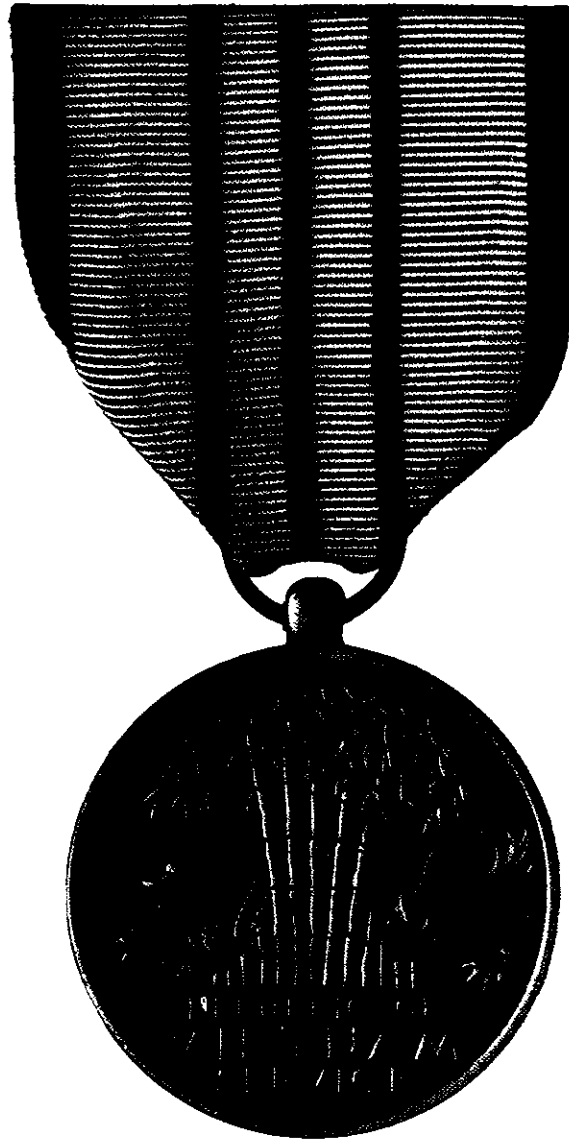


ROBERT E. LAURENCE



TOUR 365

UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM  
Office of the Commander  
APO San Francisco 96222

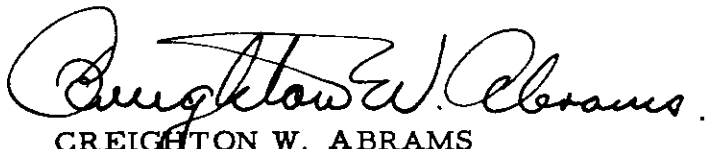


Now that your tour of duty with the United States Army, Vietnam has ended, you can look back with perspective on your experiences. You now know the difficult tasks inherent in fighting to help protect the freedom of peace-loving people against Communist invaders. As a veteran, you understand better than many of our countrymen the meaning of North Vietnam's aggression against the Republic of Vietnam.

You have seen the horror and destruction created by North Vietnamese soldiers and the local Viet Cong terrorists who kill and maim their own neighbors. You have fought beside soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and other Free World nations in a common struggle of defense. Many of you have worked in hamlet improvement and pacification programs as teachers and builders as well as fighters.

People at home will want to hear your story of the war. Tell it. Regardless of the role you played, part of your story is reflected in the pages of this magazine. I hope this publication will assist you in relating your experiences.

I extend my sincere appreciation for your help in accomplishing our task in Vietnam and my thanks for a job well done. May your trip home and reunion with your family and friends be the pleasant, happy occasion you anticipate.

  
CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS  
General, United States Army  
Commanding



## RICHARD M. NIXON, 1969

It is beyond question that without the American commitment in Vietnam, Asia would be a far different place today. . . . Asian leaders know why we are in Vietnam . . . and urge us to see it through to a satisfactory conclusion.



## LYNDON B. JOHNSON, 1965

The central issue of the conflict . . . is the aggression by North Vietnam. . . . If that aggression is stopped, the people and government of South Vietnam will be free to settle their own future—and get on with the great tasks of national development.



## JOHN F. KENNEDY 1961

. . . The United States is determined to help Vietnam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist assassins, and build a better life through economic growth.



## DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, 1959

The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have consequences for us and for freedom.

# TOUR 365

## For Soldiers Going Home

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Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, Deputy Commanding General  
Colonel James W. Campbell, Information Officer  
Major Elmer L. Karstensen, Command Information Officer  
First Lieutenant Joseph E. Moreland Jr., Editor  
Sergeant First Class Carl D. Martin, Associate Editor

# Vietnam

## *in Retrospect*

*The cathedral at Tay Ninh is the Holy See of the Cao Dai Church. Cao Daism is a blend of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, the major religions of Vietnam.*





**T**O understand the war it is best to understand Vietnam's past. The Vietnamese people have been struggling for independence for nearly 2,000 years.

In 938 A.D., after centuries of Chinese domination, the Vietnamese drove the invaders from the Red River Delta at the Battle of Bach Dang. Attempts to retake the area were repelled. In 946, though by no means out of danger, an independent Vietnam became a reality. With the exception of a 20-year interlude of reoccupation in the early 15th Century, Vietnam remained independent for the next 900 years.

The Ly Dynasty, established in 1009, was the first great Vietnamese reign and, after an interval of confusion, ushered in a period of cultural development, territorial expansion and prosperity. The Ly rulers gave the government the form it retained until the French conquest in the 19th Century.

The role of the emperor was dominant. He was the father of the nation-family—the absolute temporal monarch in whom all power of state resided. And he was the religious head of the realm acting as intermediary between it and heaven. A civil bureaucracy, called the mandarinat, performed the functions of administering the country.

In mid-13th Century, Kublai Khan tried to invade Dai-Viet, as Vietnam was then called. Three times his armies were repelled—the last time in 1287 by an army under General Tran Hung Dao.

The Vietnamese realized that their independence and survival depended on their relationship with China. Knowing their own weakness and making the appropriate gestures to the Chinese, the Vietnamese were allowed to enjoy the maximum degree of independence, but always as a tributary state to China.

European influence reached Vietnam in 1535 when Portuguese Captain Antonio de Paria arrived in Da Nang Bay. For a century the Portuguese dominated commerce in Vietnam, but they were unable to impose their will on the Vietnamese as they had the West Indians.

The first Catholic missionaries entered Vietnam during the 16th Century. Confucian-oriented officials had their misgivings about the new religion. They suspected it as the forerunner of conquest, and feared its effect upon the traditional order which had been the foundation of the state for centuries.

Missionary activities spread, despite a loosely enforced ban. Christianity was embraced by a substantial portion of the Vietnamese population over the years.

Toward the middle of the 19th Century, pressure mounted in France for the government to take positive action to establish a position on Vietnam. This pressure resulted from an envy of the power other European nations were establishing in Asia

and a desire to protect missionaries who were, at times, being persecuted.

In 1858 the French captured the city of Da Nang and in July 1861 they took Saigon. The Vietnamese court at Hue ceded Saigon and the adjacent area to the French and agreed to pay an indemnity. In 1867 the western part of the southern delta was annexed, and the area known as Cochin China (the extreme southern portion of Vietnam) was under French control.

For the next 30 years the French expanded their control over all of Indochina, or what today is North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The basic political structure of French Indochina was completed by 1900. Each of Vietnam's three regions were treated separately although basic policy decisions were made in Paris.

The emperor and the mandarinat remained in both central and north Vietnam; Cochin China was administered directly by the French. The old structure of government remained; however, all major decisions were made by French authorities.

French rule demoralized the emperors and mandarinat, tending to turn them into self-seekers and yes men.

French colonialism also had profound economic effects on the region. Absentee ownership grew as large scale agricultural and rubber plantations appeared. Prosperous Vietnamese moved into the cities, and more and more of the land was tilled by peasants who did not own it. Large scale canal systems were dug in the Mekong Delta to exploit rice production. By the early 20th Century the French had managed to produce a rice surplus.

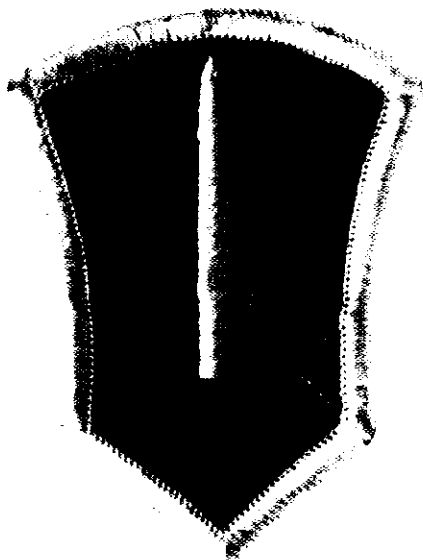
European ideas and culture permeated the country, especially among the mandarin classes. Western thought also stimulated another movement—growing Vietnamese nationalism.

Early in the 20th Century nationalist movements began to develop, initially among urban intellectuals. Numerous anti-French secret societies developed, however most were loosely organized and had no well-defined political objectives.

Leadership of the clandestine nationalist movement in Vietnam was eventually taken over by the Indochinese Communist Party (Dong Duong Cong San Dang). Formed in Hong Kong in 1930, it united several existing independent Communist groups under the leadership of Nguyen Ai Quoc—later known as Ho Chi Minh.

When France fell to Germany in June of 1940, the Vichy government ceded all of French Indochina to the Japanese. However, the French administration was permitted to remain intact with many lucrative agreements being made between wealthy French interests in Vietnam and the occupying forces.

Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh had become the leading national political figure in Vietnam. His party



## I FIELD FORCE

I Field Force was organized in August 1965, as Task Force Alpha to control all U.S. Army forces in Vietnam. Shortly, however, the mission was changed to control over forces in II Corps. In November 1965, Task Force Alpha was renamed Field Force Vietnam. The command became I Field Force in March 1966, when a second field force was organized in III Corps.

Currently, the major units under operational control of I Field Force include the 4th Infantry Division; the 173rd Airborne Brigade; Task Force South; the 17th Combat Aviation Group, and Company B, 5th Special Forces Group. The battalions of I Field Force Artillery provide support for all major U.S. and Allied combat operations. The complex communications network in II Corps is operated by the 54th Signal Battalion.

Task Force South was organized in July 1968, to increase pressure on enemy forces operating in the four southern provinces of II Corps. It is a force made up of combat units from the 4th Infantry Division, 173d and the 101st, with armor, helicopter and artillery support. Task Force South's command element is co-located with the Light Infantry Command Post of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 23d Infantry Division. Coordinated operations have resulted.

## II FIELD FORCE

Since its arrival in Vietnam, on March 15, 1966, II Field Force has grown into the largest combat command in the world.

Though only three years old, II Field Force, Vietnam, traces a proud lineage to its predecessor, XXII U.S. Army Corps. Prior to its inactivation at the end of World War II, XXII U.S. Army Corps saw action in the Rhineland and in various central European campaigns. When reactivated at Ft. Hood, Texas in January 1966, the command received its new name, II Field Force.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, II Field Force had operational control of five major units: the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 173d Airborne Brigade, the 12th Combat Aviation Group and the 23d Artillery Group.

During the following three years, numerous U.S. and Free World Military forces came under II Field Force's control. Currently operating under II Field Force operational control are such diverse units as the 25th Infantry Division, the 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Australian Task Force, the Royal Thai Black Panther Regiment and the Capitol Military Assistance Command (CMAC).

Also with II Field Force are the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne and the 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division. The 23d and 54th Artillery Groups, the 12th Combat Aviation Group and the 20th Engineer Brigade provide support for the II Field Force Combat units.

## XXIV CORPS

XXIV Corps was first activated at Ft. Shafter, Hawaii, on April 8, 1944. It remained in Hawaii until Sept. 11 of the same year, when it then embarked on combat operations in the South Pacific.

The Corps received its baptism of fire near Dulag, on Leyte in the Philippine Islands on Oct. 20, 1944. At that time, the 7th Infantry Division and 96th Infantry Division were the major combat elements of the Corps, later to be joined by the 77th Infantry Division.

From the Philippines, the Corps moved to Okinawa, and in September 1945 moved into Korea. It remained in Korea until it was deactivated on Jan. 25, 1949.

On Aug. 15, 1968, XXIV Corps was recalled to the colors at Phu Bai, Republic of Vietnam. The Corps replaced Provisional Corps Vietnam which had been created to assist in stemming the tide of the North Vietnamese Army Tet Offensive in January 1968. The Corps was placed under the operational control of III Marine Amphibious Force—its brother in arms of 24 years earlier in the South Pacific.

At the time of its activation, the Corps assumed operational control of those units which had been under the control of Provisional Corps Vietnam: the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the 101st Airborne Division, the 3rd Marine Division and the 108th Artillery Group and the Navy's Task Force Clearwater.



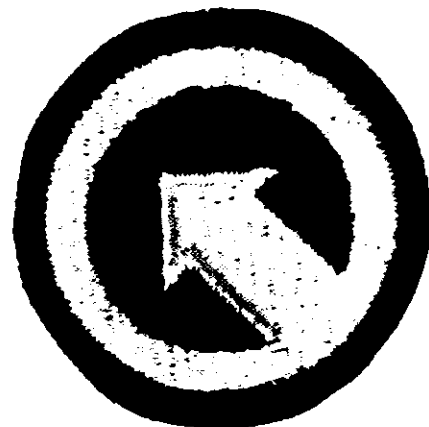
## 1ST LOGISTICAL COMMAND

On Sept. 20, 1950, the 1st Logistical Command was activated at Ft. McPherson, Ga., with 15 officers and 35 enlisted men. Its early years were spent at Ft. McPherson and later at Ft. Bragg, N.C.; the command's varied responsibilities during this period included participation in logistical exercises and assisting in the testing and evaluation of new logistics doctrine and organization.

In July 1958, 1st Log was designated a major unit of the Strategic Army Corps, and during the next three years it was responsible for administrative and logistical support to contingency forces of the Corps. During the Berlin crisis, 1st Log deployed to France and became a major unit of the Communications Zone, Europe. After nearly a year of service in Europe, the command returned to the U.S. and was based at Ft. Hood, Texas. As U.S. military involvement in Vietnam increased, an urgent requirement developed for immediate and responsive combat service support. On April 1, 1965, 1st Log was established in Saigon to meet the challenge.

By the end of 1965, less than a year after establishment, 1st Log's strength had increased to more than 22,000 personnel.

During 1966, 1st Log became the largest single major command in Vietnam as its military personnel strength increased to 50,000.

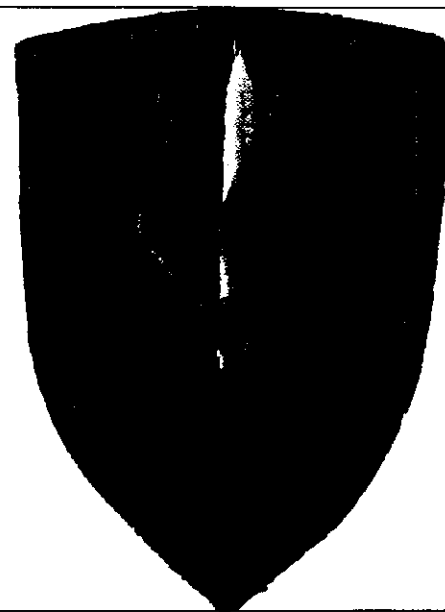


## 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

On the frontless war in Vietnam, more than 2,000 rotary and fixed-wing aircraft from the 1st Aviation Brigade give ground commanders an "extra edge" in closing with the enemy and defeating him in combat. Never before in military history has a ground commander approached the capability with which today he can find the enemy, conduct route and area reconnaissance, deploy infantrymen where the enemy is, deliver sustained firepower and supplies, control the ground battle from the air, adjust artillery and air strikes and evacuate the wounded soldiers.

Established in May 1966, the 1st Aviation Brigade consistently supplies the "extra edge" with which the ground commander can keep pressure on the enemy, maintain contact in fluid situations, cut off the enemy's withdrawal and complete the destruction or capture of his forces. Flying in support of U.S. and Allied forces, the brigade has been on all types of missions, including tactical combat assaults, direct fire support, aerial reconnaissance, medivac, troop lift, cargo hauling, evacuation of Vietnamese civilians from battle areas and actions in support of the revolutionary development program.

In 1969, the brigade carried more than 6.5 million troops in more than four million sorties, flying more than 1.5 million hours to accomplish this monumental mission.



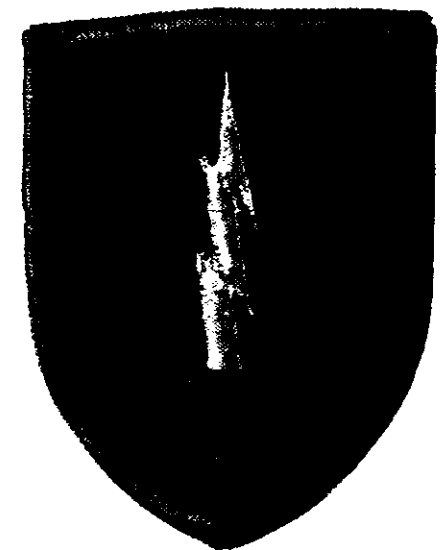
## 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE

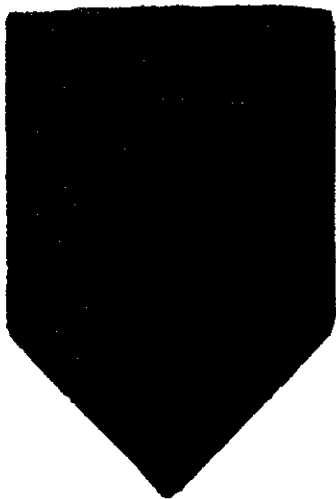
From a satellite in orbit 18,200 miles above the Pacific Ocean to a courier on a dusty Vietnamese road, the 1st Signal Brigade passes the word into, out of and within Southeast Asia.

With more than 20,000 men scattered among almost 300 sites in Vietnam and Thailand, the brigade is the largest combat signal unit ever formed and controls the most comprehensive military communications-electronics systems in the history of warfare. Its mission is very simply put: communication.

Since its organization on April 1, 1966, the brigade has fulfilled this mission by planning, engineering, installing, operating and maintaining both the Southeast Asian portion of the Army's worldwide strategic communications system and extensive area communications systems in Vietnam and Thailand.

All communications entering or leaving Vietnam must pass through facilities operated by the brigade, which consists of six subordinate signal groups, five in Vietnam and one in Thailand. In the more than three years of its existence the 1st Signal team has provided communications of a scope never before achieved in a combat zone. The primary mission is to "keep the shooters talking" but as the last sentence of every signal unit mission outlines, the communicator will "perform as infantry" when required. These he has done admirably.



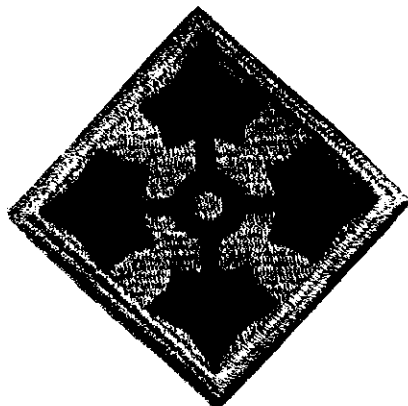


## 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

For 51 years the 1st Infantry Division has lived by its motto, "No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great, duty first." Organized in 1917 by Major General John J. Pershing, the Big Red One was the first division to see action in Europe during World War I. Again in World War II the Big Red One was the first to reach Britain and land in North Africa, Sicily and France. It was also the first US Army infantry division to reach Vietnam.

The bulk of the 1st Infantry Division reached Vietnam in October 1965 after the 2d Brigade's advance party had arrived in July. The division established basecamps with its headquarters at Di An (later, headquarters was moved to Lai Khe). Operations against the enemy were begun immediately.

The 1st Infantry Division's mission of defending the cities and pacifying the countryside is not being done with weapons alone. The division actively participates in civic action programs aimed at encouraging the Vietnamese to help themselves. At the same time, the civic action program is geared to improving the living, health and educational standards of the people. Together with the Vietnamese people the men of the Big Red One have been fulfilling their mission of protecting life and freedom so that the people can pursue their own future.

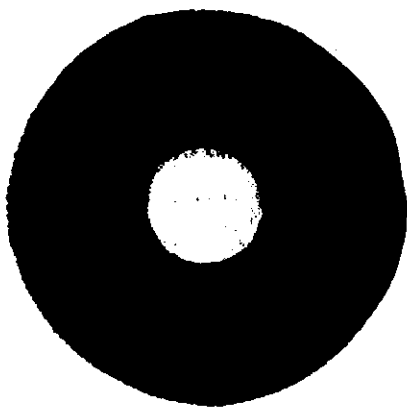


## 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The history of the Fourth Infantry Division dates back to 1917, when the division was organized at Camp Greene, N. Car. During World War I, division troops fought through the bitter campaigns of Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne. From the outset, their presence on the battlefield was feared by enemy troopers, who referred to them as the "men with the terrible green crosses." In the Meuse-Argonne, the Fourth Division achieved its initial triumph by cracking the Hindenburg line and stopping the Kaiser's all-out drive to Paris.

During World War II at Normandy, the Fourth Division smashed ashore at Utah Beach and later spearheaded the drive to Cherbourg. Elements of the hard-hitting Fourth were the first U.S. troops into Paris and the first Allied troops to set foot on German soil.

In 1966 the division deployed to Vietnam in four major increments. The 2nd Brigade, soon to become known as the Highlanders, landed in August, and by mid-October the entire division was operating in the Central Highlands. No time was wasted in going into full-scale operations. On Oct. 18, the division launched Operation Paul Revere IV. Since that time the division has continued to mete out heavy punishment on Viet Cong and main line North Vietnamese Army forces.



## 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The 9th Infantry Division—the Old Reliables—was first organized July 18, 1918, at Camp Sheridan, Ala., but was demobilized in February 1919 shortly after the war ended. It was redesignated a Regular Army unit 1923, though remaining inactive. Reactivation took place on Aug. 1, 1940, at Ft. Bragg, N.C., and subsequently the division took part in action in North Africa, on the Normandy beaches, across France, Belgium and Germany. Following World War II the division underwent a series of inactivations and reactivations, with the most recent call to duty being on Feb. 1, 1966, at Ft. Riley, Kan.

When the division first began landing in Vietnam at Vung Tau on Dec. 19, 1966, a new chapter in its history opened. The unit's 3rd Brigade became the first American infantry unit to establish a permanent base in the Mekong Delta at Dong Tam in mid-January.

When the enemy launched his 1968 Tet attacks, the Old Reliables reacted with swift precision to gain decisive victories, accounting for almost 2,000 VC killed. In July 1968, the 9th Division was presented the Vietnamese Valor Award, Army Level. When President Richard Nixon announced that he would redeploy 25,000 American troops during the summer of 1969, all elements of the division, with the exception of the 3rd Brigade, were redeployed to the States for inactivation. The 3rd Brigade remained at its base camp in Tan An.



## 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION

On October 1, 1941, the 25th Infantry Division was born. On December 7, 1941, the 25th Infantry Division was mature. It had to be. For the 25th was called to defend the shores of Hawaii after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

Within a year of that day of infamy, Tropic Lightning troops were on the offensive in the Pacific. From Guadalcanal through the northern chain of Solomon Islands to Arundel Island and Kolombangara the 25th penetrated Japanese strongholds.

After World War II, the Tropic Lightning Division helped occupy Japan, remaining until 1950 when they were again called into combat in Korea. It was the division's heroics at Pusan that earned for the division its first Korean Presidential Unit Citation. For three years Tropic Lightning battled seasoned North Korean and Chinese Communist soldiers.

In 1954, the 25th was back in Hawaii. By 1963 the division was providing men for Vietnam and in late 1965 the 3rd Brigade moved. By April, 1966 the division was totally in combat. The present chapter of the 25th's history is still being written.



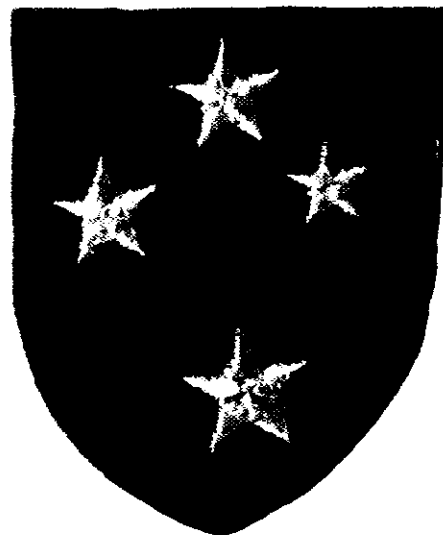
## AMERICAL DIVISION

Born in the steamy jungles and mountains of New Caledonia during World War II, the Americal Division is the Army's only named division on active duty. It is also the largest infantry division operating in South Vietnam with three light infantry brigades and a squadron of armored cavalry.

The current Americal Division got its start in Vietnam as Task Force Oregon in April 1967, marking the first time that Army troops were employed in I Corps. The task force initially moved into the Quang Ngai and Quang Tin provinces of southern I Corps to ease the pressure on Marines operating near the Demilitarized Zone. On Sept. 25, 1967, Task Force Oregon was reconstituted and redesignated as the Americal Division. The division is under the operational control of the III Marine Amphibious Force and the only division in the Army that works directly for the Marine Corps.

The rugged terrain of southern I Corps, where the Americal Division makes its home at Chu Lai, runs the gamut from marshy, coastal lowlands to triple-canopy jungle on steep mountain slopes.

On every front the Americal soldiers have won significant battles and inflicted more than 30,000 casualties in less than two years in such operations as Vernon Lake II, Fayette Canyon, Russell Beach, Iron Mountain, Geneva Park and Frederick Hill.



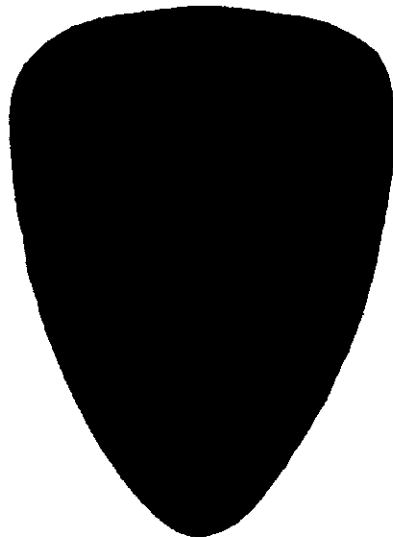
## 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

From its activation at Ft. Bliss, Texas, on Sept. 13, 1921, through World War II and Korea, until today, the 1st Cavalry Division has recorded a series of unparalleled firsts. Generations of Americans have been reminded that the big golden patch with the black horse's head is worn by the Skytroopers.

As the Army's first airmobile division, the 1st Air Cav arrived in Vietnam on Sept. 14, 1965. Less than two months later, demonstrating a mastery of terrain and enemy, it won a Presidential Unit Citation by routing heavy North Vietnamese concentrations around the Ia Drang Valley west of Pleiku. In the next 13 months, Skytroopers met and defeated strong enemy forces throughout the II Corps Tactical Zone.

In January 1968, the division was ordered to I Corps, arriving in time to blunt the enemy's Tet Offensive. After a bitter battle near Hue in February, the unit moved swiftly in April to relieve the embattled Marine base at Khe Sanh.

In October 1968, the Cav was needed in III Corps to thwart a potential Communist threat. The equivalent of a medium-sized U.S. town took wings and landed at the other end of South Vietnam. While thrusting against enemy positions along the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon, some elements of the division moved further south into IV Corps, working with Naval forces in an operation called "Nav-Cav." Thus the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) became the first American division to have fought in all four tactical zones in South Vietnam.





## 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

In the carefully conceived plans for the invasion of Nazi-held Europe, it became evident that a large force of hard-hitting, superbly-trained airborne troops would be needed to nullify coastal defenses and cut enemy lines. Thus, on Aug. 16, 1942, the 101st Airborne Division was activated at Camp Claiborne, La.

After months of arduous training, drills and practice jumps, two parachute infantry regiments and two glider regiments landed in England in the fall of 1943. The division made history on D-Day, June 6, 1944, when it jumped, 14,000 strong, into occupied France.

The division's fortunes fluctuated after World War II, and it was inactivated and reactivated as a training division three times in 11 years. On July 29, 1965, the 1st Brigade and support troops arrived at Cam Ranh Bay to begin the next chapter in the Screaming Eagles' combat history.

The remainder of the Division was in country by Dec. 13, 1967, and a year later, more than 10,000 enemy had died at the hands of the airmobile 101st. The division's mission has carried it into all four of Vietnam's tactical zones, and it has successfully defended the U.S. embassy in Saigon, the Bien Hoa Air Base and the coastal city of Phan Thiet.



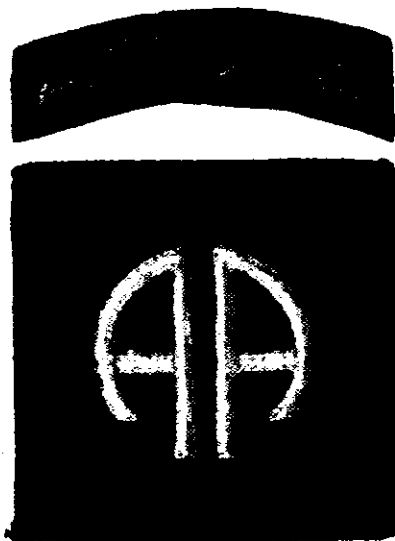
## 173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE

Formed in May 1963, the 173d Airborne Brigade—nicknamed the "Sky Soldiers"—went to work training for the type of warfare it would encounter in Vietnam.

Arriving in May 1965, the 173d was the first major U.S. Army ground combat unit to fight in Vietnam. The brigade is currently conducting operations in northern Binh Dinh Province in support of the Republic of Vietnam's pacification program.

Among the brigade's responsibilities are: conducting training to upgrade Vietnamese armed forces—particularly Regional and Popular Forces, Revolutionary Development Cadre and Peoples' Self Defense Forces, helping provide security for key populated areas, reducing the VC infrastructure, increasing the number of Hoi Chanhs and securing a portion of Highway QL 1, Vietnam's only major north-south highway.

The brigade received the Presidential Unit Citation for distinguishing itself in the battle of Dak To during November 1967. Brigade elements fought with an entrenched North Vietnamese Army regiment on Hill 875, and in some of the most bitter fighting of the war, captured the hill on Thanksgiving Day. More than 800 enemy were killed.



## 3RD BRIGADE, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION

The 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division was activated in 1917 as the 156th Infantry Brigade, an element of the 78th Division. In May 1964 the brigade was reorganized as the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. When the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division jumped into Florida, Jan. 22, 1968, little did the paratroopers realize that they would be fighting in Vietnam less than one month later. But on Feb. 13, the advance party departed Pope AFB, N.C., for Vietnam. On the afternoon of Valentine's Day the huge airlift began; an operation which was to require 155 C141s and six C133s before it was over. The All-Americans were on the way to Vietnam.

Landing at Chu Lai, the brigade had just begun to muster itself from its deployment when it moved again. The All-Americans were attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and given the mission to protect the ancient capital of Hue in the I Corps sector.

In the fall of 1968, the brigade moved again, this time to the Capital Military District. With the forward element at Camp Red Ball on the outskirts of Saigon and the rear element at Phu Loi the brigade was given the mission of protecting the western flanks of Saigon from enemy attacks.

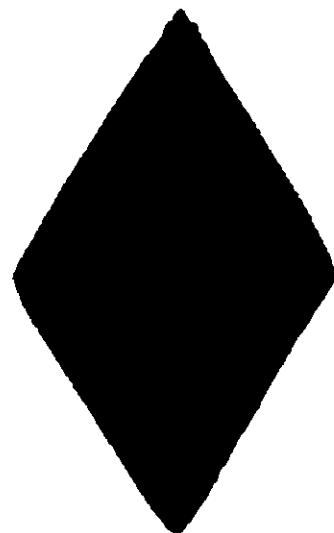
## 1ST BRIGADE, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION (MECHANIZED)

The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) is a little more than a year old in terms of Vietnam experience, but its units have used the organization's unique mechanized combination of heavy firepower and mobility to good advantage.

The brigade was reorganized in March 1968 for Vietnam deployment and was in-country and ready to operate by Aug. 1, 1968.

Since November 1968, the 1st Brigade has been fighting a different war, having moved a few miles south of the DMZ to the Quang Tri area for search and clear, cordon and sweep operations. The brigade spends much of its time working with the Vietnamese Army and is constantly conducting a variety of civic action programs.

In addition to these small unit actions the brigade, from time to time, becomes involved in 3d Marine Division operations and since March 1969, has been out on the Khe Sanh plains twice and up to the vicinity of the DMZ to aide the Marine elements of the command. The 1st Brigade has also maintained close contact with local ARVN, RF, and PF forces. During the Province elections in March 1969, there were no known acts of terrorism in the brigade's area of operation. The mission of the 1st Brigade is thus twofold: to conduct major operations against NVA elements and to provide peace and freedom to the residents of the Quang Tri area.



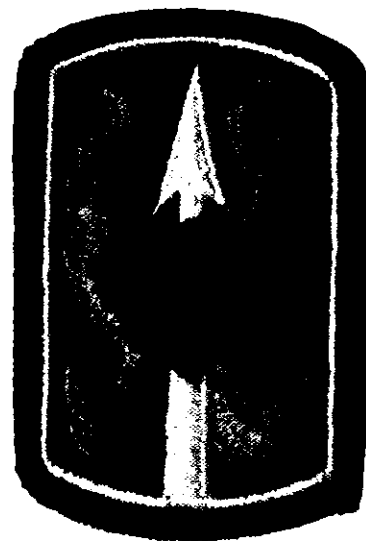
## 199TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE

The primary mission of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade is to assist in the defense of Saigon, including the guarding of major infiltration corridors into the capital city. The brigade arrived in Vietnam December 12, 1966. The bitterest and bloodiest battle for the unit in 1967 came December 6. 5 miles north of Tan Uyen village, when the enemy was soundly defeated.

The 1968 Tet Offensive began January 31, with a 3 a.m. rocket attack against II FFV Headquarters, Long Binh Post, and Bien Hoa Air Base. With several elements of the 275th VC Regiment simultaneously attacking the II Field Force-199th perimeter, the Redcatchers killed over 500 enemy in the first 14 hours of the attack, and after three days had been credited with more than 900 enemy killed.

During the January 31 Long Binh attacks the Brigade's 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry was helicoptered into Saigon to retake the Phu Tho Racetrack from enemy forces who had infiltrated the capital and were using the racetrack as a command post. The track was taken within eight hours and for the next two days, the battalion engaged in house-to-house fighting in the Cholon Sector.

Since May 1968 brigade action has been characterized by light and sporadic contact with enemy forces during numerous reconnaissance-in-force operations around Saigon.



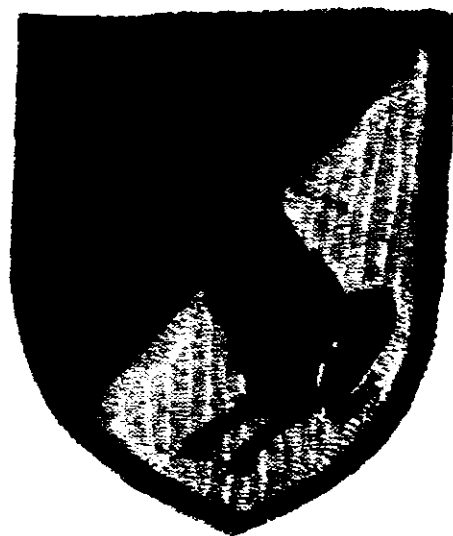
## 11TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

For 67 years the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment—Blackhorse—has been known for its ability to perform its mission through preparedness of both men and material. From its birth as a horse cavalry regiment at Ft. Meyer, Va., in 1901 to its present status as a light armored, completely mobile reconnaissance force, the 11th Cav has continuously added to its proud tradition.

Soon after it was formed the regiment won its spurs in the Philippines and it was in these trying first years that the Blackhorse earned its motto, "Allons" (Let's Go). Since then the regiment has served in the Mexican War, World War II and now Vietnam.

The regiment arrived in Vietnam in September 1966, and has been in almost constant contact with the enemy. A variety of missions, from clearing roads to dislodging enemy forces from almost inaccessible jungle areas, have taken the regiment from southeast Long Khanh Province to An Loc in northern Binh Long Province.

During the first half of 1969, the regiment participated in several major operations north of Lai Khe to offset an anticipated enemy offensive against Saigon. The operations, most recently in conjunction with ARVN forces, have greatly reduced the infiltration of enemy troops and supplies into the III Corps area.



# *In the Beginning*

... 1954—1961

*These people were enjoying a stroll when Viet Cong bombs exploded.*





*A hard core Viet Cong soldier is taken into custody by Vietnamese Army Rangers (right). South Vietnamese forces under attack by VC unload supplies from a U.S. helicopter in early days of the conflict (below).*



# The Darkest Era

... 1961 1964



*Vo Chi Cong—Born 1921 in Quang Nam Province, Vo Chi Cong joined the Communist revolutionaries in his teens. He is one of the major founders of the National Liberation Front and probably a key figure in the People's Revolutionary Party—yet he is a relative unknown.*



*Tran Nam Trung—Born in North Vietnam in 1913, Tran is a militant revolutionary. He is formerly an NVA officer, but is now secretary general of the People's Revolutionary Party, which claims to represent the South Vietnamese people.*

THE situation was becoming critical in South Vietnam. The Diem Government asked for increased U.S. assistance in October 1961. The American government responded immediately.

Advisors were increased. Supply personnel and helicopter units were also sent to assist the struggling nation. A small logistical team arrived in December 1961, followed by two Army aviation companies. The entire group numbered fewer than 500 men.

The first aviation company, the 57th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter), to arrive was put into operation immediately. Ten days after arrival the unit's Shawnee helicopters were flying Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops into combat.

The 57th was quickly followed by the 8th Transportation Company. Both units were later redesignated; the 57th became the 120th Aviation Company and the 8th was renamed the 117th Aviation Company.

The remaining new troops were assigned directly as advisors to ARVN units or to the U.S. Army Support Group, Vietnam, the forerunner of the United States Army, Vietnam.

Each ARVN Corps had U.S. Army advisory teams attached. They brought their specialized knowledge in aviation, logistics, planning, ordnance, medical services, communications, artillery and use of paramilitary forces to assist in the battle.

Advisory teams and detachments were dispatched down to battalion level. The arrival of the first elements of the 5th Special Forces Group in 1962 saw special warfare detachments assigned to remote or primitive areas to teach Montagnards and similar groups how to defend themselves.

South Vietnam was in serious danger of being overrun by Communist forces in 1961. Approximately 65 per cent of the country was completely or partially under Viet Cong control.

Warfare was leaving the terrorist stage and was now entering into the stage of small unit attacks on strategic hamlets and lightly defended villages, although terror attacks were still common as a psychological weapon against the people.

The Communist party in South Vietnam, called the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), claimed





*A giant Buddha overlooks a Vietnamese youngster and the harbor at Nha Trang.*

Photo by Spec. 5 Gordon Gahan

nearly 100,000 members. The PRP overtly asserted it was "the vanguard of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the soul of the NLF."

Radio Hanoi announced the PRP's formation on Jan. 18, 1962. Despite using the North Vietnamese medium for making the announcement, the new group denied any connection with Hanoi, Peking or Moscow, beyond the "fraternal ties of Communism."

Claims were being made that the NLF was the true government of South Vietnam. In the countryside, the PRP and its military arm, the Viet Cong, were extracting taxes from the peasants, forcibly impressing thousands into their services and requiring families to provide food, clothing and shelter for them. Whole villages were sometimes required to build bunker and trench systems for guerrillas.

Delegates from the PRP were sent to 30 Asian and African nations, and semi-official diplomatic relations were established with eight Communist countries and three non-Communist governments. These delegates traveled on North Vietnamese passports and used northern currency, although they claimed to represent the South Vietnamese people.

Despite American assistance, the terror attacks were causing an appalling number of casualties. During the period 1959 through 1964 about 20,000 South Vietnamese military had been killed, over 12,000 captured and 35,000 wounded.

On the civilian scene equally shocking devastation was taking place. During 1963 alone, 17,710 civilian casualties resulted from Communist terrorist activities. This figure breaks down as follows:

Assassinated:

Civilian population .....	1,558
Local government officials .....	415
Civil servants .....	100
Injured .....	8,375
Kidnaped .....	7,262

Between Jan. 1, 1961, and Aug. 10, 1964, 181 American gave their lives in combat alongside the Vietnamese. More than 900 were wounded during the same period.

serious. In November 1963 the political scene was disrupted by the overthrow of the South Viet-

namese government and the assassination of President Diem. Almost two years of political unrest and turmoil followed before the crisis was resolved.

The Viet Cong increased their attacks on the people. Refugees flowed into the cities in ever increasing numbers. Saigon's population increased spectacularly. With the refugees were Communist agents.

No longer were the North Vietnamese denying their support of the Viet Cong. It was evident the screen of "civil war" was being cast aside. The North anticipated victory and was striking out in all directions.

Emboldened by their success the North Vietnamese attacked the 7th Fleet in the Tonkin Gulf. On August 2 and 4, 1964, U.S. destroyers were attacked in international waters off the Vietnamese coast by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

The attack in the Tonkin Gulf proved to be a major blunder on the part of the North. America was quick to react to the attack. President Johnson asked for and received from Congress approval to use all available means to defeat the aggressor in South Vietnam.

The August 7th resolution reads:

*"The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom."*

Preparations were made in the United States for the buildup of U.S. forces in South Vietnam. It was apparent that to reverse the Communist threat, ground combat troops would have to be deployed to Vietnam.

Thus, with aggression met by resolve, the darkest era of South Vietnam's history drew to a close. America, joined by other SEATO countries, would respond to South Vietnam's call for assistance.

*President Johnson requested and received the consent of Congress to use armed force to protect Southeast Asia.*



*The USS Maddox (above) was attacked off the coast of North Vietnam on Aug. 2, 1964, thus leading to the Tonkin Resolution. An Army sergeant aids a wounded Vietnamese child during a savage VC terror attack (below).*





*The American buildup in South Vietnam required huge amounts of supplies and equipment. Saigon port was a major unloading point.*

## *From Buildup to Counteroffensive*

... 1965—1966

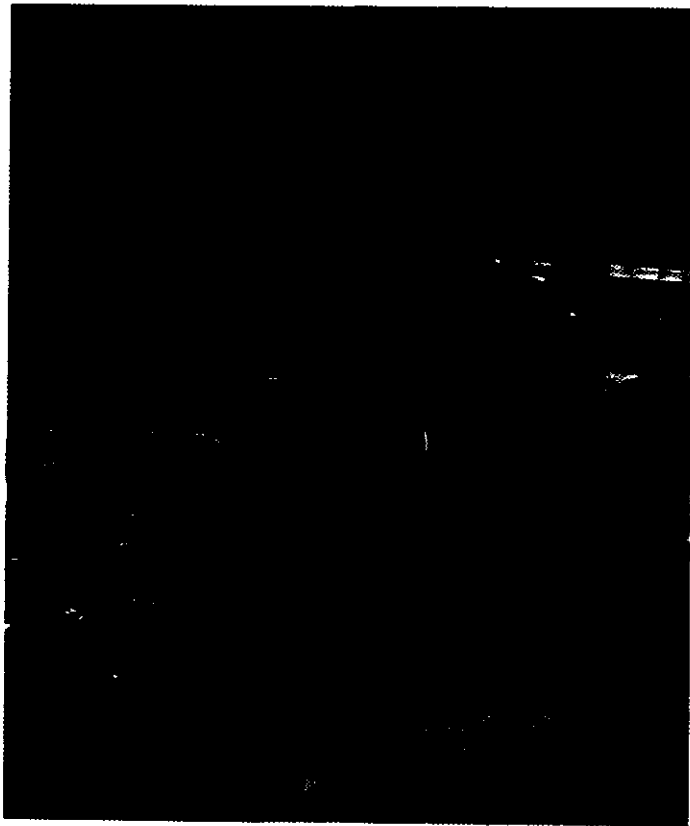
UNITED States involvement in South Vietnam increased sharply during 1965. Other Free World Forces joined in the commitment of ground combat troops. Australia, New Zealand and Korea responded with the United States during the year in answer to the challenge of Communist aggression.

The complexion of the war developed from guerrilla warfare and terrorism to large unit actions on the part of the Viet Cong, reinforced by North Vietnamese regular army units. The South Vietnamese Army and the Communists were now engaging in battalion and larger force actions. Guerrilla actions occurred from time to time, and terror still played a prominent part in the Viet Cong strategy.

On February 7, the Viet Cong attacked a U.S. compound at Pleiku and Camp Holloway nearby. Later that same day U.S. aircraft struck the NVA military barracks just north of the 17th parallel in North Vietnam. Americans were now definitely a Communist target and America was bombing North Vietnam for the first time.

With the war intensifying, President Johnson ordered immediate evacuation of all U.S. dependents in Vietnam. His concern for their safety was warranted, for two days later the VC blew up a hotel in Qui Nhon that housed American enlisted men. Twenty-three died in the attack and 21 were injured. Fourteen Vietnamese were also injured by the attack.

The Viet Cong also suffered a serious loss in February. A supply ship attempting to smuggle



*Logistics personnel "humped" supplies from docks to depot and then to the field.*

80 tons of arms and ammunition was sunk at Vung Ro Bay.

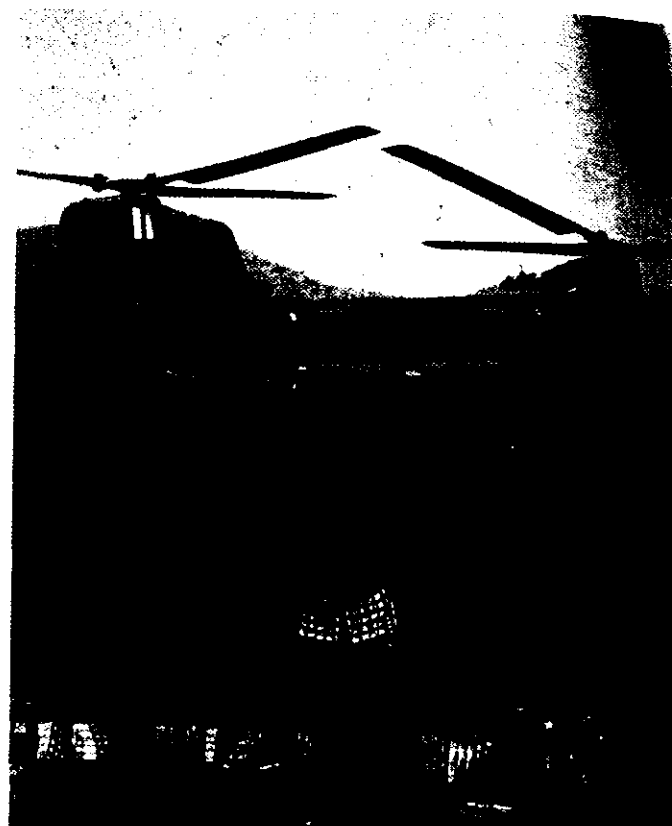
By mid-March Air Force and Navy aircraft were striking regularly at Communist targets in North and South Vietnam. March also saw the first ground offensive unit from the United States arrive. It was the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines of the 3rd Marine Division.

Little significant ground action took place during the two months of March and April; however, terror attacks on the Americans continued. A car filled with explosives was driven next to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. When the explosives detonated a few moments later two Americans and 11 Vietnamese lost their lives while 143 others were injured.

While killing and maiming scores of civilians, the Communists were keeping a steady barrage of propaganda flowing into the international press decrying the American bombing of North Vietnam, claiming hundreds of civilians were becoming casualties from American raids.

In May U.S. forces began to buildup in earnest. The Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade was landed in-country and immediately went into tactical operations around Bien Hoa. They were followed by additional Marines and Seabees landing at Chu Lai in the I Corps Tactical Zone (I CTZ).

The buildup continued in June with the arrival of Australia's first combat troops, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. U.S. combat engineers arrived in force to begin the construction of a deepdraft port and airfield at Cam Ranh Bay.



*Aerial resupply is one of the jobs performed by the Chinook helicopter, carrying goods either inside or by sling load.*

The port was needed to ease the congestion of supply ships at Saigon port.

During this time the VC had been active. A week-long battle around Quang Ngai City resulted in about 500 ARVN casualties. A four-day battle 55 miles northeast of Saigon, resulted in 650 friendly casualties. A bomb exploded in Tan Son Nhut civilian air terminal, injuring 46 persons.

Another terrorist incident occurred at the My Canh floating restaurant in the Saigon River. Two claymore mines cost 44 persons their lives and injured 81 others.

A multi-battalion attack on Duc Hoa showed the Communists were settling into conventional warfare in an attempt for complete victory in 1965. They thought they could overcome the Free World and South Vietnamese Forces before the buildup could be accomplished.

American troops continued to arrive. In July the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and elements of the 1st Logistical Command added to the strength of military forces in the southern portion of the country. Two Marine battalions bolstered forces in the northern provinces.

Communist forces were increasing on a large scale also. The North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) 101st Regiment was definitely identified as being in South Vietnam and the 18th and 95th NVA Regiments were also believed to be completely within South Vietnam's borders.

In the central section of the country, a tactical headquarters was placed at Nha Trang to control new units arriving in the II CTZ. Originally designat-

*A patrol winds its way through fertile fields in a constant search for the enemy. (below). Nguyen Van Thieu is sworn in as President of South Vietnam (right), and is honored at a parade celebrating the inauguration and National Day (left).*



ed Task Force Alpha, the headquarters later became I Field Force, Vietnam (I FFV). The 1st Cavalry Division moved into An Khe while the 173rd Airborne Brigade protected the arrival with Operation Gibraltar in the immediate vicinity. The September operation resulted in 226 Viet Cong killed in three days.

A regimental force of VC attacked the Phu Co outpost near Qui Nhon and before the battle was complete, ARVN troops mounted a staggering toll on the attackers. Seven hundred Viet Cong died in the encounter.

Another Free World Force entered Vietnam in October. The Republic of Korea sent its Capital Division into South Vietnam to help aid a country invaded from the north by Communists, as was Korea 15 years earlier. During the same period

the remaining elements of the 1st Infantry Division arrived.

By November the 1st Cavalry Division was conducting tactical operations. The prelude to one of the largest-scale actions of the war took place during the first 12 days of the month when the cavalry tangled with a large force west of Plei Me.

To the west of Plei Me, Communist forces were moving into the Ia Drang Valley intent on engaging the 1st Cavalry and winning a victory over the "green" troops. The enemy met the 3rd Brigade of the division, and stood and fought, rather than melt into the jungle after initial contact. When the smoke of battle cleared 1,238 enemy soldiers had died while only one-fifth as many Americans were killed. The "green" troops and the airmobile concept had proven themselves.

The Communists had suffered a stunning defeat against the Americans in the Ia Drang Valley, but they overran an ARVN unit at the Michelin Plantation in Binh Duong Province, inflicting heavy casualties on the South Vietnamese. The VC also countered with terror by detonating a truck laden with explosives at the Metropole Bachelor Enlisted Quarters in Saigon. Eight Americans were killed and 137 injured.

Before the year closed, the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division deployed from Hawaii. This raised the total strength of U.S. and Free World Military Forces in Vietnam to 181,000. Meanwhile enemy forces had increased from 103,000 at the beginning of the year to an estimated 230,000.

The year had seen U.S. troops penetrate into areas Communists had controlled for years. With the aid of saturation bombing by B52 bombers, the 1965 monsoon offensive the VC had promised was little more than a small splash. Superior firepower, rapid artillery and air response, plus with the helicopter's mobility, were proving that the Communists' attempt to wrap up the war by 1966 would not materialize.

On the diplomatic scene Hanoi scorned America's peace overture of a 37-day pause in air strikes over North Vietnam. In Saigon the governmental turmoil was eliminated by the emergence of a military National Leadership Council. Air Force Commander Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky became premier, bringing long-needed calm to the government.

The year 1966 was marked by military, political and diplomatic changes in South Vietnam. For the first time, Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) of America, Australia, Korea and South Vietnam were actively entering Viet Cong strong-holds, breaking the enemy's stranglehold on the people. Charlie was losing his rice, ammunition and weapons caches. The FWMAF were beginning the first phase of the counter-offensive.

During January the 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment launched a seven-day sweep into an area near





the Cambodian border in search of two VC battalions. The penetration resulted in more than 400 enemy deaths.

The 25th Infantry Division teamed up with the 173rd and the Australians to uncover an enemy headquarters complex with extensive tunnel systems. In the operation large quantities of weapons and ammunition were captured.

Korean troops began an operation in Binh Dinh Province that resulted in 250 enemy killed.

In the past VC tax collectors had bled off large percentages of the rice harvest. The 101st Airborne's 1st Brigade and Korean Marines were sent into Phu Yen Province to secure the rice harvest and prevent VC taxation of the 30,000-ton crop.

Prior to Tet's 84-hour truce, the Viet Cong were busy attacking targets ranging from the airfield at Da Nang to a Special Forces camp and a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) outpost, and even exploding a claymore mine outside the main gate of Tan Son Nhut Air Base. They detonated two charges at a U.S. Bachelor Enlisted Quarters in Dalat. The Vo Khia New Life Hamlet was attacked, and USAID representative Douglas Ramsey was kidnapped in another action.

The truce was marred by more than 100 violations by the Viet Cong.

Later in January the 1st Cavalry Division joined with Vietnamese and Korean units for a 42-day operation near Bong Son that resulted in nearly 2,400 enemy dead.

Military action in the next two months took a heavy toll of the enemy's ranks and base camps. The 1st Infantry Division's Operation Rolling Stone resulted in 150 VC killed. The 101st's Operation Harrison in Phu Yen Province; the 3rd Brigade, 25th Division's Operation Garfield in Darlac Province; and the combined force in the Song Be River operation all uncovered enemy camps, weapons and ammunition.

At Bien Hoa, II Field Force, Vietnam (II FFV) was activated to control U.S. forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone.

A program designed to bring the Viet Cong back to the government, called the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) Program, met with spectacular success in March when a record-setting 2,336 former enemy soldiers rallied during the month.

With the increase of troops in the Saigon area, Headquarters Area Command (HAC) was activated to provide support functions for all services in the capital city. The 1st Signal Brigade was also activated in early April.

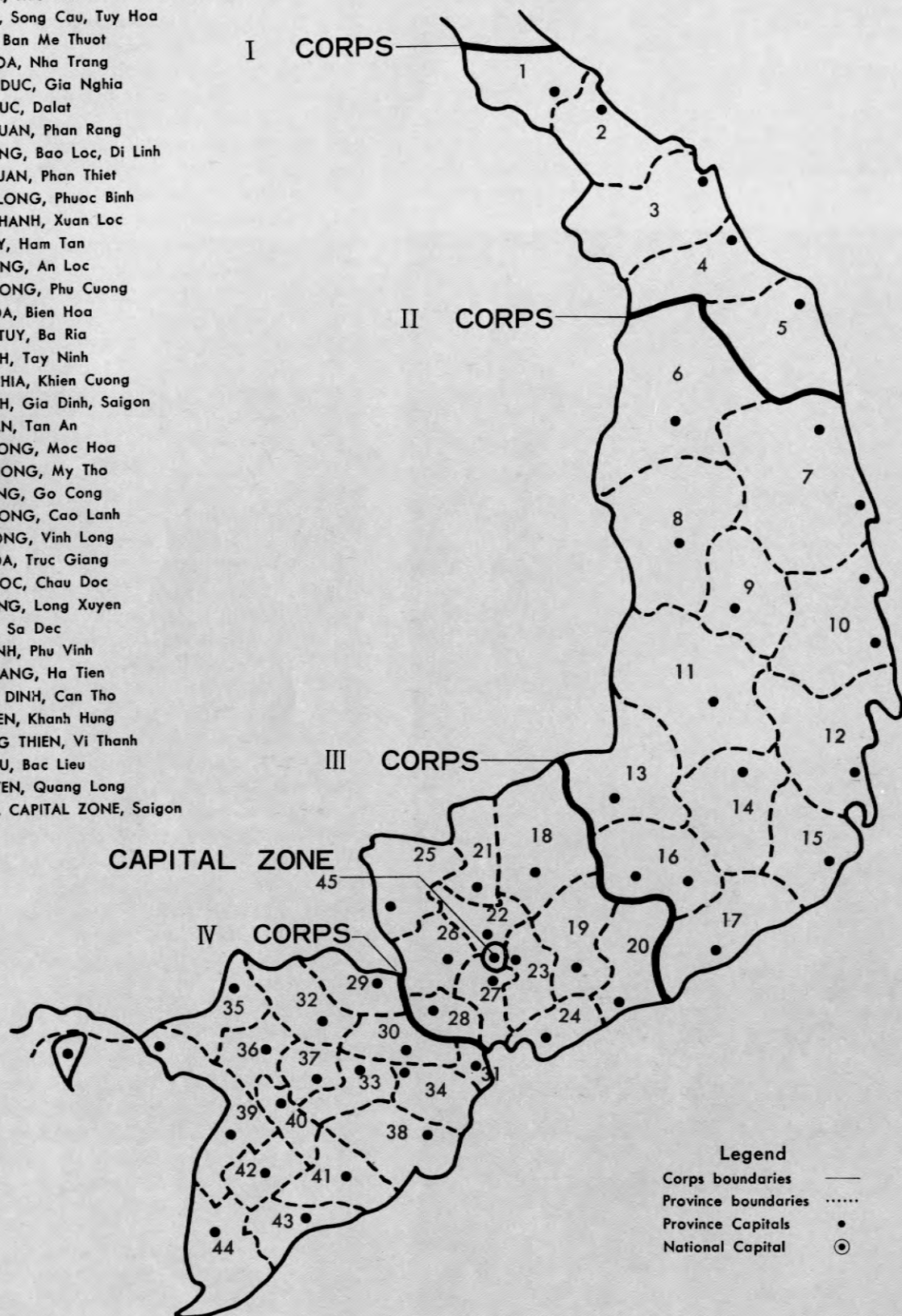
The expansion of forces continued with the arrival of the USS Corpus Christi Bay at Cam Ranh Bay to provide a floating maintenance facility for Army helicopters, and the Royal Australian Task Force entered the country.

As mid-year approached, the threatened VC monsoon offensive was blunted by several opera-

*A Hoi Chanh asks his trapped comrades to surrender during a 101st Airborne Division cordon operation (top). A monk uses a loudspeaker to talk to a crowd during Buddhist demonstrations throughout the country (bottom).*



1. QUANG TRI, Quang Tri
2. THUA THIEN, Hue
3. QUANG NAM, Hoi An
4. QUANG TIN, Tam Ky
5. QUANG NGAI, Quang Ngai
6. KONTUM, Kontum
7. BINH DINH, Bong Son, Qui Nhon
8. PLEIKU, Pleiku
9. PHU BON, Hau Bon
10. PHU YEN, Song Cau, Tuy Hoa
11. DARLAC, Ban Me Thuot
12. KHAN HOA, Nha Trang
13. QUANG DUC, Gia Nghia
14. TUYEN DUC, Dalat
15. NINH THUAN, Phan Rang
16. LAM DONG, Bao Loc, Di Linh
17. BINH THUAN, Phan Thiet
18. PHUOC LONG, Phuoc Binh
19. LONG KHANH, Xuan Loc
20. BINH TUY, Ham Tan
21. BINH LONG, An Loc
22. BINH DUONG, Phu Cuong
23. BINH HOA, Bien Hoa
24. PHUOC TUY, Ba Ria
25. TAY NINH, Tay Ninh
26. HAU NGHIA, Khiem Cuong
27. GIA DINH, Gia Dinh, Saigon
28. LONG AN, Tan An
29. KIEN TUONG, Moc Hoa
30. DINH TUONG, My Tho
31. GO CONG, Go Cong
32. KIEN PHONG, Cao Lanh
33. VINH LONG, Vinh Long
34. KIEN HOA, Truc Giang
35. CHAU DOC, Chau Doc
36. AN GIANG, Long Xuyen
37. SA DEC, Sa Dec
38. BINH BINH, Phu Vinh
39. KIEN GIANG, Ha Tien
40. PHONG DINH, Can Tho
41. BA XUYEN, Khanh Hung
42. CHUONG THIEN, Vi Thanh
43. BAC LIEU, Bac Lieu
44. AN XUYEN, Quang Long
45. SPECIAL CAPITAL ZONE, Saigon



# *The Squeeze*

... 1967



tions. One found the 1st Infantry Division pushing deep into War Zone C near Tay Ninh, where no friendly troops had been for five years. Large quantities of supplies were captured. In Pleiku Province along the Cambodian border, ARVN and 25th Division troops killed 546 of the enemy.

In III Corps Tactical Zone a sweep through Binh Long Province by the 1st Infantry Division and 5th ARVN Division cost the Viet Cong 855 men in a little over a month. In Kontum Province the 101st and ARVN units accounted for 531 more enemy deaths. This action was near a city to become famous 18 months later—Dak To.

Terror attacks included a mine explosion at the Brinks Hotel in Saigon and attacks on Regional and Popular Forces outposts and small CIDG units.

U.S. planes faced an increasing number of Russian-made surface-to-air missiles over North Vietnam. In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh announced a partial mobilization of the country.

Units continued to arrive to support the counter-offensive. In August elements of the 4th Infantry Division landed at Qui Nhon, and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the first of a 2,000 man Philippine Civic Action Group arrived.

In September the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, a Spanish Medical Team and the German hospital ship Helgoland arrived, plus the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

Two U.S. operations, Attleboro and Irving, kept the enemy off balance. The 1st Cavalry accounted for 230 Viet Cong killed in Binh Dinh Province, while the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and elements of the 1st, 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions and 173rd Airborne Brigade mauled the 9th VC Division, killing more than 1,100 in Operation Attleboro. The force also captured 2,243,000 pounds of enemy rice.

October action saw a combined force of 1st Cavalry, Koreans and Vietnamese kill 681 Viet Cong in Operation Irving. To avoid the superior firepower of the Allies, the enemy tried to break contact as quickly as possible. The enemy confined his raids to the northern provinces near his supply lines.

Operation Paul Revere whittled another 1,000 from the enemy's ranks and cost him 300 weapons. Viet Cong losses were running high and the enemy brought in the North Vietnamese 5th Division to bolster their forces.

November was marked by increased VC raiding. The 4th Infantry Division, operating west of Plei Djereng, withstood a mortar barrage of more than 500 rounds. National Day celebrations in Saigon were interrupted by two dozen 57mm recoilless rifle rounds; the 196th's base camp near Tay Ninh was hit, and a portion of the Long Binh ammunition dump was blown up by satchel charges.

The dump was struck again in December, and

Tan Son Nhut Air Base sustained a raid in which guerrillas penetrated the perimeter.

At the close of the year the first elements of the 9th Infantry Division arrived to bring U.S. troop strength to 361,000.

The year was marked by harmony on the diplomatic front. To set the stage for high-level discussions, then Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited the country in January. This was followed the next month by Premier Ky, Chief of State Thieu, and President Johnson meeting in Honolulu for a two-day conference on political, social and economic aspects of the war. Vice President Humphrey visited South Vietnam later in February.

Another conference for the heads of state was held in Manila in October. Then Secretary of Defense McNamara visited Vietnam prior to the Philippine meeting.

On the political front Premier Ky headed off a military coup with the arrest of several junior officers. He also announced general elections would be held in 1967 after a constitutional referendum in October 1966.

The political calm was shattered in April, when the I Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, considered a potential political rival of Premier Ky, was relieved from his command. A demonstration of 2,000 persons in Da Nang was followed by Buddhist protests in Hue, Saigon and Hoi An.

A call for a general strike closed the port of Da Nang and 20,000 Buddhists rallied to demonstrate in the historic capital city of Hue. The unrest continued into early April, resulting in anti-government groups forming in the major cities of the Republic. Government troops moved into Da Nang in a show of force while turmoil and demonstrations continued in Hue, Dalat and Nha Trang. By April 12, the situation appeared resolved as anti-government forces pledged to fight Communism alongside the government.

The National Political Congress announced that a constituent assembly would be elected in five months.

In late May, however, the political waters were again muddied by Buddhist and anti-government factions rising in Da Nang and Hue. A Buddhist nun burned herself to death in protest against the government. This was the first of several acts of self-immolation. In Hue the U.S. consulate was sacked and burned.

Marine operations in I Corps Tactical Zone were delayed by Buddhists placing altars in the streets of Hue. Government troops and riot police finally cleared the streets and arrested some of the dissident leaders to bring an end to the protests.

Relative calm prevailed for the remainder of the year, broken only by the Saigon dock strike, and the new constitution's first three articles were approved.

The year 1967 saw the Free World Forces tighten the screw on the enemy. His manpower was slowly whittled down by many operations. His weapons and food caches were seized, blunting many planned raids and offensive actions. Increased air strikes made his supply routes difficult to use, curtailing his operations further. His cause was weakened by thousands of Viet Cong, political cadre and North Vietnamese who rallied to the government.

During the latter months of 1967, the enemy made spectacular tries at propaganda victories at Loc Ninh and Dak To. These battles alone accounted for nearly 3,000 enemy dead.

His losses for the year included 87,534 killed in action and more than 31,000 weapons captured. He lost almost 14,000 tons of rice and 162 tons of salt. His ammunition supply was reduced by almost 2.5 million rounds. His ranks were depleted by 27,178 who rallied to the Chieu Hoi Program, 17,671 of whom were fighting men. He was found to be recruiting boys from 12 to 16 years old.

He was feeling the pinch, yet he continued to fight. Civilians in South Vietnam were his victims almost as often as the military. Communist terrorists slaughtered more than 4,000 South Vietnamese and wounded more than 8,000 in their attacks. Kidnaping accounted for another 5,454 persons, all in an attempt to control the people.

Meanwhile, more civilians moved into government protected resettlement areas than ever before. The enemy's source of labor, recruits, food and shelter was slipping away.

During the spring, hamlet and village elections were conducted and in the fall the upper and lower houses were filled and the president and vice president were chosen. Despite threats of death and destruction, the people turned out in large numbers to vote.

On the political and diplomatic side of the war, a constitution was submitted to the Constituent Assembly for debate. Elsewhere, Thailand announced it would allow bases within its borders to be used for support of Vietnam operations, and Premier Ky visited Australia and New Zealand.

By February the American military strength had risen by 20,000 men. The increased manpower permitted the U.S. forces to enter the field for long periods of time.

The four-day truce for the Lunar New Year, Tet, provided a stand-down period in which many operations were terminated. The truce itself was marred by 272 violations.

Operation Lam Son II in Binh Duong Province and Operation Thayer II were terminated with a combined kill of slightly more than 2,000 enemy soldiers.

*Tunnel rats (preceding page) play an important role in searching out Viet Cong caches, and locating enemy attempting to hide.*

By mid-month elements of the 9th Infantry Division started Operation Enterprise in Long An Province and other 9th Division units began operations in the Mekong Delta with U.S. Navy units. This marked the beginning of the Allied squeeze on Viet Cong domination of Delta waterways.

Other 9th Division units joined elements of the 1st, 4th and 25th Infantry Division plus troops from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 196th Light Infantry Brigade and 173rd Airborne Brigade in what was to be the largest operation of the war, Operation Junction City. The gigantic force was supported by the 11th Combat Aviation Group and 7th Air Force planes.

U.S. troops in War Zone C north and west of Saigon formed a giant horseshoe enclosing 250 square miles of enemy-held territory. Heavy fighting characterized the operation, and large stores of ammunition, weapons, clothing, food, documents and utensils were confiscated.

After 81 days, 2,738 enemy lay dead from the operation and War-Zone C was no longer a VC stronghold. Their bases were destroyed; many of their supplies were gone.

Further north the 1st Cavalry Division had begun Operation Pershing and the Communist pounded the Da Nang Airbase with more than 50 Russian-made 140mm rockets, killing 43 and wounding 137. A few days later in March Da Nang was hit by 10 more of the huge rockets.

The February-March period was also active diplomatically. The Manila Conference countries and their ambassadors met in Saigon in preparation for a two-day conference in Guam with high Vietnamese leaders and President Johnson. The Constituent Assembly had approved the draft constitution for South Vietnam a few days prior to the meeting. Premier Ky presented President Johnson with a copy of the new constitution, which was ratified a few days later.

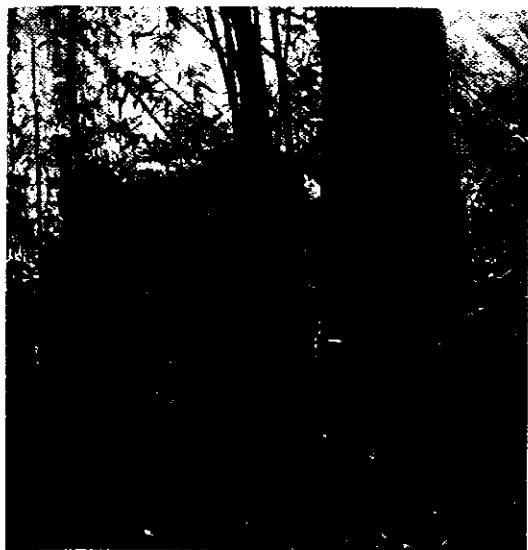
In Thailand, B52s began to arrive at bases in accordance with a previous agreement with the kingdom. The huge bombers were used mainly against enemy complexes in South Vietnam in early April. Previously they had flown from Guam to South Vietnam in a 5,000-mile round trip.

U.S. forces in Vietnam climbed to a strength of 470,000, a few thousand from the year-end peak of 490,000 servicemen in-country.

In April, an eight-week election period began for thousands of villages and hamlets throughout the country. About 77 per cent of the eligible voters turned out to elect their local leaders despite constant threats from the Viet Cong. Many of the threats were carried out as 12 candidates were slain by terrorists and 31 others kidnaped.

The government also announced that fall elections would take place to select the upper and lower houses of the new government and to choose

*"Medic," hollers a 173d Airborne Brigade soldier to get aid for a buddy (bottom). A sniper firing on U.S. soldiers draws a return blast (left). After landing in a clearing, soldiers charge from their assault chopper into the tropic jungles (right).*





a new president and vice president.

In Saigon Ellsworth P. Bunker assumed duties from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge who was retiring from public life.

Enemy pressure was mounting near the Demilitarized Zone and the I Corps Tactical Zone. Marine units were moved to counter the threat. The 196th Light Infantry Brigade was moved into the Chu Lai area to replace the relocated Marine units. This was the first of many major ground combat units from USARV to operate in the northern provinces.

Other units soon joined the 196th. They were the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and, in May, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. The Army troops in the zone were placed under the operational control of Task Force Oregon which was controlled by the III Marine Amphibious Force.

In Saigon, Premier Ky announced his candidacy for president on May 12. Four days later the assembly approved the presidential election law.

In July Thailand announced that it would send a 2,200-man regiment to the Republic of Vietnam. This force was the first ground combat unit contributed by the Thais who had already provided airlift of supplies on several occasions.

Meanwhile Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara conducted high-level conferences at USARV's Tan Son Nhut headquarters. The day after the secretary left the country, President Johnson announced the United States would increase its troop commitment to Vietnam.

During the month, USARV moved to its new headquarters in the Long Binh complex and MACV moved to its new buildings opposite Tan Son Nhut civilian air terminal. Other units moved out of the capital area during the following months, including 1st Logistical Command, 1st Aviation Brigade and the 1st Signal Brigade headquarters.

Enemy action during August was heavy. An enemy company struck the Edap Enang Montagnard resettlement village in the Central Highlands. The tank farm at Nha Be City, 10 miles southeast of Saigon, was hit by Communist fire causing extensive damage. And the Ban Me Thout airfield in Darlac Province was struck by mortars twice during the month.

In I CTZ the Marine bases at Gio Linh and Con Thien began to receive heavy artillery and mortar attacks. These attacks reached a peak during September. Marine and Army artillery, plus Air Force bombers lifted the siege from the DMZ bases.

On September 3 the presidential elections were held. About 83 per cent of the voters turned out. Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky were elected president and vice president respectively. The voters also chose an upper house for the new

government.

New operations during the month included Task Force Oregon's Operation Wheeler in I CTZ, accounting for nearly 2,000 enemy killed; the Mobile Riverine Force's Operation Coronado V in the Delta, costing the enemy 330 dead; Operation Bolling, conducted by the 173rd Airborne Brigade and elements of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Infantry Division's Operation Shenandoah in Binh Duong Province, which took 956 enemy lives and 100 weapons.

At Chu Lai, Task Force Oregon was redesignated the Americal Division, becoming the only named division on active duty in the U.S. Army.

Russia made a late September announcement that a new military assistance agreement had been signed by the U.S.S.R. and North Vietnam whereby the Russians would furnish "airplanes, antiaircraft and rocket equipment, artillery and small arms ammunition and other military equipment . . ."

Early in October the Vietnamese National Assembly validated election results. This was followed by the installation of the 60 newly elected members of the upper house of the government. Later in the month the lower house elections were held with 73 per cent of the electorate turning out to complete the last round of elections. On the last day of the month the inauguration ceremonies were conducted in downtown Saigon.

In I CTZ Army forces were increased as the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division joined the Americal Division. The brigade immediately began Operation Wallowa, which was later combined with Americal's Operation Wheeler.

October also saw the introduction of a helicopter especially designed for ground support—the Huey

*HueyCobra gunships were introduced into the conflict in October, 1967.*



Cobra. This gunship, with advanced weapons systems, slim silhouette, high speed and maneuverability began combat operations in 1st Aviation Brigade units.

The 4th Infantry Division started Operation MacArthur in Pleiku Province and the 7th Squadron, Highlands during the month. Also the 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry arrived at Qui Nhon to

Communist activity included a North Vietnam Army regiment's attack on an ARVN regiment at Song Be with the North Vietnamese coming out on the short end of the battle. ARVN losses were only 10 killed to the Communists' 130.

At Loc Ninh, near the Cambodian border, two battalions of the 273rd VC Regiment attacked the perimeter where CIDG and ARVN troops were lodged. The Viet Cong broke through the perimeter and entered the village. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry was one of the first of the 1st Infantry Division units rushed to help push the enemy force from the area.

Fighting broke out again when the Viet Cong attacked across the landing strip at the district headquarters. This attempt was broken up, but not before the VC had tried to scale the walls of the outpost. Enemy forces made sporadic attempts to get back into Loc Ninh, but they withdrew from the area, losing more than 1,000 men in the over-all action.

In the Central Highlands the rumblings of the biggest battle of the war were resounding in the hills around Dak To. For several weeks intelligence reports showed increased enemy activity in the vicinity of Dak To, astride the natural infiltration route along Route 312 north of Pleiku and close

to the Laotian-Cambodian border. The town was normally garrisoned by ARVN troops and elements of a U.S. Special Forces-trained Civilian Irregular Defense Group.

When it became apparent the enemy was preparing battlefield positions for an assault on the town, the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade was deployed into the area. Two companies from the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry made initial contact with a strong North Vietnamese Army force. The battle grew in ferocity. The NVA regulars pinned the Americans down. The 3rd Battalion commander called in air support against positions astride the steep hill. Artillery and mortar fire combined with the bombs to stem the enemy fire. Morning reconnaissance patrols found the enemy so well entrenched he was barely hurt by the tremendous pounding. It was apparent the enemy was not going to give up easily or melt away into the jungle.

Additional American and South Vietnamese troops were called to reinforce those locked in combat. The 173rd Airborne Brigade and later elements of the 1st Cavalry were brought in to assist the 4th Division troops. Besides artillery and helicopter gunship fire support, C47 Dragonships and giant B52 bombers flew supporting missions for the ground troops. Artillery and airstrikes pounded the hills for hours before infantry assaults on the enemy positions. The soldiers found the enemy still capable of delivering effective fire to slow their advance. Casualties mounted on both sides, but gradually the NVA troops were forced back toward the Cambodian border and sanctuary.

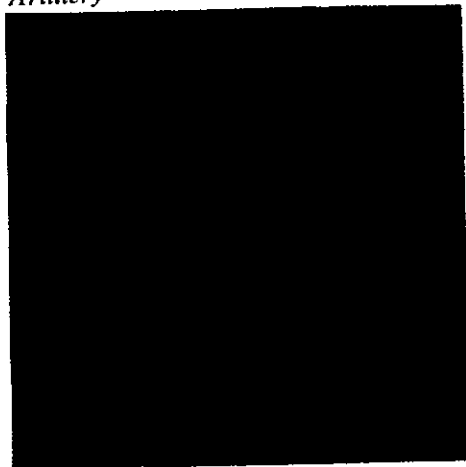
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*In spite of the war, traditional open market places are abundant.*

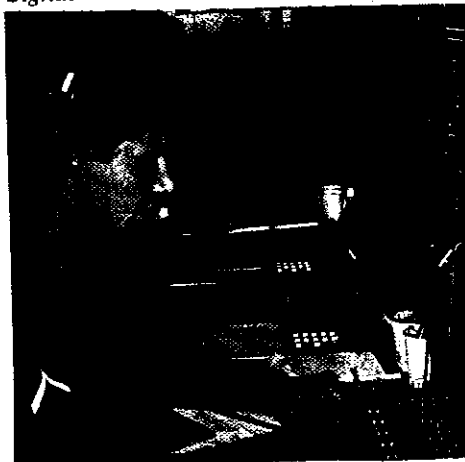




*Infantry  
Artillery*



*Signal*

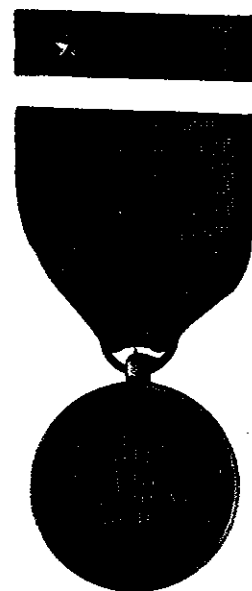


*Engineers*





*Armor and air support*



- ★ Vietnam Advisory Campaign—March 15, 1962 to March 7, 1965
- ★ Vietnam Defensive Campaign—March 8, 1965 to December 24, 1965
- ★ Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase I—December 25, 1965 to June 30, 1966
- ★ Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase II—July 1, 1966 to May 31, 1967
- ★ Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase III—June 1, 1967 to January 29, 1968
- ★ Tet Counteroffensive Campaign—January 30, 1968 to April 1, 1968
- ★ Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase IV—April 2, 1968 to June 30, 1968
- ★ Vietnam Counteroffensive Campaign, Phase V—July 1, 1968 to November 1, 1968
- ★ Current Campaign—November 2, 1968 to date to be determined

Any member of the Army who is serving or who has served in Vietnam or contiguous waters or air space in accordance with AR 672-5-1, is authorized to wear a battle star on the Vietnam service ribbon for each period in which he served in Vietnam.

*Moving through the dense jungle, tense soldiers keep a wary eye for the enemy.*



One of the bloodiest battles was fought for Hill 875. The remnants of the 24th, 32nd, 66th and 174th NVA Regiments stood and fought off American and ARVN soldiers for four days. But when Thanksgiving Day arrived, Americans had claimed the hilltop and their turkey dinner was served them amidst the shattered bunkers and trees.

The enemy had paid a terrible price for the Dak To battle. His known losses were 1,641 men killed; how many more had been killed or seriously wounded and dragged from the battle area would be impossible to estimate. He had been subjected to fantastic bombardments during the 26 days of battle. Almost 138,000 rounds of artillery had been fired; 1,101 Army helicopter gunship sorties were flown against him, combined with 1,869 Air Force sorties and 32 strikes by B52 bombers. Many hills were decked with jumbled piles of splinters where great trees had been felled by the battle.

Year-end saw one of the most atrocious terror attacks in Vietnam's history. In the Montagnard village of Dak Son two battalions of Communists pushed the local defense force into a small area, then rampaged up and down the hamlet streets, systematically burning down more than half of the 150 thatched homes. With flame throwers and grenades the Communists slaughtered persons in their primitive homes and bunkers. Seven out of every 10 of the 252 victims were either women or children; some burned beyond recognition. An unknown number of men were kidnaped and led away by the 300-member Communist force.

At Saigon the Constituent Assembly disbanded as its activities were completed. The newly elected National Legislative Assembly convened to begin functioning as the lawmakers under the new constitution.

New U.S. troops continued to arrive in country during December, mostly from the 101st Airborne Division. The 3rd Brigade arrived at Bien Hoa on December 8, the command group on December 13, and the 2nd Brigade came five days later to complete the huge airlift from Ft. Campbell by giant C141 Starlifters.

Just before Christmas the 11th Light Infantry Brigade completed its movement from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, to join the Americal Division at Chu Lai. The 11th brought the total U.S. troop strength to more than that of the Korean War.

The Communists again showed their disdain for truces by violating both the Christmas and New Years truce periods. The Christmas truce was marred by 40 major incidents and the New Years by 63 major and 107 minor incidents.



*Flares and smoke mark sites of combat in Saigon during the 1968 Tet attacks.*

## *Tet and the Aftermath* ... 1968

*"The year ahead is destined to be one of  
great challenge and opportunity."*

*New Year's Day Message  
Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer  
January 1, 1968*

A DOZEN names: Paris . . . Saigon . . . Hanoi  
. . . Tet . . . the Demilitarized Zone . . .  
Khe Sanh . . . the New Jersey . . . Hue . . .  
Abrams . . . these and many more studded the  
world's headlines during 1968.

And the names of thousands of Americans were  
printed in newspaper pages, etched on tombstones,  
whispered in lonely, tearfilled nights.

Seldom has a statement about the future been  
more prophetic than the one made on that New

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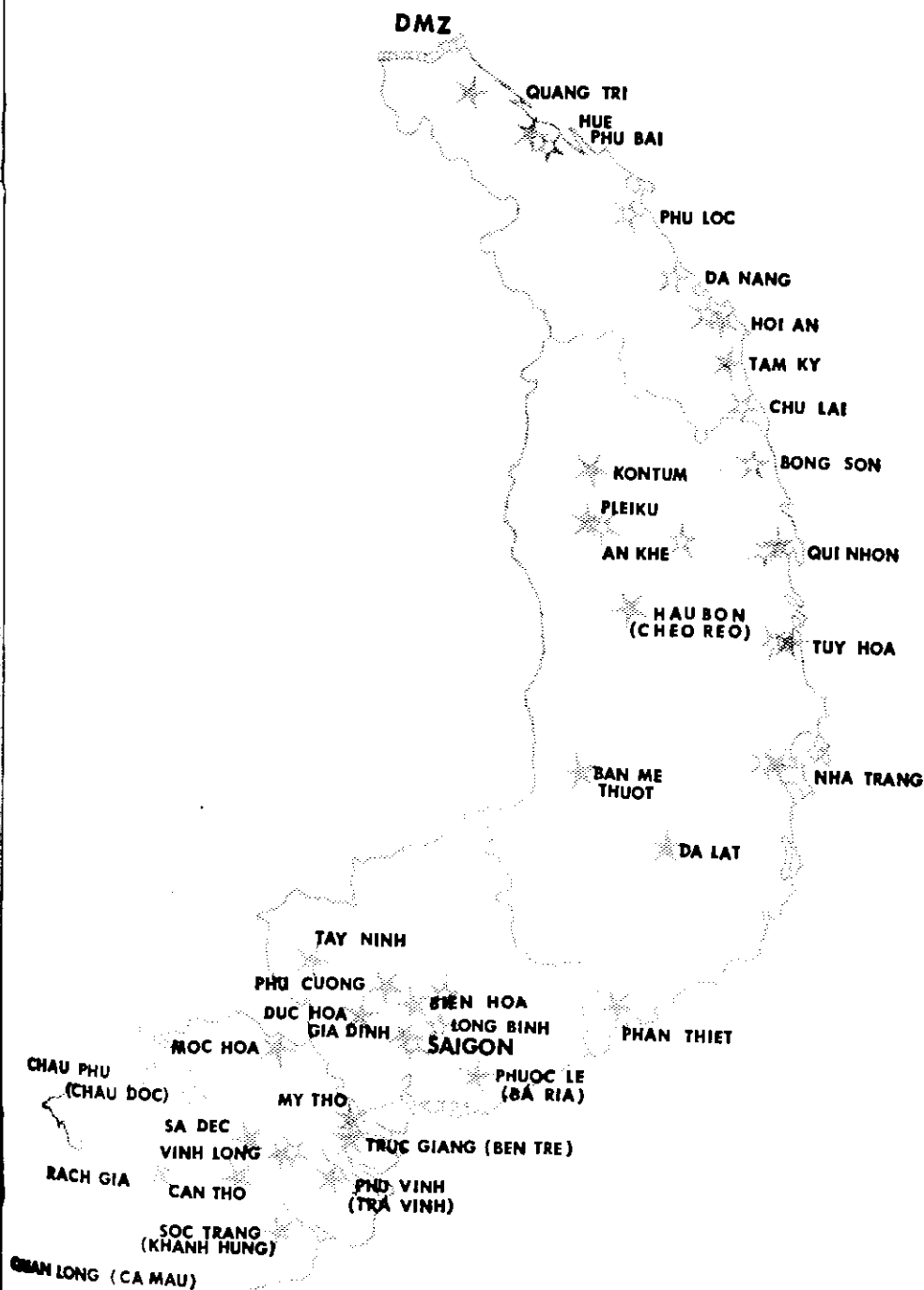
*Rockets like the captured one fired back at the Viet Cong (right) slammed into Saigon during Tet and again in May (center). Identification was checked on all persons traveling (bottom left), and sampans—often used by VC—were carefully observed (bottom right).*



Photo by Major Charles B. Moore



# THE 1968 TET OFFENSIVE



PROVINCE CAPITALS AND OTHER CITIES ATTACKED  
MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ATTACKED

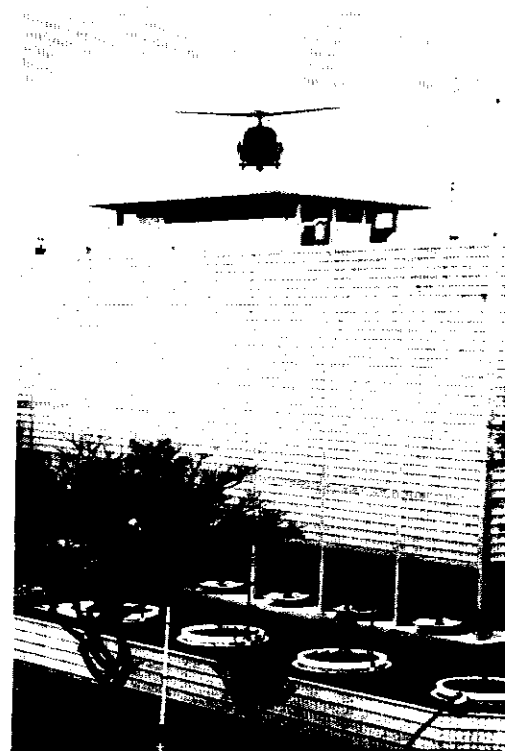


During Tet 4th Infantry Division soldiers clear Kontum.

Photo by Spec. 4 James Doyle



Alone in her VC destroyed home in Song Be Chopper lands atop U.S. Embassy in Saigon



*MPs hustle a Viet Cong detainee apprehended near the American Embassy during Tet to a detention point. Corporal George Moyer (left) and Spec. 4 James M. Singer were among MPs rushed to the Embassy to assist guards in repelling an assault on the compound.*

Photo by Spec. 5 Donald A. Hirst



Year's by the deputy commander of the U.S. Army, Vietnam.

This was, without question, the most eventful year completed during America's agonizing war in Southeast Asia. It saw the most savage series of attacks, the most brutal fighting and a strong glimmer of hope for an honorable end.

The most violent part of the war year was the Communists' winter-spring offensive. It began even before 1968 did, with a 36-hour New Year's truce that was violated by the Reds 177 times—"the bloodiest holiday truce of the Vietnam War," the papers called it, 30 days and several thousand deaths before Tet.

The bombers flew north to begin the fourth year of raids above the Demilitarized Zone on Tuesday, Jan. 3. There were dogfights and Air Force Phantom pilots bagged two MIG 17s that day.

There were rumors that Ho Chi Minh was seriously ill, but it didn't make much difference to Americal Division troopers—they beat off attacks by elements of two NVA regiments on Jan. 3 and began a massive sweep of their southern I Corps area of operation. About 200 Reds were killed that first day, and by the time the fighting was over, more than a week later, Skytroopers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Brigade had joined in to help kill more than a thousand North Vietnamese.

As January neared its end it began to look like an offensive was coming near the DMZ, where a string of artillery, rocket and ground attacks were unleashed on Allied posts all along the buffer zone. Khe Sanh and neighboring Lang Vei were hit—hard—for the first time on Jan. 21, beginning a three-month drama that would focus the eyes of the world on a small Marine garrison in the rolling, rusty-red hills of the Lao border country.

The U.S. command rushed 3,000 1st Cavalry Division troops as reinforcements into northern I Corps, and infantrymen from the 101st Airborne Division soon followed. A total of 10,000 Marine and Army troops were poured, in less than a week, into areas near the DMZ to guard against an expected "major offensive" there.

American intelligence reports indicated that a fresh North Vietnamese division had been infiltrated into I Corps, to make a total of between 40 and 50 thousand NVA soldiers—three full divisions—poised for a general attack.

On Saturday, Jan. 27, the Communists began their "unilateral seven-day truce" during the Tet holiday season in South Vietnam, which the North Vietnamese completely ignored in the northern part of the Republic. The carnage there went on. On Wednesday, Jan. 31, the Allies began their 36-hour version of the Tet truce. It lasted 15½ hours, until 9:30 Thursday morning when rockets began

slamming into Da Nang Air Base. Wild street fighting broke out in the peaceful seaside resort of Nha Trang and Communist sappers breached the security of the U.S. Embassy grounds in Saigon.

One senior American officer said of the northern provinces: "It is something I would label an invasion. It is no longer just an infiltration."

In Saigon, on Jan. 31, the government was distributing "Tet tote bags," little gift packets of soap and other hard-to-get necessities. In each was a printed horoscope that predicted the new year, beginning that day, would be "favorable to the government but unfavorable to its enemies."

"VC Hit Saigon," screamed the headlines on Thursday, Feb. 1.

Street fighting raged in all eight major cities and at least 30 towns and provincial capitals. That first day, the U.S. command acknowledged full-scale attacks on Kontum, Ban Me Thuot, Nha Trang, Hoi An, Tuy Hoa, Qui Nhon and Pleiku, and, of course, in the capital itself.

But many towns, such as My Tho and Can Tho in the Mekong Delta, were ripped with battles that at first went unreported in Saigon because of the confusion.

There was more fighting in Quang Tri, Dalat and Bien Hoa. The North Vietnamese virtually occupied Hue—they assassinated more than 1,000 civilians in that city alone. They held half of Kontum. Terrorist slaughter was reported everywhere—foreign missionaries were slain, and anyone who worked for the Americans was murdered or tortured.

The Reds had lists of names marked for assassination in nearly every city. Those who waited too long, or who had no place to hide, were killed without compunction—men, women and children—by the "liberators."

General William C. Westmoreland, U.S. commander in Vietnam, stated the attacks were "a diversionary effort to draw attention from the northern part of the country."

Communist snipers were operating within 200 yards of his Tan Son Nhut headquarters. The Philippine Embassy residence had been destroyed by terrorists, the ambassador and his wife barely escaping death or capture. Tanks ringed the Saigon home of U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker.

Five thousand Reds had died in savage, confused fighting in the first of the Tet Offensive—that name was already burning itself into front pages and TV screens around the world. More than 650 enemy deaths occurred in Saigon alone.

By Feb. 9, 920 U.S. soldiers had died in the Tet fighting; 4,561 were wounded. Newsmen were reporting that "countless civilians perished in the fighting"—the final count was almost 20,000 killed or wounded.

Dive bombers and rocket helicopters were raining destruction on Red troops entrenched in the

suburbs of South Vietnam's capital, the city that the world had considered "secure" until the morning of Feb. 1.

That's how it began. It went on, in Saigon, until mid-February, when fighting still flickered in the suburbs of Cholon and around the Phu Tho race track.

Who won the battles of the Tet Offensive? It's a hard question to answer. Certainly, the Communists were deprived of every major goal, with the possible exception of publicity.

It was by no stretch of the imagination a military win—27,706 Reds died in the Tet fighting. For this, the Communist high command had not one single prize to show.

It was not a psychological victory. In no clearly defined instance did any of the civilians in the areas of fighting join or support the Reds—unless at the point of a gun.

On the other hand, no one will deny that South Vietnam's city populace suffered terribly. There are scars of destruction that will last a long time—and scars of the mind that will last longer. As Dean Rusk said, "This is a time of trial for the South Vietnamese and their Allies. It may well be the climactic period of the struggle in Southeast Asia."

As the cleanup began in mid-February, a drama was unfolding in Hue. Some 4,000 Reds had died there in the first three weeks of February, but an estimated 500 North Vietnamese had holed up in the old imperial Citadel, from which Vietnam's ancient emperors ruled. They decided to die there, and the Allies had no choice but to oblige them. A Communist flag had been raised on Jan. 31, and it fluttered for nearly a month over the Citadel as U.S. Marines pushed grueling street fighting back toward the center, step by step. On Feb. 24, a company of South Vietnamese soldiers charged the last hold-out—and the flag came down. The enemy soldiers were at last dead, but Hue lay in ruins.

There was one bright spot in the gloomy month of February—Hanoi, as a "goodwill gesture," released three captured U.S. pilots on Feb. 16.

Friday, March 1, saw 4,000 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division arriving in Vietnam, part of the 10,500 men that Washington had decided to rush to the Republic as reinforcements, acting on Westmoreland's request.

The first day of March also saw Clark Clifford sworn in as the new Secretary of Defense.

By the first week of the month, there were so many Army troops in the Marine bailiwick of the northern provinces that Westmoreland sent Army Lieutenant General William B. Rosson to assume a new command in I Corps, which was to serve as "a tactical echelon between General Cushman (Marine Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, senior I Corps commander) and the commanders of the U.S. Army and Marine divisions in the

northern area." It was called at first Provisional Corps, Vietnam, but is now XXIV Corps.

In mid-March, Operation Quyet Thang (Resolved to Win) was kicked off around Saigon. More than 50,000 Allied troops—including the 1st, 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and elements of the 7th and 25th ARVN Infantry Divisions, an airborne task force and the 5th Ranger Group plus National Police forces—swept and re-swept the provinces around the capital, searching for Communist troops and arms caches. Before it ended on April 9, 2,658 Reds had been killed.

On Thursday, March 21, the U.S. command announced it was kicking off five more general operations across South Vietnam "to regain the initiative." Ten thousand U.S. troops were committed, and 799 Communist soldiers were reported killed in the early fighting.

On Friday, March 22, President Johnson announced in Washington that General Westmoreland would be promoted to Army Chief of Staff. Replacing General Westmoreland as commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam would be General Creighton W. Abrams, then deputy commander. General Palmer would become the new Army Vice Chief of Staff, with Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren replacing him as deputy commander of U.S. Army, Vietnam.

On the last day of March, the President made his famous "I won't run" speech and cut back the bombing in the north to below the 19th Parallel, marking America's broadest appeal to Hanoi for peace.

On Monday, April Fool's Day, Operation Pegasus/Lam Son, a massive aerial-assault, began the several days of sweeping near Laos that would lift the siege of beleaguered Khe Sanh Marine camp—where up to 1,300 Red shells had been falling every day, but the promised tidal-wave ground assault that would relive Dien Bien Phu never came.

On the same day, President Nguyen Van Thieu told his nation that general mobilization, which would place more than 200,000 additional South Vietnamese under arms by the end of the year, was coming.

Operation Quyet Thang had been so successful that another mass Allied sweep, Operation Toan Thang (Complete Victory) was launched on April 8. Fifty thousand soldiers began a drive through 11 provinces around Saigon, with the same objective that the earlier operation had, but on a scale twice as large.

It was not as spectacular in results, but the Allies were to learn in the coming May Offensive how well both sweeps had done their jobs.

The Air Force and the Navy were doing their work, too. On Friday, April 19, the highest number of missions over North Vietnam for the year

were logged—160. And on the Tuesday before that, B52 Stratoforts, South Vietnam's "man-made thunder," socked over a million pounds of explosives into the A Shau Valley in a single day, softening that area for Operation Delaware, a sweep by 1st Cavalry and 101st Airborne Division troops in which the major Communist stronghold and supply route was shattered.

On Friday, May 3, there was an announcement the world had been waiting for—the United States and Hanoi agreed to begin preliminary peace discussions in Paris.

The war was not, though, by any stretch of the imagination, ending in May—that was the month of the second Communist city offensive. The fighting was bitter, but the Red effort was a faint echo of the Tet campaign.

It began the night of May 4, with the near-simultaneous shelling of 119 cities, towns and villages in the Republic. There were ground attacks in Saigon and Bu Dop, three miles from Cambodia. The Bu Dop attackers were driven off in hours. It took longer in Saigon.

There was wild, confused street fighting in the western and southern suburbs of the city. The first secretary of the West German Embassy was assassinated. Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, chief of the National Police, was wounded badly in a leg leading a charge against a machine gun position near the big Newport Bridge, in Gia Dinh. Two hundred VC were killed in the first day of the fighting.

But no U.S. installations in Saigon were even attacked this time, and there was absence of the wide-spread terrorism and sniping that had marked the Tet fighting. On Monday, May 6, the Reds were turned back when they tried to break into Tan Son Nhut Air Base from the western perimeter—but the South Vietnamese commander of the base was killed by a Red rocket.

By the end of the week, the resistance had been localized into pockets in the western and southern suburbs, but they still had to be rooted out. This meant treacherous house-to-house fighting and more heavy damage to Saigon's badly needed housing areas. By Sunday, May 12, it was over—the last pocket of Reds surrendered, en masse. Enemy losses had reached a total of 2,982 killed. They had never entered the heart of the city itself. An intended 26 to 30 battalions had never gotten close enough to take part in the second assault on Saigon—the two big sweeps had cut them off or wiped them out.

The next day, May 13, the Paris peace talks began.

Fighting trailed off at this time. Although there were minor skirmishes in the Saigon suburban areas until mid-summer, there were no more "Tet Offensives." But on Ho Chi Minh's birthday, May 19, 20 big 122mm rockets slammed into downtown

Saigon, killing 11 and wounding 51. It marked the start of a scatter-shot terror campaign of rocketings against Saigon and other cities that killed only innocent civilians and lasted till the fall.

The shellings did more to turn the population against the VC than to terrorize them into the Communist line. There were 12 straight days of rocketings in the worst period, in June. More than 100 civilians were killed and 400 wounded during those dozen days alone. Massive, close-in Allied sweeps turned up scores of Red rockets and put a stop to most of the shellings.

The last half of the year saw a switch in combat accent away from the cities and back into the countryside. The war tended to decentralize, although there was no lack of "significant" contacts, and the fury of the fighting was not for a moment abated by the on-going peace talks.

While 1968 brought the hardest fighting of the war to South Vietnam, it also brought a sweet, delicate breath of peace—and America took the first step away from escalation. President Johnson, after months of bitter wrangling with Hanoi's representatives in Paris, told the world he was ordering a total halt to the bombing of North Vietnam on the first of November, five months after he initially limited the bombing.

The great carriers in the Tonkin Gulf headed southward in silence.

In late summer, fall and winter, the other big news stories were:

—Defense Secretary Clark Clifford arrived for a four-day "complete review" of the war on July 14, promising South Vietnamese forces new equipment, including M16s.

—Three more U.S. pilot-captives were released by Hanoi on Aug. 3. They went home, saying they were "well-treated" while in prison.

—The 4,500-man 27th Marine Regiment was withdrawn from Vietnam and sent back to the U.S. on Sept. 10. It had arrived during Tet as "temporary reinforcements."

—Major General Keith L. Ware, commander of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, was killed near the Cambodian border Sept. 13, when his helicopter was shot down by enemy fire.

—Brigadier General Frederick E. Davison, commanding the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, became the third Negro in U.S. history to win general's stars, given him on Sept. 13.

—The 56,000-ton battleship New Jersey, first dreadnought to fire in combat since Korea, returned to war, off the coast of Vietnam, Sept. 30.

—General Duong Van (Big) Minh, leader of the coup that overthrew the Diem regime in 1963, returned from exile in Thailand at President Thieu's invitation, Oct. 5.

*His reflection cast on the water, a combat-ready soldier walks along a dike between two rice paddies.*

## *The New Look*

...1969

THE thunder of rockets and mortars shattered the final hours of a Communist ceasefire period toward the end of February, marking the first broad enemy offensive of 1969. As the year moved into summer, the low level of ground action indicated that the enemy was changing his tactics. The Communist capability for large scale attacks had been whittled away by constant pressure from U.S., Republic of Vietnam and other Free World armed forces. Apparently the enemy would now have to depend on small unit, sapper-type attacks, with occasional high points, to cause any significant damage.

The new year got off on a hopeful note with the release of three American soldiers captured during 1968 by Viet Cong (VC) and the escape the day before of Special Forces Major James Rowe, a VC captive since 1963. The peace talks were continuing in Paris and Richard M. Nixon was being inaugurated as President of the United States.

Many thought that the new president would bring a rapid end to the war. President Nguyen Van Thieu made a comprehensive proposal for peace in which he said all factions, including the Communists, would participate. His only stipulation was that all parties abide by the outcome. President Nixon lauded the proposal and said that the enemy could gain nothing by waiting. Still the Communists made no move for a settlement of the war. While he waited, the enemy suffered heavy losses, including men, food supplies and weapons.

Through mid-August 1969, Allied forces accounted for 109,948 enemy dead, uncovered caches of rice amounting to 3,326 tons and captured 47,338 individual and crew-served weapons. The Chieu Hoi Program was more effective than ever. Thirty-thousand, four-hundred, thirty-nine enemy soldiers had rallied to the Republic of Vietnam by Aug. 31.

Meanwhile, the Hamlet Evaluation System revealed that a record 86.5 per cent of the Republic of Vietnam was now pacified. President Thieu's popularity was growing and his armed forces were becoming stronger. So much stronger, that in June, Presidents Nixon and Thieu issued a joint communique which called for the redeployment and replacement by Republic of Vietnam forces of 25,000 American troops. President Nixon hinted that more American troops might be replaced in the fall. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was taking over more and more of the load.

This was Vietnam 1969—the new look.

During the February offensive, more than 100 cities and military facilities in the Republic of Vietnam came under Communist attack, but American and Vietnam forces quickly repelled and routed the attackers, inflicting heavy enemy casualties.

One major attack was mounted against Long Binh Post, where elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 720th Military Police Battalion, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and post personnel killed 132 enemy soldiers. Attacks on 25th Infantry Division camps and fire support bases resulted in 309 enemy dead, while Americal Division soldiers killed 160 in one day's fighting.

The Americal Division engaged the enemy in a number of sharp but successful battles. Operation Fayette Canyon, begun Dec. 15, approximately 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky, resulted in 327 enemy deaths against only two U.S. fatalities by mid-February. In Operation Hardin Falls, which began on Dec. 2, the mid-February figures showed 78 enemy dead and 17 suspects detained contrasting to only one U.S. soldier killed.

On Jan. 13, Americal elements, ARVN troops and U.S. Marines joined forces for Operation Russell Beach. The operation ended Feb. 10, with a cordon on the Batangan Peninsula resulting in 158 enemy killed. Operation Vernon Lake II begun Nov. 2 west-southwest of Quang Ngai City, had resulted in 455 enemy killed and 181 suspects detained as compared with 23 U.S. soldiers killed.

The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the

*ARVN soldiers rush into battle in the Mekong Delta area of operations that was formerly the responsibility of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division (bottom). Infantrymen from the 101st Airborne Division charge up Dong Ap Bia mountain in the A Shau Valley. The mountain was captured after 10 days of heavy fighting (below).*

