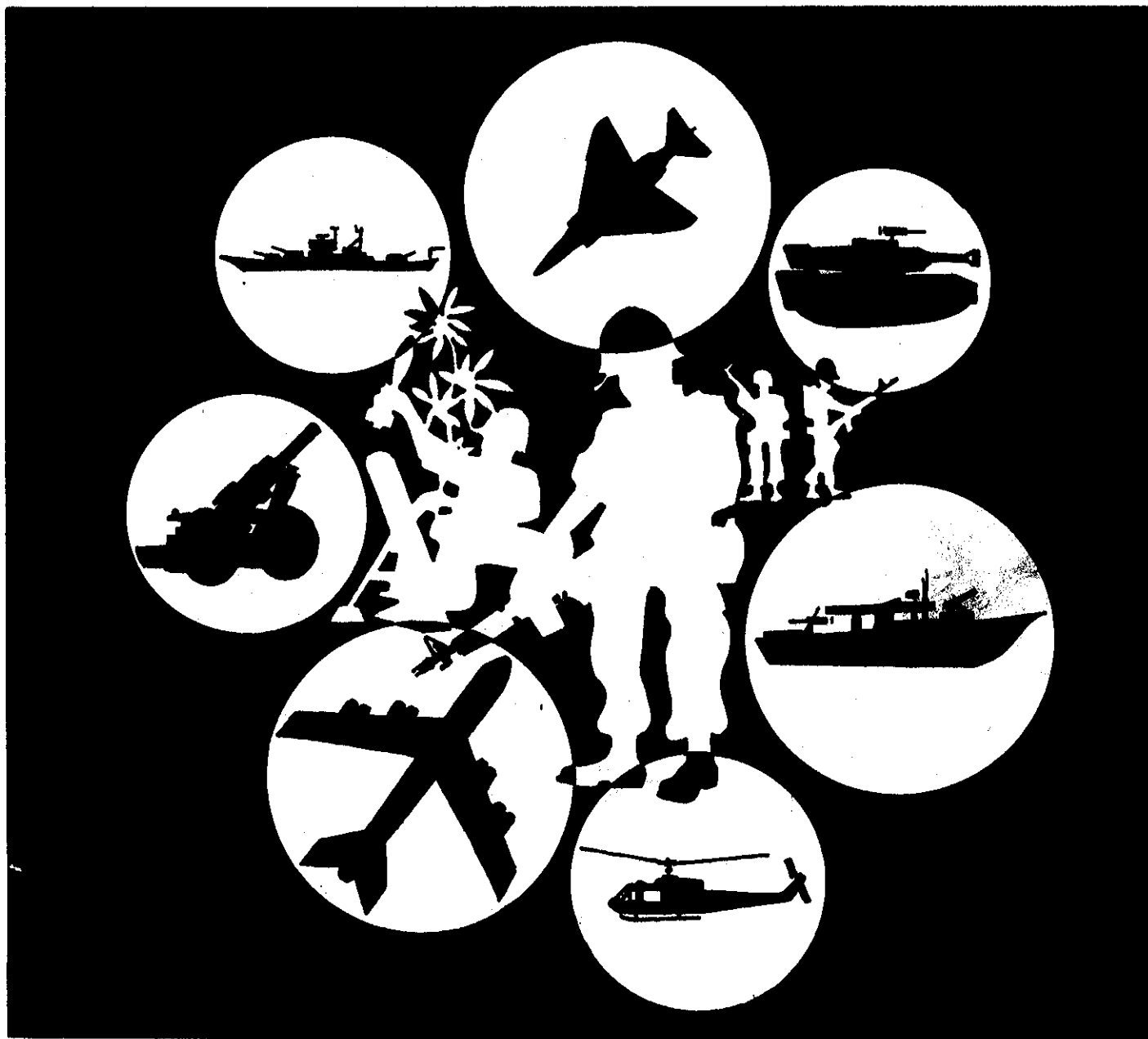
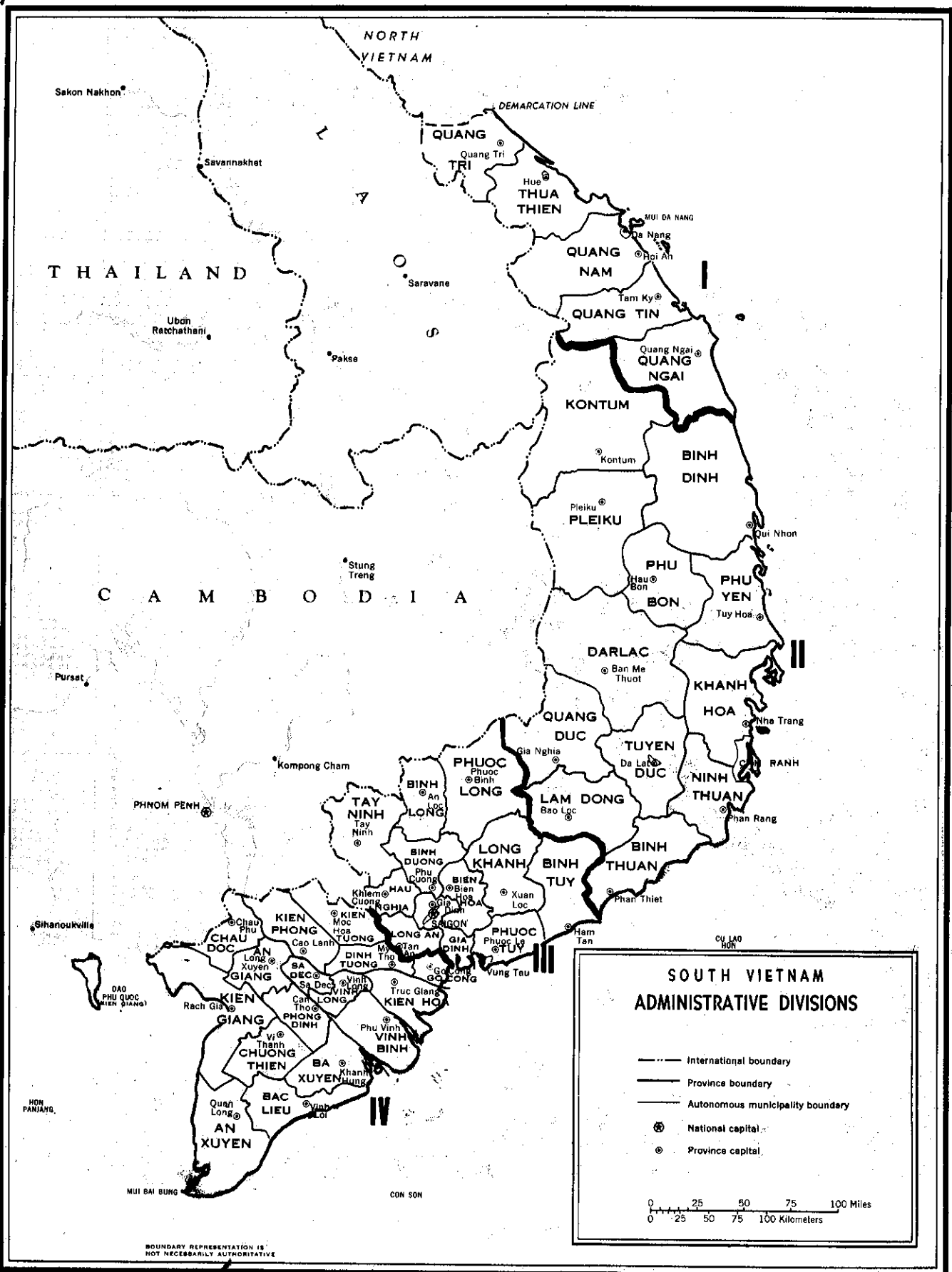


# 1968 SUMMARY

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UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM  
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Office of Information



MACOI-P

1 March 1969

FOR THE PRESS

This summary has been prepared to present a review of significant events occurring in this command in 1968.

The selection of actions and incidents for the narrative summaries and chronologies in Sections II, III and IV were compiled and condensed from the daily news releases issued during the calendar year 1968.

The historical chronology and statistical summaries include information from earlier periods for reference purposes. Information in these sections pertaining to other than U. S. Forces is provided for historical and background use.

More detailed information regarding combat operations can be found in the MACV Office of Information Monthly Summaries.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Merritt G. Garner".

MERRITT G. GARNER  
Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Public Information Division

C O N T E N T S

	PAGES
I - VIETNAM 1968 (Narrative Summary)	1 - 12
II - NARRATIVE REVIEW OF EVENTS	13 - 129
III - ABBREVIATED CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS	131 - 237
IV - ANNOUNCED GROUND OPERATIONS	239 - 246
V - AIR OPERATIONS	247 - 264
VI - NAVAL OPERATIONS	265 - 269
VII - STATISTICS	271 - 276
VIII - GENERAL DESCRIPTION, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM	277 - 281
IX - CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS, RVN	283 - 316

## VIETNAM 1968

The year 1968 was unquestionably the most significant year of the war to date and may prove to have been the turning point. During the year, North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces were severely beaten in their two major offensives and were pre-empted by Allied forces from carrying out a third offensive and probably a fourth.

In order to place the significant events of 1968 into perspective, it is essential that the situation during the latter half of 1967 be reviewed briefly. During that period, Hanoi made several significant decisions which were to influence the overall enemy strategy and tactics in 1968. These decisions, for the most part, were necessitated by the continued military successes of the Free World Forces.

In the summer of 1967, the most serious condition confronting the enemy, according to numerous prisoners and captured documents, was the fact that his proselyting effort was failing, and he was losing control over increasing portions of the population as the pacification program began to make an impact on his activities. In addition, the enemy was highly concerned over the prospects for successful elections to be conducted in the South. From a military standpoint, the enemy was experiencing serious problems in maintaining his strength. Beginning in 1966 and continuing through 1967, his personnel losses exceeded his replacements through recruitment and infiltration. Despite these problems, the leadership in Hanoi thought it detected in the United States a considerable decline in public support for the war effort and division among members of the government which could possibly influence the American government to withdraw its commitment. Hanoi also saw various signs that segments of world opinion were turning against the U.S. effort in Vietnam and in some cases, overt sympathy and support for the communist North Vietnamese was evidenced.

In the late summer, therefore, Hanoi decided that it was not only essential for military reasons, but desirable in light of world public opinion and the situation in the United States, to make a maximum military effort as soon as possible. This effort was to be made in what the enemy called his "1967-1968 Winter-Spring Campaign".

In preparation for the campaign and stepped-up activities, the enemy began to make more extensive use of his lines of supply through Cambodia and undertook a major program to improve his lines of communication elsewhere. Along with the improvement of the roads outside of Vietnam, there was an intense effort to extend and improve a fair-weather road net into South Vietnam itself. Access roads were built through base areas in the sanctuaries in Laos to the west of the northern provinces. These were designed to allow positioning of supplies as far forward as possible in order to lower requirements for portering supplies and equipment to using units. A new jungle route was constructed toward Hue to the east and another was extended south into Quang Nam Province increasing the value

of the A Shau Valley as a logistic base. A road complex was built in the central highlands of II Corps to serve units in that area and, in III Corps, a road was extended down through Phuoc Long Province to allow motoring of supplies into the "War Zone D" area. These "in-country" roads were heavily interdicted by friendly forces, but the enemy persisted in his effort to use them.

In late October 1967, the enemy began military operations in the "Winter-Spring" campaign with attacks near Con Thien, on Pleiku by indirect fire, by elements of three regiments at Loc Ninh as well as widespread actions in IV Corps. The enemy continued his logistics preparations on an unparalleled scale, to include extensive stockpiling of supplies for the culminating effort of his campaign.

November of 1967 was highlighted by a major engagement around Dak To in Kontum Province and by other attacks in Binh Thuan, Phuoc Long and Binh Long Provinces. Activities dropped off, somewhat, in December.

During January 1968, enemy attacks were heavy throughout the entire country as the enemy effort built in intensity toward the Vietnamese "Tet" or lunar new year holiday period. The deployment of two NVA divisions, the 304th and 320th, into northern I Corps around Khe Sanh and a general southward drift of several enemy main force units in III Corps, toward Saigon, were further confirmation of impending heavy fighting in early 1968.

On 30 January, the enemy initiated the climax phase of his "Winter-Spring" campaign with widespread attacks on the nation's capital and many major population centers in all Corps Tactical Zones. This "Tet" offensive came during the period of a stand-down in military operations which had been previously agreed upon by both sides. Hoping to achieve the maximum amount of surprise through this deceit, the enemy blatantly violated the agreement by launching his greatest military effort of the Vietnam conflict.

The enemy skillfully employed night movement and infiltration tactics and, in some cases, by-passed territorial outposts and moved into the population centers. However, during the attacks, the enemy massed his forces, and even after being driven from the cities, his units remained initially in tight formations and made lucrative targets for air and artillery strikes.

After defeating the initial enemy attacks, friendly forces were committed to a general offensive and regained the initiative.

By the end of the first week of February, the offensive had been countered and the remains of his forces had been driven out of the cities and were retreating to remote areas of the country except at Hue, where NVA troops were able to hold out within the walled citadel until 25 February.

From interrogation of enemy prisoners, during and following the attacks, considerable information was learned about the enemy's objectives and expectations for the Tet offensive.

By coordinating his attacks country-side, the enemy hoped to create an impression of great strength with enough force to seize and hold the initiative and of being capable of striking where ever he chose. In those areas where he lacked the strength to conduct ground assaults, he planned to conduct widespread attacks by indirect rocket and mortar fire. By attacking Saigon and other key cities, the enemy hoped to achieve the collapse of the South Vietnamese **government**, the ARVN, and to achieve a favorable psychological impact from international news publicity. The enemy also planned on heavy attrition of U.S. forces during the widespread attacks which he felt would have a great influence on the attitude of the American people and would, in fact, weaken the will of the United States **government and people to continue the war**. Finally, the enemy expected a "general uprising" of the Vietnamese people in which they would join with and support, the attacking forces. The general uprising was to topple the South Vietnamese **government since the** armed forces were also expected to join the enemy side. The enemy apparently believed that the United States forces would be isolated by the uprising, permitting rapid expansion of enemy control in the rural areas. It is probable that this great emphasis on, and even greater belief in, a general uprising is one reason the enemy placed primary reliance on Viet Cong units during the Tet attacks and furthermore decided to commit some political cadre, bringing them into the open to move immediately into control positions at all levels of **government**.

The results of the Tet offensive were not what the enemy had anticipated. In the north, he attacked Hue, Phu Bai and Quang Tri City. In II Corps, attacks were launched against Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, and Phan Thiet as well as the larger cities of the central highlands. The most dramatic action was in the Saigon area but the enemy was quickly thrown out of the city. In IV Corps, action was widespread, but the attacks were of smaller scale. The enemy, however, was unable to hold any of the targets he attacked except Hue where he held on for about three weeks.

The general uprising did not occur and the fact that the Vietnamese people did not greet the attackers with open arms was a terrible psychological blow, according to captured enemy soldiers. In some areas, the troops found themselves in desperate need of withdrawal plans which had not been made because "there would be no need to withdraw." The South Vietnamese **government not only did not collapse it gained a new measure of respect**. At the same time, public opinion generally solidified against the communists because of the vicious and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and populated areas. Some 9,000 civilians were killed and about 18,000 were wounded in the attacks. South Vietnamese Armed Forces units fought brilliantly and all, aggressively and successfully, opposed the attacking forces despite the fact that many units were at low strength due to Tet leaves.

By mid-February, enemy forces were attempting to avoid contact and their offensive actions, for the most part, were limited to stand-off attacks by indirect fire against friendly installations.

During the three weeks ending 17 February, the enemy forces lost 36,200 killed in action including much of his experienced VC troop leadership. This exceeded the total number of U.S. battle deaths incurred during the entire three years of the Korean War and represented a crushing defeat. In fact, the number of enemy killed represented approximately one-sixth of his entire military strength at the time. But, perhaps most serious to the enemy in the long run was the loss of personnel in certain levels of the infrastructure he had so carefully built up over many years. Country-wide, the failure to achieve success at Tet deeply damaged the morale of even the most experienced of the command structure cadre. In effect, the enemy was dealt a staggering blow during the Tet offensive from which he has not recovered.

The major impact of the Tet offensive, on the GVN and Allied effort, was in the pacification program. Pacification was disrupted and there was an overall loss of security. As of 29 January, the Hamlet Evaluation System showed 67.2% of the Vietnamese people were living in relatively secure areas. In February, this dropped to 57.9% but has since steadily increased to a new record high of 76.3% by the end of the year.

A total of 9,600 Vietnamese civilians were killed and 21,000 wounded during the first three months of 1968 as a result of enemy actions. The majority of these casualties occurred during the Tet Offensive. Property damage was estimated at almost 174 million dollars, 46% of which was to private housing.

In order to blunt the initial enemy attacks, GVN and allied forces were required to move closer to the cities and towns which were the primary targets of the enemy. To counter the enemy attack on Saigon, for example, Task Force Ware (commanded by Army Major General Keith L. Ware, later killed in action in September) was established in the Capitol Military District and a number of U.S. and Vietnamese battalions were deployed into the CMD. A loss of security in rural areas resulted from this country-wide tightening of forces around the population centers. Many Revolutionary Development teams were involved in relief and recovery tasks in the cities and towns but over half remained in their assigned hamlets.

Following the initial enemy onslaught, President Thieu announced the formation of a high-level GVN/US task force to direct and coordinate recovery activities. Vice President Ky headed the group initially, with the Deputy to COMUSMACV for CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) as the senior US representative. Each Vietnamese Corps Commander created similar task forces and the effort proved effective in moving toward normalization.

Although the offensive made a major psychological impact on the American people and resulted in some temporary gains for the enemy in the rural areas of Vietnam, he failed to achieve a single one of his original principal objectives.

The one triumph for the enemy, which emerged from his Tet offensive, was the propaganda effect on the world outside of Vietnam.

This propaganda victory was to have an impact on his future strategy which will be discussed later.

During January and February, significant activity occurred in the area of the U.S. Marine Khe Sanh Combat Base in northwest Quang Tri Province which is worthy of separate mention. In January, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) began deploying from the An Khe area of northern II Corps into northern I Corps based on the intelligence indications of imminent large-scale offensive operations on the part of the enemy and a substantial movement of major North Vietnamese Army forces into the northernmost province. Simultaneously, General Westmoreland dispatched his deputy, General Abrams, together with a small staff, to establish a MACV forward headquarters at Phu Bai south of Hue. General Abrams was given full decision authority so that the Commanding General, III MAF, could receive rapid MACV support without worrying about the long communications lines between Saigon and Da Nang.

On 7 February, the Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camp at Lang Vei, to the southwest of Khe Sanh, was attacked and the defenders were compelled to withdraw from the camp under the pressure. The North Vietnamese forces used several Soviet PT-76 Amphibious Tanks in the attack on the camp. This was the first enemy employment of armor in the war and was a failure. An enemy armor attack has not been attempted since that time. Beginning in late January and continuing intermittently thru February, the Khe Sanh Combat Base received heavy attacks by enemy artillery and other indirect fire, totalling hundreds of rounds; however, casualties were light.

Although intense enemy attacks by indirect fire continued in early March, activity steadily declined in late March. A ~~concerted~~ ground attack at Khe Sanh never occurred because heavy casualties were inflicted on the North Vietnamese Army divisions in the vicinity which forced the enemy to abandon his planned offensive. The principal weapon employed in the defense of Khe Sanh was a concentrated air campaign in which 96,000 tons of bombs were dropped by B-52's and tactical aircraft on enemy positions and troop concentrations. This massive air power, combined with over 100,000 rounds of artillery fired in support of the base, forced the enemy to withdraw.

The enemy's failure at Tet caused him to again assess his strategy and tactics. He realized that he could not afford another country-wide offensive of the kind attempted at Tet but he believed the propaganda success achieved at that time could be exploited by sustaining pressure on Allied forces. Since his resources in both manpower and materiel were insufficient to conduct simultaneous attacks comparable to those of the Tet offensive, the enemy decided to stagger the main blows in his second offensive, both in time and place, after some preparation. This preparation involved concentration on his primary problems of resupply, reorganization of forces and integration of replacements into his units. In the latter regard, the enemy had intended to obtain replacements from the population in areas made less secure, but had little success.

The enemy's critical supply situation was exemplified by actions on the night of 29 February - 1 March when U.S. Navy patrol craft detected a major North Vietnamese infiltration effort by sea. Three 100 foot long steel-hulled fishing trawlers were intercepted while attempting to run into the shore at remote, uninhabited spots during the darkness of the early morning hours. Many tons of Chinese Communist weapons and ammunition, which had been loaded at Hai Phong, were captured or destroyed. (By the end of the year, enemy infiltration by sea had been virtually eliminated and emphasis was placed on the interdiction of the enemy's use of inland waterways.)

As the enemy avoided contact to rebuild his badly hurt units, at least partially, normalization in the Republic steadily progressed in March. Curfews were eased, RD cadre groups were moving back to their hamlets, major roads were reopened and commerce rapidly approached the pre-Tet level. Slower economic progress was made in IV Corps, however, as the enemy made a determined effort to prevent movement of commodities to Saigon from the Delta primarily by mining and disrupting travel on Highway 4.

The plan for the second general offensive envisioned attacks on Saigon and Hue to be launched in mid-April, a major thrust in the central highlands in mid-May and attacks against Da Nang in June. His North Vietnamese units were to be committed since the Viet Cong forces he had used at Tet were now seriously depleted and would be unable to carry as full a burden. This enemy offensive was destined to end in failure due to the aggressive spoiling attacks by Allied forces which upset the enemy's timetable in several areas.

Along with search and clear operations, B-52 strikes not only ruined the enemy's plans for overrunning the Khe Sanh combat base but were instrumental in smashing his units and base areas in southern I Corps, the Central Highlands and in III Corps. For example, in early April, 1st Air Cavalry Division troopers participated in Operation Pegasus/Lam Son 207 and linked up with the Marines at Khe Sanh. The Air Cav units then moved into the A Shau Valley to conduct Operation Delaware. This was the first time ground forces had operated in the valley in two years and resulted in the first capture of NVA artillery pieces in South Vietnam, the destruction of large stockpiles of supplies, and the interdiction of one of the enemy's primary infiltration routes forcing him to delay in I Corps and divert his efforts to building routes which would by-pass the valley. Other operations by friendly forces destroyed or captured **material** cached throughout the country, placing an even greater strain on the enemy's capability.

With respect to the mid-April Saigon attack plan, an enemy Lieutenant Colonel, who defected during the month, provided information that the plan had been delayed to late April or early May. He also gave detailed information on the enemy units involved in III Corps and their objectives.

Consequently, there was no surprise and many of the enemy units were intercepted at some distance from the capital on 3 and 4 May enroute to their final assembly areas. Although the enemy committed as much force,

Corps-wide, as during the TET offensive, his attacks were not well executed, were of reduced intensity and were more quickly defeated.

The attacks began on 4 and 5 May as expected. More enemy forces were committed in the main attack against Saigon than at Tet. However, allied knowledge of the enemy's plan, poor preparation, inexperienced personnel plus losses inflicted on the enemy during his movement toward the capital contributed to his defeat. Elements of only 9 of the 27 battalions committed reached the edge of the city and the largest element was company size. In addition, more North Vietnamese Army personnel were involved in the attacks and were not familiar enough with built-up areas to conduct an effective attack. Despite heavy enemy losses, sporadic contact continued in the capital area until early June. Resistance ended when remnants trapped in the northern outskirts of the city surrendered in mid-June. Elsewhere, the enemy achieved some degree of coordination with supporting attacks by fire in IV Corps, II Corps and southern I Corps.

Damage in built-up areas during early May was not as great as that resulting from the TET offensive; but, again, the outlying villages and towns around Saigon were hardest hit in damage to private dwellings.

The U.S. and GVN announced a program called "DONG TAM", in the 3rd week of May, to accomplish the rapid reconstruction of housing and the temporary resettlement of the people whose houses were destroyed by the enemy attacks and friendly countermeasures. The combined operation was highly successful and, by mid-July, over 900 family housing units had been constructed by U.S. Army and Air Force Engineers, Navy Seabees, ARVN Engineers and Vietnamese civilians in the areas of destruction.

The enemy attempted further attacks into June, primarily in the Central Highlands and southern I Corps, but his efforts were preempted by friendly actions. Several rocket attacks were conducted against the city of Saigon in June inflicting many civilian casualties. The attacks were designed to terrorize the population while attempting to create an impression of military strength. That the indiscriminate attacks were not more frequent or intense can be attributed to the fact that allied troops captured 551-107mm and 122mm rockets cached within firing range of Saigon during the period 1 March through 4 July. During that same period, the enemy still managed to fire 215 rockets into the general Saigon area.

Pacification again received a setback as a result of the second offensive but it was minor in comparison to the loss of security following the TET attacks. The percentage of the population living in secure areas continued to increase during June. The setback for the enemy was much worse; overall, he lost another 30,000 men killed in action in his second offensive. He then withdrew into his base areas and border sanctuaries in order to refit, retrain, and receive replacements.

In July, a period of relatively little enemy initiated activity prevailed. The enemy generally avoided contact while planning for what he refers to as his "third offensive".

Concurrent with battlefield successes, there were other significant developments with regard to the improvement of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. On 31 July, a program involving a phased reduction in the number of U.S. Army Advisory personnel serving with a regiment of the ARVN 22nd Infantry Division was implemented on an experimental basis. The program was mutually developed by the Senior Advisor and Commanding General of the Division and it involved the replacement of advisors with Combat Assistance Teams. The teams were made up of fewer personnel in a liaison capacity. The Vietnamese officers and infantrymen demonstrated an outstanding ability to conduct combat operations without advisors and the decision was made to implement a similar program within the other two regiments. At the completion of the program, the number of advisory personnel with the division dropped about 100 personnel to almost one-third the number authorized. This reduction freed allocations under the current force level which could be **utilized** to augment other priorities within the MACV advisory effort.

Prior to the increased activity in August, all Vietnamese combat maneuver battalions had been equipped with the M-16 rifle. This had a significant impact on their combat effectiveness. The firepower of these troops was increased over 50 percent with the new weapons and, just as important from a psychological standpoint, these were the same weapons being carried by Americans. As the M-16's went to the regular battalions, those units in turn handed over many weapons, such as M-2 carbines, to the Regional and Popular forces who were armed mostly with M-1 rifles. This led to a noticeable increase in the **aggressiveness of these troops who began conducting** more combat sweep operations in contrast to normal static security missions.

The enemy plan for a third offensive envisioned an offensive of longer duration than his Tet and 5 May attacks. He planned to seize the initiative and exploit it in several follow-up phases. He expected to begin with diversionary attacks against targets of secondary importance, such as Ban Me Thuot, the fringes of northwest III Corps and areas in the Delta. A final, decisive and rapid attack was to **be launched against Da Nang. The enemy** commanders relied on the belief that they would be able to retain flexibility, preserving the combat capabilities of the major forces in key objective areas for commitment at the decisive time and place. The enemy's strategy involved threatening outlying areas, such as Tay Ninh, hoping Allied re-deployments would expose more vital objectives, such as Saigon. If this happened, he planned to move through the gaps. If not, he intended to use his relative strength to attack in the outlying regions and expand his control there.

Inherent in his planning were the two very important factors that his losses must be kept to a minimum and that his blows must be staggered. These overriding considerations were borne of necessity and not by choice.

The enemy's "third offensive" of the year began on 18 August with a series of attacks in the three northern Corps followed by coordinated attacks, largely of a harrasing nature, in IV Corps two days later.

In central I Corps, the plan for a "crushing blow" against Da Nang was prevented by the quick destruction of the attacking forces. His try for a quick attack against Ban Me Thuot in II Corps was frustrated by Allied reinforcements, and his diversionary attack at Due Lap, to the southwest, was repulsed by ARVN and CIDG troops. In that effort, the 1st NVA Division suffered heavy losses. The Vietnamese fought extremely well and, even though the enemy had the advantage of a nearby Cambodian sanctuary and a superiority in numbers he was unable to capture the CIDG camp or the District headquarters.

To the south, in III Corps, the main effort was some distance from Saigon in Tay Ninh Province. Although the city of Tay Ninh appeared to have been an objective, only a small group of enemy actually penetrated one edge and were quickly driven out in about 2 hours with insignificant results. His ground attacks, by largely NVA troops, against fire support bases of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division in the Tay Ninh area, were repelled with heavy losses and he failed to accomplish the desired weakening of the Saigon defenses. In IV Corps, aggressive ARVN operations pre-empted planned multi-battalion attacks on Cai Lay and Can Tho cities. During the first two weeks of his "third offensive" over 10,500 enemy were killed country-wide in an abortive effort, which proved much weaker than the previous two offensives.

Before the offensive was finally called off in late September, the enemy KIA figure passed 25,000 without anyone knowing for sure whether a "third offensive" had taken place.

In September, Allied forces continued to maintain the initiative, seeking out the enemy forces in his base areas. Substantial quantities of food supplies, munitions and weapons totaling over 300 tons were captured in I and III Corps by U.S. and ARVN forces. On 14 September, ARVN troops found the largest munitions cache of the war in the Binh Long-Phuoc Long Provinces border area just south of Cambodia. The 40 to 50 tons of munitions were in wooden crates and were mostly of Communist Chinese manufacture. The loss of those supplies undoubtedly had an impact on the enemy's ability to initiate or sustain combat in certain areas of the country. Despite this, NVA replacements continued to infiltrate, although the rate began to drop, and North Vietnam showed no intention of deviating from it's goal of subjugating the South through armed aggression.

There had been some earlier indications that the quality of the individual enemy soldier was deteriorating, which were partially evidenced in August; but, in October, two battles gave positive indication of this deterioration. The first action occurred on 5 October in the Delta. In a day-long fight, infantrymen from the U.S. 9th Infantry Division killed 90 enemy, captured 8 and picked up over 160 individual and crew-served weapons left scattered on the battlefield along with a large quantity of ammunition and equipment.

Only one U.S. soldier was killed in the action. Although the weapons were the best in his arsenal, the poor battlefield discipline of the Viet Cong troops was not characteristic of the enemy our forces were engaging in 1967. At the other end of the country, on 25 October, mechanized infantrymen from the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, (Mechanized) conducted a sweep into the southern Demilitarized Zone, based on intelligence, and engaged a North Vietnamese Army battalion. In a day-long heavy battle, 232 NVA soldiers were killed while U.S. deaths were 6 killed. More than 250 individual and crew-served weapons were **left** behind by the retreating NVA troops. This was the largest number of weapons captured in any single engagement of the war.

In late September and early October, a diminution of the enemy threat in I Corps was noted due to the success of individual and combined military operations which had inflicted severe losses on many of the enemy's best fighting units since August, forcing him to pull back for refitting. In some cases this refitting took place as far away as his enemy sanctuaries well north of the 17th parallel in Laos. Since there was still a substantial threat in III Corps, the decision was made by COMUSMACV to redeploy the entire 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) into northern III Corps, 50 to 100 miles north of Saigon. The highly mobile air cavalry striking force, of some 19,000 men and over 400 helicopters, began moving south on 28 October and was seeking out and engaging NVA troops 500 miles from its old operational area within three days. The move was completed by mid-November.

A heavy enemy rocket attack on Saigon preceded the announcement of a U.S. cessation of bombing against the north on 1 November. Following the bombing halt, though, the enemy continued his military activities in the Demilitarized Zone as well as in other parts of the country. There was a daily average of about 20 separate indications of his activity in the DMZ reported. This activity included AAA and small arms attacks on observation aircraft over the southern DMZ and construction of various types of military fortifications within the DMZ. In addition, an officer from the 138th NVA regiment, captured on 26 November by ARVN troops, stated that major elements of his regiment were still in the southern DMZ.

On 15 November, U.S. 5th Special Forces Group Advisors were withdrawn from another CIDG camp in the Delta, the 5th such withdrawal since 1967. By mutual agreement, the withdrawals are being made when the Vietnamese Special Forces teams demonstrate their **ability** to conduct combat operations without U.S. advisors.

At about midnight on 13 November, the heaviest single action of the month took place when an ARVN Ranger battalion repelled an assault by two NVA battalions in northern Tay Ninh Province killing 287 enemy while losing only 4 rangers killed.

The Hamlet Evaluation System results compiled for the month of November showed that 636,800 more Vietnamese people were incorporated into the category inhabiting relatively secure areas. This was a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent

increase over the previous month and brought the total to 76.3 per cent of the country-wide population - the highest level for that category since the initiation of the program in 1967. As area security spread, there was a corresponding drop reported in the number of people living in contested and enemy controlled areas. More than 90 per cent of the people representing the November increase are living in rural areas.

At the beginning of the month of December, intelligence on enemy movement and activities, coupled with numerous small contacts with NVA units indicated the enemy would possibly attempt a fourth series of coordinated attacks with the main effort in III Corps. U.S. and ARVN sweep operations in the northern part of the Corps, coupled with a significant number of B-52 strikes during the month, again set back his timetable by inflicting heavy casualties on his forces. The enemy offensive had failed to materialize by the end of the year.

The most significant action in December was the highly successful combined cordon operation "MEADE RIVER" in I CORPS. The operation succeeded in trapping sizable elements of the North Vietnamese Army's 36th Regiment (Independent) in an area southwest of Da Nang. The 36th NVA Regiment arrived in Quang Nam Province from North Vietnam early in the year. In 3 weeks of fighting, which ended on 9 December, U.S. Marines, Vietnamese and Allied forces killed and captured more than 1,000 enemy soldiers, 75 percent of whom were NVA troops. From the standpoint of personnel losses and the defeat of an enemy unit of the size involved, this cordon operation was, in all probability, the most successful of the war to date. In concept, coordination and execution, it equaled Operation CEDAR FALLS which cordoned and neutralized the enemy's Military Region 4 headquarters in the "Iron Triangle" area of III Corps during January of 1967.

Predictably, the enemy failed to adhere to his "ceasefire" over the Christmas holiday. During the 24 hour stand-down observed by U.S., GVN and Free World Forces, a total of 133 incidents were reported of which 47 were considered significant. As during the previous ceasefires proclaimed by the enemy, his weapons killed and wounded American and Vietnamese soldiers and innocent civilians.

In conclusion, although enemy offensive operations during the periods of Tet and May were violently executed, resulted in serious loss of life, both military and civilian, and caused extensive property damage as well as reverses to the pacification effort, the situation was restored by early summer and at extremely heavy cost to the enemy. During the remainder of the year a total war was waged against all elements of the enemy's system, the infrastructure, the guerrillas, VC main and local force units and NVA forces. Pacification and ARVN improvement continued as the top priority missions. All of these actions combined to forestall significant enemy offensive operations, destroy his war materiel, disrupt his movement and force him over to the defensive.

The heavy fighting of Tet and May enhanced the confidence and aggressiveness of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and reflected their basically sound combat capability. The remainder of the year was marked by an accelerated effort at improving the effectiveness of RVNAF through equipment modernization, manpower mobilization, leadership development and upgraded training.

Pacification and nation building were seriously retarded during early 1968, primarily because of the widespread materiel destruction and the generation of large numbers of refugees resulting from fighting in urban areas during the Tet and May offensives. By late **summer, there** dislocations had been largely overcome and previously planned programs resumed. The Accelerated Pacification Campaign was launched in November 1968, aimed primarily at expanding area and population security, plus the identification and elimination of clandestine enemy infrastructure personnel and influence.

Overall, the quality of the enemy's forces was degraded considerably during the year. Units which had a large turnover of personnel are no longer effective because the majority of the replacements have been "green" recruits. Many of the experienced cadre were lost, resulting in a shortage of leaders, both on the battlefield in the south and in the training bases in the north. A significant percentage of the North Vietnamese enlisted prisoners, who entered South Vietnam **during the year,** received less than the normal amount of training and some received no training at all. A trend toward an increased number of Viet Cong prisoners with less than three months total service was noticed. Evidence was revealed showing the enemy was employing more older and younger combatants.

As the year ended, the flow of North Vietnamese troops and Communist Chinese weapons and ammunition, through Laos and Cambodia into the hands of NVA and VC units in the south, continued. While the enemy met to talk of peace at year's end, it was clear that there had been no change in his effort to fabricate an impression of military strength in South Vietnam at the cost of many men.

## REVIEW OF EVENTS

JANUARY 1968

GENERAL: The level of enemy activity fluctuated during the month of January. Characteristic enemy action included: attacks by fire, attempts to interdict lines of communications, sapper attacks, and large-scale infiltration of enemy units into major cities. The enemy activity increased sharply during the early part of the Tet holiday period as attacks were conducted against friendly installations throughout the country. In the early part of the month, the enemy violated the New Year's standdown period by committing numerous major and minor incidents of terrorism and attacks by fire. U.S. and FWMAF curtailed offensive operations from 1800 31 Dec thru 0600 2 Jan 1968. By 0600, 2 January, 110 incidents had been reported, 37 of which were significant. These incidents resulted in 1 CIDG and 27 U.S. soldiers killed and 205 U.S. and 9 CIDG soldiers wounded. A total of 387 enemy were killed.

U.S. and other Free World Forces curtailed offensive operations at 1800 hours on 29 January in accordance with the planned 36-hour stand-down during the Tet period. Bombing was stopped north of Vinh and south of the I Corps area. The Government of the Republic was forced by enemy actions to cancel the standdown truce at 0930 hours on 30 January. US. and other Free World Military Assistance Forces ended their defensive posture after repeated attacks by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces throughout the Republic. However, air strikes north of Vinh in North Vietnam were not resumed until the last day of the month.

### I CORPS

In the area of the Demilitarized Zone, elements of NVA units were deployed in the area north of Con Thien and Goi Linh, and in the coastal area northeast of Dong Ha. The enemy forces sustained heavy casualties while conducting reconnaissance and probing actions in the Con Thien and Gio Linh area. The enemy used indirect fire support to reinforce his attacks. Hostile forces located north and south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base continued reconnaissance activity, attacks by fire, and probing actions throughout the month. These activities climaxed on 21 January when the Khe Sanh village and the Huong Hoa District Headquarters were overrun. Enemy activity then declined until 30 January.

In central I Corps, the enemy conducted several coordinated small-scale attacks southwest of Da Nang and in the Hoi An area on 3 January. On the same day, enemy forces launched a rocket attack on Da Nang Air Base. At the same time, in the Que Son area, North Vietnamese Army elements attacked several helicopter landing zones supporting Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA. Two of these attacks were supported by 122mm rocket fire. No other significant activity occurred until the Lunar New Year.

Beginning in the early morning hours of 30 January, the enemy launched a series of coordinated attacks against major military installations and population centers.

On 31 January, during the Tet holiday period, enemy forces attacked friendly installations in the Bien Hoa and Long Binh area. Other elements of Viet Cong forces conducted attacks in the Saigon and Tan Son Nhut area. The attacks in the Saigon area on 31 January resulted in approximately 700 enemy killed.

#### IV CORPS

In IV Corps, the enemy initiated small-scale attacks on friendly forces during the early part of the month. During the New Year's stand-down period, the enemy committed 14 major and 29 minor incidents.

On 4 January, in Dinh Tuong Province, elements of the 7th ARVN Infantry Division captured an enemy soldier, who subsequently led friendly forces to 41 enemy weapons caches. Uncovered in one of the weapons caches were fifty-five 120mm mortar rounds. On 6 January, the enemy conducted minor coordinated attacks in Vinh Binh Province. On 8 January coordinated enemy activity was noted in five provinces throughout IV Corps. Enemy activity subsided after mid-January. Starting again on 31 January, the enemy conducted widespread attacks against district towns, friendly defensive positions and airfields throughout the Corps area.

The highest number of enemy killed in the III Corps area during January was reported in Operation YELLOWSTONE. The enemy initiated heavy attacks against base camps of the 25th Infantry Division throughout the month, but failed to achieve a military victory in the area. The month's action can best be described as almost daily moderate contacts. The enemy lost 789 soldiers killed while U.S. losses totalled 75 infantrymen killed in action.

Four battalions of Main Force Viet Cong failed to overrun a fire support base of the 25th Infantry Division and lost 382 of their number in their effort on 1 January. The Viet Cong launched their attack during the afternoon, hours before the termination of their announced New Year's standdown period.

The attack began with a mortar and rocket-grenade barrage lasting through the afternoon and evening. Then shortly before midnight, still before the end of the truce, two battalions each from the 271st and 272nd Main Force Viet Cong Regiments, launched human wave assaults against the fire support base perimeter.

The defenders from the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, repelled the enemy's attacks with small arms, automatic weapons, hand grenades and supporting fire. The tubes of the howitzers were lowered and 105mm rounds were fired directly into the Viet Cong attackers. Heavy fire support was provided by U.S. Army helicopter gunships and U.S. Air Force tactical aircraft who bombed and strafed enemy positions and escape routes.

U.S. casualties were 23 killed and 153 wounded. In addition, to the 382 enemy killed, they lost 87 individual (rifles, carbines, sub-machineguns) and 29 crew-served weapons (machineguns, mortars, recoilless rifles).

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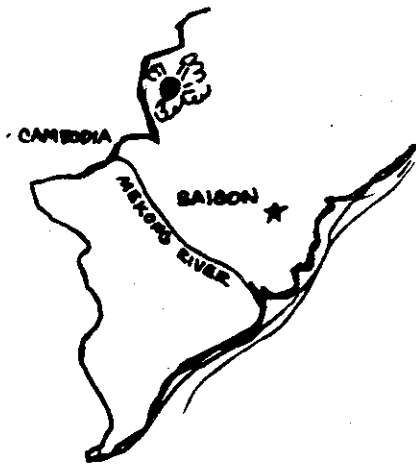
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# 25th INFANTRY DIVISION

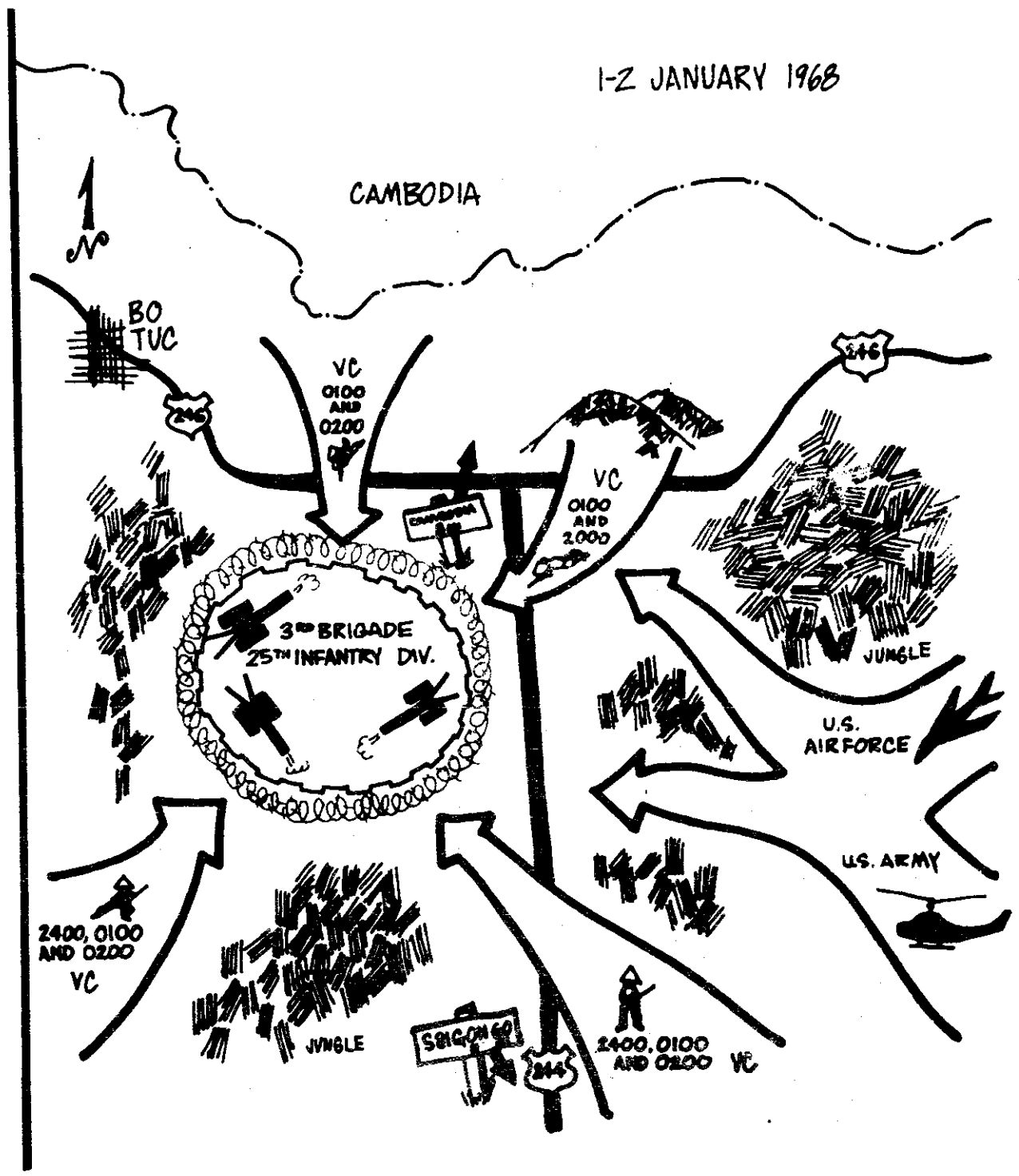
SUPPORTED BY  
 U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS  
 U.S. ARMY ARTILLERY  
 U.S.A.F. TACTICAL AIRCRAFT

KILLED 382 ENEMY  
 IDENTIFIED AS BELONGING  
 TO TWO MAIN FORCE UNITS:  
 271<sup>ST</sup> VC REGIMENT  
 272<sup>ND</sup> VC REGIMENT

IN ADDITION, U.S. INFANTRYMEN  
 CAPTURED 118 WEAPONS  
 FROM THE VIET CONG



1-2 JANUARY 1968



In Operation WHEELER/WHALLOWA during the month, U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) units from the AMERICAL Division killed 1,425 enemy with the loss of 127 Cav troopers. The operation, being conducted in Quang Tin and Quang Nam Provinces, was supported by 646 direct air support sorties and 93 naval gunfire missions.

The major battle during the month in this operation took place on 3 January. Elements of two North Vietnamese Army regiments attacked two AMERICAL Division positions and suffered heavily in unsuccessful attempts to overrun the U.S. positions. Two hundred and eight-seven North Vietnamese Army soldiers lost their lives in the actions.

After firing intense mortar, recoilless rifle and artillery fire into Landing Zones (LZ's) "Ross" and "Leslie", the NVA units followed the attacks by fire with ground attacks against the perimeters of the fortified LZ's.

At one point the enemy forces penetrated the perimeter at LZ "Leslie", but were driven out by the defenders. The barrels of 105mm howitzers were lowered to the horizontal, and fired high explosive ordnance point-blank into the attacking enemy. Although two other landing zones nearby received mortar attacks, the enemy concentrated his ground attacks on "Ross" and Leslie".

Throughout the action, the AMERICAL soldiers of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) defending the two landing zones were supported by U.S. Army artillery and helicopter gunships and U.S. Air Force tactical aircraft.

In addition to the 287 killed, the North Vietnamese Army lost 87 individual (rifles, carbines and submachine guns) and 20 crew-served (machine guns, mortars and recoilless rifles) weapons.

The AMERICAL Division units lost 17 soldiers for a kill ratio of 16.9 to 1.

In another action, AMERICAL Division infantrymen killed 147 enemy 21 miles northwest of Tam Ky on 7 January. Two companies, supported by artillery and helicopter gunships, engaged an unknown size enemy force. The enemy employed heavy mortar and recoilless rifle fire against the AMERICAL troopers.

During the 10-hour battle, 147 enemy were killed, many as a result of supporting arms. Eight U.S. cavalrymen were killed in the action and 44 were wounded and medevaced.

Throughout the remainder of the month, action was reported as moderate in this area.

# THE U.S. ARMY'S AMERICAL DIVISION KILL 287 NVA AND CAPTURE 107 WEAPONS

IN DEFENSE OF THEIR POSITIONS, TROOPERS FROM THE 3<sup>RD</sup> BRIGADE, 1<sup>ST</sup> CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE), SUPPORTED BY HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS, ARTILLERY, AND U.S.A.F. FIGHTER PLANES, KILLED 287 NVA SOLDIERS FROM THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> REGIMENTS, 2<sup>ND</sup> NVA DIVISION. THE ACTION IN THE QUE SON VALLEY ALSO COST THE ENEMY 87 INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS AND 20 CREW-SERVED WEAPONS.



\* LZ: LANDING ZONE

On 23 January, elements of the Capital ROK Infantry Division made contact with an enemy force in the vicinity of Phu Cat, 14 miles northwest of Qui Nhon and killed 278 enemy soldiers during the next five days.

Reacting swiftly, the Koreans deployed six companies in an encircling maneuver and trapped the enemy force in their cordon. The Republic of Korea troops were from the 1st Regiment, Capital ROK Infantry Division.

Before nightfall on the 23rd, two platoons from the 1st Battalion 69th Armor, normally attached to the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, had deployed into the cordon from positions along Route 19 to the west. In addition, two platoons of mechanized infantry in armored personnel carriers from the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry, normally attached to the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division, deployed into the northwest portion of the cordon from northern Binh Dinh Province.

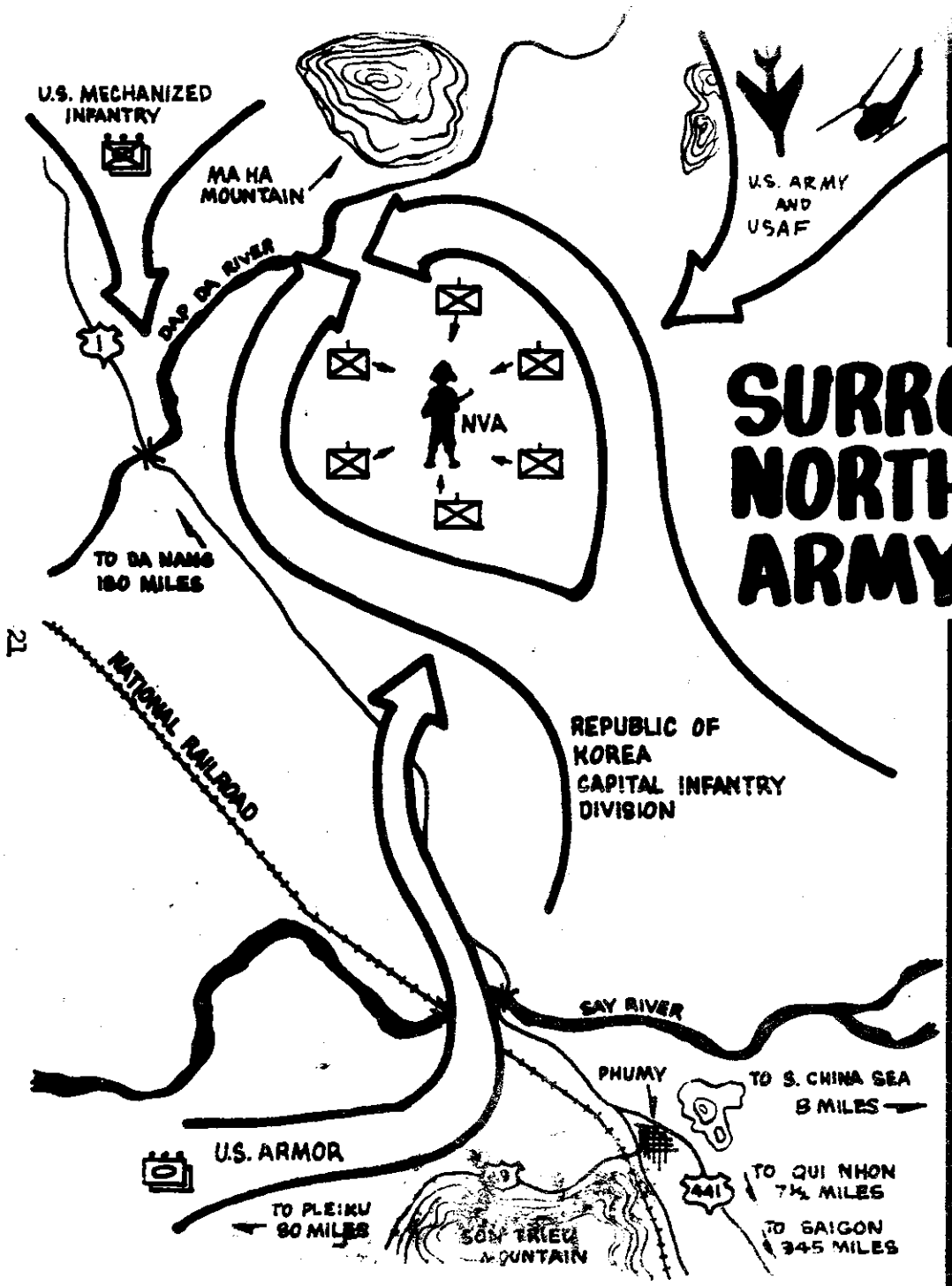
Gradually tightening the circle through the next five days, the Korean troops fought the enemy during the day and maintained their tight cordon at night preventing the enemy's escape.

The enemy force was identified as at least two companies of the 9th Battalion, 18th Regiment, 3rd North Vietnamese Army Division.

During the engagement, the forces in contact were supported by U.S. Air Force tactical aircraft and U.S. Army helicopter gunships.

While killing the 278 enemy, the Korean forces suffered 11 killed and 25 wounded. The kill ratio for the engagement was 25.3 enemy to 1 Korean. There were no U.S. casualties reported.

In addition, 145 enemy individual and 21 crew-served weapons were captured. Eleven North Vietnamese Army suspects were detained.



**IN SIX DAYS, 23-29 JAN.  
ROK CAPITAL  
INFANTRY DIVISION**

SUPPORTED BY U.S. ARMY ARMOR, MECHANIZED  
INFANTRY AND HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS AND  
U.S. AIRFORCE TACTICAL AIRCRAFT

# SURROUND AND KILL 278 NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY REGULARS

**ALLIES:**

- 6 ROK INFANTRY COMPANIES
- 2 U.S. TANK PLATOONS
- 2 U.S. MECHANIZED INFANTRY PLATOONS
- U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS
- U.S. AIRFORCE TACTICAL AIRCRAFT

**ENEMY:**

- 9th BATTALION, 18th REGIMENT,  
3rd NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY DIVISION

- ☒ INFANTRY COMPANY
- ☒ MECHANIZED INFANTRY PLATOON
- ☒ TANK PLATOON

## REVIEW OF EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

GENERAL: Action was heavy throughout most of the Republic during the month. RVNAF, US and other Free World Military Assistance Forces first repelled enemy units which had attacked numerous installations and population centers during the South Vietnamese Tet celebrations, and then went on the offensive to destroy or neutralize the enemy forces. There were approximately 39,867 enemy killed during the month of February in the Republic. This is the highest number of enemy reported killed during any one month of the conflict.

### I CORPS

Beginning on 30 and 31 January, the enemy launched attacks by fire, coordinated with ground assaults, on military installations and population centers throughout I Corps. He was quickly repulsed from Quang Tri City, Da Nang, Hoi An, Tam Ky and Quang Ngai City suffering heavy casualties. Fighting persisted in the Hue Citadel, however, until 25 February. North Vietnamese Army elements remained active in the Demilitarized Zone area throughout the month conducting sporadic attacks and harassments by fire against Allied positions. Elements of a North Vietnamese Division attacked friendly forces at Cam Lo on 2 and 7 February. The NVA 325C and 304th Divisions remained deployed in the Khe Sanh area. On 6 February elements of the NVA 95C Regiment unsuccessfully assaulted Hill 861, 3 miles northwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB), while enemy artillery, mortar and rocket fire was directed against the combat base itself. On 7 February, elements of the NVA 304th Division overran the Lang Vei CIDG Camp and again attacked KSCB by fire. Nine Soviet-built PT-76 amphibious tanks were used in the attack against Lang Vei. Several of the vehicles were destroyed by the defenders before they were forced to evacuate the camp. KSCB was attacked by fire on other occasions during the month but ground assaults of any size did not materialize. Casualties and damage to equipment at the base as a result of the fire were light.

North Vietnamese forces harassed Allied shipping during the month on the Cua Viet River in an attempt to isolate Dong Ha from waterborne resupply and secure a personnel and logistics infiltration route. In mid-February the enemy, using 122mm rockets, attacked friendly forces in southern Quang Tri Province. Rocket attacks were also conducted in the Hue and Phu Bai areas during this period.

On 31 January Viet Cong units reinforced by NVA forces attacked Tam Ky but were driven back almost immediately sustaining heavy casualties. Toward the end of February, enemy forces were again contacted in the Tam Ky area and once again repelled with heavy losses.

Elements of all enemy battalions in Quang Ngai Province were involved in the 31 January attack on the provincial capital. There included local force companies and platoons from as far south as Duc Pho District. The enemy sustained some 800 killed in the actions in the city area which continued until about 4 February.

Beginning 31 January the VC Hue City Sapper Battalion, and several NVA Battalions attacked Hue from the west and south. Some 2,500 prisoners were released from the city jail, many of whom were impressed into enemy units to compensate for high combat casualties. Other NVA units joined the action and fighting continued until the enemy was completely ejected from the Citadel on 25 February. His forces remained on the outskirts of the city and presented a threat-in-being during the remainder of the month. The following is an account of the fighting at Hue:

Hue, the ancient Imperial capital city of Vietnam, is the third largest city in the Republic of South Vietnam. The Citadel, or Imperial City, is a walled-in portion of Hue sitting on the north bank of the Perfume River, and the barrier around the Citadel forms a 2,500 meter square. The outer stone wall is one meter thick and five meters high and separated from the inner wall by dirt fill. The distance between the walls varies from 75 meters to 17.5 meters.

Within the Citadel, is the former palace area where the ancient Emperors of Vietnam lived and in which some are buried. Hue is generally regarded as the most beautiful city in South Vietnam and is popular as a tourist site.

The headquarters of the 1st Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of South Vietnam, is in the northern corner of the Citadel portion of Hue.

A stand-down in military operations had gone into effect at 1800 hours, 29 January. The next morning, however, the Tet truce in South Vietnam was officially terminated because of the numerous violations by the enemy and the 1st ARVN Infantry Division in Hue went on 100% alert.

An element of the Reconnaissance Company of the 1st Division, was on a river and area surveillance mission four kilometers southwest of Hue during the night of 30-31 January. At 2200, a Regional Force (RF) Company to their east was attacked by a large enemy force. The recon troope reported that elements of at least two enemy battalions filtered past their position during the night moving in the direction of Hue.

At 0340 two salvos of enemy rockets, launched from the mountains to the west of the city, impacted in the Citadel area and intense fighting broke out in all sections.

The enemy maneuvered two battalions, the 802nd and the 800th, into the Citadel toward the 1st Division's headquarters. But as the latter unit approached the Hue City airfield at 0400, it was engaged by the 1st Division's reaction force, the Black Panther Company.

As the 800th NVA Battalion crossed the airfield, it was met by heavy fire from the ARVN troops which broke up the attack. The 800th was then diverted to the south, 1,000 meters short of the 1st Division Headquarters, after losing 30 men killed on the airfield.

Meanwhile, soldiers from the 803rd NVA Battalion had penetrated the 1st Division compound and had occupied the area of the medical company. About 30 ARVN staff personnel, mostly clerks, assaulted the enemy penetration. The provisional platoon killed five NVA soldiers in the compound and another 40 as they tried to flee to the west. An attack on the main gate was also repulsed by the ARVN troops.

By daylight, the enemy occupied the entire Citadel except for the corner that contained the Division Compound. Identified as the 6th NVA Regiment, the enemy soldiers had established a blocking position with the 806th Battalion outside the northwest corner on Highway 1, the main reinforcing route from the north.

At the same time, across the Perfume River to the south, the MACV Compound was under attack from elements of the 4th NVA Regiment. Following a rocket and mortar attack, the 804th Battalion with highly trained sapper personnel (demolition experts), tried to assault the compound but were thrown back by grenades and small arms fire. Enemy bodies found the next day revealed that the NVA unit had planned to overrun the compound and destroy it with explosives.

By dawn, the enemy controlled the entire Hue area except their two prime objectives--the 1st ARVN Division Headquarters and the MACV Compound. Plans were put into effect to get reinforcements to those two areas, and the Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division, (ARVN), issued orders to the 3rd Regiment, the Vietnamese 1st Airborne Task Force, and the 3rd Troop, 7th ARVN Cavalry to move to the Citadel. At the same time, two companies reinforced with tanks from the 1st Battalion, 1st U.S. Marine Regiment at Phu Bai were also dispatched as a reaction force.

At 0920, 31 January, Vietnamese armored cav troopers and the 7th Airborne Battalion departed their base camp, 17 kilometers north of Hue, and proceeded south on Highway 1. Four hundred meters short of the Citadel the enemy attacked the convoy with an estimated two battalions. The 2nd Airborne Battalion was dispatched from the Quang Dien sub-sector to reinforce the contact. Fighting continued but by early the following morning, 1 February, the convoy had broken through and entered the Division Headquarters by the northern gate. Units in the convoy suffered light to moderate casualties, and the 3/7 Cavalry lost four of its 12 armored personnel carriers.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 3rd Regiment then moved along the north bank of the Perfume River to the Citadel where they spread out along the southeast wall, unable to enter the walled city. The 1st and 4th Battalions of the 3rd Regiment, which had been on operations southeast of Hue when the enemy's Tet offensive began, both were cut off by enemy forces and had to fight their way back to the city.

After breaking the enemy encirclement, the 1st Battalion maneuvered eastward under constant harassment to the coastal outpost of Ba Lang. On 1 February, the battalion boarded Vietnamese motorized junks and arrived at Division Headquarters at 1500.

The 4th Battalion, 3rd Regiment, was surrounded by the 804th NVA Battalion on the morning of 31 January, and it took the unit four days of continuous fighting to break the enemy encirclement and reach the MACV Compound. By 4 February, 170 men from the battalion managed to get to the compound.

Meanwhile, the two companies of U.S. Marines from the 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment and tanks that had moved north from Phu Bai during the morning of 31 January, engaged the 1st Battalion of the 4th NVA Regiment first at the An Cuu Bridge site on Highway 1 and then again only 700 meters south of the MACV Compound. The Marines arrived at the compound at 1420, after hard fighting.

Both of the Marine companies then crossed to the north side of the Perfume River and attempted to enter the Citadel, but were repulsed as the enemy, firmly entrenched between the Citadel walls, kept up a heavy volume of fire. The Marines returned to the MACV Compound and together with the rest of the battalion, which joined the next day, proceeded to enlarge the friendly perimeter on the south side of the river. To accelerate the expansion, the 2nd Battalion of the 5th U.S. Marine Regiment from Phu Bai reinforced the 1/1 Battalion on 2 February.

On 1 February, the 2nd and 7th Vietnamese Airborne Battalions, together with the ARVN 3/7 Cavalry and the Black Panther Company, swept toward the west and recaptured the airfield. On the same day, one-half of the 4th Battalion, 2nd Regiment was airlifted from Dong Ha to the Citadel where it deployed south of the Division Headquarters. The next day, the rest of the 4/2 Battalion, a company from the 3/1 Battalion, and the 9th ARVN Airborne were airlifted into the Division Headquarters area. While the 9th Airborne Battalion joined other airborne units near the airfield, the 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment went into position along the northwest wall.

During the first few days, the three airborne units reported killing over 200 of the enemy in the vicinity of the airfield, and on 4 February the 1/3 Battalion recaptured the An Hoa Gate on the northwest wall and pushed toward the western corner. The 4/2 Battalion also made good progress on the eastern side of the Citadel, and moved

about half-way before the enemy resistance stiffened. Casualty figures on the 4th revealed that 693 enemy had been killed in the Citadel and to the northwest of Highway 1.

On the 5th, the Airborne Task Force was redeployed along the north-east wall and the 4/2 Battalion took up positions by the airfield; on the following day, the 4/2 Battalion drove all the way to the southwest wall and set up its CP on the breastwork. But on the night of 6/7 February, the enemy attacked this position six times and the battalion withdrew off the walls. At one time during the night the enemy came over the walls from the west with grappling hooks.

On 5 February, too, the 4/3 Battalion managed to cross the Perfume River and assault the south gate of the Citadel seven times although it was never able to enter. The unit then took up positions adjacent to the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 3rd Regiment just outside the southeast wall and along the Perfume River.

On the 6th, the 1/3 Battalion attacked and did secure the western corner of the Citadel wall. Then, during the early morning hours of the 7th, the six-span bridge, the only overland link with the two battalions of U.S. Marines on the south side of the Perfume River was destroyed by the enemy.

Unable to penetrate the Citadel from the south, the three battalions of the 3rd Regiment (the 2nd, 3rd and 4th) were put aboard Vietnamese junks and transported by water to the Division Headquarters on the 7th; they were then deployed to the airfield area the next day, relieving the 4/2 Battalion.

On 3 February the 2nd Troop, 7th Cavalry, had been ordered to move from Quang Tri to the Hue Citadel. But the 2/7 Cavalry and the 1st Regiment, 1st Division were then engaged in the provincial capital city. On 6 February the 2/7 Cavalry broke out and began moving south on Highway 1 with 15 armored personnel carriers and one company of infantry from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment.

Stopping at Camp Evans that night, the convoy started out the following morning for Hue. About 12 kilometers north of the Citadel, the convoy cut east and then south across rice paddies and entered the Division Headquarters at 1700; it had traveled all the way without any enemy contact and without any .50 caliber ammunition. The units were then re-armed and deployed to the airfield area, relieving the 3/7 Cavalry.

The weather for this first week of fighting—overcast and chilly—had enabled the enemy to move men and supplies into the Citadel with a reduced threat of allied air power. On 7 February, the Vietnamese Air Force planes dropped 500-pound bombs on the southwest wall for the first large scale aerial bombing.

By the end of the first week, enemy casualties rose to over 1,200 killed and an intelligence estimate placed two enemy battalions within the Citadel: one in the southwest, the other in the southeast. A third enemy battalion remained outside the western corner to block Highway 1, and the enemy still maintained his capability of resupplying in large quantities from the west.

The general picture during the next week--from 7 to 12 February indicated a well dug-in enemy offering stiff resistance and with little headway being made by friendly forces. The enemy, infiltrating fresh NVA troops each night, continued to probe the 3rd Regimental positions near the airfield.

A company of U.S. Marines from the 1st Battalion, 5th Regiment, reinforced with 5 tanks, arrived by boat at Division Headquarters on the night of the 11th, and on the following day the rest of the battalion arrived and took over the southeastern portion of the city, relieving the Airborne Task Force.

The 1st and 5th Battalions of Vietnamese Marines from Task Force Alpha arrived on the 12th with six 105mm howitzers and were deployed to the southwestern portion of the city; these troops had been fighting in Saigon during the early part of the enemy's Tet offensive.

Both of these fresh units had the mission to sweep toward the southeast wall, a distance of about 1,000 meters, but the enemy, during the previous few days, had taken advantage of a heavy overcast to strengthen his positions in the Citadel with new men and supplies. On the 12th, when the battle was renewed by fresh troops on both sides, savage street fighting took place.

The 3rd Regiment and the 2/7 Cavalry first attacked the enemy salient west of the airfield. On the 14th, the enemy broke out of this salient and cut off the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Regiment in the western corner. The Black Panther Company and the 2/7 Cavalry broke the encirclement two days later.

Also on the 14th, the 1/5 Battalion of U.S. Marines attacked a vital gate on the northeast wall but were repulsed by a well dug in enemy; the Marines did succeed the next day as artillery and naval gunfire were directed onto the enemy positions. Air strikes by VNAF, US Marine, and US Air Force tactical aircraft continued on the 14th and 15th with most of the ordnance being delivered along the southwest wall.

The Vietnamese Marines, moving cautiously in the southwest killed 39 enemy on the 15th and recaptured a schoolhouse near the Palace. In the classrooms were 22 weapons, 80-60mm mortar rounds, and 10 grenades. It was also learned on the 16th that the commanding officer of the enemy forces in the Citadel had been killed and that his replacement had immediately requested permission to withdraw his troops from the city; permission had been refused and he had been told to defend in place. Harassing and interdiction artillery and naval gunfire began to make enemy movement at night, especially to the west of the city, very costly.

On the 16th, the 4th Battalion of the Vietnamese Marines arrived in the Citadel. They were dispatched on the 17th and given the mission of sweeping down the southwest wall to cut off an enemy infiltration route. The enemy resistance was strong, however, and after two days the 4th Battalion had gained only 400 meters.

On the 18th, the Black Panther and Reconnaissance Companies moved to the right flank of the U.S. Marines, along the northeast wall of the Palace, while the 4th Vietnamese Marine Battalion joined Marine units the following day in the southwest for a determined push to the southeast wall.

On 21 February, the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) sent 4 battalions on a sweep through the La Chu area, five kilometers to the northwest of Hue, and a suspected enemy regimental headquarters was overrun the following day. The Cavalrymen lost 4 men killed, but the enemy suffered 41 killed and had 23 weapons captured.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Marines, using their tanks and ONTOS vehicles, attacked within one block of the southeast Citadel wall. There, after receiving an additional company, they reached the southeast wall on the 22nd, with the 2/3 ARVN Battalion on their right flank.

At 0630 on the 22nd, the NVA, feeling the pressure of the advancing 1st U.S. Cavalry Division troops, launched a massive ground attack through the southwest wall against the 3rd Regiment and the 4th and 5th Battalions of the Vietnamese Marines. Eight-inch fire from the 1st Cavalry Division and fire from ARVN 105mm howitzers onto the enemy for a two-hour period broke the attacks. The Black Panther Company then spearheaded a counter-attack by the 3rd Regiment which resulted in 150 enemy killed. The Vietnamese Marines also counter-attacked resulting in 48 enemy killed and 23 weapons captured.

The 21st and 39th ARVN Ranger Battalions landed by boat outside the northeast Citadel wall, also on the 22nd, and began to sweep south on the large island east of the city. These Rangers, part of the I Corps reaction force, met light to moderate resistance during their three day operation, killing 55 enemy.

During the following night, the enemy launched a rocket and mortar attack followed by a ground assault in the western area of the city, but the ARVN artillery fired over 300 rounds in this area and by daylight the attack had been repulsed. While this action was taking place, in the southern portion of the Citadel, the Vietnamese 2/3 Battalion conducted a surprise night raid along the southeast wall seizing the area around the main flag pole. At 0500, 24 February, the Viet Cong flag, which had flown for 24 days, was ripped down and the flag of the Republic of South Vietnam raised in its place.

At 0730 on the 24th, the 3rd Regiment, Black Panther Company, and the ARVN 2/7 Cavalry moved forward to the southwest wall and met only light resistance. By 1025, the 3rd Regiment had moved to the wall and secured it. The Black Panther and 2/3 Battalion were ordered to take the Palace, and the units entered it at 1515; by 1700 the Palace had been secured. At no time during the 25-day battle had any artillery fire or air strikes been called in on the Palace grounds, although the walls surrounding the area had been partially destroyed.

The Vietnamese Marines also began to move against light resistance and by nightfall they had swept all the way to the southwest wall. At 0500 on the 25th, the last enemy stronghold fell and the Citadel was declared secure. Fifty-six more enemy weapons were captured, together with 102 rounds of B-40 ammunition, 16-60mm mortar rounds 16-82mm mortar rounds, and 158 assorted grenades.

Meanwhile, four battalions from the 1st U.S. Cavalry Division, north and west of the Citadel were in position to intercept the withdrawing enemy. These troops killed 152 enemy soldiers at La Chu and to the west of the Citadel, in addition to capturing 96 weapons.

Enemy casualties in the Hue City area during the period totaled over 2,500 killed.

During the remainder of the month, enemy activity was at a low level in southern I Corps.

## II CORPS

In II Corps on 30 January, the enemy initiated offensive actions in the cities of Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Tuy Hoa, Ninh Hoa and Nha Trang. On 31 January, Phan Thiet was attacked. Dalat was hit on 1 February. Ground attacks were generally preceded by attacks by fire aimed at Government of Vietnam and U.S. facilities. In the larger cities, the enemy infiltrated his forces into the populated areas and launched attacks from within. Pleiku, Qui Nhon and Ninh Hoa were secured by the allies within a day after the enemy attacks. In Kontum and Ban Me Thuot, where major enemy forces consisted of North Vietnamese units, the fighting continued for almost four days. After initial failures in Tuy Hoa and Phan Thiet, the enemy attempted to return on 3 and 5 February, respectively but were quickly defeated. Except for Dalat and Phan Thiet, the enemy withdrew his force to base areas after being repulsed. In the Dalat area, the enemy held strong points for about three weeks. Probing actions continued around Phan Thiet for several days.

In Kontum City, elements of the 24th NVA Regiment and the VC 304th Local Force Battalion withdrew after suffering heavy losses early in the month. Enemy action was relatively light in the area following the fighting.

While attacking Ban Me Thuot, two battalions of the NVA 33rd Regiment and a VC local force battalion suffered heavy casualties in early February. After the battle, the NVA units withdrew from the area, but harassing attacks by fire continued sporadically during the rest of the month.

The battles during the Tet period in the coastal provinces were not as severe as those in the western highlands. Nha Trang was the scene of the most significant action in this area as a North Vietnamese Army battalion attacked the city.

On 11 February, elements of two VC Main Force battalions were expelled from holding actions within the city. They entered the city again on the 18th but were quickly repelled and withdrew.

In Phan Thiet, two VC Main Force battalions failed in their initial attempts to penetrate the city. Between the 3rd and the 18th they again attacked and, at times, held sections of the city until completely driven out on the 20th. Sporadic contacts continued near the city during the remainder of the month.

Although the enemy generally withdrew from the urban areas after his initial attacks in II Corps, attacks against hamlets, villages and Regional and Popular Forces outposts, as well as attacks by fire against friendly installations, continued throughout the month. No major contacts were made following the initial offensive.

In II Corps, over 7,000 enemy were killed as a result of allied actions during and following the enemy's Tet offensive.

### III CORPS

The assault against Saigon began early on 31 January. The objective was apparently to seize and hold the national capitol, thereby paralyzing the government, and to close Tan Son Nhut Airbase. Units identified in the Saigon attack were the C-10 Sapper Battalion, the 267th, 269th and 1st VC MF Battalions and the 2nd and 6th Independent VC LF battalions. The main attacks were directed against TSN Airbase, the JGS Compound, and the Cholon District of Saigon. Attacks were also made against several U.S. BOQs and BEQs.

The attack against TSN began at 0400 hours with a mortar and ground assault. Units identified in the attack included the 267th, 269th and DL6 MF Battalions. Approximately 100 of the enemy managed to penetrate the perimeter of the field, but were killed or withdrew. Reaction forces and helicopter LFTs quickly responded and by 1000 hours the perimeter of the field had been secured.

The JGS Compound located near TSN was attacked the same morning by a VC Battalion supported by elements of the C-10 Sapper Battalion. Two companies of the VC Battalion managed to penetrate into the Headquarters area of the compound, but were ejected during the day. Another element of the C-10 penetrated the grounds of the American Embassy; however, they failed to get into the building itself and by 1000 hours all of the attackers were dead or captured. The enemy probably had his

greatest success in western Cholon where he operated in sections of the area for about a week. Units indentified in this attack were the 2nd VC and 6th VC LF Battalions. Military police, National Police and units around the periphery of the city took the brunt of the fighting until reaction forces arrived and broke the back of the enemy's attacks.

At the same time, two Main Force Regiments of the VC 5th Division attacked the II FFV Headquarters at Long Binh and Bien Hoa Airbase. The attack was initiated by rocket, mortar and small rms fire, and then followed by a ground assault against the airbase. Both regiments suffered heavy losses and by 2 Feburary were withdrawing to the east.

After having taken heavy casualties in the cities, the enemy began a number of attacks by fire in other parts of III Corps on 3 February. The U.S. base camps at Lai Khe, Dau Tieng, Quan Loi and Cu Chi were attacked with 122mm rockets and recoilless rifle fire.

On the 5th, the enemy tried to regain the initiative in Saigon by attacking south Cholon, and pushing to the northwest. They were stopped and contained by ARVN units. On the same day, Free World Military Assistance and ARVN forces began Operation TRAN HUNG DAO. While units of the U.S. 1st, 9th and 25th Infantry Division swept around Saigon, ARVN units swept parts of the city. Surviving enemy were forced out of the area, many being killed or captured by the Allied forces in the outskirts.

During the following week, enemy actions throughout III Corps were reduced to attacks by fire and attempts to hold positions occupied after exfiltrating the city. A number of VC were contained in the Phu Tho Race Track area on the western edge of Cholon and continued to fight sporadically until 21 February. One of the reasons actions continued in this area for this length of time was because the track area had been designated by the enemy as an assembly and rallying area, as well as supply base and field hospital. As units attempted to link up with their compatriots, evacuate their wounded and obtain supplies, they moved toward the race track where they were engaged by allied forces.

On 18 February, the VC attacked 21 targets by fire throughout the Corps area. Province capitols, major towns, U.S. installations and airbases were hit with mortar and 122mm rocket fire. Song Be was the scene of a ground assault the same day, and the market place was occupied by the enemy for about nine hours before it was secured by friendly forces.

Elements of the VC 9th Division, which had moved from its normal area of operations north of Saigon prior to Tet, were contacted by Allied forces conducting TRAN HUNG DAO as they attempted to move away from the city.

Intermittent VC harassments by mortar, recoilless rifle and 122mm rocket fire were conducted after the 18th, although ground contacts were light. Friendly units continued to sweep areas of enemy concentration, and daily contacts were made during the last week of the month.

#### IV CORPS

In the Mekong Delta of IV Corps, enemy forces launched coordinated attacks which started during the early morning hours of 31 January. During February, they attempted to maintain pressure on urban centers and solidly positions in the country-side, but these attempts resulted in more than 6,000 enemy troops killed by allied forces.

Between 31 January and 2 February, the fighting in IV Corps reached an unprecedented level of intensity. During the first three days of the Lunar New Year, 13 of the 16 Province capitols were attacked, and portions of the cities of Chau Phu, Vinh Long, My Tho, Ben Tre and Can Tho were held for periods of time by enemy units.

Despite some element of surprise gained by the enemy, ARVN and U.S. troops methodically re-established their control over these cities. As the fighting developed, it became apparent that the enemy had been amply supplied with new model weapons and ammunition. There was widespread use of AK-47 assault rifles and RPG-2 and 7 rocket launchers. The size of the enemy units had been greatly augmented prior to the offensive. Many of the enemy dead and captured were youths between 14 and 16 years old. Interrogation of the detainees revealed that many of them had been inducted only days prior to the offensive and had received the bare rudiments of weapons familiarization and tactics.

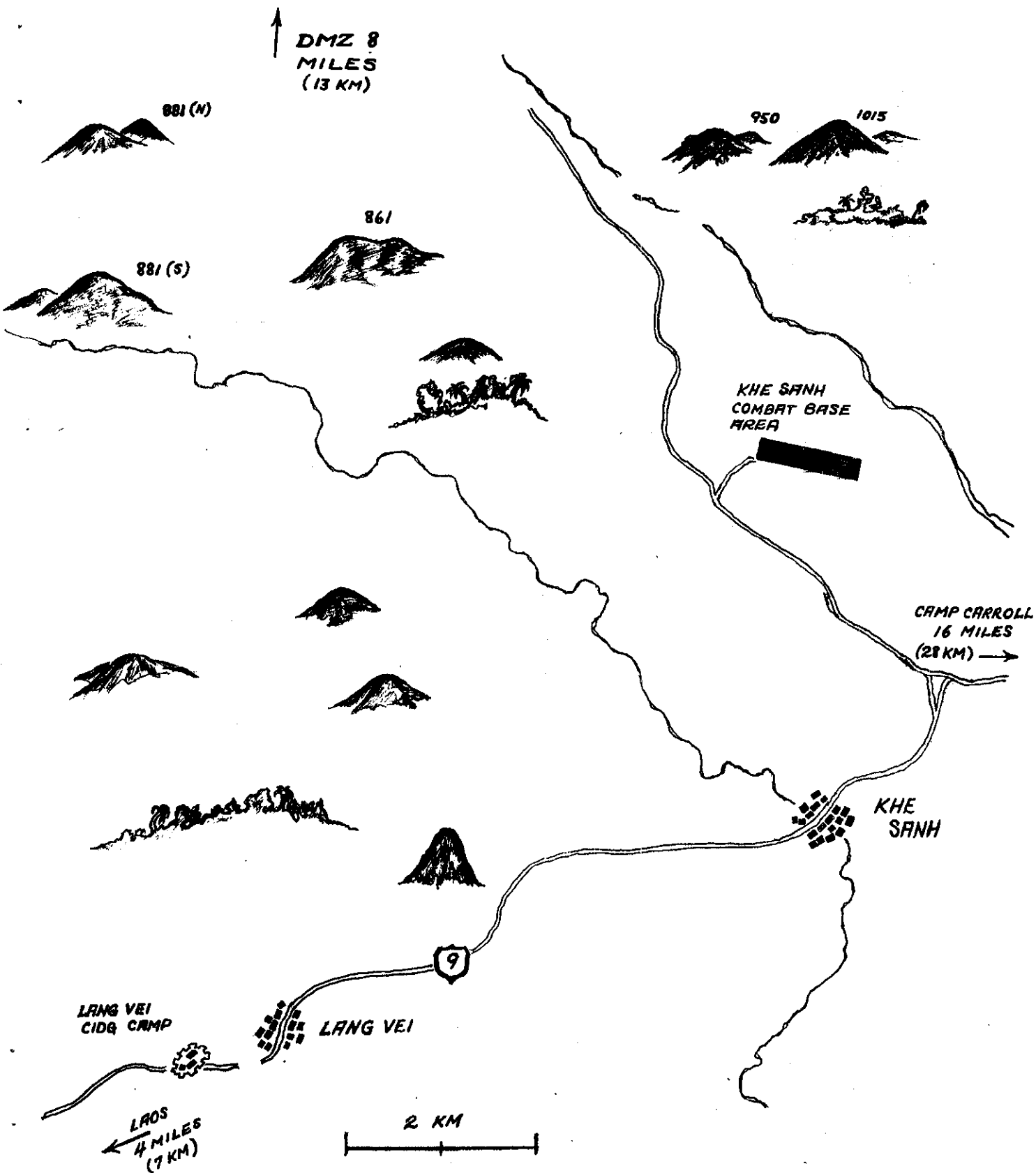
After 4 February, the enemy's coordinated offensive activities dropped off sharply. Friendly sweep operations around the major cities resulted in large numbers of enemy casualties. These operations revealed, however, that the enemy intended to maintain a threatening posture around the urban areas. The largest concentrations of forces were in the vicinity of Can Tho, where three battalions remained south and west of the city, and along Highway 4 between My Tho and Cai Lay.

Enemy activity between 4 and 17 February was characterized by sporadic attacks by fire on towns and airfields throughout the Corps area. With the exception of a ground attack against Bac Lieu City on the 10th (which eventually cost the enemy over 100 casualties), the enemy's ground activity was limited to harassment of outposts and watch towers in the rural areas. Binh Thuy and Can Tho airfields in Phong Dinh Province were principal targets for attacks by fire during this period.

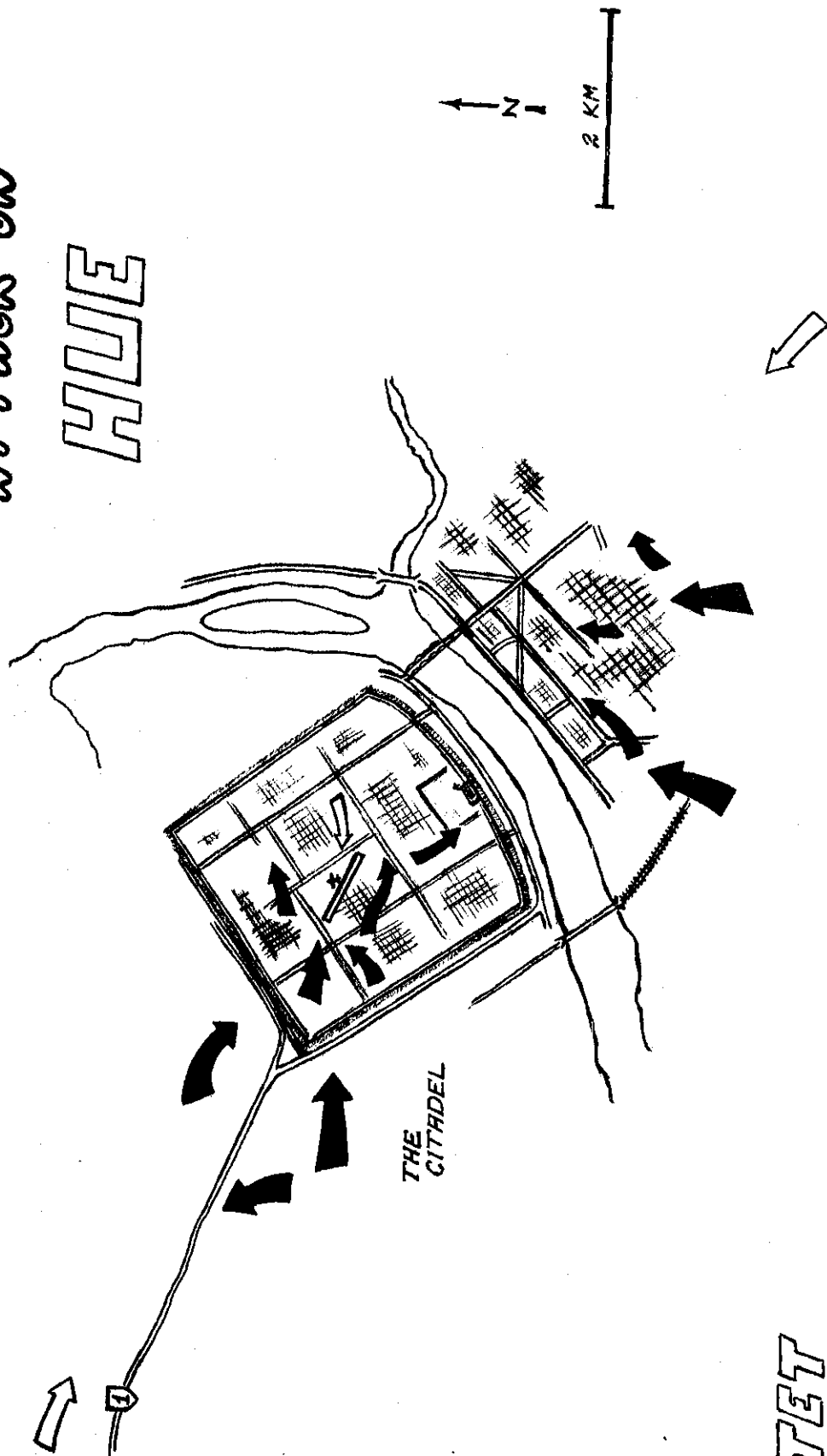
On the morning of 18 February, the enemy attacked eight province capitols, five major airfields and the Dong Tam naval operations base. These attacks were well coordinated and were characterized by a high volume of mortar and recoilless rifle fire. It is interesting to note however, that the intensity of these attacks did not approach the level of the 31 January attacks.

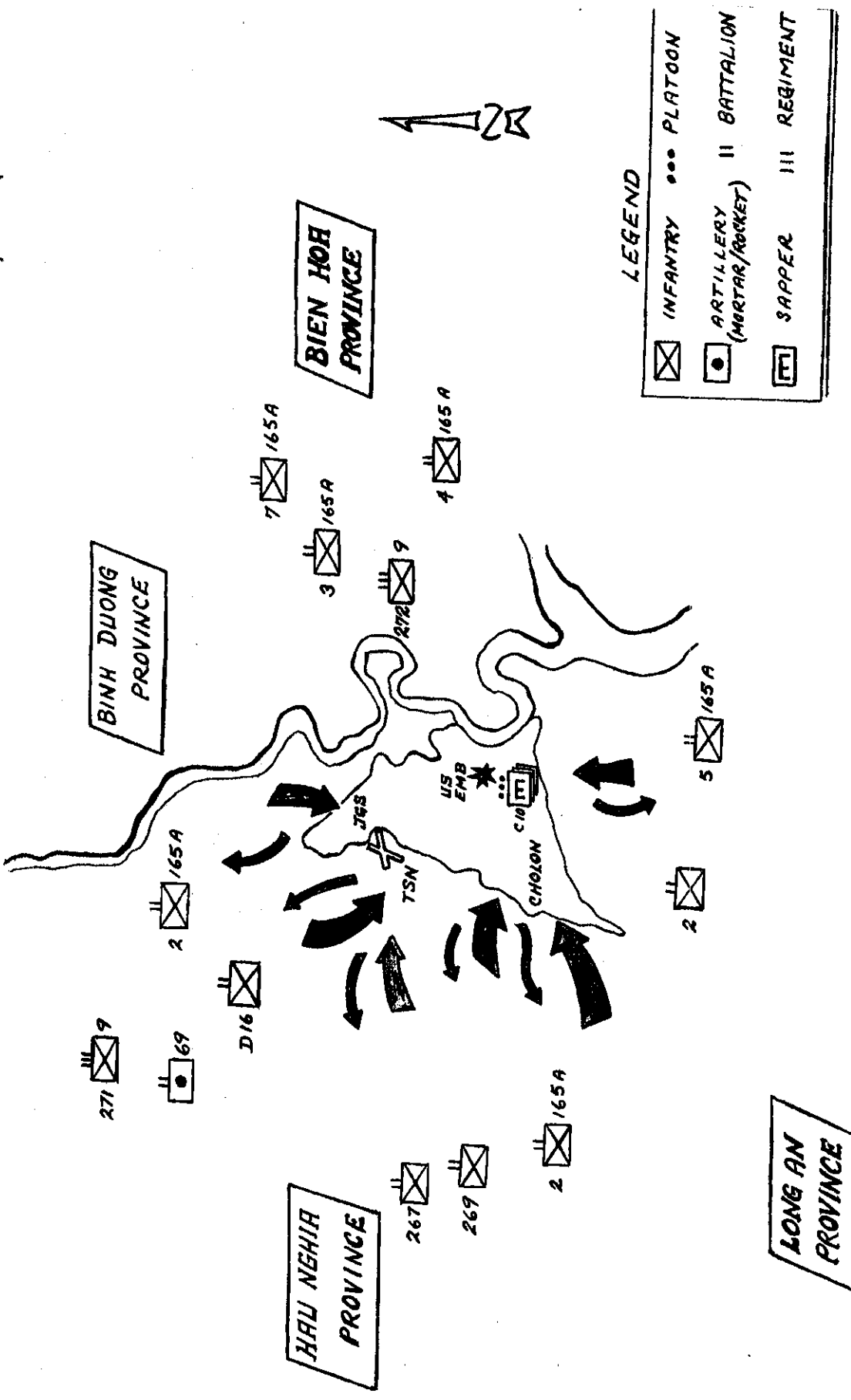
Enemy activity decreased after these attacks and remained at a relatively low level during the remainder of the month. Friendly sweep operations and reconnaissance-in-force missions continued to make light contact near Cai Lay and Can Tho during this period, while the enemy devoted much effort attempting to interdict Highway 4.

# KHE SANH



ATTACK ON  
HUÉ





**TET OFFENSIVE**  
 SAIGON AREA • 30 JAN - 1 FEB

← 5 MILES →

## REVIEW OF EVENTS

MARCH 1968

GENERAL: Actions during March decreased significantly compared to the level during February. Allied sweep operations and heavy losses sustained during and following the Tet period forced the enemy to pull back in order to refit, resupply and receive replacements. Although enemy forces continued to hit friendly installations and some cities with stand-off attacks by rocket, mortar and recoilless rifle fire, they generally avoided becoming heavily engaged in ground combat.

### I CORPS

In I Corps, enemy initiated action was limited primarily to attacks by fire on the combat bases south of the Demilitarized Zone. Incoming fire in the Operation SCOTLAND area averaged about 100 rounds per 24-hour period, although 200 rounds or more were received on 10 separate days during the month. Reports of trench and tunnel construction by enemy forces in the vicinity of Khe Sanh were received, but attacks against the combat base were limited to probes of the perimeter. Air power and allied artillery inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, and construction of fortifications and activity of enemy ground forces fell off noticeably late in the month.

Further to the east, below the DMZ, Marines working from the Con Thien Combat Base fought two sharp battles with North Vietnamese Regulars early in the month. Incoming enemy mortar, artillery and rocket fire was generally light during March, although on the 16th, about 440 rounds hit positions in the Operation KENTUCKY area in Quang Tri Province.

In fighting lasting throughout the month, U.S. Marines and ARVN troops engaged the enemy in seven major actions in northeast Quang Tri Province just below the DMZ. The enemy's losses due to these engagements were 916 enemy killed.

Several Allied military installations in the III MAF area were hit with enemy mortar, artillery and rocket attacks on 4 March. Positions in Thua Thien, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai Provinces were attacked during the early morning hours. Four of the installations were in the Da Nang area.

Indications of enemy activity in the A Shau Valley became increasingly pronounced. Route 547 and 547A leading from the valley toward Hue were upgraded to support enemy mortar transport. Enemy munitions caches were also located in the area. Enemy units generally avoided contact, apparently devoting much of their time to replacing personnel casualties lost during the Tet offensive and to resupply activities.

On the first day of the month, one of three enemy trawlers attempting to infiltrate munitions into the Republic made an unsuccessful run at a beach in Quang Ngai Province. The trawler was detected and challenged as it entered territorial waters southeast of Duc Pho. The ship's crew elected to employ a self-destruct device when it became apparent their mission had no chance of success.

PROVISIONAL CORPS, VIETNAM was activated and became operational on 12 March. The new corps, commanded by Army Lieutenant General William B. Rosson, is under the operational control of Headquarters, III MAF and is responsible for operations conducted generally in the northern two provinces.

### II CORPS

In II Corps, major contacts were reported on 4 March in Phu Yen Province and on the 26th in Kontum. Otherwise ground contacts were generally light and scattered. Instead the enemy employed attacks by mortars and rockets while he attempted to rebuild his forces severely hurt during the Tet offensive.

In Phu Yen Province, ARVN and U.S. forces combined to kill 218 enemy near Tuy Hoa on 4 March. Tactical air and helicopter gunships supported the engagement. Eight U.S. troopers were killed in the action while ARVN losses were light.

Two or three enemy battalions hit a fire support base of the 4th Infantry Division 31 km west of Kontum City during the early morning hours of 26 March. Nineteen U.S. were killed in the action, while 135 enemy dead were found during sweeps of the area after daylight.

On 1 March, an enemy trawler attempted to approach the coast north-east of Nha Trang but was taken under fire by U.S. and Vietnamese Navy patrol boats. The ship was destroyed about 0230 when hit by 81 mm mortar rounds.

Enemy initiated activities in the southern portion of II Corps remained at a low level during March. Elements of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) continued to conduct Operation MCLAIN in that area, while enemy forces were principally involved in attempts to interdict lines of communication.

### III CORPS

In III Corps, RVNAF and U.S. forces combined to kill nearly 500 enemy soldiers in the vicinity of Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province during the last week of March. Elements of the VC/NVA 271st and 272 Regiments and a VC Local Force Battalion were identified in action in the area.

In other areas of the III Corps, major contacts were limited as enemy main-force units avoided becoming decisively engaged. Attacks by mortar, rocket and recoilless rifle fire were conducted against several Allied installations during the month, but were light in terms of ammunition expended and damage caused.

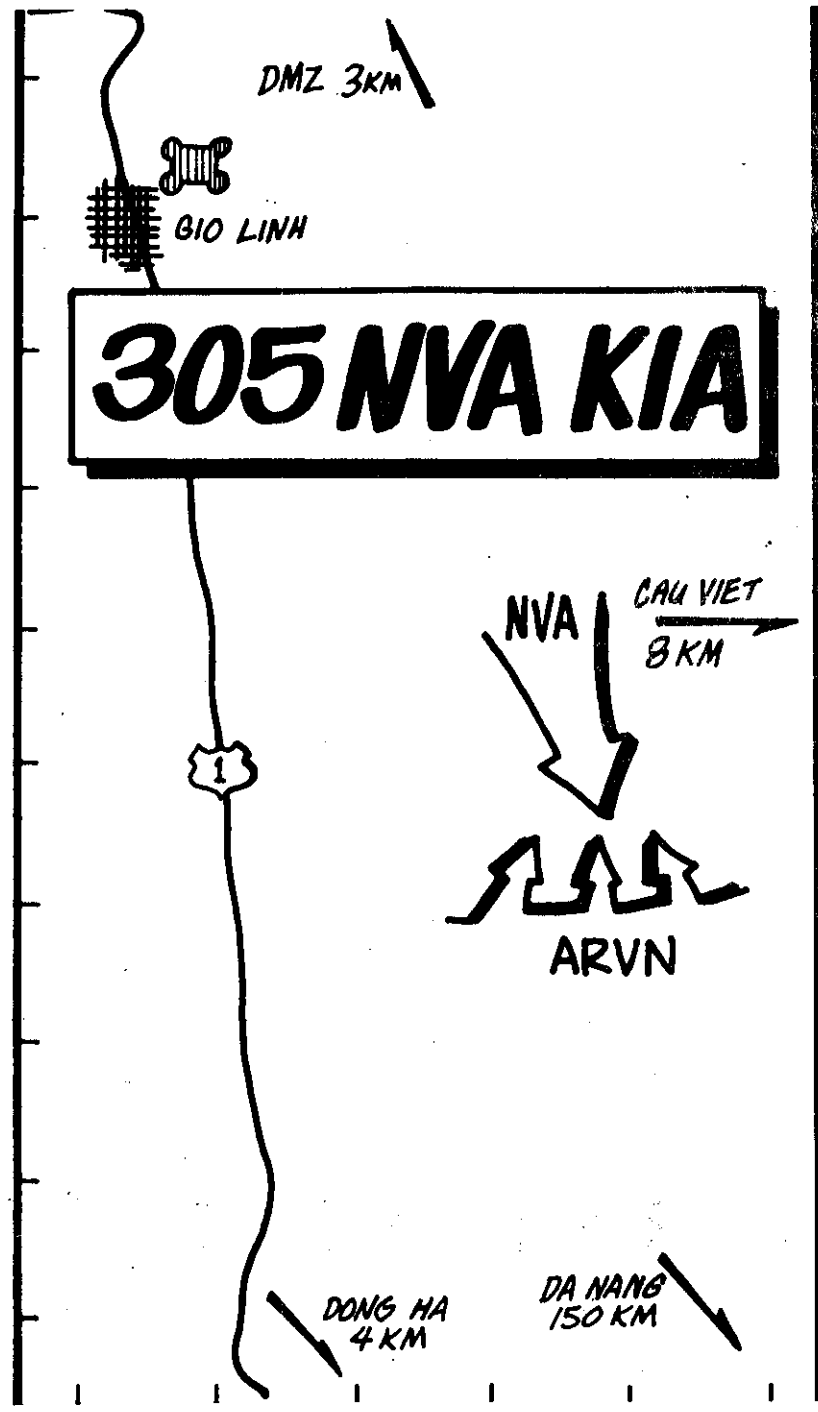
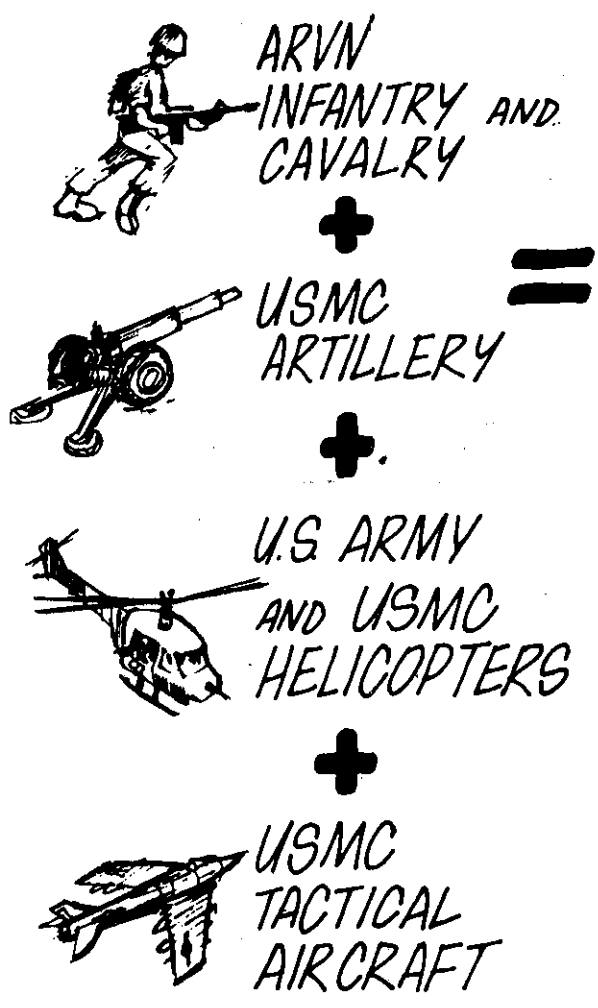
Friendly forces discovered a number of large enemy munitions caches during the month. During the period 11-24 March alone, over 150 122mm rockets were captured in Hau Nghia and Bien Hoa Provinces. Some 1,200 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar ammunition were discovered in one cache about 12km north of Saigon. Allied units, sweeping the provinces throughout the corps area while conducting QUIET THANG OFFENSIVE, may have materially affected the enemy's plans for a major offensive in the Saigon area to follow their Tet campaign. In at least two instances, POW's who were captured at the same time as a number of rockets were captured, stated that the rockets were to have been fired into the Saigon area.

#### IV CORPS

Enemy initiated activity in the Delta remained at about the same level as late February. Action was generally light as the enemy sought to maintain a "threat in being" by hitting outposts and lines of communication. This is an indication that much effort was directed toward recruiting and training forces to fill his depleted ranks after suffering heavy losses in late January and early February.

Enemy attempts to infiltrate munitions into the Delta by trawler were thwarted in An Xuyen Province on 1 March, as they were in two other locations in the Republic on the same day. Direct hits from the main guns of the USCG Cutter WINONA caused secondary explosions aboard the trawler and destroyed it. Attempts to resupply by sampan were also opposed and disrupted during the month as over 350 of the watercraft were taken under fire and destroyed by helicopter gunships.

The U.S. and Vietnamese TRUONG CONG DINH OFFENSIVE was initiated in the Delta on 7 and 8 March, respectively. Elements of the ARVN 7th and the U.S. 9th Infantry Divisions conducted the offensive. At month's end, over 900 enemy soldiers had been killed by the combined forces.



U.S. Marines conducting Operation NAPOLEON/SALINE were credited with killing 495 NVA soldiers during the month. Together with ARVN 1st Infantry Division troopers, they killed 784 enemy in the first 18 days of the month. Over 305 of this number were killed on the 11th of March when the ARVN soldiers contacted an NVA battalion 5 kilometers south-southeast of Gio Linh. Holding the enemy in place, the ARVN forces requested supporting fires from U.S. sources. U.S. Marine tactical aircraft, helicopter gunships and artillery, as well as Army helicopter rocket-artillery, attacked the enemy. When contact with the enemy was lost, 305 enemy dead and 54 individual and 19 crew-served weapons were found on the battlefield.

AMERICAL Division soldiers and supporting air, artillery and Navy gunfire accounted for 1,164 enemy killed while conducting Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA during March in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces. Thirty-three of the Division's soldiers were killed during the period. Many of the enemy casualties were caused by tactical air strikes and artillery missions. Almost 400 sorties were flown by Air Force and Marine Corps crews.

About half of the total enemy killed were as a result of contacts on eight days, with the biggest counts on the 9th and 21st. On 9 March, AMERICAL Division cavalry units and an infantry company from the division's 196th Light Infantry Brigade made heavy contact with an enemy unit of unknown size 15 kilometers northwest of Tam Ky. The action continued from 1015 until about 1930 when contact with the enemy force was lost.

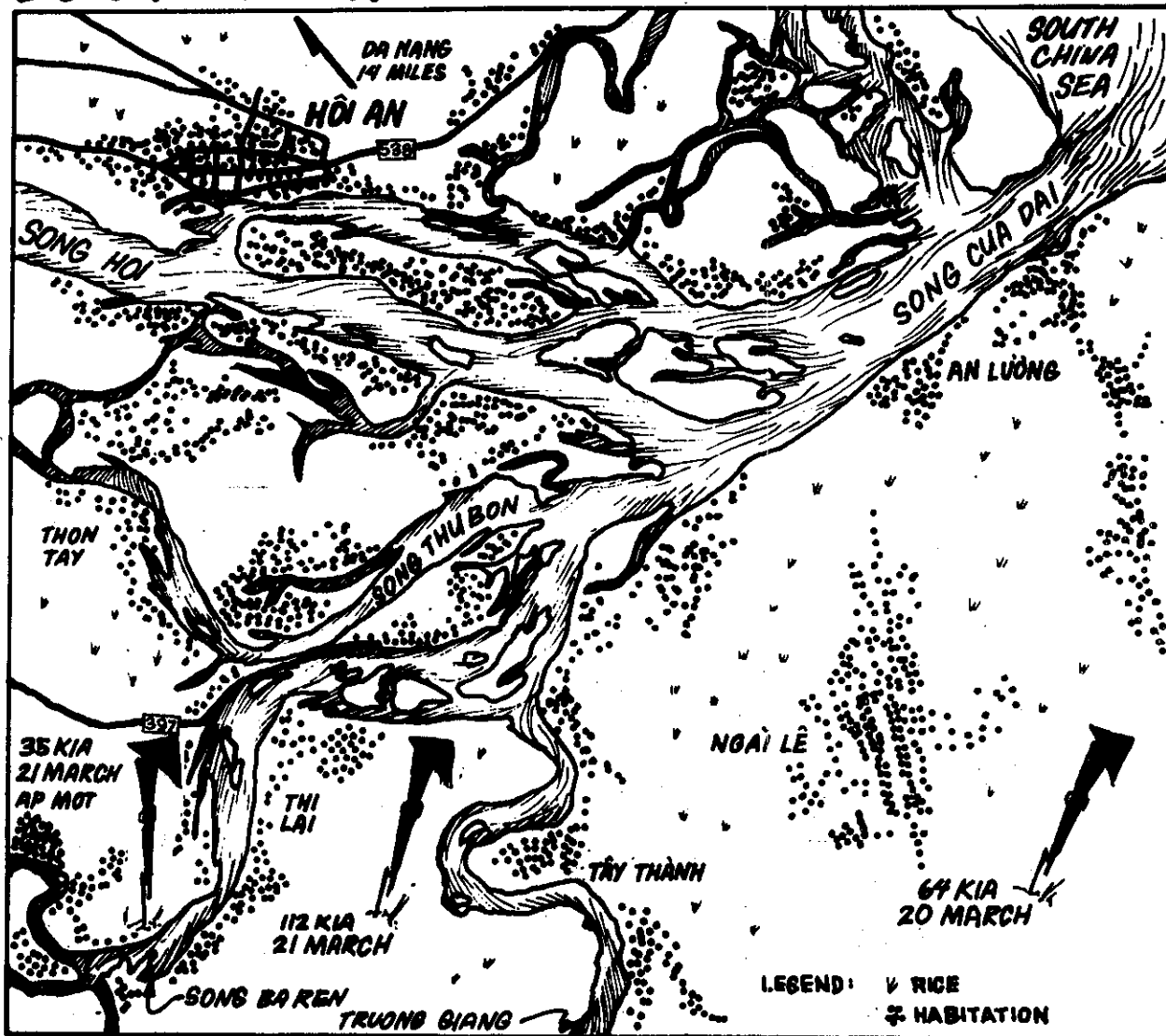
The U.S. forces called for extensive tactical air, artillery and helicopter gunship support. This fire support was credited with many of the enemy killed, and kept friendly casualties to 10 wounded requiring medical evacuation and 8 wounded who were treated and returned to duty.

On the 21st, troopers from the AMERICAL's 198th Light Infantry Brigade, together with divisional cavalry elements, killed 112 enemy near Hoi An. This was near the location where 11th Light Infantry Brigade members had killed 64 enemy the previous day. There were no U.S. fatalities in either engagement, although 8 soldiers were wounded on the 20th and 18 on the 21st.

Republic of Korea Marines, operating just to the west of the AMERICAL Division contact on the 21st, killed another 35 enemy soldiers. The action began when an enemy force attacked and tried to overrun a ROK Marine Company. The Koreans first beat off the enemy force, then counterattacked, forcing the enemy to flee and break contact. Three of the ROK Marines were killed in the action.

The armor/infantry team concept, supported by heavy tactical air, helicopter gunships and artillery support, resulted in a ratio of 35 enemy killed for each AMERICAL Division soldier killed during the month.

# 20-21 MARCH 1968

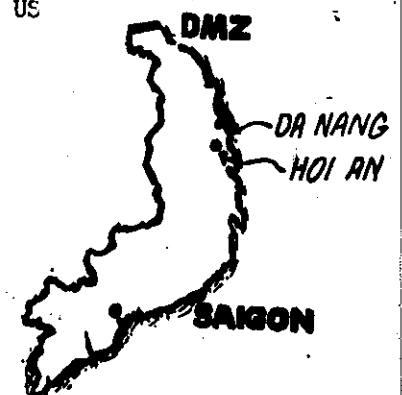


## ROK MARINES & AMERICAN DIVISION TROOPS KILL 211 ENEMY IN THE VICINITY OF HOI AN.

**20 MARCH:** At 1810, six km (4 miles) southeast of Hoi An, two companies from the Americal Division made contact with an enemy force of unknown size. The two companies attacked the enemy with artillery in support and killed 64. US casualties were only 6 wounded.

**21 MARCH:** At 1430, seven km (4 miles) south of Hoi An, a reconnaissance unit from the Americal Division made contact with an unknown size enemy force. Helicopter gunships from the 17th Air Cavalry supported. One hundred twelve enemy were killed. There were no US fatalities and only 13 US soldiers were wounded.

**21 MARCH:** At 1755, seven km (4 miles) south-southwest of Hoi An, the 7th ROK Marine Company was attacked by an unknown size enemy force employing small arms fire. The ROK Marines counter-attacked forcing the enemy to break contact. The ROK's killed 35 enemy and sustained 3 killed and 9 wounded.



ARVN and U.S. forces combined to kill 273 enemy soldiers on 15, 16 and 17 March. The total came as the result of three significant contacts about 24 kilometers west-northwest of Saigon.

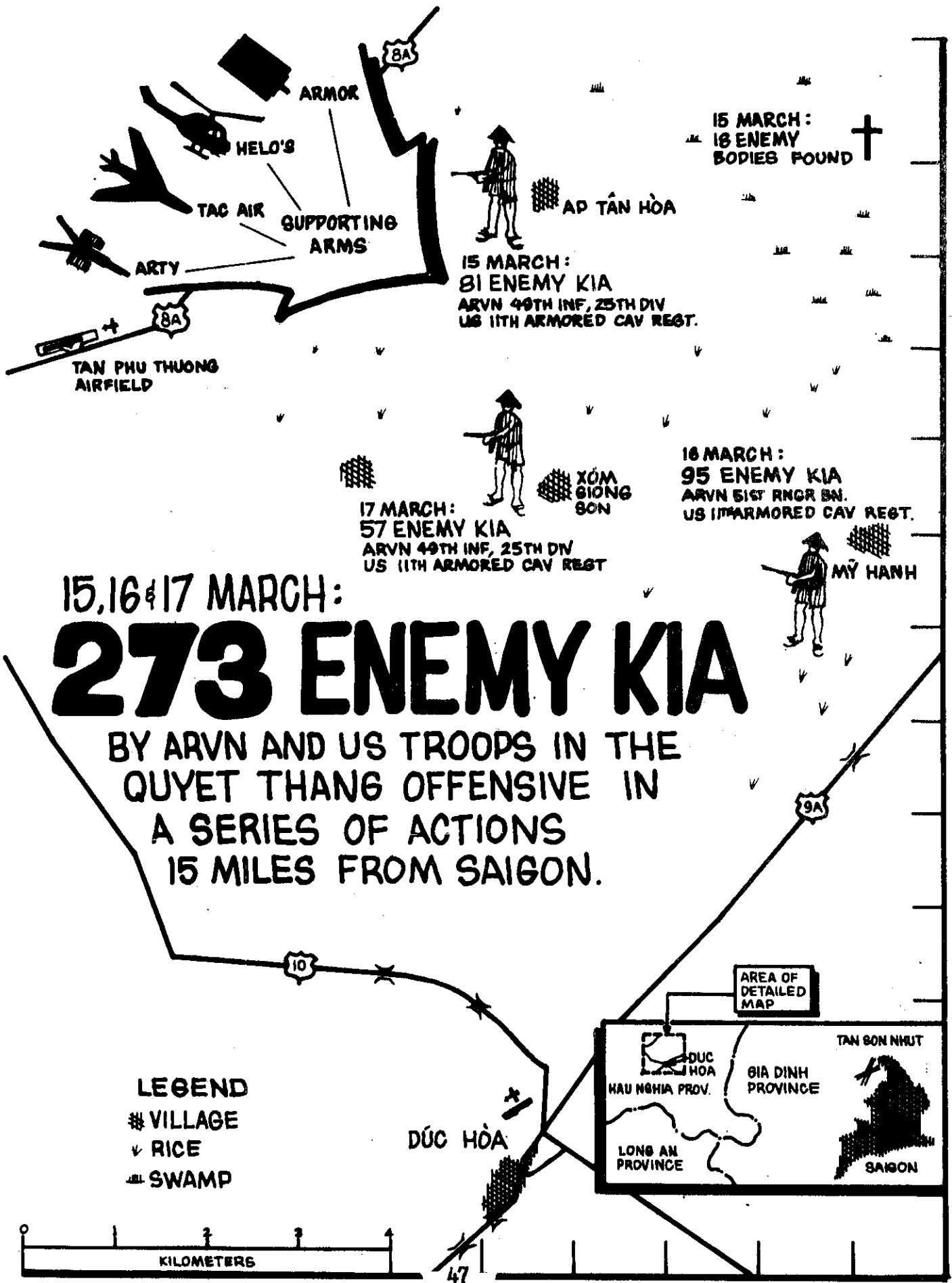
The first contact occurred on the 15th when a troop from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and an infantry battalion from the ARVN 25th Infantry Division hit an estimated enemy battalion. Together with tactical aircraft and artillery support, the Allied force killed 81 enemy in the engagement.

On 16 March, the ARVN 51st Ranger Battalion and an element of the 11th Cav attacked the positions of an estimated reinforced enemy company. Again, tactical aircraft and artillery missions, as well as helicopter gunships pounded the enemy positions. Ninety-five enemy dead were found in a sweep of the area following a 6-hour battle.

The third battle broke out just south and west of the other two. Reconnaissance personnel from the 11th Cav joined with two battalions from the ARVN 25th Infantry Division to attack an enemy position near Xom Giong Son Village. Following this engagement, 57 enemy bodies were counted.

Forty other enemy soldiers were killed in this same general area in scattered contacts during the period. Eighteen of this number were found in one mass grave.

While killing the 273 enemy, 21 ARVN troopers lost their lives. There were no U.S. fatalities. Twelve U.S. and 46 ARVN soldiers were wounded in these engagements.



15 MARCH:  
18 ENEMY  
BODIES FOUND

AP TAN HÒA

15 MARCH:  
81 ENEMY KIA  
ARVN 49TH INF, 25TH DIV  
US 11TH ARMORED CAV REGT.

17 MARCH:  
57 ENEMY KIA  
ARVN 49TH INF, 25TH DIV  
US 11TH ARMORED CAV REGT

XOM  
GIONG  
SON

16 MARCH:  
95 ENEMY KIA  
ARVN 51ST RNGR BN.  
US 11TH ARMORED CAV REGT.

MỸ HẠNH

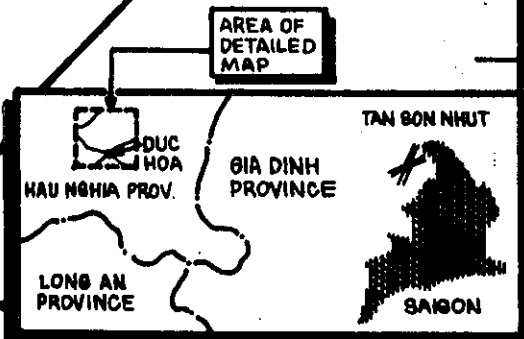
15, 16 & 17 MARCH:

# 273 ENEMY KIA

BY ARVN AND US TROOPS IN THE  
QUIET THANG OFFENSIVE IN  
A SERIES OF ACTIONS  
15 MILES FROM SAIGON.

### LEGEND

- # VILLAGE
- ↓ RICE
- ≡ SWAMP



DÚC HÒA

KILOMETERS

Allied operations in Hau Nghia Province netted 470 enemy killed on 24, 25 and 26 March in three major contacts. Forty-seven Allied soldiers lost their lives in these engagements.

On the 24th, elements of the 1st Brigade, U.S. 25th Infantry Division contacted the Viet Cong 7th Cu Chi Battalion. Other elements of the brigade joined with a divisional cavalry unit and supported the friendly forces in contact 10 kilometers northeast of Trang Bang. Tactical aircraft, helicopter gunship and artillery missions were also directed on the enemy positions.

Contact with the enemy unit was lost about 0200 the following morning. Eighty-seven Viet Cong bodies were left on the battlefield.

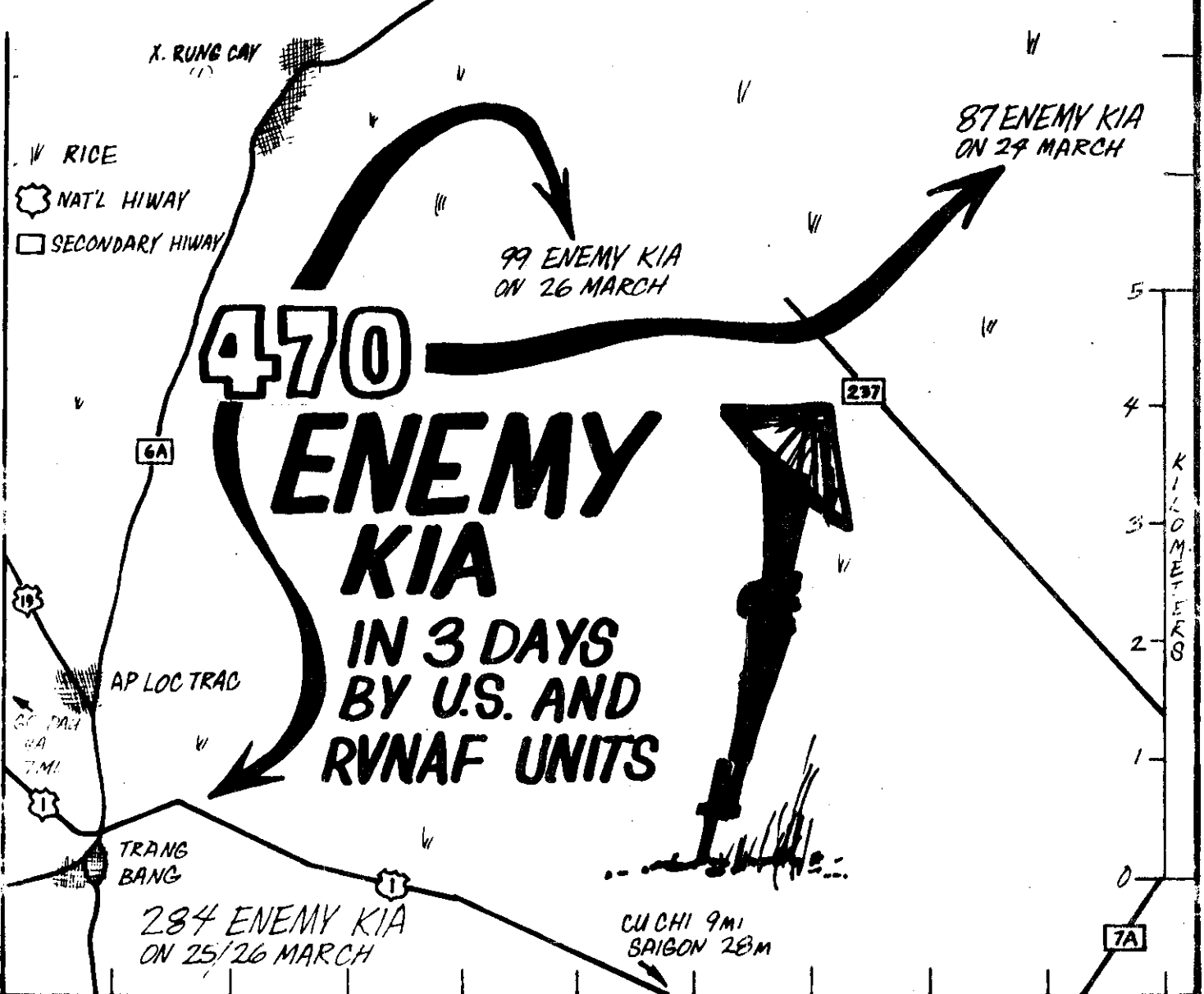
An enemy force attacked the town of Trang Bang and Popular Forces outposts early on the 25th. Elements of the U.S. 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division joined with the ARVN 34th Ranger Battalion and deployed to make contact with the enemy. Contact was maintained throughout that day and until about 0530 the next morning.

U.S. and Vietnamese tactical aircraft and U.S. AC-47 Dragonships, artillery and helicopter gunships joined in supporting the ground forces. When contact was lost, 284 enemy bodies were found in sweeps of the area.

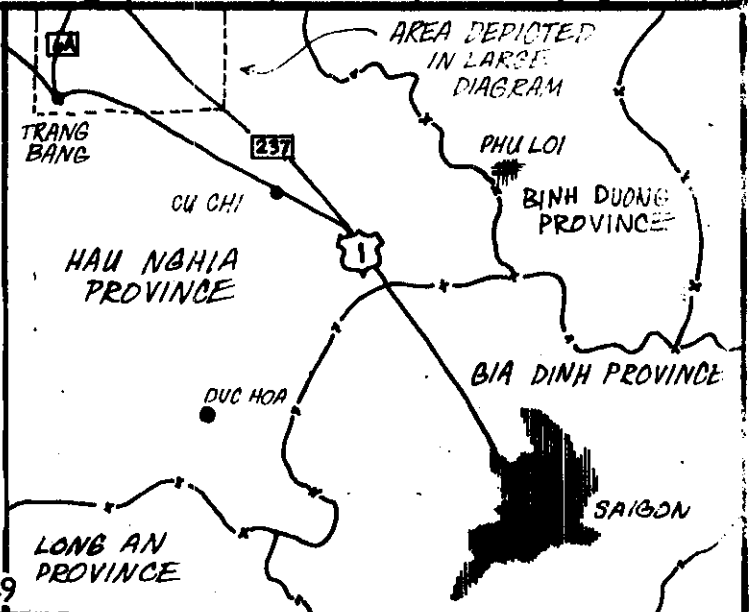
Ninety-nine more enemy lost their lives in an engagement with helicopter-landed infantrymen from the U.S. 25th Infantry Division on the 26th. The action took place 7 kilometers northeast of Trang Bang. Cavalry elements from the division reinforced the infantrymen that afternoon and maintained contact until the action terminated after dark.

In addition to the 470 enemy killed in these three engagements, 49 individual and 23 crew-served weapons were captured on the battlefield.

# QUYET THANG OFFENSIVE : 24-25-26 MARCH



**QUYET THANG OFFENSIVE:  
A COMBINED AND COORDI-  
NATED CAMPAIGN BEING  
CONDUCTED BY U.S. II FIELD  
FORCE & ARVN III CORPS  
TACTICAL HEADQUARTERS  
IN THE III CORPS TAC-  
TICAL ZONE**



The sketch map on the opposite page recounts the major contacts in Hau Nghia Province during the period 14-31 March. The major actions on 15-17 and 24-26 March have already been described on the previous four pages. A brief explanation of the other engagements is outlined below.

On 14 March, U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment troopers discovered a grave containing 14 enemy dead. The enemy were apparently killed by artillery missions in the area.

Eighteen enemy were found in graves on the 15th by U.S. 25th Division infantrymen. Air strikes were credited with the kills.

Also on the 15th, infantrymen from the division's 2nd Brigade contacted an enemy force 12 kilometers north-northeast of Trang Bang and killed 15 Viet Cong.

ARVN 25th Division infantrymen and troopers from the U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment combined to kill 142 soldiers of an estimated enemy battalion on the 20th. The action took place 9 kilometers north-northeast of Duc Hoa.

On 28 March, ARVN infantrymen from the 25th Division, rangers from the 34th Ranger Battalion, and troopers from the U.S. 11th Cav combined to kill 57 enemy 9 kilometers southwest of Trang Bang.

The ground forces were supported in all the contacts with tactical air strikes and artillery and helicopter gunship missions.