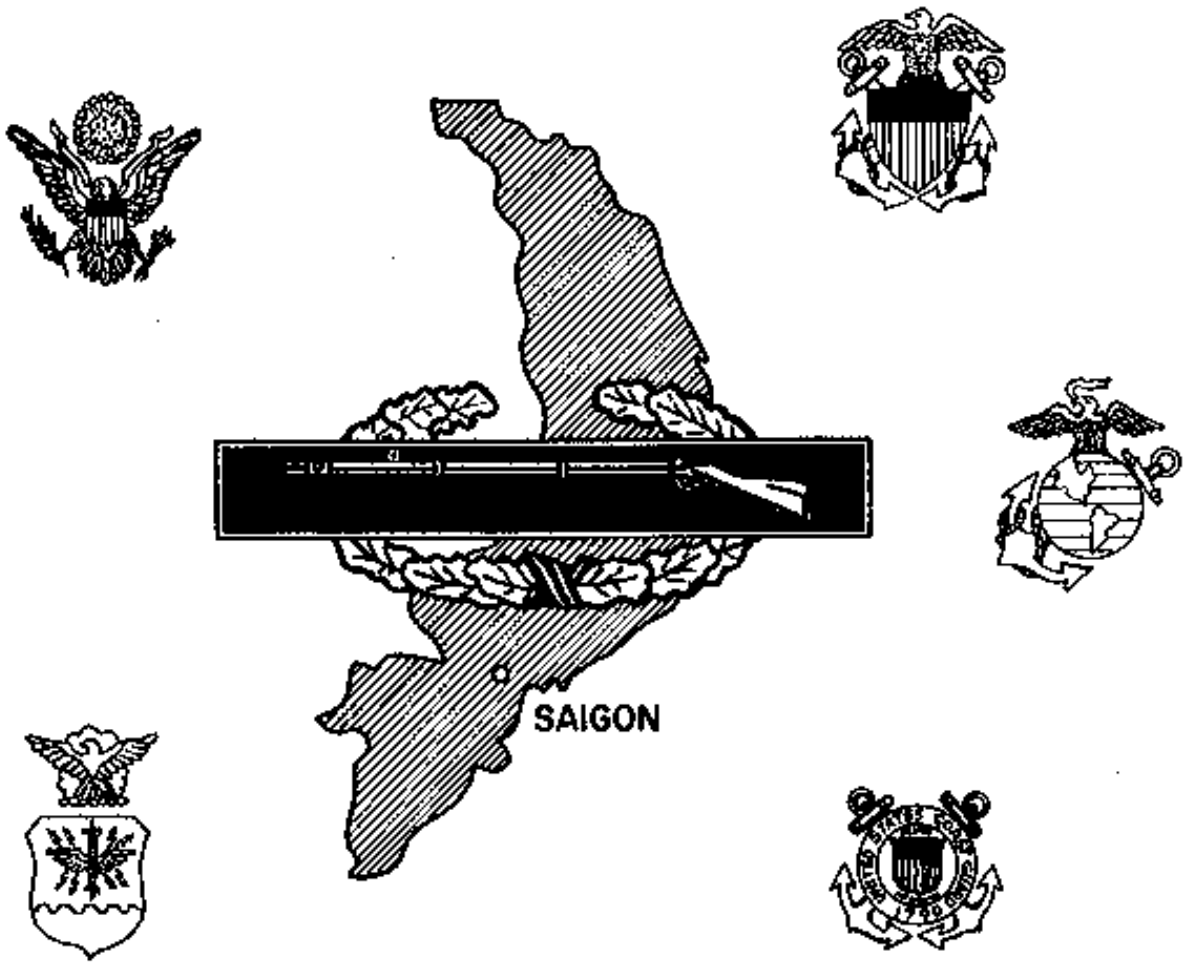
HANDBOOK
FOR US FORCES IN VIETNAM



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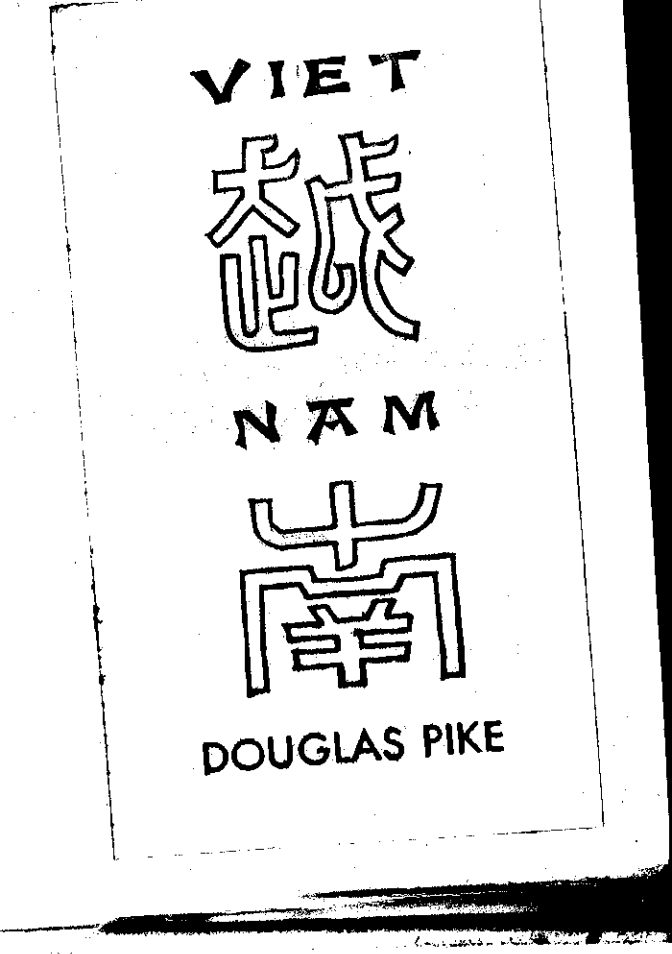

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FOREWORD

The enemy we face in South Vietnam today is challenging us with many old fighting techniques and a few new ones. We have shown that both his regular and guerrilla forces can and will be defeated.

This handbook summarizes certain basic techniques and procedures which have evolved out of several years of combat operations against the enemy. When followed, the guidance contained in the handbook will increase the effectiveness of our forces and preclude repetition of past mistakes.

The importance and value of the training given to each member of the Armed Forces prior to entering combat is demonstrated clearly in the results of every action. This handbook provides valuable lessons learned for incorporation into individual and unit training programs.

This handbook is not the last word. Each of us must continue to display imagination, resourcefulness and ingenuity in our combat actions.

W. C. WESTMORELAND
General, United States Army
Commanding

HANDBOOK FOR U.S. FORCES IN VIETNAM

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CHAPTER 1

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FORCES

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) has been harassed by Communist instigated guerrilla warfare since it first obtained independence from France. More recently the Republic has suffered from open aggression from the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). In order to meet this threat the government has committed a major portion of its human and material resources to defeating the Viet Cong and the NVA. At the same time, it has attempted to provide its rural peoples with the economic and social becefits of development. Free World military and economic assistance programs are designed to support the efforts of the Vietnamese government and peoples toward both of these objectives.

SECTION I. THE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

1. General

Political power in the Government of Vietnam (GVN) is concentrated at the national level. The National Leadership Council is the key policy making body. It is composed of ten generals and ten civilians headed by a chairman; he is also the Chief of State. The Prime Minister is the real head of the government and is chairmen of the Central Executive Committee or Cabinet. The Prime Minister is responsible for all government operations. The full ministers and Secretaries of State who make up the Cabinet develop the policies which are passed to the lower echelons of the government structure.

2. Divisions of Government

The first level of government below the Saigon Central Government is the Corps. There are four Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ), each headed by a general who is both the Corps Commander and the head of the government (See Appendix VII). He functions in a military and administrative capacity. Corps headquarters

is concerned primarily with tactical operations. Therefore, not all instructions originating at the national level pass through the corps headquarters. Routine administrative instructions from the various ministers in Saigon normally go directly to the province chief, who is the next lower echelon of government. There are 44 provinces in the country. The next subdivision of government is the district, each of which is divided into 8 to 12 villages. Each village consists of 4 to 6 hamlets. Historically the village and hamlet have been the most important element of local government and efforts are underway to restore them to this role. At the present time, however, the district is more important.

SECTION II. THE ARMED FORCES

3. General

The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) consists of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF), the Vietnamese Navy (VNN), the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC), and the Regional Forces and Popular Forces (RF/PF). Each of these elements has a specific role in the overall strategy for defeating the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) main force units, the VC local force units, and the guerrillas. In conjunction with the role of defeating enemy forces all components of the RVNAF are employed in support of the Revolutionary Development program.

4. Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

a. The ARVN is primarily an infantry force, consisting of 10 infantry divisions plus separate infantry airborne, ranger, and armor units. The ARVN conducts offensive operations, such as search and destroy operations against VC/NVA main force units, and securing operations. ARVN units may be committed to defend key installations or supply and communications routes. ARVN participates in and contributes to the Revolutionary Development program. All operations are coordinated closely with the local Government of Vietnam (GVN) officials to insure that the operations support local efforts and do not endanger the programs of other government forces or agencies.

b. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) advisory teams work with all ARVN forces, normally down to battalion level. These advisors provide a ready point of contact in coordinating combined operations with United States and Free World Military Assistance Forces (US/FWMAF).

5. Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF)

a. The VNAF includes five tactical wings, each of which is composed of a variable number of fighters, helicopters and transport squadrons. Three of the composite wings are organized identically, each being assigned a fighter squadron, a liaison squadron, and a helicopter squadron. The fourth wing has two fighter squadrons and a liaison squadron, but is lacking a helicopter squadron. One of these wings is assigned to each of the Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ). The fifth wing provides general support. It is assigned three transport squadrons, one helicopter squadron, and a reconnaissance squadron. Fighter squadrons can engage designated targets with a combination of general purpose, fragmentation, concussion, incendiary, delayed action, and fire (napalm) bombs, rockets, and 20mm cannon fire. The transport squadrons provide a capability for air dropping troops, equipment and supplies, flare drops for illumination of target areas in support of offensive air strikes and ground operations, and for air movement of troops, supplies, equipment, and officials. The liaison squadrons are capable of performing forward air control, visual reconnaissance, psychological warfare operations, and other liaison functions. Helicopter squadrons furnish a limited capability for medical evacuation and air movement of troops, equipment, and supplies throughout the RVN.

b. MACV advisors work with the VNAF at all echelons, often accompanying them on missions. They provide a ready point of contact for liaison or coordination.

6. Vietnamese Navy (VNN)

a. The VNN is primarily a defensive force, consisting of a small sea fleet for off-shore counter-infiltration surveillance from the 17th parallel to the Cambodian border, a fleet of junks organized into 27 coastal groups for patrolling inshore coastal waters, and a river assault force for inland waterway operations.

The river assault force is organized into thirteen river assault groups (RAGs). Each RAG is capable of transporting one battalion of the RVNAF by water.

b. MACV advisors work with the VNN fleet, coastal groups, and river assault groups. They provide a point of contact for joint and combined operations.

7. Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC)

a. The VNMC is a separate service consisting of one Marine Brigade composed of six infantry battalions, an artillery battalion and an amphibious support battalion. The VNMC has the assigned mission of conducting "Amphibious operations to assist in the counterinsurgency effort". The VNMC Brigade is part of the General Reserve and is part of the General Staff (JGS) of the RVNAF in any of the Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ).

b. MACV advisors work with VNMC units, often accompanying them on missions. They provide o ready point of contact for joint and combined operations.

8. Regional Forces (Province and District Forces)

a. The Regional Forces (RF) are a nationally administered military force assigned to and under the operational control of the sector commander (province chief). The basic combat unit of the RF is the infantry company, though in all provinces there are also a number of RF mechanized platoons, and intelligence platoons and squads. In some provinces, RF River Patrol Companies are organized.

b. Normally, the RF unit is recruited locally, placed under the operational control of the sector or subsector commander (province or district chief), and habitually employed in the same general area. The primary missions given to RF units are to annihilate VC guerrilla forces and destroy VC infrastructure, secure key installations and communication routes, to protect the population, and to provide a subsector reserve for assisting village and hamlet defense forces. When ARVN or Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) units

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are operating in an area where RF are located, the RF can often contribute to the success of the operation through the direct participation of forces and their detailed knowledge of the local terrain and people.

9. Popular Forces (Village and Hamlet Forces)

a. The Popular Forces (PF) are a nationally administered military force organized and operated at the village and hamlet level and consist of infantry platoons and squads. The PF are commanded by their own noncommissioned officer leaders who are responsible, through their village chiefs, to the district chiefs. PF members are full-time volunteers recruited and employed within their native villages and hamlets with the primary mission of destroying VC infrastructure, protecting public security and maintaining law and order, protecting bases, lines of communication, and their own families and property. Though legally this force may be supplemented with draftees, its primary motivation stems from the fact that its members are recruited from the villages and hamlets in which they are stationed and in which their families live.

b. Because PF units are small, lightly armed and limited in training, their combat capability is restricted to local operations in the form of patrols and ambushes. The basic concept of employment is for village platoons and hamlet squads to defend their own areas with the inter-village platoons providing responsive reinforcement. Occasionally, PF units may participate in operations with other forces. Such operations normally are undertaken to reinforce, support or relieve a village, hamlet or outpost under attack or to destroy local VC forces. The PF provide valuable assistance during operations by acting as guides, by protecting flanks, by providing a rear guard and by direct combat participation.

10. Paramilitary Forces

Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) have been organized throughout RVN. US Army Special Forces (USASF) personnel and Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB) personnel work with the CIDG, assisting and advising in all phases of operations.

11. RVNAF Logistics Support

a. At the present time, the logistic system for RVNAF is Technical Service oriented. There are five technical services (Ordnance, Signal, Quartermaster, Engineer, and Medical) that provide common item support to the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. A sixth service, the Transportation Agency, provides Transportation services to RVNAF, with no material responsibility. The activities of these technical services are directed by the Commander, Central Logistics Command, RVNAF. The commanders of the Air Force and Navy have installations under their command which provide logistic support peculiar to aircraft and naval vessels, respectively.

b. In addition to the technical services, the Commander, Central Logistics Command, directs the Central Procurement Office. The Central Procurement Office provides a medium for procuring major supplies and services for all technical services and items peculiar to Air Force and Navy requirements from in-country resources. The technical services, Area Logistic Commands (ALCs) and the Navy and Air Force also have limited procurement authority.

c. The five ALCs are actually the heart of the RVNAF field logistical system, with various field depots, general support units, and direct support units which provide logistic support to the Corps Tactical Zones and to the Capital Military District. Support is provided on an area basis. The ALC boundaries are not the same as the Corps boundaries in all cases. The ALCs support ARVN, VNAF, VNMC and VNN on common service items, and paramilitary and PWNAF on designated items.

SUMMARY

The Vietnamese have paid heavily in their long struggle against the Communist insurgents. Despite the cost, they retain their determination to be victorious. We are assisting them in all their efforts-military, economic, and political - wherever we can: in the field, with the rural people, and at

the military and governmental headquarters. Success will depend ultimately upon the effectiveness of our joint efforts.

CHAPTER 2

COMMAND & CONTROL

US/FWMAF

1. General

The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) is being assisted in its fight against Communist aggression by other Free World countries of which the US is providing the majority of assistance. The assistance takes the form of combat elements, combat support elements, combat service support elements and economic support to the military and civilian populace of SVN. The relationship of United States/Free World Military Assistance Forces/Republic of Vietnam (US/FWMAF/RVN) is one of individual sovereignty and combined coordination and cooperation, with the RVN having the final authority.

2. US Military Organization, Vietnam (Figure 1)

a. Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) is the overall commander of US Forces in Vietnam. His staff works in close coordination with the Joint General Staff (JGS) of RVN and the FWMAF staff to establish overall policy, guidance and tactics to combat the enemy forces.

b. Assisting COMUSMACV in the control, administration, and logistical support of the armed forces in Vietnam are his three component commanders. The component commander for US Army Forces Vietnam (USARV) is located at Tan Son Nhut. The component commander for the Air Force located at Tan Son Nhut is CG, 7th Air Force who is also the Deputy COMUSMACV for Air Operations. The component commander for Naval Forces (CNFV) is located in Saigon.

c. The operational control of the US ground force within the Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) is vested in the senior US military officer within that CTZ. In the I CTZ the CG, III Marine Amphibious Force is the senior officer responsible for the operations of all US ground forces within the CTZ and the coordination of these operations with other FWMAFs and RVNAF. The CG, III MAF is located at Danang. With similar responsibilities for II CTZ is the CG, I Field Force Vietnam (I FFORCEV) located at Nha Trang. In the III CTZ is the CG, II Field Force Vietnam (II FFORCEV), located at Long Binh. The IV CTZ does not have a Field Force Commander designated. In each of the CTZs the Force Commanders, and in IV CTZ the Senior Army Advisor is the senior US Military Advisor who coordinates with and advises the RVNAF Corps Commander.

d. The Commander, 7th Air Force, as component commander, controls 7th Air Force elements and coordinates other air functions provided by Commander, 7th Fleet; Commander, 13th Air Force, CG, III MAF; and commander, VNAF. Seventh Air Force provides fixed-wing tactical airlift support through the Commander, 834th Air Division. The Seventh Air Force also provides an advisory group to the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF).

e. The Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam (CNFV) controls and coordinates the coastal and river surveillance forces that assist the Vietnamese Navy (VNN) in patrolling the coastal and river waterways.

f. The US Army has advisory groups in all of the CTZs. At each echelon of the RVNAF there is an Army Advisory Officer with a small staff. These advisors provide a ready point of contact in coordinating combined operations.

g. The US Army Special Forces Group is under operational control of COMUSMACV. The headquarters for the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) (5SFG) is at Nha Trang. Normally the Special Forces teams when deployed come under the operational control of the US Force Commander or Senior Advisor in the appropriate CTZ.

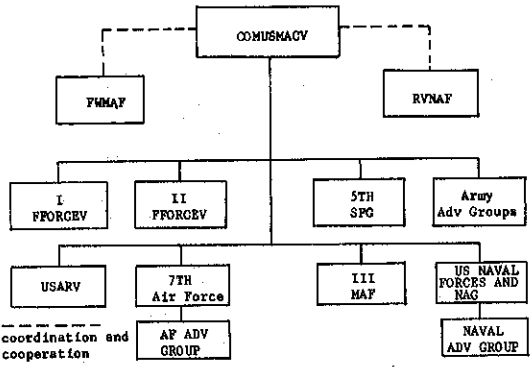

Figure 1

3. Free World Military Assistance Force

a. Other Free World Nations beside the US provide assistance to Vietnam in its fight against Communist aggression. At the present time there are 8 countries in addition to the US that are contributing combat forces, Military Advisors and medical support to RVN. More Free World countries are offering token economic aid to indicate their moral backing for the Vietnamese. Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF), cooperate and coordinate their operations with the Joint General Staff (JGS) at the national level and the RVN Corps Commanders within the CTZs. The FWMAF headquarters is located in Saigon.

b. The Republic of Korea provides two Divisions (the Capital and White Horse Divisions), one Marine Brigade and the 100th

Logistical Command to the support of Vietnam. The Australian Armed Forces are represented by a brigade and an air element. The Dominion of New Zealand provides one artillery battery.

c. Other countries contributing personnel and services are: Republic of the Philippines, Spain, Republic of China, Thailand and the Federal Republic of Germany.

CHAPTER 3

NVA/VC

INTRODUCTION

The NVA/VC is well trained, organized, and equipped for his mission. He employs the tactics of the guerrilla because they suit his means. NVA/VC forces sometimes lack uniforms, but in most cases their weapons are modern and effective. If he is prepared to fight, or has good reason, he will stay and fight. But frequently when hit hard, he will break into small groups and melt away. On occasion he travels with his family and is not above using women and children to cover his withdrawal, leaving them to fend for themselves. He digs in well and uses concealed tunnels and bunkers extensively. He moves mostly at night and prefers to fight under cover of darkness. Normally, he will not attack unless he has great superiority. The NVA/VC is smart but far from unbeatable -- even on his own ground.

SECTION I. MILITARY ORGANIZATION

1. General

a. The Viet Cong military organization is an integral part of the communist apparatus under the direction of the Government of North Vietnam which controls every aspect of VC activity within the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). Each VC political headquarters at hamlet, village, district and province level includes a military component which exercises some control over Viet Cong military units assigned to its area of jurisdiction.

b. The Central Office, South Vietnam (COSVN) is the highest VC headquarters within the RVN. It translates directives of the North Vietnamese Communist Party (Lao Dong Party) into specific orders to subordinate elements for the political subversion and military conquest of South Vietnam. COSVN in addition to exercising direct control over certain units has overall responsibility for VC military operations in South Vietnam. Under COSVN are six military regions. The military region is a political headquarters with a closely integrated military component which directs military operations of VC units subordinate to it. At the province and district levels, the VC political and military structure resembles but does not coincide with the geographic organization of the Government of South Vietnam (GVN). For example, the Viet Cong divide South Vietnam into 37 provinces whereas there are 44 GVN provinces plus the Capital Military District within the Republic. The VC organizational technique subordinates the military to the political and promotes unity of effort and is patterned after the system used in North Vietnam.

2. Military Units

a. Military units are divided into three general categories: Combat, Combat Support and Militia. The combat units consist of three distinct types of military forces: North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces (units infiltrated into South Vietnam), VC main forces and VC local forces.

(1) NVA infiltration began in early 1965 and reached a total of nineteen regiments (four confirmed and one probable division) as of mid-September 1966. One NVA division, the 324B, invaded directly through the DMZ in June 1966 as opposed to the other NVA units which infiltrated through Laos and Cambodia to form divisions in-country. An NVA unit is one which is formed, trained and designated by North Vietnam as an NVA unit, and composed completely or primarily of North Vietnamese. Some native South Vietnamese may be assigned to this unit as filler or replacement personnel.

(2) VC main forces are those units directly subordinate to COSVN or to the military regions in RVN. They

may be found as division, regimental, battalion or separate company sized units. They are trained and equipped better than VC local forces. Their leadership consists of experienced and dedicated communist personnel with long experience in guerrilla warfare.

(3) VC local forces are organized in units up to battalion size and normally are subordinate to an individual VC province or district. Their operational area usually is defined by territorial boundaries.

b. VC combat support forces form a category which has been designated by the RVN military authorities as VC headquarters personnel and special combat support units such as communication, engineer, reconnaissance and food production elements which are not assigned to a particular VC combat unit.

c. VC militia are subdivided into three types of irregular forces: guerrilla, self-defense and secret self-defense.

(1) The most important militia forces are the full time local guerrilla units. They are used to harass friendly units, conduct assassinations, and other acts of terrorism and sabotage. However, they do participate in actions in conjunction with local or main forces when the latter operate within their areas. They are used as guides, porters and rear guard riflemen in this supporting role.

(2) VC self-defense and secret self-defense forces are part time irregulars primarily responsible for local security and for providing early warning of approaching enemy forces. Such defense forces rarely exceed a squad size. The self-defense units normally are found in VC controlled areas while the secret self-defense units are found in contested or RVN controlled areas.

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3. Organization for Combat

a. NVA forces operating in South Vietnam are organized into battalions, regiments and divisions. The NVA division consists of three infantry regiments, combat support, and combat service support elements. The NVA infantry regiment (Figure 2) consists of three infantry battalions and combat support elements. Each infantry battalion (Figure 3) is composed of three infantry companies (Figure 4) and command and signal elements. The strength of the NVA infantry battalion operating in South Vietnam is approximately 600. NVA forces are equipped with CHICOM/Soviet weapons including carbines, machine guns, recoilless rifles, mortars, and antiaircraft machine guns.

b. VC Main Force units are patterned after NVA forces and follow the triangular concept. They are formed into companies, battalions, regiments and divisions. Unlike their NVA counterparts, most VC Main Force units are armed with a mix of Communist block, German, French, and US weapons. The strength of a VC Main Force infantry battalion is approximately 500, the company, approximately 120.

c. NVA/VC Local Force battalions consist of from two to six infantry companies and combat support elements. Their strength and composition varies in accordance with the availability of manpower, weapons, and cadre. The strength of VC Local Force battalions currently operating in the field is estimated to average 420; companies range in strength from 80 to 130. Local Force units are equipped with a variety of foreign weapons, and locally produced mines, and grenades.

d. VC military units vary considerably in strength and equipment, depending on location, availability of food and recruits, and the degree of control exercised by the VC over the surrounding territory. Irregular units usually are encountered in platoon or squad strength, although special VC guerrilla operations may require only 2 to 5 men

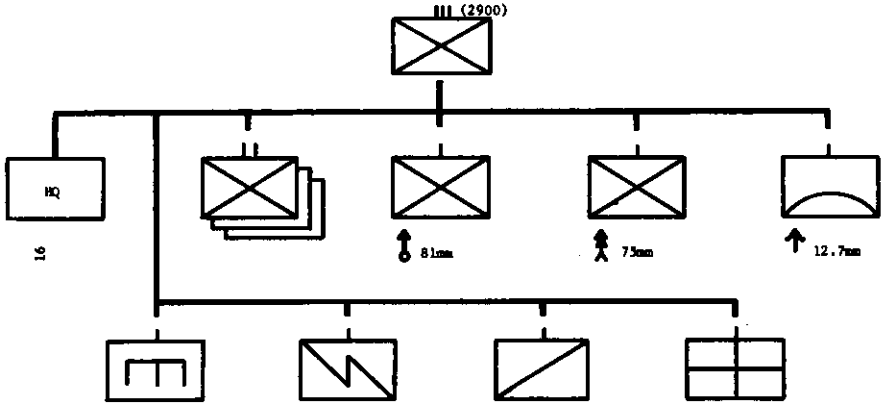

FIGURE 2

TYPE NVA/VC INFANTRY REGIMENT

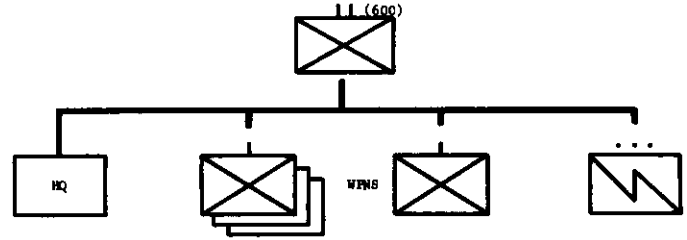

FIGURE 3

TYPE NVA/VC INFANTRY BATTALION, INFANTRY REGIMENT

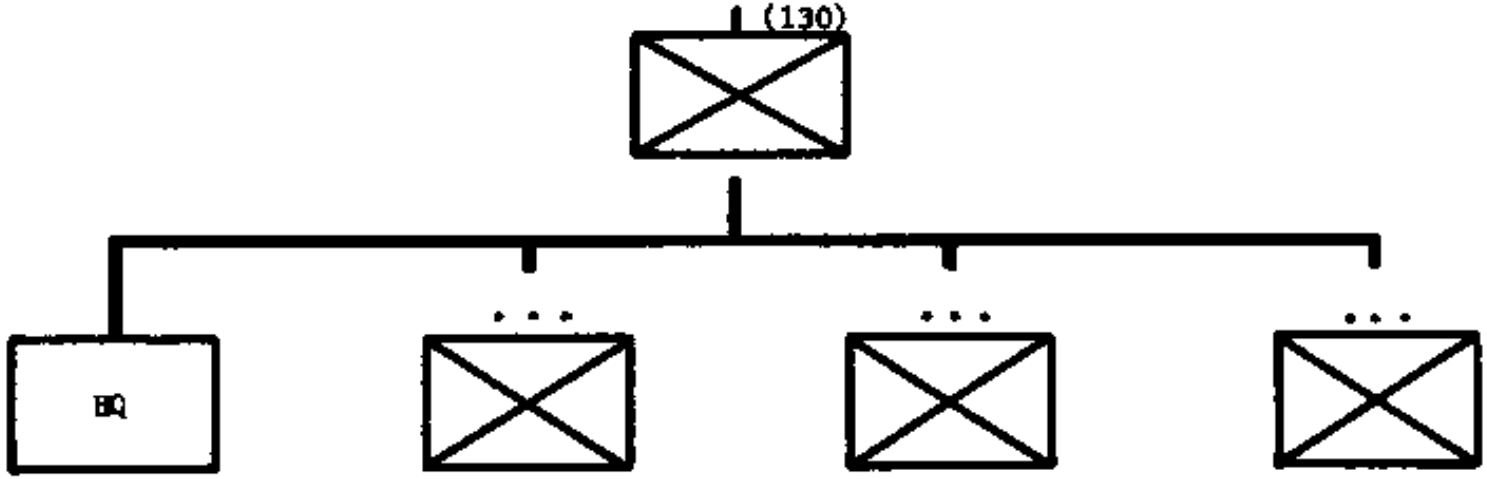

FIGURE 4

TYPE NVA/VC INFANTRY COMPANY, INFANTRY BATTALION

teams. The VC irregular units characteristically are flexible in organization.

SECTION II. METHODS OF OPERATION

4. General

a. The simple but effective code of the VC is "When the enemy advances, withdraw; when he defends, harass; when he is tired, attack; when he withdraws, pursue." VC tactics and techniques are simply embellishments on this theme. Emphasis is placed on speed, security, surprise and deception. The VC exhibit great skill in making the most of their enemy's weaknesses.

b. VC operations are planned in detail and are based upon careful reconnaissance and up-to-date intelligence. Detailed rehearsals, including the use of mockups, sand-tables, and similar terrain prepare the troops for the mission, whether it be a raid, ambush, assassination or destruction. Once a plan is made and rehearsed, the VC seem reluctant to depart from it. They appear reluctant to attack units which have demonstrated skill in employing artillery and close air support. A certain inflexibility is apparent in some VC operations, but on other occasions, VC forces have shown themselves to be masters of improvision.

c. The VC are very cautious and attempt to determine in detail the size, disposition and direction of movement of their opponent before engaging him. They would rather let an opportunity slip by than act hastily without proper intelligence and preparation. In one instance, a three-battalion VC ambush force permitted two 155mm howitzers and accompanying ammunition trucks to drive through the killing zone unmolested because the VC had not completed laying wire lines and checking communications. In another case,

four US advisors in a jeep were allowed to pass through a company size ambush because the VC were waiting for a ten truck convoy which was five minutes behind the advisors. The VC ambushed the trucks, destroying several and causing a number of ARVN casualties.

5. Offensive Techniques

a. Ambushes

(1) In keeping with their emphasis on surprise, VC use the ambush as one of their most effective offensive tactics. Units establishing ambushes have been known to remain in place for periods in excess of ten days. Once the ambush is established, a small force is sent out to make contact with the friendly force. Once contact has been established, the small enemy force quickly withdraws, luring the friendly force into the ambush site. The normal practice is to ambush along roads, trails, streams and other natural routes of movement. Unpredictable or unexpected tactics such as establishing ambushes close to friendly forces, are revealed by the following two examples:

(a) The VC positioned a company size ambush force along a road less than one hundred meters from a friendly guard post manned by six personnel. Rather than attack the guard post, they ambushed a small convoy and inflicted eight casualties.

(b) Approximately 65 VC ambushed a military vehicle transporting troops on a stretch of fairly open road between two ARVN outposts less than a mile apart. Twelve of the sixteen personnel in the friendly force became casualties.

(2) VC planning for ambushes is comprehensive. Rehearsals are conducted and friendly force patterns are studied in detail. Baited traps are often used, such as

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attacks designed to lure reaction or reserve forces into prepared ambush positions. Advantage is taken of any laxity in security on the part of friendly forces, such as during meal breaks. Another favorite tactic is to feign retreat by one unit to draw the friendly force into an ambush by another unit. VC ambushes usually are short, violent actions followed by a rapid withdrawal. The VC frequently have ambushed units whose security was lax while returning from an operational area.

b. Raids

(1) Raids are another favorite VC offensive tactic and are conducted by units from squad to regimental size. They are most often executed during the hours of darkness.

(2) Two basic types of VC raids have been observed. The "surprise" raid is the most common. Secrecy and speed are key considerations in this type of action since the VC raiding party may have less numerical strength than the defending force. The "power" raid is one in which the VC employs overwhelming strength and fire power in order to annihilate a defending unit. The time the raid begins is often a clue to its nature. Raids begun after 0200 hours rarely are power raids intended to overrun an outpost.

c. Harassing Operations. Harassment is one of the tenets of VC guerrilla warfare. Sniper fire is a form of harassment frequently used by the VC to frighten, confuse and mislead friendly forces. Personnel carrying automatic weapons and radios are often initial targets for VC sniper fire. Diversionary harassing attacks are used to draw friendly forces from vulnerable VC target areas.

d. The VC have used mortars and recoilless attacks against airfields, installations and FWMAF positions with success.

(1) The VC attacks are planned and rehearsed thoroughly. Through reconnaissance efforts and agents the enemy learns the exact location of activities. Where day-to-day activities and dispositions have become stereotyped, the enemy has used such fixed patterns of activity to his advantage in planning and executing the attack. The attacks are executed with a determination and precision which indicates a complete understanding of the duties of each attacker. For example, a PW captured after one attack stated that the attack was rehearsed six times and sand table classes were held to point out individual tasks.

(2) Recoilless rifles are positioned to fire along the long axis of the airfield to take advantage of small deflection error and relatively large range dispersion of this weapon. Several positions are used to permit the enemy to continue firing when one position is knocked out. Positions usually are placed along a trail to facilitate withdrawal.

(3) Most of the attacks have occurred between the hours of 2330 and 0230 on moonless nights. This time frame suggests that the enemy moves into position and withdraws under the cover of darkness.

(4) The enemy has made use of aiming markers, directional guides and target strikes during the preparation phase of an attack. Rounds are placed well with no adjustment noted. Fire for effect commences with the first round.

(5) Recently a mortar and recoilless rifle attack was conducted against an air base in Vietnam. During the attack, a minimum of 240 rounds were fired by the enemy from 81 and 82mm mortars and recoilless rifles. A plot of the rounds indicates that the aircraft parking areas and other operating installations adjacent to taxiways and runways were the primary targets. The Viet Cong attack apparently was planned in detail and executed vigorously without warning.

c. Infiltration. The VC are experts at infiltration. Particularly important is their habit of infiltrating friendly positions during periods of reduced visibility and adverse weather, usually combining the infiltration with a feint or ruse. Objects of VC infiltration tactics are sabotage, assassination, demoralization of enemy troops and the collection of intelligence for future operations. Also significant is the technique of infiltrating agents disguised as friendly civilians. The VC also have infiltrated military installations disguised as ARVN soldiers and marines thus enabling them to penetrate the defense before the ruse was discovered.

6. Defensive Tactics.

a. VC defensive tactics are centered around ways and means of escaping from ambushes, raids, meeting engagements and surprise attacks. The VC make extensive use of rear guard personnel whose mission is to delay the pursuing friendly force until withdrawal of the VC main force is accomplished. Ambushes designed to slow friendly forces are employed frequently. At other times, VC may evade capture by hiding or by blending in with the local populace.

b. Hiding places used by the VC are almost limitless, although underground locations appear to be the favorite. Underground means of hiding personnel and equipment range from simple "spider trap" holes to elaborate, reinforced rooms. From the surface these underground installations are most difficult, if not impossible, to detect (Figure 5). Critical points are entrances and emergency exits, which usually are concealed in gardens, animal pens, under piles of straw, dung, etc. (Figure 6), in or under structures (Figure 7) and in river banks (Figures 8 and 9).

CONCEALED TUNNEL ENTRANCES

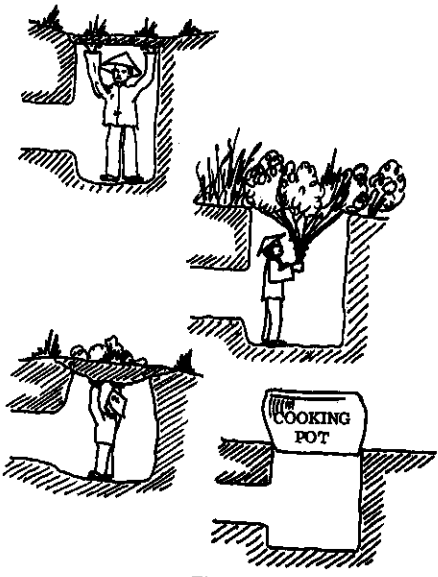
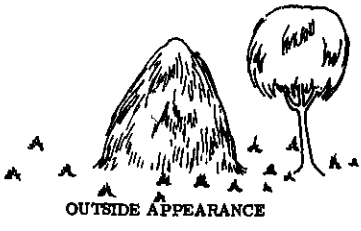


Figure 5

HAYSTACK USED FOR HIDING PLACE AND MEETING PLACE



OUTSIDE APPEARANCE

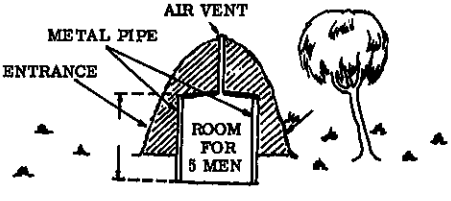


Figure 6

HIDING PLACES UNDER LOCAL HOMES

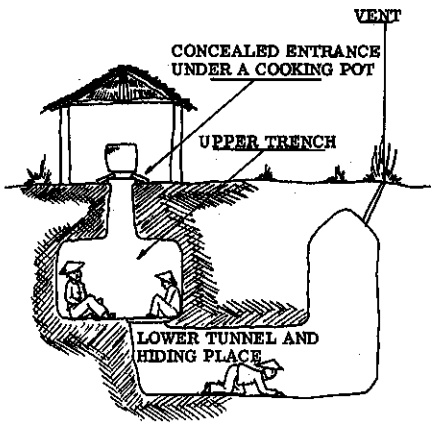


Figure 7

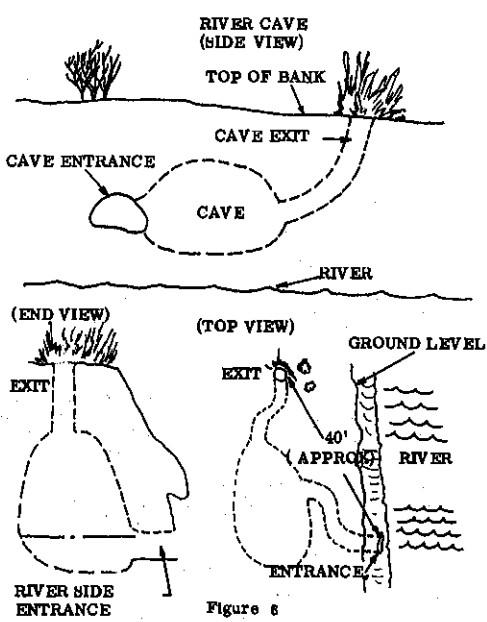
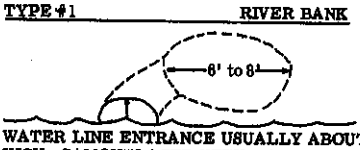


Figure 8

RIVER AREA POSITIONS



WATER LINE ENTRANCE USUALLY ABOUT 1 FOOT HIGH, CAMOUFLAGED WITH WATER PLANTS, ETC.

This type of cave usually has entrance from below water line to about 1 foot above. There is about a 2 foot approach leading to the main room which is circular and about 6 to 8 feet across. Can only be entered from the water.

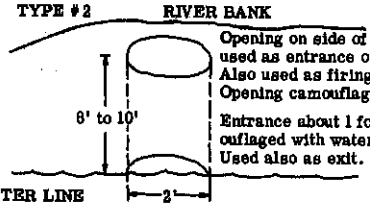


Figure 6

c. Extensive and ingeniously constructed underground tunnel systems are one of the unique features of underground hiding places (Figure 10 thru 14). Most are constructed in such a manner that they permit short term underground habitation. They usually are built in a zigzag, multi-level form with ventilation holes at various intervals. This type of construction may provide protection from grenades or discovery. When cornered underground by friendly forces, the VC will often eject a grenade from one of the holes and attempt to escape during the resulting shock and smoke.

d. The VC prepare extensive defensive positions throughout their operational area. If surprised by friendly forces, they will, if possible, withdraw to a previously prepared position and defend until they can break out, most probably during the hours of darkness. VC positions are characterized by defense in depth, mutual support, overhead cover and maximum use of natural cover and concealment.

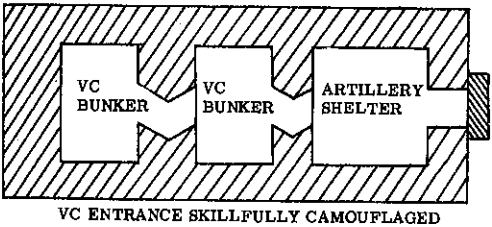
e. Use of reinforced concrete in connection with tunnel complexes adds considerable security for the defending force. Defensive efforts are sustained most easily thereby demanding a greater effort from the attacking force, particularly in the employment of heavy ordnance.

7. Spacial Techniques

a. General.

Viet Cong tactics include many types of actions which are peculiar to unconventional warfare, such as assassinations and other acts of terrorism directed against the RVN population. Subversion and sabotage have increased against RVN and all Free World Military Assistance Forces and installations as well as the civilian populace. The VC terrorist attacks usually are simple and direct methods of inflicting casualties on their enemy. To date, most VC terrorist activities have taken the form of murder by shootings, kidnappings, throwing of grenades into homes, businesses,

VC UNDERGROUND BUNKER



VC ENTRANCE SKILLFULLY CAMOUFLAGED

Bunker shown above was discovered in the vicinity of Da Nang during June/July 1965 by ARVN units.

It is a multi-bunker tunnel with angled connecting tunnels. Each bunker has space available for 3 or 4 men. The entrance to the VC bunker is built into the wall of the artillery shelter and skillfully camouflaged. A second bunker is concealed behind the first; each entrance in turn is camouflaged on the outside by local inhabitants.

Figure 10

GUERRILLA BASE

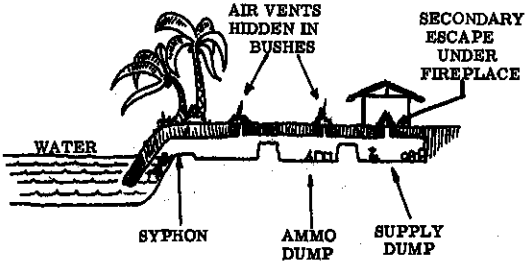
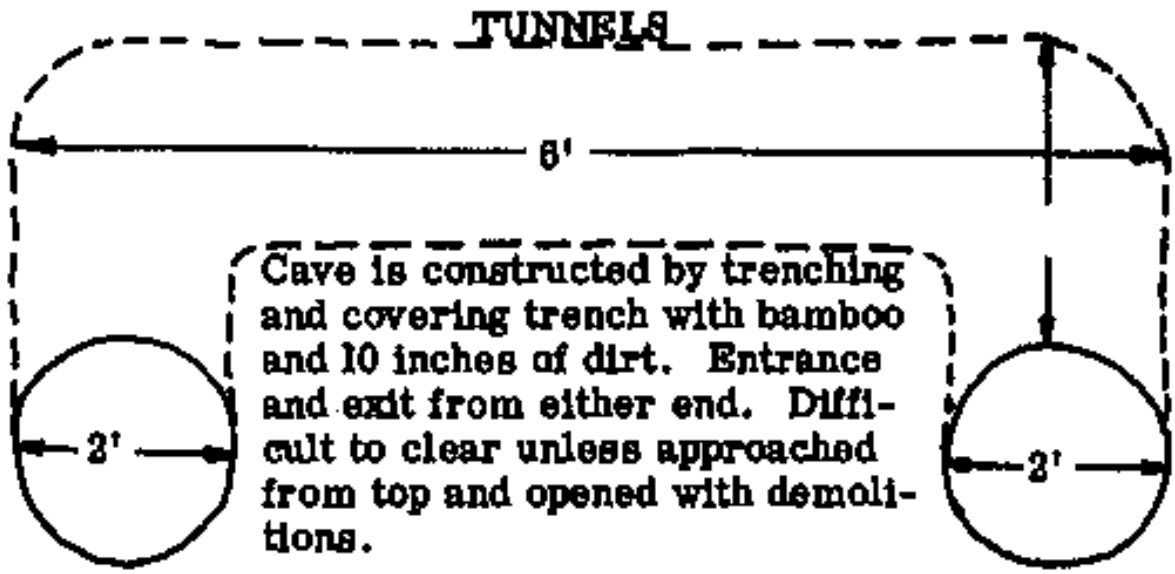
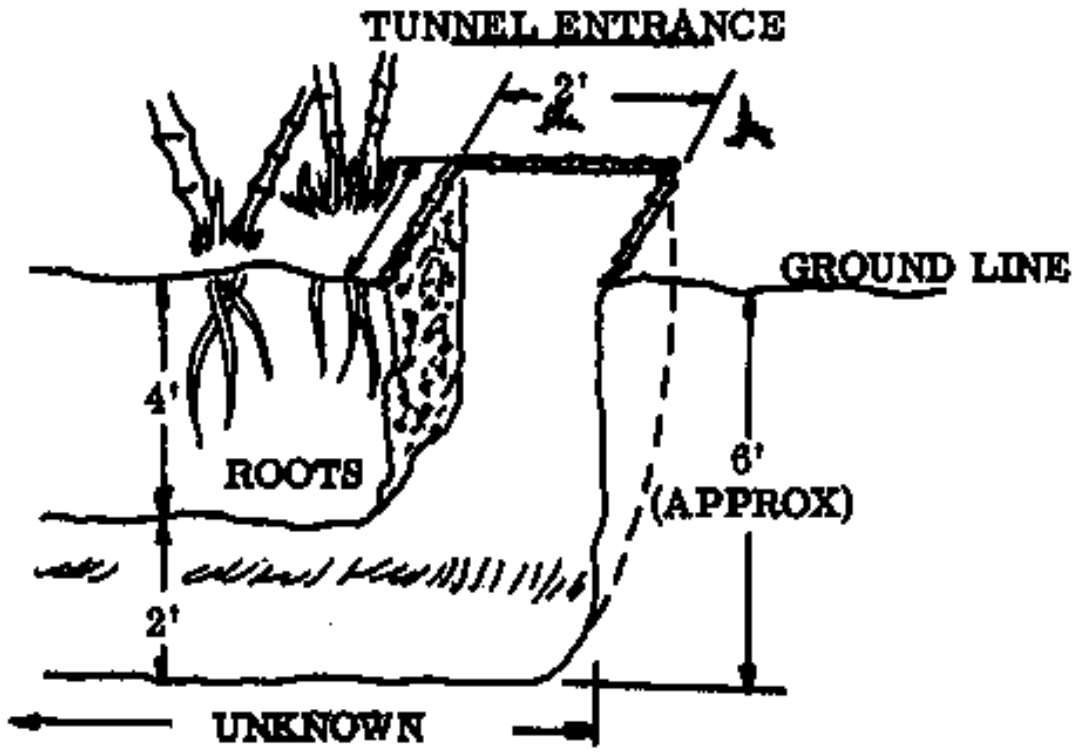


Figure 11





Root system provides excellent reinforcement for roof of cave.

Figure 12

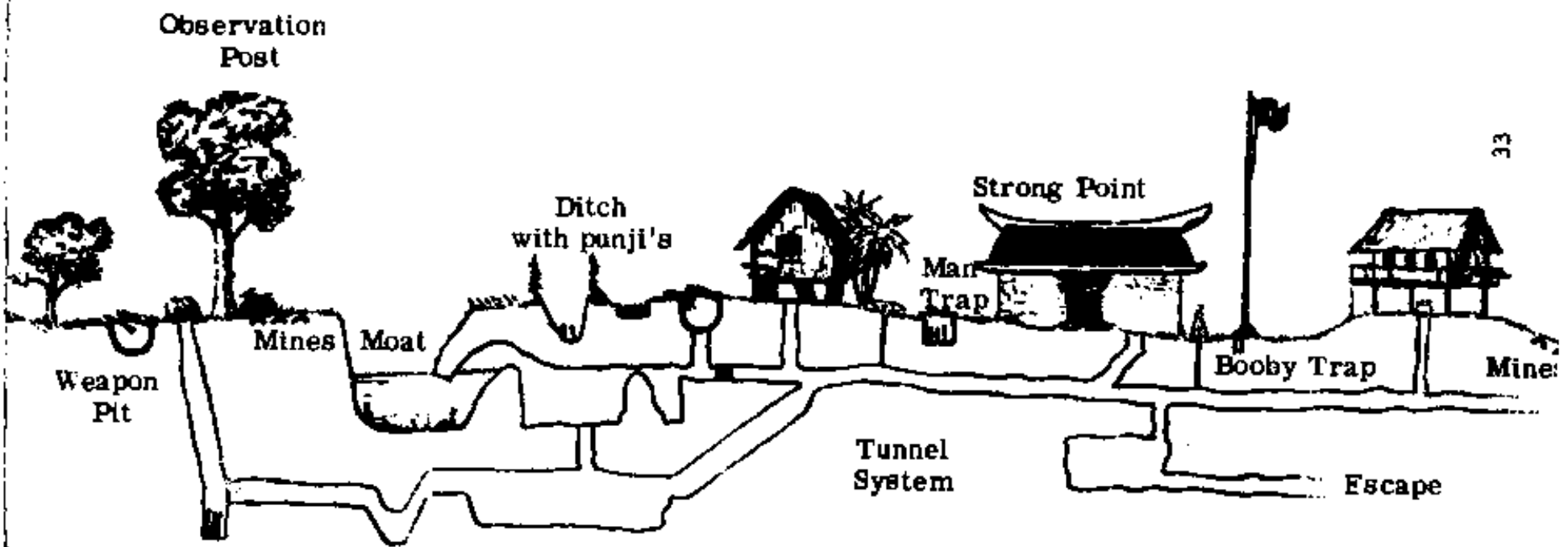
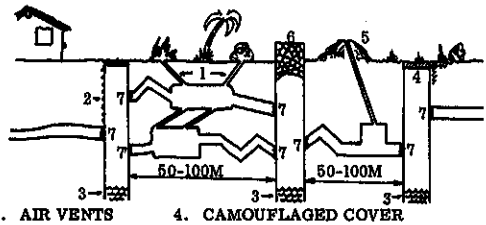


Figure 13 A Typical VC Fortified Village
(Note Tunnel System)

WELL - TUNNEL COMPLEX -- BEN CAT AREA



1. AIR VENTS
2. NOTCHED DIRT STEPS
3. WATER
4. CAMOUFLAGED COVER
5. CAMOUFLAGED VENT HOLE
6. NORMAL WELL TOP
7. CAMOUFLAGED ENTRANCE COVERS

Well-Tunnel Complex above was discovered near Ben Cat in September 1965. It is a series of multi-bunker tunnels with angled connecting tunnels. Each bunker has space available for 15 to 20 men. The entrances to and exits from the VC bunkers are built into the walls of actual or simulated wells which are 20 to 30 meters deep. Access to these skillfully camouflaged entrances and exits is by way of notched dirt steps or by the use of long notched bamboo pole ladders. These wells also serve as deep pit man traps.

Figure 14

passing vehicles and into groups of people. Although these are the most common techniques employed, the VC continue to engage in selective terrorism of the public and brutal execution of rural officials in order to intimidate the local population. The Viet Cong have increased their capability to engage in more sophisticated tactics such as the mining of billets and work-areas with explosive charges and claymore type, antipersonnel mines.

b. Booby Traps

(1) Booby traps are favorite devices of the Viet Cong. Grenades, spike traps, poison arrows and a variety of other means are employed to harass, slow down, confuse and kill friendly forces. The forms of these weapons are limited only by the imagination of the designer (Figures 15 thru 17).

(2) Grenades commonly are used as booby traps because they are light in weight, easy to carry and conceal, and readily adaptable. They frequently are put in trees or on fences and also along trails that friendly forces are expected to use, with trip wires strung across the pathway. Munitions, particularly artillery and mortar shells, also have been rigged for detonation as booby traps (Figures 18 thru 24).

(3) Booby traps are emplaced most frequently on the most convenient route, such as rice paddy dikes, trails, fords, foot bridge approaches and gates in bamboo fences.

(4) Spiked foot and man traps are common types of booby traps found throughout Vietnam. The spikes may be sharpened bamboo sticks, or they may be barbed wood or metal spikes emplaced in wooden, concrete or metal blocks. The spiked devices are placed in holes along routes of movement and carefully camouflaged to prevent detection or they can be placed on top of the ground (Figures 25 thru 31). Punji traps are often covered by boards or brushwood mats, to prevent injury to vivilians or livestock. Upon approach of GVN/Allied Forces, the covers are removed. The presence of

CARTRIDGE TRAP

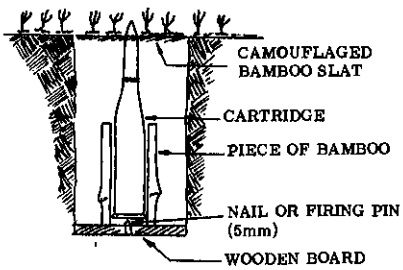


Figure 15

STEEL ARROW TRAP

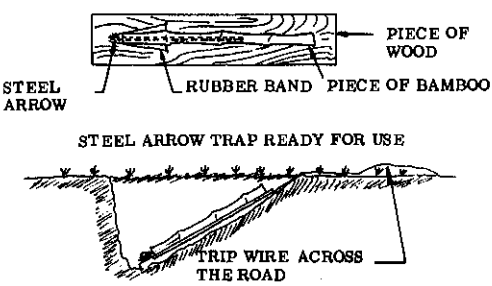


Figure 16

"SORRY BOUT THAT"

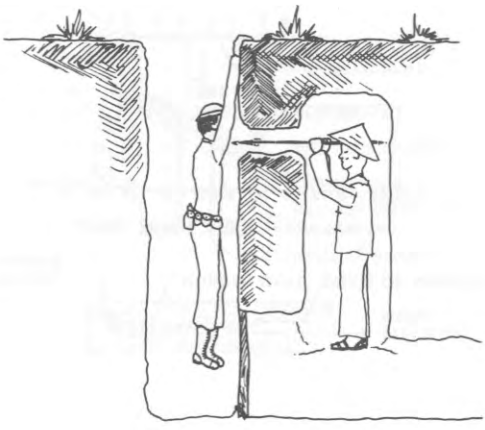
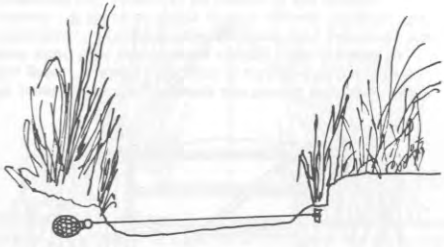


Figure 17

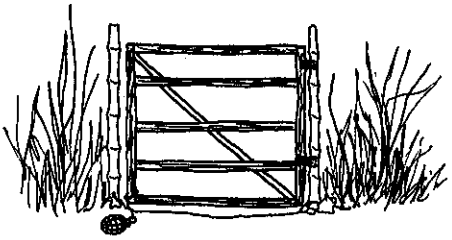
GRENADE ON TRAIL



The most common type of booby trap consists of a trip wire stretched across a trail, anchored to a small bush or tree and to a friction type fuze in the grenade. Most other booby traps are a variation on this basic idea.

Figure 18

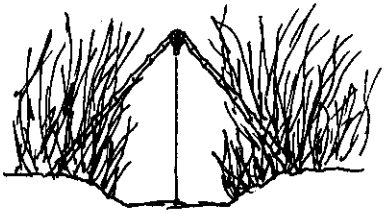
GRENADE AT GATE



In most cases the grenades are buried (shallow) under the gate. A short trip wire is attached to the gate so that when it is moved even slightly, the grenade is detonated. Pressure release fuzes have also been employed. If there is heavy growth around the gate, the grenades will generally be hidden in the growth.

Figure 19

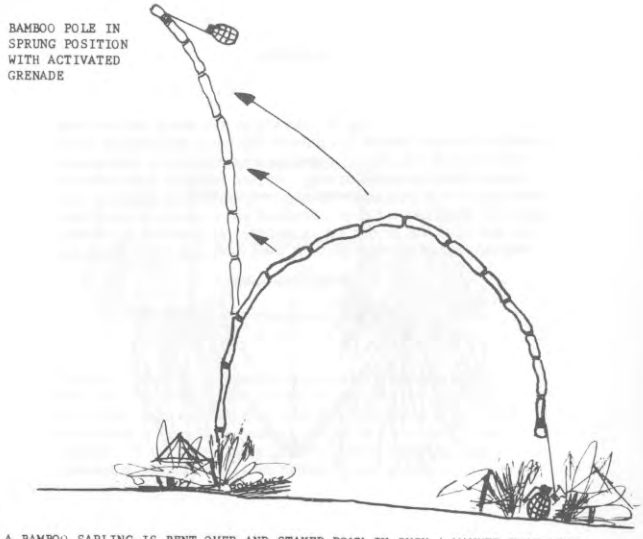
BAMBOO ARCH



Recently the VC have been making bamboo arches across trails. A grenade is secured at the top of the arch and the trip wire secured to the grenade. Any contact with trip wire will detonate the grenade. This is employed most effectively at night as a warning device. The location of the grenade achieves a large casualty radius. During the day the trip wire is loosened from the ground and wound around the bamboo arch to allow use of the trail to VC.

Figure 20

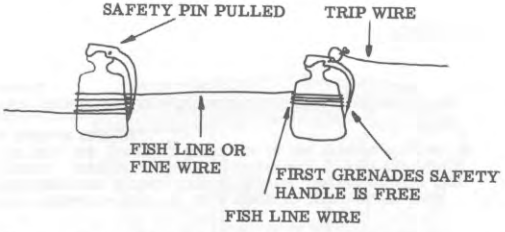
"JACK IN THE BOX"



A BAMBOO SAPLING IS BENT OVER AND STAKED DOWN IN SUCH A MANNER THAT VERY SLIGHT PRESSURE ON THE BAMBOO POLE OR ATTACHED WIRES WILL RELEASE THE POLE AND ACTIVATE THE GRENADE SEVEN TO TEN FEET OVERHEAD.

FIGURE 21

GRENADE DAISY CHAIN



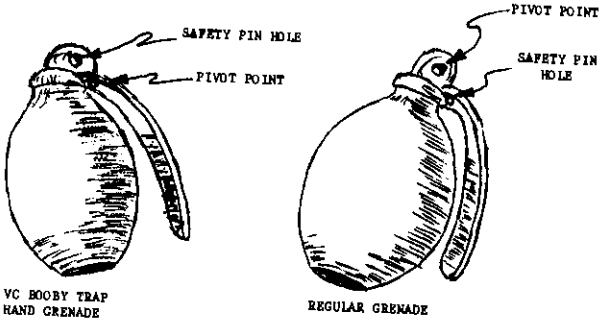
The daisy chain of grenades is made by first attaching a grenade to a tree or bush and tying it in such a manner that the handle is free to activate if the safety pin (which is attached to a trip wire) is pulled. Successive grenade handles are held under tension by a line from the preceding grenade. All grenades but the first one have their safety pins pulled.

When the trip wire to the first grenade is tripped, the safety pin is pulled and the safety handle flys off, allowing the grenade to detonate. As the grenade detonates, it releases the string to the next grenade allowing the handle to fly free, detonate and, in turn, release subsequent grenades in the line.

Placed along a trail this arrangement is very effective against closely spaced members of a patrol.

Figure 22

VC BOOBY TRAP HAND GRENADE

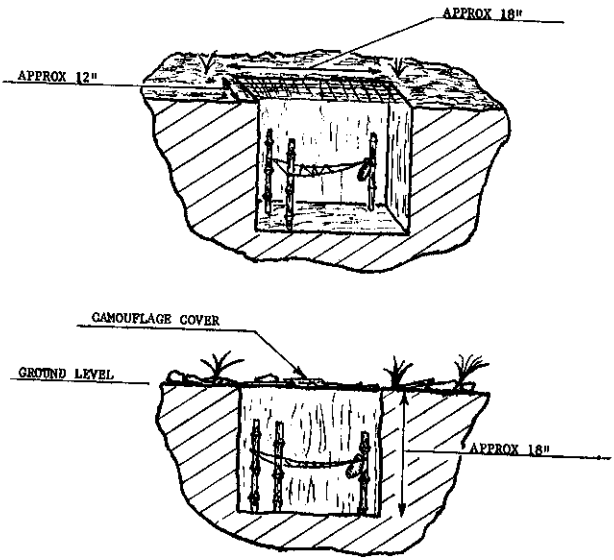


THIS GRENADE APPEARS TO BE A STANDARD CAST, SMOOTH BODY, FRAGMENTATION GRENADE WITH A STANDARD STRIKER RELEASE TYPE FUZING. HOWEVER, AN OBVIOUS DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE SAFETY PIN HOLE AND THE PIVOT POINT ARE IN THE REVERSE POSITION OF A REGULAR GRENADE.

THIS GRENADE IS DETONATED WHEN PRESSURE IS APPLIED TO THE HANDLE.

FIGURE 23

GRENADE TRAP



This variation may be found in areas used extensively by tank/infantry teams. The grenade is placed far enough below the surface to avoid being detonated by the crushing action of tanks and yet be detonated when stepped into.

FIGURE 24

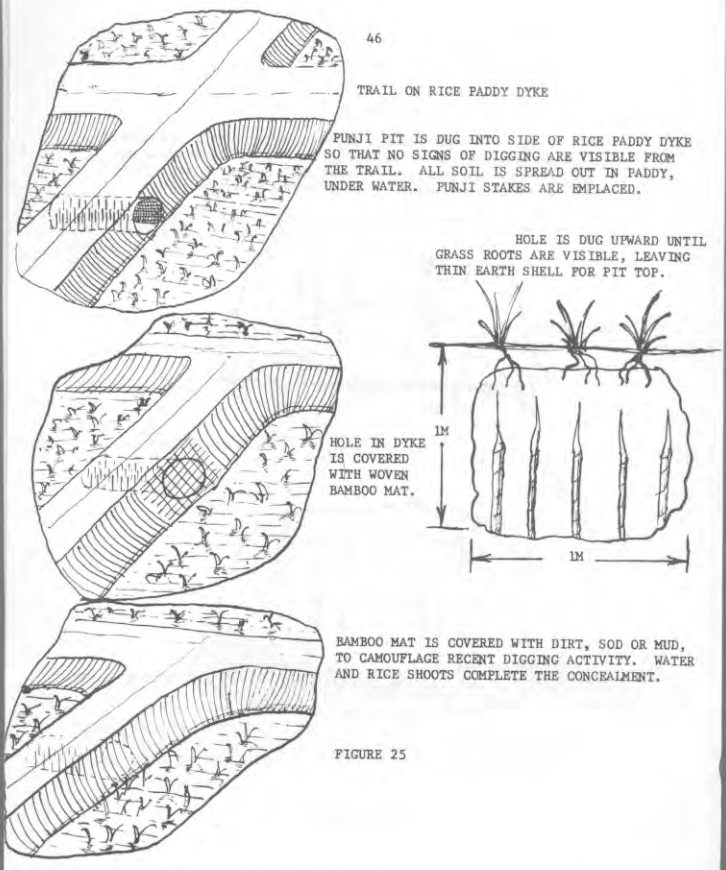
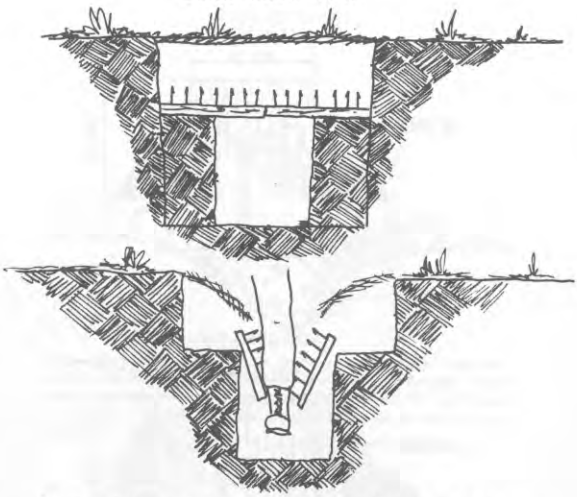


FIGURE 25

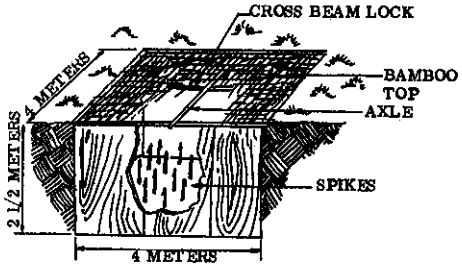
PUNJI "BEAR" TRAP



A man stepping into the punji pit hits two boards or steel plates with steel spikes affixed, the boards or plates then pivot, wounding the leg above the area protected by the boot.

Figure 26

SPIKE TRAP PIT



SPIKE TRAP BOX

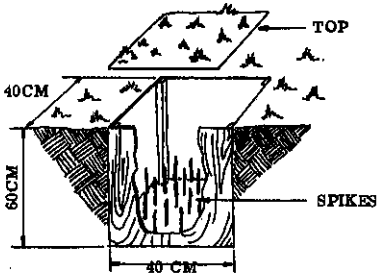
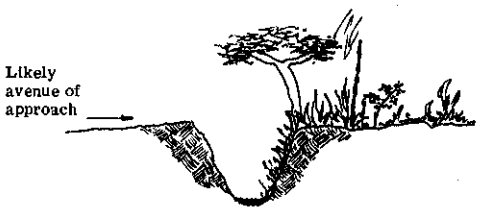


Figure 27

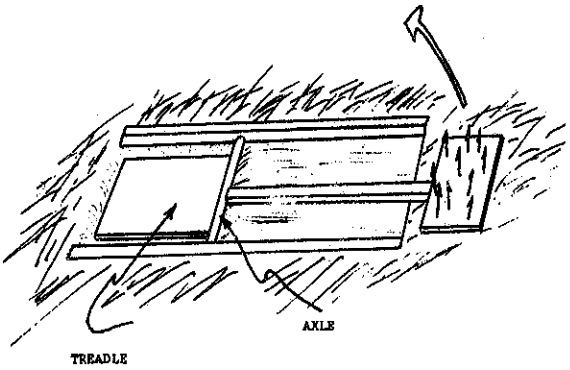
GULLEY TRAPS



Quite often short stakes are employed on banks of gullies and streams, in areas where it is likely that troops might jump from one bank to another. The stakes (2" to 3" long) are usually hidden in grass or other growth on the stream banks.

Figure 28

PIVOTED SPIKE BOARD



THE PIVOTED SPIKE BOARD IS USED WITH A FOOT PIT. WHEN A PERSON STEPS ON THE TREADLE, THE BOARD WITH DRIVEN SPIKES PIVOTS ABOUT AN AXLE. AS THE VICTIM DROPS INTO THE PIT, THE SPIKE BOARD STRIKES HIM IN THE CHEST OR FACE.

FIGURE 29

BRIDGE SPIKE TRAP

cut at the middle and
covered with mud

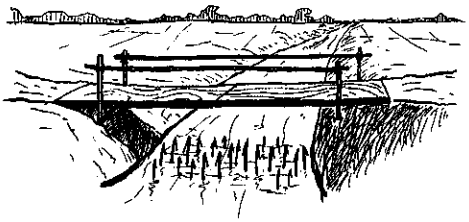


Figure 30

GUARDED AND SPIKED COMBAT TRENCHES

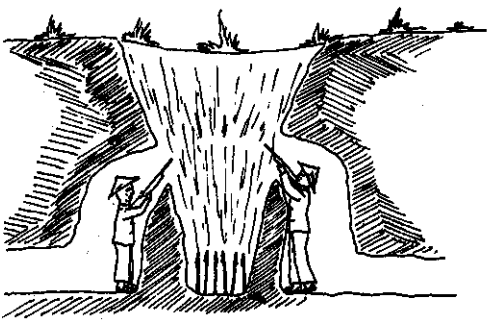


Figure 31

such covers concealed in undergrowth along a trail, is a sure tipoff to the punji trap. The VC often will leave one or two punji traps poorly camouflaged to suggest subtly that all traps are discernable readily, which in fact is not so.

(5) The VC also employ crude but effective trip wire type devices along trails and paths which release arrows, bamboo whips and other swinging, barbed or club type objects. Barbs are often dipped in poison to compound casualty effects (Figures 32 and 33).

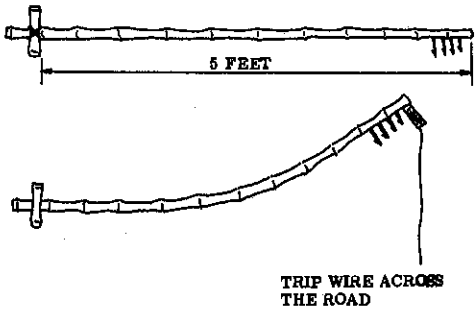
(6) Explosive pens and cigarette lighters have been put in obvious hiding places by the VC for the unsuspecting soldier to find.

(7) The bamboo whip consists of a bamboo pole about ten feet long, two fragmentation hand grenades, and materials for securing them together. One grenade is tied to each end of the pole. One end of the pole is buried and the pin of its grenade is secured to the ground so that removal of the pole detonates the grenade. The pole is then bent into a bow with the free end fastened to the ground. The safety pin of the grenade at this end also is secured to the ground. The prime target of the bamboo whip is jungle clearing equipment, jungle clearing personnel, or patrols. When the device is disturbed, the bamboo pole whips up and the grenade is detonated about 10 feet above the ground. Any attempt to remove the pole will cause one or both of the grenades to detonate.

c. Mines. (Figures 34 thru 46)

(1) Antipersonnel (AP) and antitank (AT) mines are used extensively in VC operations. They may be of the crude homemade variety or similar to those in the US inventory. AT mines usually are employed on roads and trails capable of carrying vehicular traffic but also are found along likely avenues of approach into VC base areas. The mines usually are pressure types; however, when utilized on roads or around bunker complexes, command detonation is the preferred technique with the detonator and power source located as far

BAMBOO WHIP



BARBED SPIKE PLATE

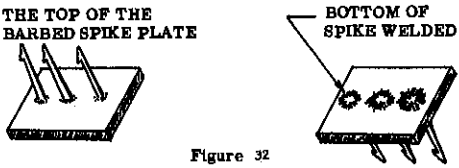


Figure 32

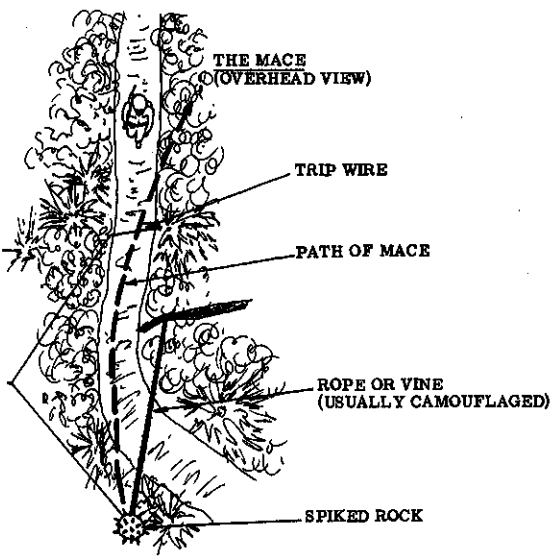
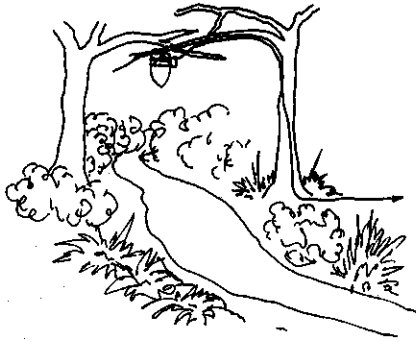


Figure 33

COMMAND DETONATED OVERHEAD MINE



The VC use artillery projectiles and mortar rounds as overhead mines. The projectile or round is hung on the limbs of trees over a trail or likely route of approach, an electrical detonator is attached and wires are run to an over watching enemy position. When a patrol or other unit comes under the camouflaged round the VC detonate it using a battery power source.

Figure 34

MINED COMBAT TRENCH

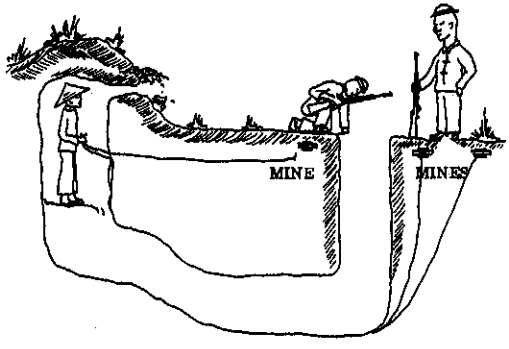
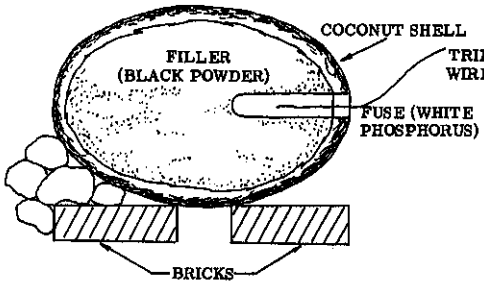


Figure 35

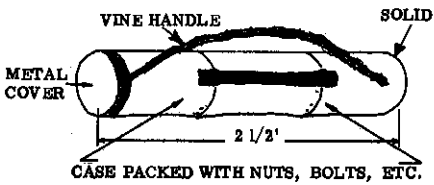
COCONUT TYPE MINE



This mine is made from a hollowed out coconut filled with black powder. Using a friction type fuze this mine is employed in much the same manner as hand grenades. It is usually buried approximately six inches underground. It has been covered by rock and brick for missile effect. These mines have been used effectively near gates.

Figure 36

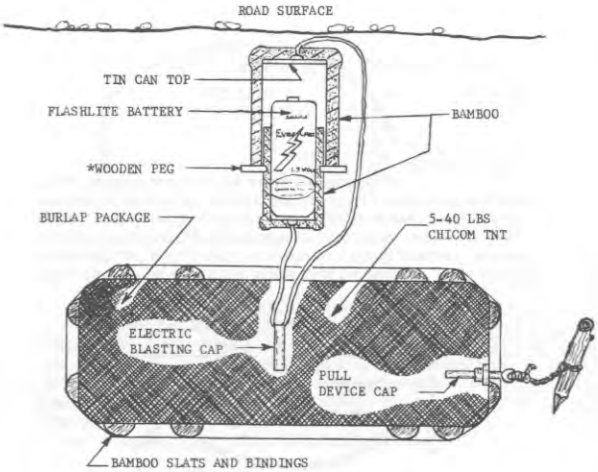
HOLLOW BAMBOO MINE



This mine is made from a large joint of bamboo. It is cleaned out and filled with plastic explosive or black powder. In addition to the explosive the section is also filled with nuts and bolts, rocks, nails and scrap metal or whatever material is available. Although usually detonated by a pull friction type fuze, other means can be readily substituted.

Figure 37

VC MINE



NOTES:

*FOUR WOODEN PEGS HOLD THE TOP BAMBOO SLEEVE FROM FOOT AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC. A VEHICLE WILL BREAK THE PEGS AND PUSH THE TOP BAMBOO SLEEVE DOWN ON THE FLASHLITE BATTERY COMPLETING THE CIRCUIT AND DETONATING THE MINE.

FIGURE 38

VC MINE

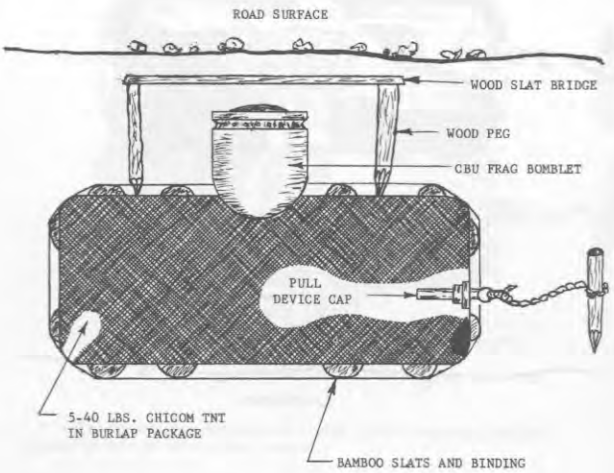


FIGURE 39

VC MINE

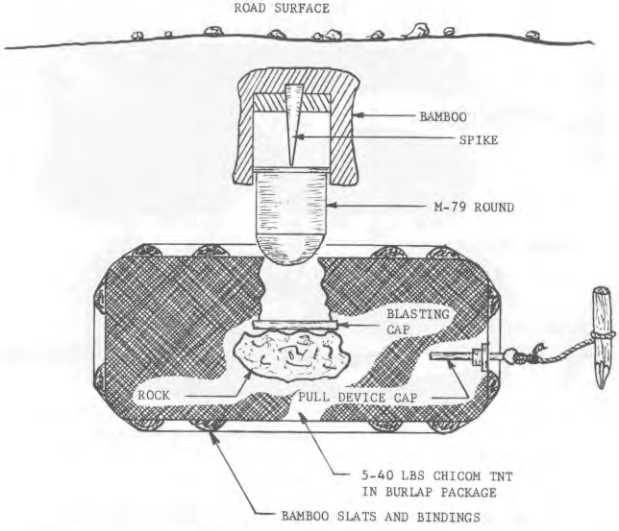
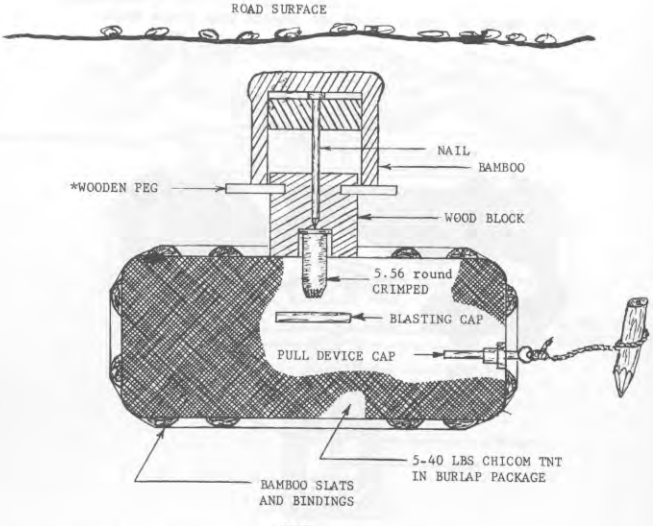


FIGURE 40

VC MINE

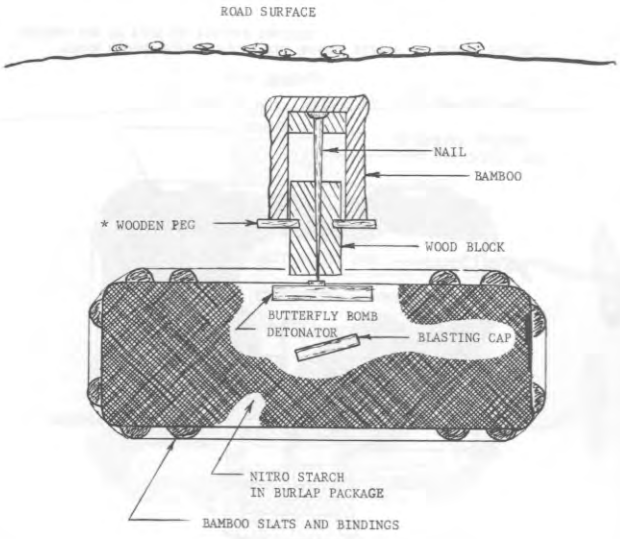


NOTE:

*FOUR WOODEN PEGS SUPPORT THE BAMBOO SLEEVE TO INSURE AGAINST DETONATION BY FOOT OR BICYCLE TRAFFIC.

FIGURE 41

VC MINE

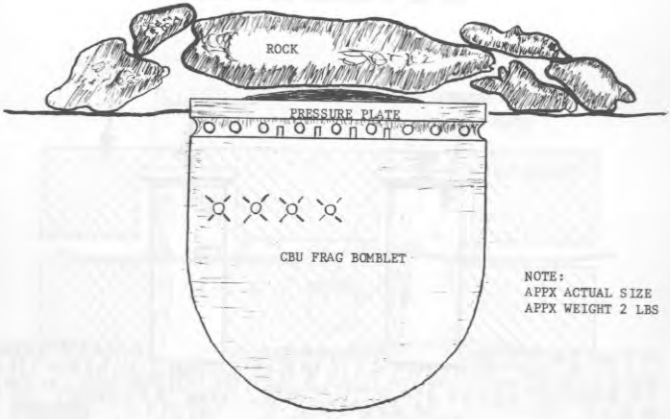


NOTE:

*FOUR WOODEN PEGS SUPPORT THE BAMBOO SLEEVE TO INSURE AGAINST DETONATION BY FOOT OR BICYCLE TRAFFIC.

FIGURE 42

VC MINE

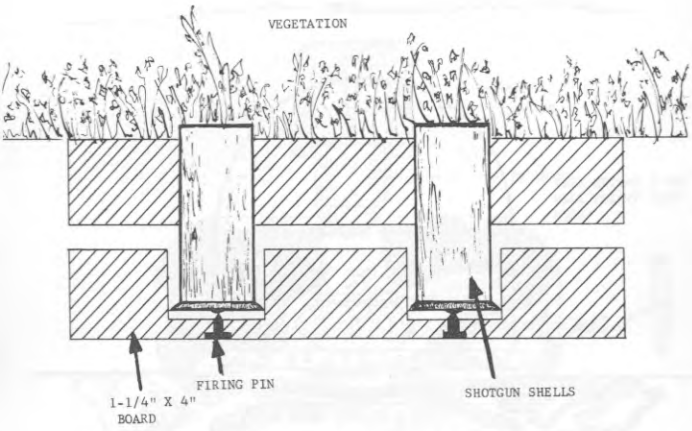


NOTES:

CBU FRAG BOMBLETS ARE SOMETIMES FOUND WITH ONLY A PIECE OF PAPER OR CIGARETTE PACKAGE WRAPPER LYING ON TOP OF THE PRESSURE PLATE.

FIGURE 43

VC MINE



NOTE:

AP MINE FOUND OFF THE SHOULDERS OF THE ROAD

FIGURE 44

VC MINE

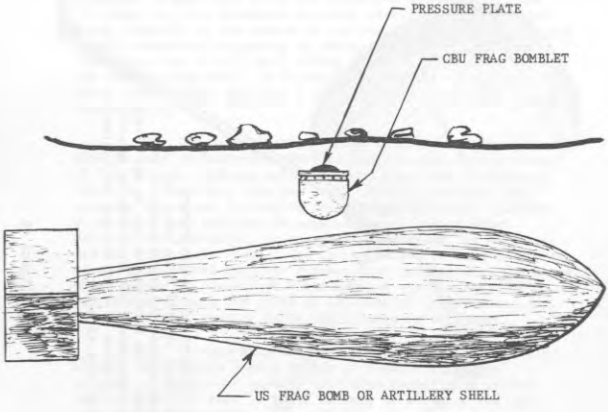
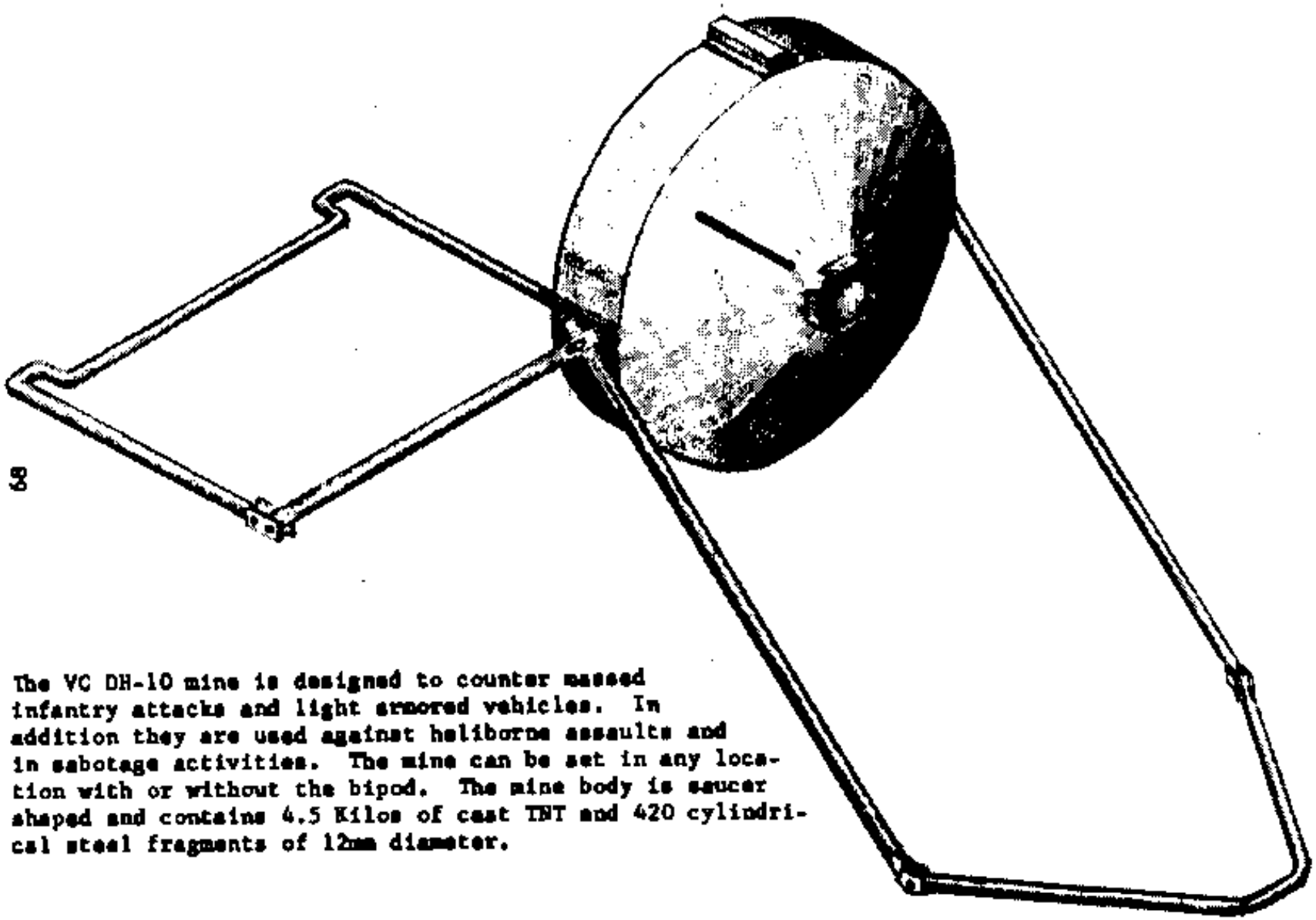


FIGURE 45



The VC DH-10 mine is designed to counter massed infantry attacks and light armored vehicles. In addition they are used against heliborne assaults and in sabotage activities. The mine can be set in any location with or without the bipod. The mine body is saucer shaped and contains 4.5 Kilos of cast TNT and 420 cylindrical steel fragments of 12mm diameter.

Figure 46

as 300 meters from the mine. However, AP mines are employed on defensive terrain nearby so that personnel taking to the high ground to protect a disabled vehicle are subjected then to the AP mines and booby traps. AP mines are used to defend entrances to VC underground hiding places and along trails.

(2) AT mines are placed in hollowed-out places on bridges or in holes which have been dug in roads. In order to make the hole difficult to discover, the VC may scatter dirt across the road for several hundred meters or dig several dummy holes for deception or for emplacement of mines at a later date. Water buffalo dung also is used for camouflage. Shoulders along roads often are mined and occasionally, the VC tunnel in from shoulders to plant electrically controlled mines directly in the center of the road. This latter practice permits selective targeting of vehicular traffic. On some occasions, the VC will bury firing wires to a location but will not emplace the mine. If friendly troops fail to discover the wires, the VC then emplaces a mine to destroy the next target that appears.

(3) The directional, command detonated claymore type mine is used extensively. The pattern size and lethal range of NVA/VC type claymore exceed in many cases the US standard claymore. Artillery fire has proven helpful in upsetting prepared mines and in cutting the detonating wires. Claymore mines have been employed in numerous operations against vehicles and personnel, in conventional defense, in ambushes, and in trees above roads. The latter method is used to prevent clearing teams and engineer rooters from neutralizing the mines. Mines placed in trees have their command wires strung 300 to 400 meters through the trees to a concealed observation post. Colored wire is used to match the foliage in the trees.

(4) Another mine recently encountered is completely plastic with ten to twenty pounds of plastic explosive wrapped in waterproof paper. This mine normally is primed with an electric cap. A small battery is wired to the cap with a pressure contact type switch.

(5) It is known that the enemy marks his mines and booby traps with various signs. Booby traps have been found marked by tufts of grass ten inches apart, perpendicular to the point of the trail where the trap is located; inverted rock "V" indicators and small bits of adhesive tape scattered around the devices were noted (Figure 47). Since VC and NVA units are forced to move throughout the country, there must be some overall marking scheme. Any unusual markings or signs along a trail should be treated as a booby trap indicator.

(6) The VC forces fully understand the great advantage of mobility that helicopters have given FWMAF troops. To reduce this advantage the VC have used several types of mines and booby traps to deny the landing zone to opposing forces.

(a) Claymore mines are rigged to a stick. The prop-wash knocks down the stick, detonating the mine.

(b) A piece of sheet metal is placed in the LZ. The prop-wash forces the sheet of metal down, exploding the mines beneath it.

(c) Grenades are placed on boards covering holes dug in suspected landing zones, and charges are placed in the holes. The pins are pulled as the helicopter approach the landing zone; the charges in the bottom of the holes are electrically detonated; the boards fly into the air; the grenades fly loose from the boards, and explode near the incoming helicopters.

d. Propaganda. In his propaganda activity against US Forces in Vietnam the communist enemy employs radio broadcasts, signs and banners, and great varieties of leaflets. He identifies his radio stations, and signs his written material or presents it in such a way that there is no doubt it is VC originated. The radio broadcasts emanate from Radio Hanoi, and from the so-called Liberation Radio operated in South Vietnam by the VC. The style and content of the broadcasts from both of these stations are similar, being rather stilted and grossly exaggerated in an attempt to tell the story in a light most favorable to the enemy.

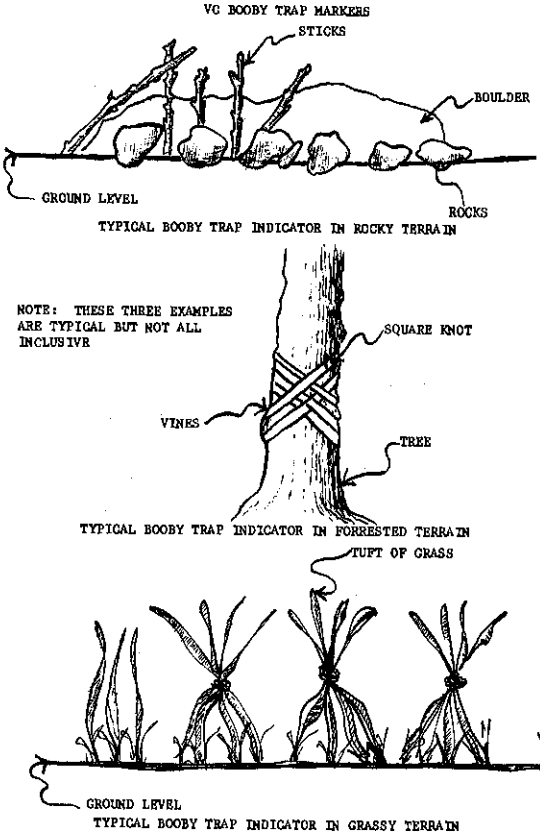


FIGURE 47

At various times and places throughout the country signs and banners defaming the US and the American fighting man have been hung by the VC and their sympathizers. These have not produced the effect desired by the VC and have been torn down by US troops wherever encountered. The most prolifically written effort by the enemy is in the form of propaganda leaflets. The first samples picked up were extremely crude in wording, grammar, content and style, as well as printing technique; but now they have become more sophisticated and more professional. However, in spite of the improvement in appearance, the effectiveness of the leaflets against US troops has been nil.

SECTION III. WEAPONS

8. General

a. The present VC weapons inventory consists of a mixed grouping of French, US, and Communist Block individual and crewserved weapons. The local manufacture of crudely made small arms has deceased since the early stages of the insurgency but some grenades, mines and other demolition devices still are being produced in RNV by the VC. Extensive reloading of small arms cartridges also is done. NVA troops are equipped with the latest weapons used by Communist Block nations.

b. A primary source of explosive devices used by the VC for all types of mines and booby traps are US M-26 grenades, Claymore mines, mortar and artillery shells. Some of this type equipment is procured from casualties. However, in many instances, this type equipment is picked up in areas vacated by US or ARVN troops. Before areas are cleared by units a complete and thorough check of the area should be conducted to preclude assisting the enemy in his logistics effort. Every item lost may be used by the VC to inflict casualties on friendly personnel and to destroy equipment.

9. Small Arms

The individual weapon of the NVA soldier is most likely to be a modern weapon. VC main force soldiers often are found to be equipped partially with the CHICOM and Soviet families of 7.62mm small arms. The CHICOM 7.62mm small arms are copies of weapons in the current Soviet Army inventroy. Also since the advent of large scale infiltration, complete units of the NVA are armed with modern Soviet or CHICOM individual weapons.

Captured US carbines, and BARs still are found among Viet Cong local and main force units. Pistols normally are reserved for political and military cadre and serve as possible identifiers of these personnel.

10. Machine Guns

The NVA/VC have a wide variety of machine guns from several countries of origin. German 7.92mm WWII LMGs and Soviet and CHICOM 7.62mm Light and heavy machine guns are the most common types. Some units are equipped with 12.7mm (.50 cal) heavy machine guns which are highly effective against low flying aircraft.

11. Recoilless Rifles and Mortars

The NVA/VC also employ recoilless rifles and mortars in heavy weapons support elements of infantry battalions, companies and platoons. CHICOM 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, plus those captured US-supplied weapons of the same caliber, are available to the VC at the present time. Infiltrated NVA units almost always are found to be equipped with the standard Soviet-CHICOM recoilless rifles or recoilless guns. Also used are locally manufactured rocket launchers. Captured US 60mm and 81mm mortars plus CHICOM 60mm, 82mm and 120mm mortars are found throughout the VC units.

12. In February 1967 the VC introduced another weapon in an attack on Danang Airfield. This is the Soviet 140mm barrage rocket. The weapon is a simple, single metal tube mounted on a wooden board with a simple elevation and deflection device. The overall length of the rocket including the motor is 40 inches. It can deliver a 9 pound warhead to a range of 12,000 meters.

SUMMARY

The NVA/VC is an elusive and determined foe. He is well organized politically and militarily, and employs both conventional and guerrilla tactics. He is an expert in the arts of camouflage, deception and embush. He is a hardy and ruthless fighter, but not an invincible one. He can and will be defeated.

CHAPTER 4

TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION

The fundamentals of counterinsurgency operations are contained in current doctrinal field manuals. However, in applying these fundamentals in Vietnam the diverse nature of the people, their culture, traditions, the widely varied terrain and the tropical weather must be considered. The tactics employed and techniques used are limited only by the commander's imaginations. The tactics and techniques presented are lessons learned from actual combat operations against the Viet Cong and the results of Revolutionary Development in rural areas.

SECTION I. WINNING AND MAINTAINING CIVILIAN SUPPORT

1. General

Winning and maintaining the friendship and cooperation of the Vietnamese civilians living within the operational area is an essential step in reducing the effectiveness of the local Viet Cong guerrillas - they cannot operate effectively without civilian support. The two main aspects of our military presence which contribute toward good civil-military relations are the individual soldier's positive attitude in his dealings with local civilians, and the planned civic actions of military units.

2. Individual Behavior

The Viet Cong attempt to separate our soldiers from the local civilians by showing that we are cruel, unthinking, and not concerned with the welfare of the local people. The VC can be defeated in these efforts by the strength and generosity we show in our daily lives. The "Nine Rules" for the military man in Vietnam provide the guide for doing this.

They are:

a. Remember we are guests here: We make no demands and seek no special treatment.

b. Join with the people: Understand their life, use phrases from their language and honor their customs and laws.

c. Treat women with politeness and respect.

d. Make friends among the soldiers and common people.

e. Always give the Vietnamese the right of way.

f. Be alert to security and ready to react with your military skill.

g. Do not attract attention by loud, rude or unusual behavior.

h. Avoid separating ourselves from the people by a display of wealth or privilege.

i. Above all else, we are members of the US military forces on a difficult mission, responsible for all our official and personal actions. Reflect honor upon ourselves and the United States of America.

3. Unit Activities

a. The Vietnamese appreciate the danger of battle areas, and normally will take such actions as are feasible to protect themselves and their property. Unit commanders at all echelons can assist in protecting them by advance planning and timely battlefield assistance. When losses occur, early and effective action should be taken to minimize suffering.

Thoughtfulness and consideration in such times of crisis will gain the support of the Vietnamese.

b. Although a unit may be involved in military operations, its capability to assist in local civic action projects designed to improve the life of the people and win the willing support of the people toward their government should be exploited. Before beginning any specific projects, the unit commander always should contact the local MACV sector or sub-sector advisor and the local Vietnamese official -- district, village, or hamlet chief-- in order to determine how the unit can assist local plans and projects. In addition, an effort should be made to participate in joint civic action projects in which regular soldiers work side-by-side with local Regional and Popular Force soldiers. In any case, it is essential that the local civilians be required to assist to the maximum extent possible in any civic action project. Military units should provide only the assistance which the civilians cannot provide for themselves. When additional guidance or supplies are required for particular projects the normal point of contact is the MACV sector or sub-sector advisor, who will then contact the appropriate GVN official or the US representative from the Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

c. In order to prevent inflation and its attendant hardships on the civilian population, commanders will coordinate with local GVN officials and the MACV advisory staff to establish local price and wage lists for items and services required by US Forces from GVN nationals. US personnel must be impressed with the necessity to abide by these lists, not only to help prevent inflation but also to limit gold flow.

SECTION II. RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE

4. General

Before the enemy can be destroyed, they must be located. Once located, surveillance must be maintained over their movements and activities. This section outlines the means and techniques of reconnaissance and surveillance being employed in Vietnam.

5. Ground Reconnaissance and Surveillance

a. Ground agencies consist of observation posts, surveillance devices, and reconnaissance patrols. Short range radars, employed at two separate locations which permit target intersection, are a valuable source of data during periods of low visibility -- positions, estimated size, direction, and speed of movement of VC elements can be detected readily.

b. Vietnamese Special Forces and other FWMAF units employ squad-size long range reconnaissance units, with considerable success in Viet Cong controlled territory. Once committed to an operational area, the teams are capable of operating for approximately seven days without resupply. When the team develops a target, a quick-reacting airmobile force or tactical air strikes may be called in to attack and destroy the target. These operations have an adverse psychological effect on the VC because they demonstrate that RVN forces are capable of penetrating VC areas and destroying targets which previously were considered to be within VC safe havens.

6. Visual Air Surveillance

Visual air surveillance is conducted primarily from O-1 type aircraft. Pilots and observers should be completely familiar with ground activity in their areas of responsibility in order that they can recognize any changes from normal patterns. Continuous surveillance missions day after day by the same observers accomplish the following:

a. Tend to restrict VC daylight movement to areas with

dense vegetation.

b. Locate and report likely landing and drop zones in fast moving situations, for reaction force employment, and for emergency medical evacuation.

c. Provide information as to possible occupation of a hamlet by VC based on a change in the normal pattern of activity.

d. Become so commonplace that reconnaissance flights for airmobile operations or air strikes do not constitute warnings to the VC of impending actions.

7. Air Reconnaissance

a. Visual observation from the air is a rapid and effective means of locating and identifying VC activity such as construction of field fortifications and road cuts, and the appearance of new track and trail activity. Although visual reconnaissance may be restricted by poor flying weather and VC ground fire, observers often can provide information vital to successful attacks on VC units and fortifications.

b. Aerial photographs are a prime source of information on terrain and VC installations and activities. Detailed photo interpretation produces accurate intelligence and often discloses hidden VC installations or camps not visible to the air observer.

c. Side looking airborne radar (SLAR) and infrared devices are air reconnaissance means which provide special information.

(1) SLAR, with its capability to detect moving targets and accurately determine their locations, has been valuable in the discovery of VC movement along the coast, canals, and rivers. In many instances, detection of a moving target has resulted in an immediate attack on a VC target.

(2) Airborne infrared detection devices are useful for detecting VC encampments and other activity at night. Because of the means by which the infrared detection is displayed, the information obtained usually must be correlated with maps and photographs to determine accurately the nature of the activity discovered. Fog, clouds, and rain reduce the effectiveness of infrared devices.

d. The information developed by SLAR, infrared, visual aerial surveillance and photo imagery is analyzed and correlated with other information at the Intelligence Centers. Intelligence of tactical value is passed by the most rapid means available, including aircraft, to appropriate organizations for necessary action.

SECTION III. PATROLS

8. General

a. Detailed and complete information on all aspects of patrolling is contained in appropriate service field manuals. Additional information peculiar to Vietnam is presented in this section to help US forces improve patrol capabilities. Several cautions are particularly applicable.

(1) Stay off roads, trails and dry creek beds; maintain dispersion.

(2) Prevent the VC from predicting the direction of movement by following a zig-zag course.

(3) Dead foliage may be old camouflage over a trap.

(4) Tied down brush may be a firing lane for an ambush site.

(5) Avoid moats around villages; they may hide punji traps or booby traps.

(6) Unoccupied huts may have booby traps hidden in the frame or in the roof thatch.

(7) Be cautious of all civilians.

(8) Be cautious in villages where no children are visible or where they are unfriendly.

(9) Do not set a pattern.

(10) Stay alert.

b. During training and conduct of patrol operations include the following procedures as SOP.

(1) Simultaneous patrol activities by elements of a unit must be coordinated closely and contact maintained when in close proximity in order to save time, protect formations, and maintain security.

(2) Take advantage of inclement weather to conduct patrols; heavy rain will cover noise of ground movement.

(3) In the jungle, trails must be cut through the dense foliage and undergrowth. When practicing dispersion in movement under such conditions, lateral contact is very difficult to maintain. Move in multiple columns for added security.

(4) Never return over the same route.

(5) When patrolling a road lined by heavy undergrowth and dense foliage, reconnaissance by observation should be supplemented by controlled reconnaissance by fire.

(6) Use helicopter lift of patrols to expand a zone of operations or to get behind VC units, especially when the VC have concealed routes of withdrawal.

(7) Use stay behind patrols to ambush small groups of VC returning to an area after the departure of the main

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body of friendly forces. The use of stay behind patrols is effective especially when the patrol remains in the vicinity of Viet Cong killed during the day, as the Viet Cong usually return to police up the bodies.

c. Extensive patrolling both saturation and ambush, should be used to deny the enemy the opportunity to prepare positions close to friendly forces' base camps and field locations.

9. Saturation Patrolling

a. During daylight one of the most successful tactics is saturation patrolling supported by a reaction force. The saturation of an area with squad size patrols allows maximum coverage and fully employs the leadership capabilities of small unit leaders. Saturation patrolling requires detailed planning by the company or higher echelon to coordinate completely all the patrols in an area. Since the VC normally will not engage a superior force, the smaller unit has a better chance of daylight contact with guerrillas. Patrol size will be determined largely by intelligence estimates of enemy strength, disposition and equipment and by the terrain.

b. Conducting night patrols without prior coordination is dangerous. In certain area, both Popular and Regional Forces may be patrolling and ambushing. Close liaison and coordination with local friendly forces through US advisors at district and province headquarters is imperative to preclude friendly units meeting in the dark and exchanging fire.

10. Sudden Engagements

Most encounters with the VC while on patrol are sudden meeting engagements. Reaction by the point must be immediate to deliver effective fire at the elusive VC, who has been trained to leap into the brush and slither away on his belly when encountered. Reaction by the remainder of the patrol must be rapid and violent. Immediately bring all available fires to bear on the VC

element. Fire low; a ricochet is better than an overshot. After fire superiority is gained, vigorously attack to destroy him. Contact with the VC must be maintained. Pursuit of the VC immediately following an engagement must be aggressive.

11. Scout Dogs

A scout dog helps moving troops to reconnoiter routes and areas for the presence of humans. If a commander makes full and skillful use of scout dogs, he may avoid a VC ambush.

a. Scout dogs rely on their keen sense of smell to detect scents which come from an upwind direction. When a dog is working in the harness, he will "alert" when he detects a human scent, usually by assuming a sitting position with body still, ears erect and nose aimed in the upwind direction. From the alert indication the handler shows the direction of the unknown person by arm signal to the tactical unit leader. The alerting distance varies according to conditions of wind, weather, terrain and vegetation. Along jungle trails the alert often will indicate a quarry along the trail because the slight winds in the jungle allow scents to drift along trails. Under favorable conditions scout dogs can alert on a noise.

b. Scout dogs can smell out a person or cache in a covered hole in the ground, or a person hiding underwater while breathing through a reed. They can assist sentries when a unit is at a halt.

c. Scout dog platoon leaders require a warning order to prepare for an operation and a briefing on the major facets of the plan. Failure to receive this information will hinder proper selection and preparation of teams and adequate provision for their logistic support.

d. Scout dogs should be used only when benefits may accrue from their use. For example, if the unit is to make a long foot march through safe areas prior to reaching the area of operation, scout dogs should not be employed until reaching the area of operations.

e. Benefit from scout dogs is greatest in small unit operations such as patrols and ambushes.

f. When troops are negotiating trails in jungle or other heavy vegetation, the dog team should be on the trail rather than in a flank security position.

g. On extended operations or in areas where negotiation of the terrain causes considerable physical exertion, dog teams should be used in pairs and alternated in the working position.

h. When operating in flooded rice paddies or similar terrain, dogs should be on the 25 foot leash rather than on the shorter 5 foot leash. Dogs normally can travel through mud without excessive difficulty but handlers tend to tire. A dog in good physical condition should be capable of six hours of work in paddies.

i. The dog's position in relation to the patrol or body of troops must be such that he uses the wind to the best advantage. When advancing with the wind, a dog should be at the rear where he is of some benefit. In a cross-wind the dog may walk on the upwind flank or at the head of the column. Handlers and advisors with the unit should emphasize these points to the tactical commander. A change in the direction of advance may require a repositioning of the dog in relation to the unit.

j. When the dog is working at the head of a column on a flank, or quartering a field (criscrossing it to obtain better area coverage) while the unit is halted, designated personnel should maintain visual contact with the dog handler. A bodyguard should accompany each team operating in close proximity to the enemy.

k. Maximum benefit can be realized from the use of scout dogs by gearing the rate of advance of the unit to that of the dog.

l. Requiring a scout dog to close with the located enemy endangers the dog and handler; both of them are ill-equipped for the assult.

m. Scout dogs easily learn to travel in helicopters and fixed wing aircraft but usually require an initial period of familiarization before they are at ease in this strange environment. The familiarization should be accomplished prior to using the dog on an operation.

SECTION IV. COUNTERAMBUSH TACTICS

12. General

Since the VC/NVA make extensive use of ambushes, counterambush measures are a vital part of operations. Counterambush operations also afford opportunities to find the enemy in a position where they can be fixed or destroyed.

13. Prevention of Ambushes

a. No part of Vietnam may be considered secure; therefore precautionary measures must be taken always. The requirement for such precautions is typified by an action which occured near Bien Hoa. A US unit which already had numerous patrols and ambushes out a few thousand meters from its base camp dispatched another six man patrol after first light. The VC ambushed the patrol less than 1000 meters from its base, killing five and wounding the sixth.

b. When possible, move cross-country, avoiding roads, trails and dry creek beds. Although these terrain features afford ease and speed of movement, they offer the VC prime ambush sites and usually are under observation.

c. In moving through open or broken terrain security must be established in front, to the rear, and to the flanks of a moving column out to at least the maximum effective range of small arms fire. In the jungle security must, as a minimum, be out in front 200 meters and cover a front broad enough to prevent a linear ambush. The main body must be back far enough to maneuver once contact is made. Lack of security has been the most prominent factor contributing to successful enemy ambushes.

d. Routes of march should receive a detailed reconnaissance from the air, by map and by small reconnaissance patrols. There are times, however, when a thorough reconnaissance cannot be completed because of lack of time or the size of the area. Air observation is valuable but is not a substitute for ground reconnaissance. A disciplined enemy unit, in place and camouflaged, is not likely to be spotted from the air. In one case an experienced US pilot and observer searched an area for two hours without spotting a VC battalion hidden in waist high grass and scattered coconut trees. Later in the day this force ambushed an ARVN battalion.

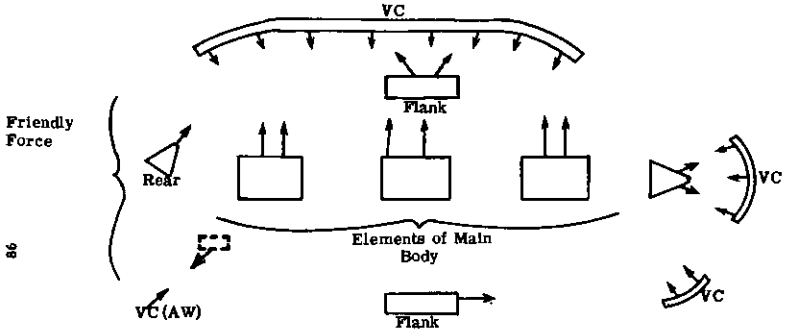
e. Security must be maintained at all times. During the return movement to home stations after conducting an operation, troops have a tendancy to relax and become careless. On several occasions, the VC have allowed a unit to pass through unmolested on its way to the objective area, then ambushed the unit as it returned.

14. Reaction to Ambush

a. When caught in an ambush the friendly unit immediately must return the fire, gain and maintain fire superiority and vigorously assault the ambush force. Friendly troops must continue to fire, even after the enemy ceases, to prevent his recovering weapons and bodies and escaping. Once the ambush is overcome, the entire ambush site must be searched thoroughly and cleared. Figures 48 thru 50 depict examples of reactions in different ambush situations.

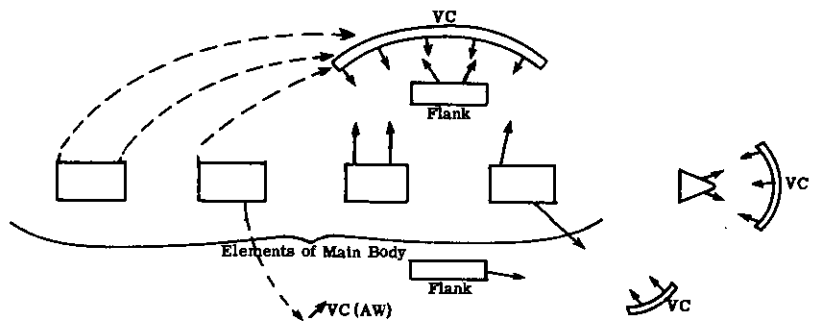
b. Troops moving through suspect areas should carry white phosphorus (WP) and offensive grenades and, when ambushed, immediately throw them towards the enemy. Coupled with casualty producing effects, the WP grenade provides a protective smoke screen.

c. Plan for the maximum use of area fire weapons such as shot guns and M-79s, 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, tank guns, or howitzers (using cannister ammunition) which might be in the convoy or troop formation.



Units positioned entirely in the kill zone of an ambush should immediately return fire with organic weapons and in conjunction with WP grenades and supporting fires, assault the primary ambush force.

Figure 48 Entire Unit Caught in VC Ambush (Schematic)



When an ambush is activated with only a portion of a unit in the kill zone that portion immediately returns fire while conducting immediate action to break out of the kill zone. Units not affected attack the flanks and rear of the main ambush position by assault and establish ambushes along the VC routes of withdrawal.

Figure 49. Portion of Friendly Unit Caught in VC Ambush (Schematic)