an O-1B made a hard landing, and hit the runway with the propeller, necessitating a prop and engine change.

Three days later on 16 May, during a resupply mission in support of SURE WIND 202, the intermediate gear box of a UH-34D failed during an approach to LZ (BS 007 766), causing the chopper to land short, damaging the under-fuselage, center fuel cell, and cabin floor. Field repair was accomplished and the aircraft flown to Da Nang the following day.

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By 27 May TE 79.3.3.6 had been released from top priority support of Operation SURE WIND 202 and returned to normal operations in the I Corps area. At the end of the month a new mission had been assigned the Marine unit--that of providing UH-34Ds for SAR standby (and medical evacuation if required), at Ashau during C-123 defoliation missions.

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June Flight Operations

On 1 June, an O-1B on a low pass attempting to spot a VC concentration in the vicinity of (YC 598 811) was hit four times in the horizontal and vertical stabilizers by small arms fire, but returned safely. On the same day 12 UH-34Ds were flown to Pleiku airfield, in the central highlands of II Corps area, in preparation for a troop assault mission on 3 June--part of Operation SURE WIND 303. Three more UH-34Ds arrived at Pleiku on 2 June and a rehearsal for the next day's operation was conducted. During the next two days the Marine choppers lifted 274 passengers and 17,550 pounds of cargo while flying 125 hours and 180 sorties without receiving a hit from enemy fire. The entire operation was flown in conjunction with the Army 52nd Aviation Battalion, lifting an ARVN battalion of 421 troops from Dak To to LZ (AS 898 768). The Marine helicopters returned to Da Nang on 4 June.

During a UH-34D emergency ammunition resupply flight to LZ (ZC 210 333) on the night of 5 June, two escort Hueys drew fire south of the landing zone and retaliated with a rocket and strafing attack. As the UH-34s departed the LZ, one Huey sustained a hit through the fuel cell, causing

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extensive fuel loss. The pilot made an emergency landing on a sandbar in the river. Heavy small arms fire erupted from both banks, but a Marine chopper hit twice, rescued the UH-1B crew. The Army helicopters attempted to destroy the downed aircraft, but could not do so due to heavy ground fire, darkness, deteriorating weather conditions, and low fuel.

ARVN forces deployed to provide security around the downed Huey but could not reach the area in the face of determined enemy resistance. During the hours of darkness ARVN artillery was utilized to keep the enemy away from the aircraft. With the coming of daylight the area was secured and the UH-1B heli-lifted to Da Nang by an Army CH-37 (a Sikorsky single main rotor, twin-engine heavy transport helicopter).

On 7 June TE 79.3.3.6 undertook still another task-- that of providing SAR aircraft on a daily basis, in support of reconnaissance missions flown by U.S. planes over Laos and North Vietnam. This SAR standby was positioned at either Khe Sanh (XD 859 381) or Quang Tri (YD 328 526). The code name for these reconnaissance missions was YANKEE TEAM.

During the period 8-15 June area search flights were

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launched in an effort to locate two enlisted Marines from Sub-Unit #2. The two, PFCs Fred T. Schrenkengost and Robert L. Greer, left the camp without authorization on the morning of 7 June on rented motorbikes to take a sightseeing tour to the southwest. Intelligence reports indicated that both were captured by the Viet Cong in the vicinity of (AT 995 664). Aerial searches of this area, Hill 267, Marble Mountain, and Hoi An revealed nothing. On 15 June, a Vietnamese Self Defense Corps (SDC) strike force recovered the two motor bikes hidden under water at (BT 003 645). A reliable informer stated that the two Americans were displayed at the hamlets of Bich Tram (AT 990 636) and Binh Nam (AT 986 630) on the evening of 8 June. On each occasion the Viet Cong announced that the two would be given five months of political training and returned. The organized search was discontinued 15 June, with intelligence efforts still under way to locate the missing Marines. (5)

Task Element helicopters provided parachute jump training for 17 Special Forces personnel at An Diem outpost (ZC 785 572) on 11 June. On the same day VNAF H-34 student class

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(5) The Intelligence Narrative Summary of TE 79.3.3.6 Command Diary for the period 15 April-9 July 1964 provides a detailed account of the Schrenkengost-Greer incident.

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IV, consisting of 8 pilots, completed its training. Since 4 February 33 pilot-trainees had received 1625.5 hours of instruction and OJT indoctrination had been completed for 107 VNAF helicopter personnel.

On 13 June, a UH-34D on a resupply mission from Khe Sanh (XD 859 361), forced by weather into making a low-angle approach to a LZ on a 5,500-foot mountain top, encountered severe down-drafts. Maximum power was insufficient to overcome the down-draft and the helicopter was forced into the trees, crashed, and rolled on its side. The crew and passengers evacuated the aircraft safely, with no injuries. The UH-34D was badly damaged and had to be destroyed.

HMM-364, on 16 June, held a maintenance stand-down to prepare its helicopters for turnover to the VNAF. Automatic stabilization equipment (ASE) (the helicopter equivalent of an auto-pilot), gun mounts, and USMC identification were removed, with the latter being replaced with VNAF insignia. The 24 UH-34Ds, along with the maintenance support equipment and spare parts, were turned over to the VNAF 217th Squadron on 19 June, with the formal acceptance taking place 10 days later. Major General Paul J. Fontana, CG, 1st MAW, Brigadier General Xung, ARVN I Corps commander, and Colonel Truc, VNAF deputy commander,

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attended the ceremony. The Vietnamese presented various orders of the Cross of Valor, the nation's second highest award, to certain Marine pilots who participated in troop assault landings 27 and 28 April in Operation SURE WIND 202. In addition, the VNAF presented their own pilot wings to Task Element instructor pilots who took part in the helicopter training program from 4 February through 11 June.

In the meantime, on 17 June, HMM-162, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver W. Curtis, arrived at SHUFLY and reported to CTE for operational control. The squadron brought its own complement of 24 UH-34Ds to replace those given to the Vietnamese. During the first few days at Da Nang squadron pilots logged familiarization flights, resupply missions, and conducted live firing practice for co-pilots, crew chiefs, and port-side gunners, as well as flying rappel practice sorties for the new SAR team. (6)

KC-130F Hercules transports of VMGR-152, based in Iwakuni, Japan, brought in the final echelons of HMM-162

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(6) Rappelling, borrowed from mountain climbing techniques, is a method of controlled descent by rope from a helicopter. Medical personnel used it to get help to the ground in an area where the chopper itself could not land.

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personnel and ground support equipment on 22 and 23 June. These heavy-duty haulers then loaded out HMM-364, returning men and equipment to Okinawa, where the squadron received new helicopters and operated as a squadron of MAG-16.

Major Marion R. Green relieved Lieutenant Colonel Beal as commander of Sub-Unit #2 on 27 June. Two days later a flight of two UH-34Ds attempted to lift Brigadier General Carl A. Youngdale, USMC, J-2, MACV, to the LZ top Tiger Tooth Mountain. Poor weather prevented the landing.

On 30 June, 6 UH-34Ds and 2 armed Hueys proceeded to LZ (BT 098 215) on a resupply mission. One UH-34 was fired on, but not hit, during the operation. One of the Hueys, in attempting to pinpoint the source of the ground fire, was shot down. The USMC flight leader and his wingman landed beside the crashed aircraft and crewmen assisted in the evacuation of three out of four personnel from the burning wreckage. Rockets, ammunition, and fuel were burning and exploding during the rescue, and unknown troops were approaching. The intense heat did not allow the fourth UH-1B crew member to be extricated. Both rescue aircraft sustained hits during climbout, but continued to the Marine dispensary at Da Nang, where the co-pilot was dead on arrival

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from a bullet wound in the right shoulder and chest. The pilot, who had suffered serious injury to his right foot, was evacuated by USAF C-123 to Nha Trang Field Hospital. The crew member sustained burns to his hands.

A later attempt to recover the body of the fourth crewman was unsuccessful due to the heat of the wreckage, though the flight surgeon, a corpsman, a six-man Marine security squad and two Army maintenance personnel did reach the site. Enemy fire was so heavy that a landing could not be made at the downed craft, even though an ARVN company was attempting to provide a perimeter defense. The party was offloaded some distance away and proceeded on foot. U.S. Army personnel recovered the body of the gunner the next day.

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As of the end of June, Major General Louis B. Robertshaw, Deputy Chief of Staff (Air), HQMC, summarized SHUFLY operations as follows:

"Our helicopter squadron has now been there (in Vietnam) for over two years. We were originally scheduled to come out this month. However, USMACV has requested that the squadron remain in Vietnam. This request was approved, and

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as it stands now, we are committed to SHUFLY indefinitely.

A recent GAO (Government Accounting Office) report on activities in Vietnam, which included some aircraft availability and maintenance comparisons between services, made us look awfully good. As a result, a great deal of interest was generated in our SHUFLY operations. Specifically, we were required to provide a rather detailed list of statistics for SecDef (Secretary of Defense) in his bout with Congress.

These statistics tell the Vietnam story to date:

Helicopter Operations in Vietnam

April 1962-June 1964

Helicopters Assigned.....	24
Observation Assigned.....	3
Total Sorties.....	60,609
Total Hours.....	38,880
Total Passengers.....	211,058
Total Cargo (lbs).....	9,369,500
Total Medical Evacs.....	3,541
Average Monthly Utilization Per Helo..	63 hours

With only 24 helicopters, and three O-1B observation aircraft, the unit has flown over 60,000 sorties carrying

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well over 211,000 passengers and 9½ million pounds of cargo. Note the 63 hours average helicopter utilization per month. Our peacetime utilization is about 52 hours per month.

Throughout the operation we have maintained a very encouraging aircraft vulnerability record. These figures show our aircraft and personnel losses thus far:

Aircraft LossesEnemy Action:

<u>Lost</u>	<u>Shot Down</u>	<u>Repaired</u>	<u>Aircraft Hit</u>
3	20	17	212

Operational Losses:

<u>Lost</u>	<u>Causes:</u>
15	Weather, Terrain, Density, Altitude Overheat

Personnel Losses

<u>Enemy Action:</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>Operational Accidents:</u>	<u>Injured</u>	<u>Killed</u>
Pilots	6	0		2	5
Crew	5	0		1	4
Troops/Pax	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	24	0		10	20

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It is interesting to note that the records show that we have lost only 3 of the 20 aircraft shot down despite the rather impressive number of aircraft hit. These three were destroyed by our own people to preclude their falling into the hands of the enemy. While it must be acknowledged that the hits almost exclusively from small arms, they are not the result of bows and arrows, which were credited for shooting down a helicopter in the Congo. Our operational losses, while only 15 in number, have accounted for the great majority of our losses.

Personnel losses are also tabulated. For the first time in our combat history, the troops and passenger losses involved outnumber our aircrew losses. These statistics may provide some useful planning factors for the future.

The Safety Center recently ruled that accidents occurring under combat conditions be excluded from the normal peacetime accident statistics due to the operational demands of combat.

The presence of our units in South Vietnam continues to be a rewarding experience as well as a very material contribution to the U.S. effort."

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July Flight Operations

At 0410 on 6 July, TE 79.3.3.6 received word that Nam Dong outpost (YC 877 848) was under heavy mortar attack, had no radio communications, and was being over-run by the Viet Cong. At 0604, 6 UH-34Ds, carrying U.S. Special Forces personnel, and 2 armed Hueys took off for Nam Dong, led by Colonel Merchant in an O-1B as TAC(A). Two VNAF A-1H support aircraft were not on station at the pre-planned time-on-target. Heavy ground fire prevented a landing by the transport helicopters, even after a maximum support effort by the Hueys, and the flight returned to Da Nang.

Meanwhile, at 0605 2 other UH-34Ds had flown U.S. Special Forces officers to An Diem outpost to alert a strike force company as reinforcement troops. CTE, upon his arrival at Da Nang, briefed the A-1H pilots and the Forward Air Controller (FAC) and was airborne again at 0910 as TAC(A), this time in a USAF U-10B. An Army CV-2 Caribou twin-engine turboprop light transport made an air drop of carbine ammunition to Nam Dong, followed by an air strike by the A-1Hs on the high ground to the west and south of the outpost. By 0945, ground fire had

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diminished and 18 UH-34Ds, escorted by 4 UH-1Bs and 2 VNAF A-1Hs, delivered 93 reinforcement troops from Da Nang and An Diem. Evacuation of 18 KIA and 111 WIA began immediately--two of the dead were American and one Australian.

At 1545, a flight of 10 UH-34s lifted 5 passengers and 9,550 pounds of ammunition, medical supplies, radios and miscellaneous equipment to Nam Dong, taking 6 passengers, 5 WIA, and 8 KIA to Ka Nang on the return trip. With the help of the reinforcements flown in, Nam Dong survived the attack. The remaining dead and wounded were evacuated the following day.

On 10 July, Colonel Hardy Hay relieved Colonel Merchant as commander of the Task Element; Colonel Merchant proceeded to Okinawa to take command of MAG-16. Marine personnel participated in "VNAF Day-64" the same day, in ceremonies attended by Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor and General William C. Westmoreland, ComUSMACV. Both officials toured the local area by helicopter. A UH-34D, settled into the ground, short of the LZ at (XD 825 550) on 11 July. It flew away from the site (which was at 5,200 feet elevation) and returned to Da Nang. It had sustained overhaul damage, however.

During the remainder of July normal missions continued, a large number of distinguished visitors arrived and departed,

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a replacement security platoon arrived (27 July), and sporadic gunfire from outside the base continued to harass Marine sentries.

August Flight Operations

Early in August TE UH-34Ds continued to provide SAR support for YANKEE TEAM missions, and hauled in supplies to a Voice of America transmitting facility at YD 782 200). The Gulf of Tonkin incident, in which North Vietnamese torpedo boats approached U.S. Navy destroyers with hostile intent, took place 2-4 August. The Task Element assumed Defense Condition (DefCon) 3 and took appropriate measures to increase the security of living and operating areas.

On 6 August, Marine Brigadier General Raymond C. Davis and his 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) staff arrived at Da Nang. During the next few days, while planning progressed for possible 9th MEB commitment to RVN, General Davis and his staff reconnoitered the beach areas from Hai Van Pass (AT 935 915) to Marble Mountain (BT 115 645) looked over the high ground of Hill 327 and Monkey Mountain near Da Nang.

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Within a few days the tenseness of the international situation subsided somewhat and General Davis and his party returned to Okinawa, where he reassumed his post as Assistant Division Commander, 3d Marine Division. The 9th MEB was not destined to land in South Vietnam until March 1965.

An O-1B crashed on 15 August at (YB 985 795) while making a reconnaissance of the valley. The pilot was evacuated to Nha Trang Hospital with serious injuries; the aerial observer's (AO) injuries were classified as moderate. The aircraft was destroyed; no enemy action was involved.

On 22 August, one helicopter received a small arms hit on the armor plate beneath the oil cooler--no damage resulted. This was the first recorded instance of the armor, which was installed on TE choppers late in 1963, definitely preventing damage to the aircraft.

During a resupply mission on 30 August, a UH-34D settled into the trees short of the LZ at (YC 806 774) in an operational accident at an elevation of 3,600 feet.

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No enemy action was involved and there were no casualties. The aircraft was stripped and destroyed.

August ended with a TAFDS in operation at Kham Duc (ZC 006 092) and approximately 13,000 gallons of avgas on hand at that location. An Army C-123 had transported this fuel dispensing unit to Kham Duc, but normally the UH-34s transplacated the TAFDSs wherever they were required to support operations. The portable fuel farms proved themselves many times over in Vietnam.

#### September Flight Operations

September began with support continuing for Team operations and with VNAF Student Pilot Class V completing training. On 4 September, Operation CHINH BIEN got under way. Fifteen UH-34Ds, 4 Hueys, 6 VNAF A-1Hs, 2 USMC O-1Bs, 1 O-1A with a FAC, and 1 USAF U-10 with CTE aboard as TAC(A) participated in the first assault to (YC 448 501). H-Hour was delayed 15 minutes to 0815 due to ground fog. No enemy resistance was encountered, and when the fourth lift was completed at 1215 192 sorties and 139.6 hours had been flown in transporting 304 Vietnamese Special Forces (VNSF) and 9,080 pounds of cargo into the zone. The operation was completed the next day, with more personnel

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and cargo delivered on schedule.

In mid-September the approaching winter monsoon season became a factor--on the 14th all flights were cancelled due to weather. Within the next few days Typhoons Violet which caused considerable damage, and Tilda passed nearby, disrupting flight operations. As Violet approached on 21 September, the UH-34s and O-1Bs were flown to Nha Trang for safekeeping, while the C-117 journeyed to Saigon. The storm eliminated all flight operations the next day, while the wind raged and rain fell in torrents. All transient tentage was blown down and many buildings were damaged by water. All electrical power was lost for a week, except to the mess hall and the water point, where it was restored in one day. For six hours the teletype circuits were knocked out, and the wing liaison net secured for 1½ hours. Personnel had to evacuate most buildings at the height of the storm because of the danger of collapse.

#### October Flight Operations

On 7 October, HMM-365, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Kolar, Jr., arrived to relieve HMM-162. The rotation of personnel was complete by the next day and the new

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squadron launched resupply missions at once, hauling over 25,000 pounds of cargo the first day. Three days later, in lifting 112 ARVN troops into Phuoc Lam (BT 072 061), 8 UH-34Ds were fired on by small arms, mortars, and 75mm recoilless rifles. No choppers were hit.

On the same day, 11 October, Major General William R. Collins, CG, 3d MarDiv, arrived with his party. During the next two days he was briefed and made reconnaissance flights over the local area.

On 12 October, a UH-34D lost power and crashed on take off from Tako (YC 615 495 at an elevation of 4,200 feet. The pilot received minor injuries; there was no enemy action involved. The aircraft was stripped of usable parts and destroyed.

In mid-October, CTE reported a new phase of Viet Cong activity in the lowland and coastal areas. There was no major combat or other noticeable movement, but the 9 hard core VC main force units of battalion size or larger in the I Corps area had increased to 11 by October. In addition, there were 17 local force units of company size, an increase of 50 percent since July. Increased pressure on the people and increased control of the countryside were noted,

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as well as the harassment of rail and road traffic and the Da Nang Air Base. Bridges were destroyed and routes of communication cut. VC battalion-sized unit activity was on the increase, with many units standing and fighting rather than retreating.

Colonel John H. King relieved Colonel Hay as TE commander on 17 June.

Toward the end of October, Marine helicopters made hazardous flights under marginal weather conditions in attempts to reach wounded troops in remote landing zones, only to find the LZ controlled by the Viet Cong. Low ceilings often forced all aircraft down to within small arms range. Sometimes the armed Hueys could not suppress the enemy fire and the mission had to be aborted. Once the pilot and crew chief of the Marine rescue helicopter were wounded by enemy fire. Several times approaching darkness and mountainous terrain compounded the hazards.

#### November Flight Operations

Typhoon Iris, on 4 and 5 November, forced cancellation of all missions, but ground training of the latest VNAF class of 8 student pilots continued. Severe weather, heavy rains, low ceilings, and reduced visibility were the order

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of the day through 10 November, when evacuation of flood victims began late in the afternoon. From 1710 until 1900, 144 victims were rescued, mostly by sling from roof tops. Helicopter crewmen had to leave the aircraft to assist the evacuees into the sling hoist. During these missions, the aircraft drew enemy fire but were not hit.

As soon as the weather permitted on 12 November, 18 UH-34Ds departed Da Nang on rescue missions. In spite of low visibility, heavy rain, and enemy fire, they rescued 1,136 civilians during the day. Three hits were recorded. More persons were evacuated the next day, and thousands of pounds of relief supplies were flown into Quang Ngai Tam Ky, and Quang Tin Provinces, south of Da Nang, and Quang Nam Province, which surrounds the city.

Relief operations continued through 16 November, when another typhoon--Kate--threatened to make matters even worse. The weather surrounding the storm forced cancellation of some flood missions, but the typhoon itself passed 200 miles to the south, causing little damage. Beginning on 17 November, seriously injured flood victims

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were flown to the Princeton, an amphibious assault helicopter carrier cruising offshore, for treatment. All available aircraft were used for flood relief from 10 November until 10 December. The magnitude of the disaster can be glimpsed from the following statistics:

<u>Province</u>	<u>Casualties Dead/Missing</u>	<u>Houses Destroyed</u>	<u>Cattle Lost</u>	<u>Crops Destroyed</u>
Quang Nam	2,500	22,447	78%	90%
Quang Tin	1,370	14,250	83.6%	100%
Quang Ngai	<u>1,000</u>	<u>14,000</u>	<u>80%</u>	<u>80%</u>
Total/Average	4,870	50,697	80.5%	90%

Refugees

12,240

3,000

6,000

21,240

On 19 November, 2 UH-34Ds equipped with TK-1 armament kits consisting of machine guns and rockets, escorted an Eagle Flight of 10 UH-1Bs to (AT 930 520). The Marine choppers conducted pre-strike and close air support operations, expending 90 rockets and 500 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition with unknown results at Viet Cong in culverts and houses.

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The next day an estimated 10-15 Viet Cong were killed in a similar strike in which 49 rockets and 4,000 rounds of ammunition were expended. For the remainder of 1964 the armed UH-34s flew regularly in an armed escort role.

A strike operation, code-named DA NANG #3, conducted 22 November, proved highly successful. Fourteen USMC UH-34s, two of which were armed, teamed up with 9 UH-1Bs, also with two armed, in lifting troops of the ARVN 11th Ranger Battalion to two landing zones in an 0630 assault. As a result, with the help of the armed choppers providing close air support, 5 VC were killed and 21 captured. Among the equipment taken from the enemy were a French BAR (automatic rifle), a French submachine gun, 2 Czech submachine guns, 18 Chinese grenades, 7 Chinese rifle grenades, 2 M-1 rifles, 2 U.S. carbines, 14,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, and 8,000 piastres (Vietnamese currency). Friendly losses totalled one man wounded.

On 25 November the squadron moved to a new hangar area aboard the Da Nang Air Base. Three days

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later a Marine UH-34D crew chief had a once-in-a-lifetime experience. During Operation DA NANG #4, a .45 caliber round impacted inside his flight helmet, grazed his hair, and exited through the top of the "hard hat." No injury. In the operation the enemy lost 7 killed, 22 captured, and a variety of weapons and ammunition. Friendly losses were one killed and one wounded.

Operation DA NANG #5, on 30 November, had even better results--53 enemy killed, 21 taken prisoner, and more weapons and documents confiscated. Friendly forces sustained only one minor wound.

December Flight Operations

In Operation DA NANG #6, conducted 7 December, the relatively cool weather allowed the Marine UH-34Ds to carry 14 troops per aircraft, half again as many as the normal load. After a delay due to ground fog, the armed UH-34s expended 62 rockets and 6,000 rounds of machine gun ammunition in preparatory zone fires at LZ (AT 932 703). The troops were landed without incident, and no hits were recorded on helicopters. The

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enemy lost 9 killed, 4 taken prisoner, 9 rifles, 1 machine gun, and several documents. There were no friendly casualties.

On 9 December, an afternoon strike mission to LZ (BT 270 140) received heavy ground fire from all directions. (An artillery duel between ARVN and VC forces had been going on since 0330 that morning.) Three armed UH-34Ds returned the fire with 59 rockets and 2,500 rounds from the M-60 machine guns. All enemy positions were neutralized; no helicopters were hit; and a second lift into the zone was accomplished without incident. Results: 70 enemy killed, 39 weapons captured, 2 105mm howitzers destroyed. Friendly losses: 1 U.S. killed, 1 Australian wounded, 8 ARVN killed, and 20 ARVN wounded.

During the remainder of December, flight operations continued at a normal tempo. Weather caused delays and cancellations, but many successful strikes were accomplished. The O-1Bs flew daily weather reconnaissance and photo missions, often

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scouting out the route and LZ approaches before the main force launched. TE aircraft also flew search missions for downed friendly aircraft, including one Air Force C-123 that crashed with the loss of all 24 persons aboard.

In spite of the efforts exerted by both U.S. forces and the Vietnamese, Viet Cong activity continued to rise at a rapid rate as 1964 drew to a close. In the third week of December alone there over 200 VC incidents recorded in the I Corps zone, an all-time high. These incidents ranged from battalion sized attacks to simple harassments. Between September and the end of the year, the estimated number of hard-core VC in the I Corps area rose from 6,000 to 9,000--enough men for 18 battalions. This increase was achieved even against a wave of ARVN victories, for in November I Corps accounted for 49 percent of all Viet Cong killed in RVN. The kill ratio for the year 1964 was 3 VC for each ARVN lost; in December this ratio was 5:1. Still the numbers of VC increased. The input down the Ho Chi Minh trail from North Vietnam approached 1,000 men per month at the end of 1964.

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As of 31 December, TE 79.3.3.6 was again redesignated TU 79.3.5 (Marine Unit, Vietnam), as directed by CG, AirFMFPac. This had been the original designation of the unit from its introduction into Vietnam in April 1962 until 6 November 1962. From that time until 30 December 1964 the official designation was TE 79.3.3.6. Even as the helicopter unit entered 1965 with a new designation, the new year would see a new and vastly expanded Marine Corps role in the Republic of Vietnam.

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SECRETCHAPTER IVANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNED<sup>(1)</sup>

During 1964, in spite of the efforts of TE 79.3.3.6 and other friendly forces, enemy activity in the I Corps zone continued to increase. Within the last three months of the year, hard-core Viet Cong strength jumped by 50 percent to 9,000, guerrilla incidents reached a record high, and the flow of insurgents down the Ho Chi Minh Trail neared 1,000 men per month. CTE expressed the gravity of the situation: "If this input (down the Ho Chi Minh Trail) is continued we will shortly be in the third phase of counter insurgency; i.e., conventional land warfare between equal numbered armies."<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: CinCPac Command History, 1964; CTE 79.3.3.6/CTU 79.3.5 Command Diaries 1Nov63-14Jan64, 15Apr-9Jul64, 10Jul-16Oct64, and 17Oct64-14Jan65; FMFPac OJT Reports, Jan-Dec64; MACV Monthly Evaluations, Jan-Dec64; MACV Quarterly Reviews; MACV Lessons Learned.

(2) CTU 79.3.5 Command Diary, 17Oct64-14Jan65, p. 57.

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The primary lesson of 1964 was that the Communist guerrillas were growing in numbers and in influence over the countryside, particularly in the north where TE 79.3.3.6 operated.

A second lesson learned in 1964 was the deep interweaving of the political and military factions in RVN. Numerous political coups and upheavals took place during the year; the military was involved to some degree in all of them; and the instability of the government reflected downward to all command echelons in the RVNAF. Commanders were removed from their units without warning or apparent justification. Both combat effectiveness and morale suffered severely from this turmoil, as the morale problem in the VNMB early in 1964 illustrated.

The language barrier, which had plagued both ground and air operations from the beginning, still caused difficulty in 1964. It limited the effectiveness of U.S. Marine advisers, as noted frequently in their reports. Several advisers recommended that more thorough language training be used to solve the problem, and further advocated that all training to U.S. personnel be Vietnamese rather than French.

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A fourth stern lesson brought out during 1964 was the fact that the Vietnamese armed forces did not measure up to U.S. standards. USMC observers and advisers repeatedly commented on serious shortcomings in leadership in the RVNAF, especially at the junior officer-NCO level. Many ARVN units exhibited a lack of confidence in company-grade officers and NCOs, poor discipline, especially while marching, a reluctance to close with the enemy or to operate at night, the lack of a functioning staff, the failure to disseminate intelligence, and weak security, both in the field and in camp. Other shortcomings included: the autonomous battalion supply system covered in Chapter II, which lacked staff supervision and coordination, and poor fire discipline, observed where entire companies returned the fire of a single hidden sniper, where more than 25 105mm artillery rounds were called in in an attempt to silence one VC rifleman, and where a company commander on patrol amused himself by shooting at chickens and ducks while his unit searched for VC in the rice paddies and hamlets.

In general, the Vietnamese operated with good equipment during 1964, though they often maintained it poorly. The aggressive spirit and discipline needed to fight the

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Viet Cong and defeat him were often lacking. Some units, however, were far above average in all respects--among these were the Vietnamese Marines, the Rangers, and the Special Forces.

Among items of ground equipment, it was found that the Army-developed vented canvas boot was superior to the Marine combat boot for use in the Vietnamese climate and terrain. The canvas boot dried faster, had better traction on slippery surfaces, and lasted well. It was procured for use. A second item of ground equipment that needed improvement was the camouflage uniform. A lighter-weight, reversible, quick-drying uniform was requested, tested, and went into use during 1964.

In aviation equipment, the 300-foot rescue hoist required for operations in the dense, towering jungles had completed a thorough test program early in 1964. It had some limitations--it took 7 minutes to fully extend and retract the cable--but CTE found the overall performance satisfactory and recommended that one 300-foot hoist per 5 aircraft be procured and installed. This proved to be a sufficient number to handle those rescues that could not be reached by the standard 100-foot hoist.

In late 1964, the TK-1 armament kit, consisting of

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forward-firing machine guns and rockets actuated by the pilot, was tested on the UH-34D. The kit proved valuable in several assault landings late in the year, but the firepower was gained at the expense of speed and payload. The UH-34 was not a stable platform, also, so when Marine UH-1E armed escort helicopters became available early in 1965, followed shortly by fixed-wing jet aircraft, the UH-34 kits were removed and the choppers resumed their transport role. The two M-60 machine guns and M-16 used for defensive fires were retained, however. USMC policy throughout had been that transport helicopters operating in combat should have fixed-wing attack aircraft in support.

In tactical flying, the choppers continued to seek safety from ground small arms fire by maintaining 1,500 feet above the terrain whenever possible. Weather conditions often forced the helicopters lower, but did not seem to appreciably increase the number of hits sustained. Contour flying was not practiced, primarily because of the absence of sophisticated anti-aircraft fire and the rugged terrain. Small arms fire brought down several UH-34s during the year; all but four were repaired and flown out safely. The armor plate beneath the oil

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cooler saved at least one aircraft from probable engine failure by stopping an enemy round. In another incident, a .50 caliber round glanced off the armor and smashed the oil cooler, bringing the helicopter down.

The O-1B observation aircraft remained invaluable for reconnaissance in 1964. These two-place craft were launched in advance of each helicopter mission to report weather conditions along approach and retirement lanes. They also scouted alternate landing zones and routes during rapidly changing or marginal weather. In addition, they were used for airborne radio relay, as tactical air controller aircraft, for position orientation by friendly ground patrols, and as landing zone markers.

O-1B photography, combined with the helicopter flight commander's visual reconnaissance when practicable, was the primary method of selecting landing zones in 1964. Selection of zones by ground commanders was tried, but unsuitable areas were often selected. Principal deficiencies were: obstacles in the approach and retirement lanes, insufficient size, excessive slope, and poor defensibility. Visual scouting by the flight leader was always desirable, but sometimes had to be weighed against the chance of compromise. Photo coverage of the zones was always extremely valuable.

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Operations during 1964 emphasized the fact that the buildup of troops in the LZ must be rapid for maximum effectiveness. Zones that would accommodate at least three and preferably six helicopters at once were chosen when available. Minimum time on the ground by each wave was stressed, speeding the buildup of men and supplies on the ground while at the same time cutting down on the reaction time of the enemy (the time in which he can bring fire to bear on aircraft on the ground).

It was proven once again in 1964 that pre-strike preparation of the landing zones by air, or some other effective means (artillery was not used in support of USMC helicopter assaults in 1964, nor was naval gunfire) was mandatory in areas of strong enemy resistance. Air cover was effective in suppressing enemy activity when properly utilized and coordinated. CTE still desired USMC pilots to fly his close air support.

The armed helicopter was especially valuable during the final approach phase of the assault because of its compatible speed and maneuverability. The UH-1B was limited in that it possessed comparatively light weapons (7.62mm machine guns, 2.75-inch rockets),

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could carry only a limited supply of ammunition, and had less endurance than the UH-34. Still, the Huey was generally effective in suppressing fire both in the LZ and along approach and retirement routes.

The fixed-wing A-1Hs, T-28s, and B-26s were particularly effective in pre-strike preparations, due in part to their ability to carry heavier and more diversified ordnance in greater quantity--these weapons were suitable for destruction and neutralization as well as suppression. Where the terrain permitted, napalm was especially effective.

At the end of 1964, the USMC men and equipment in RVN were doing their job and doing it well, but they still faced an uphill fight against a cunning and resourceful enemy that used every advantage to its fullest.

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5-25-64

(DATE)

*Spindle*

FROM: Assistant G-3

*copy*

- TO: Head, Operations Branch
- Head, Training Branch
- Head, Plans Branch
- Head, Historical Branch
- Head, Admin & Fiscal Branch
- Head, Manpower Branch

*Content & action*

*noted*

*JJZ*



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO  
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MAY 12 1964

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From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

Encl: (1) Subject manuscript

1. In April 1963, the Deputy Secretary of Defense requested each of the military services to prepare an accounting of its activities in South Vietnam for the period 1954 through 1963. Subsequently, an outline for the Marine Corps study was approved by DOD. Submission date for the document is 30 June 1964.
2. Enclosure (1) is the draft manuscript of the Marine Corps study less Part VI, an analysis, to be completed after review. Selected Marine participants, Headquarters Marine Corps agencies, Marine Corps activities, and activities containing Marines have been requested to review enclosure (1) and comment on it.
3. Comments should be addressed to the particular areas of interest in which your activity, or Marines or civilian employees, participated. In addition, any new information deemed significant to the study should be submitted.
4. Comments, along with the manuscript, should reach the Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D) by 25 May 1964 for CONUS addressees and by 1 June 1964 for all others.
5. This letter is declassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

*F. C. Caldwell*  
F. C. CALDWELL  
By direction

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Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

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*F. C. Caldwell*  
F. C. CALDWELL  
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19 MAY 1964

G-4 Bucktag comment on Routing Sheet 003C12564 dtd 13 May 1964

Subj: United States Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963; Proposed History of

1. In accordance with the request contained in reference (a), the draft of the subject proposed historical study has been reviewed and the following comments are submitted:

- a. Page I:14. "Figure I-1" should read "Figure I-2."
- b. Page IV:1. "Figure IV-1A" is cited on line 5. Examination of the figures at the rear of this chapter reveal that "Figure IV-1A" is not labeled. It is believed that this figure is the figure immediately above Figure IV-1B.
- c. Page IV:17. "Figure IV-1" should read "Figure IV-1B."
- d. Page IV:18. The citing of Figure IV-8 and IV-7 in the footnotes at the bottom of this page are incorrect. This Division was unable to ascertain which of the specific figures contained in Chapter IV were being referred to.
- e. Figure IV-2A. In the body of the study, no reference is made to this figure. Since the figure is considered to be of importance, it should be referred to in the body of the study.

2. It is to be noted that throughout the study, continual reference is made to DANANG. Inspection of the map contained in Figure I-3 reveals that DANANG is not shown while the city of TOURANE is. For the uninitiated reader who is using the document, and who is unaware of the fact that TOURANE and DANANG are the same, difficulty would be encountered in attempting to locate DANANG. It is recommended that the place name of DANANG be entered on the map at Figure I-3 by inserting the name below TOURANE in parenthesis.

*will change format for final study*

*will include both names in final study*

*incorporated into smooth.*

D. W. SHERMAN  
D. W. SHERMAN  
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					PERSONNEL		1. In April 1963, DOD requested each	
					POLICY ANALYSIS		service to prepare and submit a	
					RESERVE		history of its activities in Vietnam	
					SUPPLY		from 1954 through 1963. DOD has ap-	
					WOMEN MARINES		proved the approach and outline of	
					LEGISLATIVE		the Marine Corps study.	
					COUNSEL		2. Attached is a draft of the	
					STAFF DENTAL		historical study. Addressees are	
					STAFF MEDICAL		requested to review the attached pro-	
					OP-09M		posed historical study and submit	
					S&C FILES		comments thereon, particularly with-	
							in their areas of cognizance, to	
					ACofS, G-3		AO3D by 21 May 1964.	
					Deputy ACofS, G-3		3. Any additional significant infor-	
					Asst G-3		mation is also desired. Part VI, an	
					Special Asst		analysis, is to be developed after	
					Admin & Fiscal Br		this review.	
					Plans Branch		4. This study is being routed for	
					PolDoct&Prod Sect		comment to West Pac activities,	
					Strat Plans Sect		MCLPDC, selected participants, and	
					Mob Plans Sect		within HQMC to Aviation, G-1, G-2,	
					Opns & Tng Branch		G-4, PolAnal, SMedOff, AO3B, AO3C,	
					Opns Section		AO3H, CSX, and S&C, and to HqBn	
							(Co F).	
					Tng Section		5. Major J. M. YINGLING (AO3D) is	
							designated as Project Officer, Tel	
					Mksmanship Branch		Ext - 42460.	
					Historical Branch		(For additional checks attach with name)	
					Admin & Prod Section		ROUTING - Use numbers to <b>GOY CALDWELL</b>	
					Records & Research Sect		OPERATIONAL <b>By direction</b>	
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NAVMC HQ 335H-CMC (REV. 11-57)

SAC NO.

003C12564

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					OP-09M	
					S&C FILES	

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					Tng Section	
					Mksmanship Branch	
					Historical Branch	
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					Records & Research Sect	

**A03D-jeb**  
MAY 1 1964

- In April 1963, DOD requested each service to prepare and submit a history of its activities in Vietnam from 1954 through 1963. DOD has approved the approach and outline of the Marine Corps study.
- Attached is a draft of the historical study. Addressees are requested to review the attached proposed historical study and submit comments thereon, particularly within their areas of cognizance, to A03D by 21 May 1964.
- Any additional significant information is also desired. Part VI, an analysis, is to be developed after this review.
- This study is being routed for comment to West Pac activities, MCLFDC, selected participants, and within HQMC to Aviation, G-1, G-2, G-4, PolAnal, SMedOff, A03B, A03C, A03H, CSX, and S&C, and to HqBn
- Major J. M. YINGLING (A03D) is designated as Project Officer, Tel Ext - 42460.

(For additional routing use numbers 1-6)

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**G-2 memo Attached**

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OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

*Memorandum*

TO : Historical

DATE: 18 May

FROM : G-2

SUBJECT: Comment on USMC Activities in South Vietnam

1. An interesting and useful document.
2. I suggest, in line with Washington custom, that it would make the publication of more use to the busy staff officer or Defense Department official if there were a very short chapter at the front which summarized in a few words the principal involvements and achievements of the Marine Corps in this area. Such a ~~chapter~~ chapter would serve the Marine Corps well in that it would have more chance of being read than a tome of this size.

*Berkeley*  
RANDOLPH C. BERKELEY, JR.

*1 page summary  
to be placed next  
to front Table of Contents*



AO3H1-dnw

3 5 MAY 1966

AO3H COMMENT

Subj: USMC activities in SVN, 1954-1963.

1. Subject document has been reviewed and the following minor comments are submitted:

- ✓ a. Page IV: 57, next to last line on page - change counter-insurgency back to guerrilla.

Reason: Counterinsurgency cannot be used interchangeably with guerrilla (JCS Pub 1). The HUS helicopters were fulfilling guerrilla warfare conditions rather than the full spectrum of counterinsurgency.

- ✓ b. Page V: 39, 4th line - word relieved is misspelled.

2. This document appears to be an interesting, well written history.

*incorporated into summary*

*W. D. Sawyer*  
W. D. SAWYER



MEMORANDUM:

15 May 1964

For: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO3D) (Attn: Major YINGLING)  
From: Commanding Officer, Company "F", Headquarters Battalion, HQMC  
Subj: T/O Increase, Marine Security Guard, American Embassy, Saigon,  
Vietnam.

1. Be advised that the T/O of the subject Detachment has been increased from twenty (20) to twenty-two (22) Marines as authorized by Personnel Allocation Change #252-64 of 22 April 1964 to T/O #5152 of 17 August 1962.

*No,*  
*f/further reference*

  
M. J. DUNBAR

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET  
NAVMC HQ 335h-CMC (REV. 11-57)

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003C12564 #16

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REMARKS (Entries to be dated and signed)

A03D-Jeb

1. In April 1963, DOD requested each service to prepare and submit a history of its activities in Vietnam from 1954 through 1963. DOD has approved the approach and outline of the Marine Corps study.

2. Attached is a draft of the historical study. Addressees are requested to review the attached proposed historical study and submit comments thereon, particularly within their areas of cognizance, to A03D by 17 May 1964.

3. Any additional significant information is also desired. Part VI, an analysis, is to be developed after this review.

4. This study is being routed for comment to West Pac activities, MCLPDC, selected participants, and within HQMC to Aviation, G-1, G-2, G-4, PolAnal, SMedOff, A03B, A03C, A03H, CSX, and S&C, and to HqBn (Co F).

5. Major J. M. YINGLING (A03D) is designated as Project Officer, Tel ext - 42460.

					ACofS, G-3
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					Ops & <del>Sec</del> Branch
					Ops Section
7	DEHF	5/17	JJK		Tng Section BRANCH (A03C)
X		5/13/64	Jeb		Mksmanship Branch
					Historical Branch
					Admin & Prod Section
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(For additional remarks attach slip)

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
NAVY ADVISORY GROUP, MACV,  
APO #143, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

WCN:jmc  
1000  
4 June 1964

SECRET NOFORN

From: Senior Marine Advisor  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO3D), Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C.

Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954 - 1963"

Ref: (a) My ltr ROD:jmc 1000 of 27 May 1964.

1. Reference (a) furnished incomplete and erroneous information. It is requested that reference (a) be destroyed and the information submitted herein be substituted therefor.

a. A reorganization of the Vietnamese Marine Brigade has been approved by COMUSMACV and the Vietnamese Joint General Staff. This reorganization provides for a reduction in the authorized strength of the infantry battalion from 1119 to 931 and the addition of a fifth infantry battalion; a reduction in the artillery battalion of one 75mm pack howitzer battery (8 howitzers); the addition of two field task force headquarters (8 officer, 12 enlisted each); the establishment of a 300 man pipeline; and other minor refinements. Authorized strength of the Brigade increased from 6109 to 6555 (446).

b. Recommendations for change to the Joint Table of Distribution have been approved and forwarded by COMUSMACV. These recommendations provide for an Assistant Senior Marine Advisor to provide advisory support to two task forces; a captain advisor for the fifth infantry battalion; and three additional gunnery sergeants to provide five Assistant Infantry Battalion Advisors.

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AFTER 12 YEARS FROM DATE OF THIS NOTICE

W. C. NOREN

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
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 APO #143, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

RGD:jmc  
 1000  
 27 May 1964

SECRET NOFORN

From: Senior Marine Advisor  
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO3D), Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C.

Subj: Request for comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954 - 1963"

Encl: (1) Subject manuscript

1. Enclosure (1) has been reviewed by this office and the following new information which is deemed significant to the study is submitted:

a. With the consolidation of MACV and MAAG, implemented on 15 May 1964, but not yet approved by JCS, an additional billet of Assistant Senior Marine Advisor (Major OS02) has been recommended. This change will relieve the Artillery Advisor (Major OS02) of his present double duty as Assistant Senior Marine Advisor and Artillery Advisor.

b. At present, there is a proposed organization of the Vietnamese Marine Brigade under consideration in which a 5th Infantry Battalion will be added. The additional personnel for the 5th Infantry Battalion will be obtained by a judicious pruning of the entire present Brigade structure and an increase of only 123 Marines to the overall Brigade strength.

R. C. DAMM  
 Acting Senior Marine Advisor

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 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

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#2

DATE 79.3.3.6  
 CMC NO. 005249  
 COPY 2 OF 6

HEADQUARTERS  
 Task Element 79.3.3.6  
 Marine Aircraft Group 16  
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Aircraft, FMF, Pacific  
 c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

**SECRET**  
SECRET

3:GAB:job  
 003A14664  
 25 May 1964

From: Commander  
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D)  
 Subj: Draft Manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in  
 South Vietnam, 1954-1963", comments on  
 Encl: (1) Subject Manuscript, copy no. 11  
 Ref: (a) CMC ltr A03D-job over 003012564 of 12 May 1964

1. In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is returned with comments pertinent to SEPTIM Operations at DaNang as this is the current tactical area of combat support rendered by the Task Element. It is believed, after consulting the distribution list, that persons more intimately knowledgeable of conditions as they existed in other areas can more appropriately comment thereon.

2. It is recommended that the following changes to the draft manuscript be incorporated.

a. Page V-3, line 3; change sentence to read:

"The asphalt runway at that time was 7,872 feet long and 199 feet wide and could handle any type aircraft. When improvements are completed about 31 July 1964, the runway will be 10,000 feet long and 175 feet wide, with headings 35 and 17."

b. Page V-7, line 4, delete the words "on the airfield". The majority of these buildings are in the Marine camp which was not at anytime within the perimeter of the airfield.

c. Page V-10, line 12, delete the words "more than twice" and substitute "adequate for". In the hot summer months the water capacity is barely sufficient to a camp of 500 Marines.

d. Page V-77, line 14; to portray actual statistics, change sentence to read:

"The MH-34D also proved once again that vulnerability is a question of degree, for in South Vietnam during the period covered it flew 38,861 hours over terrain 90 percent hostile, and only one aircraft was lost to enemy fire, though 213 hits were recorded."

#2  
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SECRET

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SECRET

3. Permission is requested to keep copy number 12 of the draft manuscript as being a matter of considerable interest and a ready source of much pertinent information concerning the first two years of the SHIFLY Operation.

ROBERT A. MERCHANT

Copy to:  
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CO MAG-16 (less encl.(1))

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## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

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0015164

26 MAY 1964

From: Commanding General  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps

Subject: Comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

Ref: (a) Ltr #031-jeb, 003012564 of 12 May 1964

Ref: (1) subject manuscript

1. Pursuant to instructions contained in reference (a), the following comments and recommendations on the contents of enclosure (1) are submitted:

a. Page II: 19, second paragraph

(1) Comment. A large airfield has been constructed at Bien Hoa, about 50 kilometers north of Saigon. This field was operational in December 1963.

(2) Recommendation. Include mention of the Bien Hoa airfield among those best suited for large operations.

b. Page II: 22, second paragraph

(1) Comment. Vietnamese provincial organization has changed often during recent years and will probably continue to do so.

(2) Recommendation. Rewrite second sentence of the paragraph to read: "South Vietnam is organized into more than 40 provinces and these into districts, cantons, villages and hamlets. Figure I-4 depicts the provincial structure as of 31 December 1963."

c. Page II: 9, third paragraph

(1) Comment. The second sentence of this paragraph indicates that there were 19 billets in the Marine Advisory Division in 1962. Paragraph 1.b. of Appendix (which is correct) shows 18.

(2) Recommendation. Delete "(1) 1)" and substitute "(1) 18".

d. Page III: 10, second paragraph

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1900

(1) Comment. This paragraph is misleading. It indicates that all of the past - 1961 advisors received French Language and Military Assistance Institute Instruction. As of May 1962, none of the NCOs and only four of eight officers had received prior schooling in French. Not all Marine Advisors had been trained at MAI.

(2) Recommendation. Rewrite the third sentence to read - "After assignment, but before departing for Vietnam, many advisors received 28 days of schooling in military assistance operations and from 125 hours to five months instruction in the French language."

e. Page II: 22, second paragraph

(1) Comment. The U. S. Embassy in Saigon no longer includes an attache office.

(2) Recommendation. In the second sentence, delete "is" and substitute "was".

f. Part 4

(1) Comment. The word "Shrapnel" appears in more than one instance. Modern ammunition does not contain shrapnel.

(2) Recommendation. Delete the word "Shrapnel" wherever it occurs and substitute "fragments".

W: R: COLLINS

**MEMORANDUM**

15 May 1964

**For:** Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A01B) (Attn: Major YINLIH)  
**From:** Commanding Officer, Company "F", Headquarters Battalion, HQMC  
**Subj:** T/O Detachment, Marine Security Guard, American Embassy, Saigon, Vietnam

1. Be advised that the T/O of the subject Detachment has been increased from twenty (20) to twenty-two (22) Marines as authorized by Personnel Allocation Change #1044 of 22 April 1964 to T/O #5152 of 17 August 1962.

M. J. DUNBAR

**MEMORANDUM**

15 May 1964

**For:** Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO3D) (Attn: Major YINDLING)  
**From:** Commanding Officer, Company "F", Headquarters Battalion, HQMC  
**Subj:** T/O Increase, Marine Security Guard, American Embassy, Saigon, Vietnam

1. Be advised that the T/O of the subject Detachment has been increased from twenty (20) to twenty-two (22) Marines as authorized by Personnel Allocation Change #512-41 of 22 April 1964 to T/O #5152 of 17 August 1962.

M. J. DUNBAR

5/JFC:lad  
47594  
27 MAY 1964

**SECRET**

**From:** Colonel John F. CAREY 05650/9907 USMC

**To:** Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AG3D)

**Subj:** Comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

**Ref:** (a) DMC ltr AG3D-jeb ser:003C12564 of 12 May 64

**Encl** (1) Subject manuscript

1. In accordance with reference (a) enclosure (1) is returned.
2. Specific corrections and marginal notes have been made with green ink in Parts III and IV.
3. This should prove to be a most interesting and valuable account of Marine activities in South Vietnam.
4. Upon removal of enclosure (1) this letter is declassified.

J. F. CAREY

**SECRET**

MARINE AIR RESERVE TRAINING DETACHMENT  
 Marine Air Reserve Training Command  
 U. S. Naval Air Station  
 Twin Cities  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55450  
 xx 55450

02:AJC:jjj  
 3000  
 27 May 1964

**SECRET**

From: Lieutenant Colonel Archie J. CLAPP, 027101/7335, U. S. Marine Corps  
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D), Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380

Subj: Comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

Ref: (a) CMC ltr A03D-jeb over 003C12564 of 12May64

Encl: (1) Subject manuscript

1. Reference (a) requested comments on enclosure (1) by 25 May 1964. Because of faulty mail distribution aboard this base, the undersigned did not receive enclosure (1) until this date.

2. Enclosure (1) has been reviewed and no deviation from the facts as I know them were detected. In fact, I found it very interesting reading, well organized and aptly written.

3. This letter is declassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

ARCHIE J. CLAPP

**SECRET**

**SECRET**207/JEH/hfd  
003A14064  
19May64

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CMC ltr A03D-jeb, 003C12564 dtd 12May64

From: LtCol Clifford J. ROBICHAUD, Jr., 014729, USMC  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D)

Subj: Comments on draft manuscript, "U.S. Marine Corps  
Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"

1. Returned.

2. The undersigned is being detached from his present station and will be enroute to FMFPAC during the period requested for review and thus will not be able to submit timely comments as requested.

CLIFFORD J. ROBICHAUD, JR.

**SECRET**

MARINE AIR RESERVE TRAINING DETACHMENT  
 Marine Air Reserve Training Command  
 U. S. Naval Air Station  
 Grosse Ile, Michigan 48138

RLR:jnd  
 Ser: 0012-64  
 23 May 1964

SECRET

From: Colonel Robert L. MATHEUN, 011684/9907 USMC  
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D)  
 Subj: Comments on draft manuscript, "U. S. Marine Corps  
 Activities in South Vietnam, 1954-1963"  
 Ref: (a) CMC ltr A03D-jeb. 003C12564 undated, with  
 subject manuscript enclosed  
 Encl: (1) Subject manuscript  
 (2) CO 1961-163 ltr 001:RLR:ral 15Feb53 less encl  
 (2)

1. Enclosure (1) is returned and enclosure (2) is forwarded for information in the event you desire to incorporate any of the observations contained in it. I have not included my letter or the summary of operations in Soc Trang since you already have access to it as evidenced in your manuscript draft.
2. I think the overall treatment of the subject in the draft manuscript is well done. I will confine my comments to specific areas of participation as requested in reference (a).
3. In response to the request contained in reference (a), the following comments are submitted:
4. Comment, page IV 35
  - a. On line 2 after, "So white was used" the significant fact is white smoke was used to mark friendly troop pick up sites.
  - b. As an anecdote; the flight leader was myself and my aircraft was the first squadron aircraft to be hit by enemy ground fire since arriving from the states. The bullet entered above the cabin door and severed the rudder control cable to the tail rotor and punctured the main rotor transmission. The resultant loss of oil required

COPY NO. 2 OF 4 COPIES  
 Less Encl (1)

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**SECRET**RLR:jnd  
23 May 1964

an immediate forced landing which was accomplished on a dirt road with no further damage to the helicopter. The control cable was spliced and the transmission filled with oil after the hole was plugged with a chamoise and stick. The helicopter was flown to a forward service site for transmission replacement. Since I was notified the same day I had been selected for colonel, the squadron coined the phrase; lost a bird, gained a bird.

5. Comment, page IV: 45.

a. The last paragraph after: "The flat, flooded, featureless terrain" add, with its network of interwoven canals etc. This was the main reason for my spider web comment that you quote.

6. Comment, page IV: 46.

a. Concerning the first paragraph. Usually the landing zone had to be identified before the first low level run in, to assure landing in the proper zone.

b. Paragraph 2. The airborne director helped solve the problem.

7. Comment, page IV: 48.

a. In second paragraph, line 8. The flight would normally only be temporarily aborted. Not the mission aborted.

8. Comment, page IV: 52.

a. More on downed aircraft procedures in paragraph 20 of enclosure (2).

9. Comment, page IV: 52.

a. If you use my chamois and stick story, change the last sentence to read, "Again a chamois on a stick etc."

10. Comment, page IV: 55.

a. The first paragraph, the significant feature is the aircraft were able to taxi to the refueling bags, refuel with engines running and immediately taxi away as soon as refueled without restarting engines, reengaging

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**SECRET**RLR:jnd  
23 May 1964

rotors etc., to make room for descending helicopters.

11. Comment page IV: 56.

a. additional comments on the AR-15 ArmaLite in paragraph 19 to enclosure (2).

b. Concerning the M-60 machine gun. Please give credit to the squadron enlisted personnel for designing and fabricating the mounting bracket in the field.

12.. Comment page IV: 58.

a. In first sentence after "when flown by qualified pilots", - please leave no doubt here that all Marine helicopter pilots are qualified and current in instrument flying. It may not hurt to mention instrument flying in the Danang area. I cover it lightly in paragraph 27 of enclosure (2).

13. Comment, page IV: 59.

a. After first sentence in last paragraph - Although the III Corps Commander was apprehensive over a new statewide squadron replacing the proven HMR 362, he soon recognized that the new squadron (HMR 163) could carry the load. Brigadier General Le Van NGHIEM again made a personal plea to General HARKINS to retain the Marine Squadron in his Corps area during a field briefing in Ca Mau. The move was delayed again and the date finally settled on Wednesday 15 September.

14. Comment, page IV: 65.

a. An elaboration on the last paragraph is contained in paragraphs 4 through 7 of enclosure (2).

15. Comment, page IV:66.

a. In the last paragraph after location; and the monsoon season they had just left on the Delta was about to commence in the north.

16. Comment, Figure IV-26.

a. Figure (b) diagrams a typical formation. I used a basic element of three aircraft for fourteen months in the far East. I know other squadrons also advocate it.

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23 May 1964

It gives the flight leader the maximum amount of flexibility especially at night and is much more adaptable to small landing zones.

17. Comment, page V: 32.

a. Your impression of the Tiger Force is incorrect. This concept was devised for the northern area and is described in paragraph 22 of enclosure (2).

18. Comment, page V: 33.

a. Paragraphs 12 through 14 of enclosure (2) elaborate on the use of air support and artillery fire.

19. Comment, page V: 34.

a. See paragraph 25 to enclosure (2) for additional comments on selection and reconnaissance of landing zones.

20. Comment, page V: 39.

a. You have recorded on 19 January the first obstacles were encountered. We ran into these in October 1962 and I make reference to them in paragraph 23 to enclosure (2).

21. I hope my comments will be of some value in elaborating on certain areas. I further hope the completed study gets to the field, in particular to helicopter groups that are continuing to grow and train so many new personnel.

R. L. RATHBUN

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MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 163  
 USS PRINCETON (LPH-5)  
 c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

001:RLR:rm1  
 15 Feb 1963

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NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONS

From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 1st Marine  
 Aircraft Wing, AirFMFPac, c/o FPO, San Francisco, California  
 Subj: Summary of HMM-163 Operations during period 16Sep62 to 11Jan63  
 Encl: (1) Captured document on Helicopter capabilities and limitations  
 (2) Helicopter Rescue Plan

1. This letter is a follow up to my first letter on operations in Soc Trang and is intended to apprise Marine Helicopter squadrons, and in particular helicopter squadrons scheduled for deployment overseas, of our operations in South Vietnam. It appears to be a long struggle in SVN and I expect we will be represented on the scene for quite some time. Consequently, I have attempted to portray some of the highlights of our operations during the last four months in Danang. Some ex-Senior and Junior School students may remember Danang by its other name, Touraine.

2. By certain standards I expect we are now supposed to be experts. However, this is far from the fact. We still have a lot to learn and must be constantly alert and continually modify our tactics to keep the VC of balance. We must also be prepared to cope with any increased anti-helicopter capability they may develop or attempt to introduce.

3. Our departure from Soc Trang was delayed by two weeks at the request of the III Corps Commander. This was due to a three phase offensive operation that was being conducted at the time.

4. We departed Soc Trang on 16 September with twelve aircraft loaded with engineering personnel and equipment. Our plan required us to be immediately operational upon landing at Danang. We had sent a forward echelon up the day before.

5. The flight up took a little over seven hours, with three scheduled refueling stops. We arrived in Danang during a lull in a tropical storm that had been centered off Danang for two days. There was still a steady downpour as we were greeted by our thoroughly drenched forward echelon. We learned the storms had been rather severe during the day and that portions of buildings had been torn off due to high winds.

ENCLOSURE (2)

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6. The Army Helicopter Company that we were relieving was unable to depart Da Nang as scheduled that day, so we were a little crowded in camp the first night.

7. The next day we were flying commitments, while the second twelve aircraft were inbound. Everybody was aboard by the evening of 17 September and we had our first 18 plane combat support group lift on 18 September. We were welcomed by the VC with one aircraft hit on the first mission.

8. I will spare you the details of our unpacking and resettlement problems which were numerous and frustrating. Let me say here that Colonel WHITT's boys and his GV's did a magnificent job in effecting the two-way switch. Years ago we wondered what we did before the helicopter, now I wonder the same of the GV aircraft. Everything we owned was moved by GV from Soc Trang, including MABS-16, Sub-Unit #2 and gear.

9. We were to conduct numerous resupply, medical evacuation and troop displacement lifts during the next four months, with a big decline in our combat support assault type missions. This was quite logical since the I Corps area included many isolated outpost positions that could only be resupplied by air drop or helicopter. ARVN troop units available for helicopter employment were at a premium and most Province and Sector Units (Self Defense Corps and Civil Guard Units) seemed to be tied up in local actions and outposts. This combined with the unfavorable and unpredictable weather and the channeled nature of the terrain contributed to the reduced number of assault type missions.

10. I expect the tempo of helo operations in the I Corps area to increase sharply starting in March, with the coming of more favorable weather. Other factors include assignment of a new Corps Commander, reduction of certain outpost commitments, experience gained in helo employment and the fact that an additional ARVN Regiment has completed its training cycle and has been designated "Operational".

11. The basic tactic of flying enroute at 1500 feet above the terrain whenever possible, still proved valid. There have been no significant changes in the enemy's capabilities, except reports that they have introduced three 12.7 MM (50 calibre) Russian heavy machine guns into the area, with an effective horizontal range of 6500 feet. We maintained the best plot we could from intelligence reports and avoided the areas. Up to now nobody has confirmed these positions by exposure. We were ticked several times when we had to fly low due to ridge lines or weather, and it was not uncommon to run into a fire fight at an outpost during resupply missions. Incidentally, outpost sites usually accommodated one to two helicopters and the surrounding real-estate was secure up to the range of their 4.2 mortars.

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12. Tactics used to approach and retire from landing zones were primarily dictated by the terrain. However, almost always we could approach the target behind existing terrain and drop into a hole with a reasonable amount of surprise. If we had a second run into the same zone, we could usually alter our approach route. We continually avoided any set or established patterns and would frequently approach from the back side and always from the least obvious avenue of approach. We have approached two nearby landing zones simultaneously from opposite directions. This complicated escort patterns, but can be worked out. At other times we would approach in a column of divisions (always three plus divisions) and break off alternate divisions into opposite landing zones. This technique also provided us with the desired separation between divisions landing in the same landing zone. We continue to advocate this separation, especially since landing zones are much easier to attack, or cover with fire from bunkered positions, than they were in the open bush area.

13. We frequently used pre-artillery and pre-air strikes whenever the situation was suitable for their employment. The artillery would usually consist of a battery of 105 mm and a platoon of 160 mm guns. We didn't have any opportunity to observe in detail we were allowed, so can't comment on its effectiveness. However, after use of their batteries, we almost had to shoot the landing due to a large herd of water buffalo in the middle of the landing zone. We they weren't that as an anti-helicopter obstacle. I am not convinced of the effectiveness of saturation patterns by artillery or air strikes in jungle or heavily wooded areas, however, future captured enemy documents or prisoners may clarify this point. We have planned very early landing hours when we wanted maximum surprise and did not use any kind of pre-strike. This was also done to avoid establishing a set pattern prior to helicopter landings.

14. For air strikes we used the F-28's, (usually two) and/or two A1's, and occasionally a single F-28 when we could get one. The A1's and F-28's carried a good load and could remain on station for subsequent runs by the helicopters. A typical A1 load was eight 151 500 lb and four 14, 100 lb GP with the four 50's up front. The F-28's had rockets and machine guns for close escort work and frogs for pre-strike work. Needless to say we used the F-28 for escort and the A1 for pre-strike work when we had both. I might mention on one occasion we were getting fire from the jungle during a run into the target and requested a firing run by the escort aircraft (F-28's). The run was requested at the 9 o'clock position close in ahead of the helicopters. In less than 30 seconds the first escort aircraft ran a string of 50's down the left side, followed by the number two aircraft having come rockets. Neither the lead division, which was in the ground, nor the accompanying division took a hit. We were using "foramite" F-28's which are flown by air force pilots with Vietnamese in the back seat. You can't get this kind of response from Vietnamese piloted F-28's because of the language barrier.

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It takes more time to explain what you want! The reason we got the suppression fire so fast from the F-28's was due to the fact that we have them stay in an ecliptical or race track pattern on both sides of the inbound and landing helicopters. Occasionally we positioned both escort aircraft on the same side when the threat to the landing is obviously from one side. While in these patterns, the escort aircraft continually made low dry passes or firing runs (if requested) along side the helicopter flight path.

✓ 15. We did not get a chance to work with the HU-1B armed helicopters the Army has been using down South. They carry 16 rockets and two .30 calibre machine guns. We should see some in the I Corps area later this year, as 1B are programmed into Vietnam. I still advocate our faster fixed wing close support concept and think fixed wing aircraft are more dreaded by the VC.

✓ 16. The aircraft held up beautifully, 2600 rpm and 56" manifold pressure were the rule rather than the exception. The landing gear held up exceptionally well in rough terrain under heavy loads. The electronics and avionics components did well as long as we had a hot box to keep the components dried out. No more serious tail rotor problems occurred, as discussed in my last letter. Of course maintenance is never an accident and I'll never overlook an opportunity to give full credit to the marvelous group of professionals we have in the engineering section.

✓ 17. We now have ASC 229 installed, which is 150# of aluminum armor plate hung directly to the rear and beneath the clam shell engine compartment doors. This ASC is designed to provide protection to the oil cooling systems. (tank, cooler, etc.) This 150# represents one troop, or 20 troops in a normal flight of 20 aircraft. It's hard to say where the point of no return starts when you start installing armor to protect vulnerable components or systems.

✓ 18. I can't say much about the M-60 machine guns. We rarely saw the enemy when we are being fired upon and after the first division has dropped its troops in the landing zones, succeeding divisions cannot use their guns for suppressive fire while in the zone.

✓ 19. We are now using the Armalite for the co-pilot. It is conveniently carried butt down, in a pocket to the right of the co-pilot where he can readily employ it. Its advantages are light weight, short barrel for ease in handling in the cockpit, high muzzle velocity, and good shock power and rate of fire against fleeting targets.

20. It just occurred to me it might be well to train for a downed or crippled aircraft condition in the landing zone. I can recall three occasions when we had to leave the aircraft in the landing zone and evacuate the crews under fire. We advocate the wingman or division

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leader, as appropriate, using the downed aircraft as a shield against incoming fire while evacuating the crew. If the last plane in a division was hit, the succeeding division could make the pick-up. If tail end Charlie got it, the division leader would go back in. Of course no firm practice can be established. We used this technique against rifle fire and not automatic weapons. The use of this technique for crew rescue would depend upon the number of troops already in the landing zone that could be used to protect the crew and the type of fire being received. Under some circumstances of heavy fire it would be best to have the troops protect the crew and secure the area with air strikes etc., before attempting to evacuate the crew. However, during a withdrawal operation this would become increasingly difficult.

21. As you know our loss of a helicopter on 6 October 1962, was particularly tragic. Tragic in that we lost so many of our own people and that it occurred in the most inaccessible area possible as far as being able to effect rescue operations, even with the helicopter. We depended heavily on the endurance, skill and determination of the ARVN troops that were landed nearby to negotiate the terrain and bring out the survivors as well as assist the Medical Officer and Corpsman that we were able to drop in at the scene of the accident. However, we learned that we had over estimated all of their capabilities and as a result developed and equipped our own rescue teams with personnel organic to the squadron and MABS-16 Sub-Unit #3. I have enclosed the plan and it is self-explanatory. It was a lesson learned when working with allied troops.

22. We have not used the "Eagle" concept of an airborne reserve (which was designed to block fleeing troops) in this area because it is not practical in jungle terrain. We have used a "Tiger" concept, whereby we had four aircraft in an alert status along with troops which were pre-staged at pick-up sites where they could be employed fast and exploit an enemy attack while it was in progress, i.e. outpost being overrun or a train being attacked. It hasn't been practicable to tie up four aircraft for this purpose because outposts are usually attacked at night and word of a train attack too slow in coming.

23. I have mentioned staked landing zones which we continued to run into in this area. For this reason we usually desire an alternate plan or landing zone of possible. As I mentioned in my last letter the stakes are partially effective against helicopter landings if the pattern of the stakes precludes landing with your tail between them. Care must be taken not to swing the tail on landing or take off.

24. Some of our troop landings were made for the purpose of positioning troops in a blocking role in conjunction with other infantry or APC 113 thrusts. In these cases we would encourage and advocate the use of ridge lines. Although the landing areas were more precarious and usually

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small, we could approach the landing zone in a careful manner without the VC looking down our throats from surrounding hillsides.

25. Whenever possible reconnaissance was done visually. In most areas it was not uncommon to have aircraft overhead coming or going to outposts. We could make a dummy run to an outpost in the area and conduct the reconnaissance enroute. Again in order to avoid a pattern we have used HU-1A's, OE's, Otters, C-123's, T-28's, CA-1, and the HUS-1 for this purpose. When using the T-28, we would schedule an air strike in an adjacent area, and performed the reconnaissance during the air strike.

26. Although some of the VC tactics are rather primitive; like the sounding hole with 50° sides like a water glass  which they use to detect the direction of approaching helicopters, they are not ignorant or untrained in the employment and capabilities of helicopters. I have included a captured document to prove my point. Paragraph 7, of this document mentions we need 3 hours of maintenance for every 2 flight hours; we were actually using 4-1 in Danang. We learned that they were not giants behind every tree, but they would show up where least expected and should never be underestimated.

27. The weather has been our nemesis during the past four months. It is very difficult to predict with patches of heavy ground fog in the mountain valleys and heavy rain. During one 6 day period we had 16 inches of rain. The amount of cloud cover would dictate how soon the ground fog would burn off, it would sometimes lay in pockets in the mountain areas for days and hamper resupply and troop lifts, although the coastal area would be clear. We learned we had to take off and try to get into the sites, even though it looked hopeless. However, the weather would frequently open up for short periods of time. Of course this rapidly changing weather could also trap you if you weren't careful. On one occasion our pilots had to climb out on top at one minute intervals to 7500 feet. They were brought down on a surveillance radar approach from 10,000 feet to Danang. This is no problem if your pilots are trained. Get them on actual instruments whenever possible, it can pay off! A specific weather analysis is included in CTE 79.3.3.6 report Ser 00163 on Helicopter tactics and techniques dated 10 Jan 63 which was distributed to all Helicopter Groups.

28. Altitude was no particular problem at this time of the year. The highest site we worked was 3800 feet. The RAL's at Santa Ana proved to be a good training area for anything we have run into out here.

29. Navigation continues to be as easy as your ability to read a map. Don't depend on radio aids or prominent terrain features. Generally the maps are good, although some areas show only ridge lines and rivers with no contour information.

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30. The three OE's provided by WIC-2 are doing a fine job and keeping busy. They are on continuous reconnaissance missions and have photographed the majority of the outpost sites for us. We use them on all troop lifts to report weather conditions in the landing zones. This frequently requires that they remain on station for extended periods during marginal weather and keep us advised on a "go", "no go", or delay in H-hour.

31. The weather pilots responsibility is very important because quite often we have had to delay H-hour due to weather. When in his judgment the weather was suitable for both helicopters and support aircraft, he would so advise the tactical command post for confirmation of a new H-hour and coordination of artillery and the ASOC (Air Support Operations Center) for coordination of the support aircraft. We could usually reset to a new L-hour between 1 and 1½ hours depending on the distance to the target.

32. During troop lifts we also used the OE as a radio relay aircraft, which permitted us to remain in almost continuous radio communication with our home base.

33. Briefly, the statistics for our stay in RVN during the period 1 August 1962 to 11 January 1963 were as follows:

Total hours - 10,557

HUS - 9,053

OE - 1,092

R4D - 410

Sorties - 15,200

Total pass - 59,084

Admin - 33,808

Assault- 25,216

Cargo - 1,114 tons

Med Evacs - 535

A/C hits - 32

34. Our relief by HMM-162 was accomplished much the same as we relieved HMM-332 in August. Basically forward echelons layed the ground work followed by incremental relief of personnel over a period of a week by

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GV aircraft. A fully operational capability was maintained at both ends without interruption.

35. We are now located at Futema with 16 aircraft. We have 6 aircraft and crews aboard the USS ALMO, an LSD operating out of Cabi Point in the Philippines. They are filling the gap until the arrival of the USS PRINCETON around 21 February when we will go aboard from here with 16 aircraft and assume the 7th Fleet commitment. The 6 aircraft and crews in Cabi Point will be returned to Futema and support the 3d Division requirements.

36. There is an excellent Special Report on SVN (now referred to as RVN, Republic of Vietnam) in the Pacific Command, Weekly Intelligence Digest, Number 4-63, dated 25 January 1963, that should be read by anyone scheduled for duty in RVN.

R. L. RATHERSON

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PARTY COMMISSARIATE

- 17 -

TO: All units and administrative Units

SUBJECT: Comments on Countering Heliborne Landings and Raids.

Profiting from the French experiences in Algiers and the English experiences in Malaya, the USA has made extensive use of surprise heliborne raids against our units and rear areas. A striking example of US employment of these tactics was seen recently in the Binh Tay Operation (Western South Vietnam).

It can be said that all the recent augmentations of forces that the USA has sent to the Diem government were primarily intended to strengthen the Diem rear area forces, increase their ability to pass information rapidly and the wide employment of helicopters in the movement of troops. Therefore if we can destroy or greatly reduce the enemy's heliborne capability we will, in essence, have destroyed the mobility necessary to the US raid tactics.

Although we have succeeded in inflicting some loss on the enemy in his heliborne operations the enemy has in some places caused us fairly heavy losses. We must therefore find means of coping with the enemy's helicopter tactics. Widespread efforts must be directed to combatting heliborne landings and shooting at helicopters. Following are the advantages which the enemy enjoys due to his employment of heliborne strike tactics:

1. Careful planning and preparations are possible together with complete mobility in an attack, support or relieving role.
2. Secrecy can be preserved and surprise strikes can be accomplished.
3. Landings can be effected deep into our rear areas with the capability to attack and withdraw rapidly.
4. An appropriate means of destroying our forces while they are still weak.

However these tactics offer the following disadvantages:

1. The population in our rear areas is on our side and will resist the enemy in every way.
2. Small forces are usually employed by the enemy in their deep strikes and if counterattacked may find it difficult to withdraw.
3. Heliborne operations require the latest information (old info may have lost its timeliness and new info must be checked for accuracy. If the time is taken to acquire confirmatory info then the situation may have changed rendering the info inaccurate).
4. The enemy's strike elements are usually unfamiliar with the

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terrain and can easily be surrounded and rapidly defeated.

5. The present available helicopters prevent the enemy from employing large forces (although this is only a temporary disadvantage it will take the enemy some time before he will be able to overcome it.)

6. The effectiveness of heliborne tactics is greatly reduced in forested and jungle covered mountain areas where a clear knowledge of the nature of the terrain cannot be discerned from the air, where landings are difficult and ambushes easily employed against the landings.

7. The disadvantages inherent in helicopters are difficult to overcome. If they are flown slow or low they are vulnerable to ground fire; every flying hour must be complemented by 3 hours of ground maintenance; they cannot be flown for more than 70 hours in any 2 or 3 days (TN: Obvious typographical or technical error. 10 hours in 2 or 3 days seems appropriate); the helicopter consumes much fuel, carrying a full load of troops its fuel capacity is reduced and as a consequence its range is reduced, as a result the starting point for heliborne operations is usually near the objective and thus the enemy's element of surprise can be compromised. A landing right within our position is the most effective, but is also subject to coming under our firepower while a landing outside of our position, though avoiding our firepower loses the element of surprise.

#### SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM.

Based on the above listed advantages and disadvantages of heliborne strikes and from our experiences with enemy heliborne operations in the South, we propose the following principles to contend with this enemy capability:

1. Our rear areas are weak and small and they can, through the use of heliborne tactics, become the enemy's front line at anytime so we must develop a widespread development of guerrilla forces in these areas and the deeper in our rear areas the stronger these forces must be. If we succeed in the widespread development of strong guerrilla forces in our rear areas, the enemy, despite his initiative in choosing the point of attack will, on landing find that he has landed in a hornet's nest of guerrillas ready to fight him and he may find himself in danger of being surrounded. Moreover (and this is sufficiently strong to prevent them from landing forces).

2. The enemy can make a heliborne landing at any time and any place in Southern South VN and particularly in cleared heavily populated areas at which time they can inflict heavy losses on US (particularly when they are landing they will fire at anything that moves to protect their landing parties). Therefore we must instruct the people that they must prepare positions in which they can safeguard their lives and property. These foxholes must be prepared at any place that they are likely to go.

Our armed and para-military forces as well as the masses must have

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self protective plans ready and the people must realize that though a heliborne operation can be launched in their very midst that helicopters have many inherent weaknesses.

3. Our district and higher units and installations are the main targets of enemy heliborne operations so they must be mobile, properly trained and equipped to oppose the enemy. Our installations and units must not become fixed to any specific location: For example units and installations in the lowlands must be moved once every week or ten days. Units or installations in the highlands must be moved frequently. Locations must be selected with an eye to defense, concealment, offense and routes of withdrawal. On arrival in a new area the unit or installation must deploy immediately and be prepared to resist an attack, prepare defensive positions and avoid unnecessary concentrations. Headquarters must establish overall defensive plans based on a perimeter defense or mutual supporting fire between separate positions to prevent enemy landings within our position and difficult for him to surround. Our dispositions should also be made so that a counter strike can be mounted by the attacked forces if the situation permits. Displacements must be made within the framework of an overall plan at specified times and to specified areas to insure that scattered forces can be concentrated rapidly.

4. Counter Intelligence Measures, strengthening of internal organization and the diligent elimination of local spies must be implemented. Enemy heliborne operations are dependent on the latest info, transmitted by the most rapid means, so we must exercise careful controls and particularly eliminate spies carrying communications equipment. Boats must be carefully inspected because the enemy may secrete radios in them. Passengers on common carriers and private conveyances must be carefully checked and we must avoid locating our forces in positions near communications axis where spies can easily maintain surveillance and rapidly transmit their info. Persons known to be in frequent proximity to GVN post must be carefully checked for communications equipment.

5. Camouflage must be stressed to mislead the enemy and positions must be selected in heavily wooded areas which are difficult for the enemy to approach or attack.

6. Armed and para-military and self defense forces must be trained in shooting at helicopters and other aircraft. Training must be given immediately in anti-heliborne tactics. Experiences gained from our defeats and victories against heliborne operations will be disseminated for instructional purposes.

7. When the enemy conducts an airborne strike against an area, the people must, without panicking rapidly secure their valuables and themselves and maintain surveillance over the enemy's actions and attitudes and determine when the moment is opportune to conduct political activities and troop propogandization among the enemy's troops. When the enemy lands he is expecting resistance from the local populace so if they resist at that moment they may suffer serious losses.

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Village guerrillas will instead, with their rudimentary armament, attempt to reduce the enemy's capability and harass them when they are eating or sleeping so that on the following day they will be unable to continue their attack and bring their operation to a rapid halt or provide proper conditions for a counterattack by our own main force units. If attacked, the district, province and main force units will resist to defend themselves. Will, if conditions permit, fire at the helicopters when they approach, engage his forces when they land, resist him as he advances and pursue him when he withdraws. Any unit can engage the enemy's airborne attacks but they must attack rapidly, achieve a rapid decision, withdraw rapidly, have adequate firepower and be trained in active anti-aircraft measures.

8. The withdrawal is an important phase of the resistance. Because the enemy can attack anywhere at any time we must know how to withdraw. Do not withdraw across open areas and withdraw under supporting fire. If we succeed in drawing the battle out till the hours of darkness we must not think that our withdrawal can be made with impunity because the enemy has employed booby traps, mines, ambushing forces or interdiction fire to block our withdrawal.

9. Attacks must be organized against enemy helicopters by luring them into our prepared positions. Areas where forces and firepower can be effectively concentrated should be organized for anti-helicopter defense (based on the enemy's helicopter capabilities). A method which can be employed is to surround and attack an enemy installation and deploy the majority of our local forces to engage the helicopter reinforcements as they land. (The selected area should be one in which our deployment can be effectively made and in which the enemy can effect helicopter landings. In addition, because the enemy may not land their troops in cleared areas, but instead lower them by lines from helicopters to avoid our ambush. Our deployments must be mobile in nature to meet enemy landings by this means. In addition the deployment of our local forces in positions to attack the helicopters will provide support for the forces attacking the enemy's fixed position and support the withdrawal of those forces. This deployment will also serve to mislead the enemy's spies as to the true nature of our disposition. The target selected should be a small post far enough away from enemy supporting forces to require the use of helicopter forces to relieve it.

Prior reconnaissance must be made of helicopter landing fields in towns and cities in order to select positions to employ mortars and other weapons against them or to determine means of employing our special mission personnel to destroy the enemy's helicopters.

10. Following the enemy's withdrawal we must approach the battle area with caution. The enemy have been known to booby trap an area prior to withdrawing and have, as a consequence, caused us some losses. The police of the battle field must be carefully organized and employ all military, para-military and civilian manpower in order to search out and disarm the enemy's booby traps.

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Above are some opinions and principles which units and organizations can employ in preparing plans to safeguard our forces against enemy attacks.

COMMENT I CORPS G2 ADVISOR: Above document was seized during Operation NGO QUYEN V on 16 Nov Vicinity AT9310.

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