

TOUR 365



TOUR 365

Winter 1968

USARV Returnee Magazine


Your tour of duty with the United States Army, Vietnam, is ended. May your trip home and reunion with family and friends be the pleasant, happy occasion you have anticipated. You go home with my best wishes.

As veterans of this war, you can now look back with perspective on your experiences and know the trying and difficult tasks inherent in fighting to protect the freedom of peace-loving people against Communist invaders. You know of the local Viet Cong terrorists who kill and maim their own neighbors, and appreciate the terror and destruction they spread. Having served here, you understand better than many of our countrymen the meaning of aggression against South Vietnam.

You have fought beside soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and many other nations in a common struggle. You have been more than just a combat ally to the South Vietnamese soldier. Many of you have worked with his people in hamlet improvement and pacification programs and been looked upon as a teacher and builder, as well as a fighter.

People at home will want to hear your story of the war. Tell it. Whether you served in a combat or combat support role, part of your story is reflected in the pages of this magazine. I hope this publication will serve to assist you.

I extend my sincere appreciation for your help in accomplishing our task in Vietnam, and my thanks for a job well done. Good luck in the future.


 CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
 General, United States Army
 Commanding



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

President Dwight D. Eisenhower
 1959

... 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.

President John F. Kennedy
 1961



The central issue of the conflict there is the aggression by North Vietnam against the brave and independent people of South 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.

President Lyndon B. Johnson
 1965

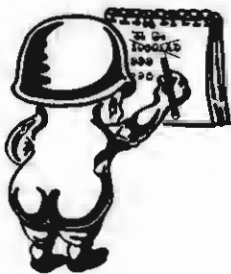


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Vietnam In Retrospect

To understand the war it is best to understand Vietnam's past. The Vietnamese people have been struggling for independence for nearly 2,000 years.

After centuries of Chinese domination, the invaders were driven from the Red River Delta in 938 A.D. at the battle of Bạch Đằng. Chinese attempts to retake the area were repelled. In 946, though by no means out of danger from the Chinese, an independent Vietnam became a reality. With the exception of a 20-year interlude of Chinese re-occupation in the early 15th Century, Vietnam remained independent for the next 900 years.

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

The role of 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 mandarin, 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 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.

THE EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

European influence reached Vietnam in 1535 when Portuguese Captain Antonio de Faria arrived in Da Nang Bay. For a century the Portuguese dominated commerce in Vietnam. Confronted by a strongly organized state power and a sophisticated officialdom, 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. After the decline in trade, they remained almost the only Europeans in the country. 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.



The cathedral at Tay Ninh is the Holy See of the Cao Dai Church. Founded in 1926, Cao Daim is a blend of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, the major religions of Vietnam.



Rice Farming

THE FRENCH ARRIVE

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 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. By June 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 Cochinchina (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 mandarin remained in both central and north Vietnam; Cochinchina 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 mandarin, 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.

THE RISE OF 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.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION (1940-1945)

When France fell to Germany in June of 1940, the Vichy government acceded to the demands of the Japanese. All of French Indochina came under Japanese control 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 adopted a policy of collaboration with all non-Communist nationalists to broaden the social and political base of its activities. This united front organization was known as the Vietnam Independence League (Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh) or the Viet Minh.

One of the first actions of the Viet Minh was to form guerrilla bands under the direction of Vo Nguyen Giap, operating in Vietnamese territory against the Japanese and French. Although Ho Chi Minh was jailed in 1941, the activities of the Viet Minh continued. Working in nationalist guise, Ho effectively strengthened the organization of Communist cells throughout Vietnam.

In August, 1945, Emperor Bao Dai, fearing the French would return once Japan surrendered, abdicated his throne.



The stern faces of victor and vanquished are shown in this photo, taken shortly after the fall of Dien Bien Phu.



The Geneva Conference opens in April, 1954. Negotiations on Indochina began May 8: the participants included Communist China, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, and North Vietnam.

and handed over power to Ho Chi Minh. French troops were once again in Vietnam in September.

The Viet Minh and French conducted negotiations for a year in an effort to assure some form of independence for Vietnam. By December 1946, the Viet Minh decided that the only way to achieve an independent Vietnam was through a "war of liberation."

For the next eight years the French fought the Viet Minh. On May 7, 1954 the French army was decisively defeated at Dien Bien Phu.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

The day after the battle of Dien Bien Phu the Geneva Conference turned its attention to the French-Indochina War. The conference had been called by the Big Four to discuss the Korean and Indochina problems.

The agreement reached for Vietnam fixed a provisional demarcation line roughly along the 17th parallel and provided for the total evacuation of French military forces, as well as the removal of Viet Minh forces from the South. Freedom of movement between the two sections was guaranteed for 300

days. An International Control Commission was formed to supervise the truce agreements, its members coming from Canada, India and Poland. Finally a provision was made for the holding of general elections throughout Vietnam in 1956.

The French proceeded to hand over the controls and administration to the non-Communist Vietnamese with their capital in Saigon. In Hanoi, Ho began the total communization of the nation north of the 17th parallel. He later turned his attention southward.

Despite the cease-fire agreement, a well-organized Viet Minh underground was deliberately left behind in the south. This underground network formed the nucleus of subsequent Communist insurgency, originated in Hanoi and directed against the Saigon government.

Vietnam was left divided—the South had a pro-Western government struggling to establish a non-Communist society. In the North Ho Chi Minh was busy organizing a Communist state which would be the base for the realization of his ultimate dream of a unified Communist Vietnam.



What Is A Soldier In USARV?



He is an infantryman or MP
on patrol...



an engineer constructing an artillery
firing site..



a helicopter crew member...



or he humps supplies from
depot to the field...

asks you, "Are you working?"...



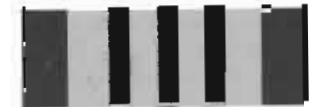
keeps his tank rolling...

or patches you up
to keep you rolling.



1954-1961

Years of Trial — Years of Decision



The result of the Geneva Accords of 1954 was the creation of a North and South Vietnam. Although the United States was not an active participant in bringing about the end of the Indochina War, our government worked quietly behind the scenes.

At the same time groundwork for the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was being laid. In September the treaty was signed in Manila. South Vietnam was included in the treaty as a "protocol state" with the signatories accepting the obligation, if asked by the government of South Vietnam, to take action in response to armed attack against South Vietnam and to consult on appropriate measures if South Vietnam were subjected to subversive activities.

President Eisenhower instituted economic aid for the new country in late 1954 and thus began active American interest in South Vietnam.

To understand the events following we must look at the



Ho Chi Minh

development of North Vietnam; the rise of the Viet Cong and their assistance from the North; and the increased economic and military aid to the South furnished by the United States.

Ho Chi Minh began an immediate consolidation of forces. Many Communists moved north of the 17th parallel—an estimated 90,000—while thousands of selected party members were ordered to remain behind. They were told to hide their weapons and wait for the call.

Hanoi presumed the South would fall by subversion and force would not be necessary. When the South became more and more prosperous, in spite of Communist penetration of South Vietnamese government agencies and attempts at agitation and propaganda, it came as a shock to the Communists.

Agitators and agents were being exposed by the people, causing morale to drop in the Communist ranks and many defections to occur. Compounding the problems of the North, per capita food output dropped by 10 percent, as the South's improved by 20 percent. Authorities in the North openly admitted that food production goals were not being reached.

Despite North Vietnam's vastly larger industrial complex,

the South's per capita gross national product was more than 50 percent higher—\$110 per person versus \$70 per person (1960 estimate). The North's failures coupled with the South's successes caused a major revision in overall strategy. Military forces would have to be employed to take over the South!

TERRORISM BEGINS

By 1958 the plan became obvious. Terrorist activity increased appreciably. The wealthy peasant, school teachers and administrative officials were favorite targets of attack. In 1959 the pace of terrorism accelerated, and recruiting for the Viet Cong was stepped up.

Communist propaganda tried to exploit the confusion by stating the South's government was falling apart and was unable to protect its people. The entire campaign was being directed from the North.

The National Liberation Front appeared on December 20, 1960, announcing its foundation and program. It called for the overthrow of the "disguised colonial regime of the United States imperialists and the dictatorial Diem administration."

Communist propaganda tried to establish that the acts of terror were from popular discontent with Ngo Dinh Diem and his palace regime. It insisted the Viet Cong obtained their weapons by capturing them from American and French sources.

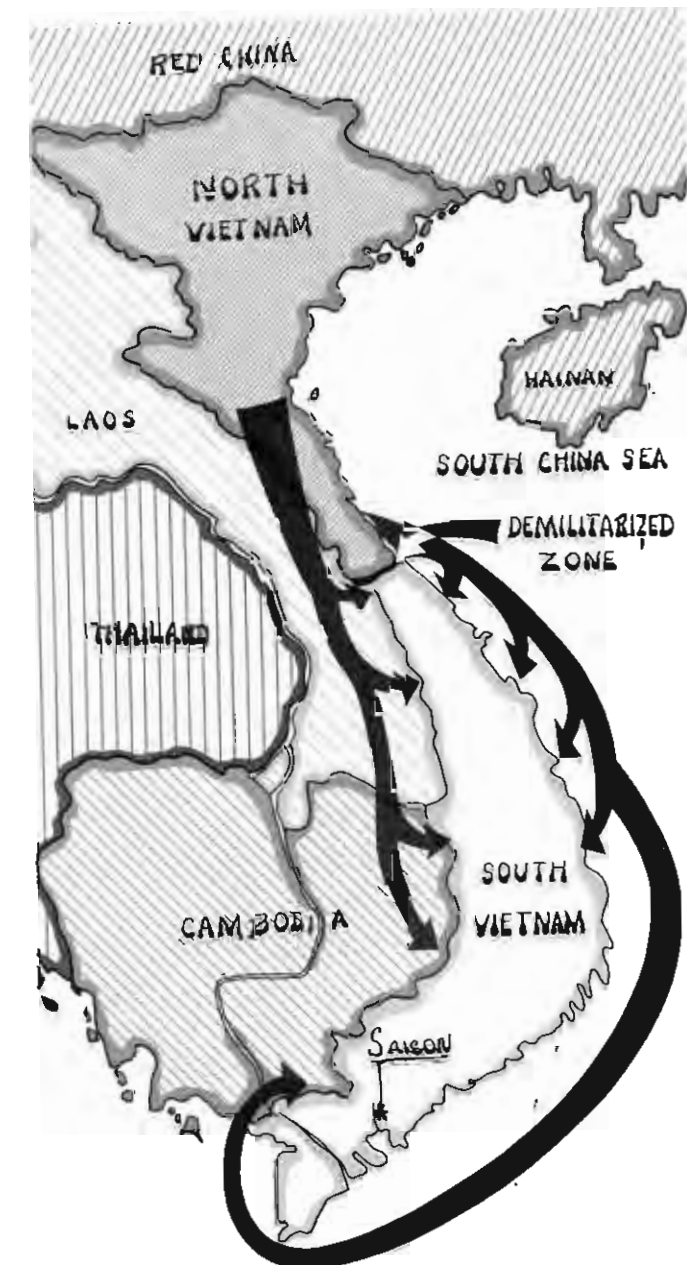
Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent discovery of North Vietnam's support of the southern Communist organization. Reliable sources estimate 40,000 trained military personnel infiltrated from North to South Vietnam through Laos in the five-year period from 1959 through 1964.

HO CHI MINH TRAIL

When an infiltrator arrives at the Laotian border, his North Vietnamese Army uniform is exchanged for a Lao "neutralist" uniform. He must give up all personal effects of an incriminating nature. A local guide takes him halfway to the first of a series of way stations along the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. There he is met by the next guide until the process has led the infiltrator onto South Vietnamese soil.

In South Vietnam he receives a black pajama-like uniform, two unmarked uniforms, rubber sandals, a sweater, a hammock, mosquito netting and waterproof sheeting. After being issued a three-to five-day supply of food and medicines, he is assigned to a unit for operations.

The other infiltration route was by sea. Agents departed from ports just north of the 17th parallel with false identity papers on innocent-looking fishing vessels. However, this route has become virtually closed with improved patrolling



President Ngo Dinh Diem

by the South Vietnamese with U.S. Navy assistance.

The Geneva Accords called for a general election in 1955 to unite the two parts of Vietnam. In that year the South Vietnamese Government under Diem rejected the possibility of a free election. The North protested loudly, but without sincerity. After the Geneva Accords, a high North Vietnamese official, Pham Van Dong, was asked who he thought would win such an election. He replied, "You know as well as I do that there won't be any elections."

CLASSIC STRUGGLE

Hanoi was determined to conquer the South with classic guerrilla tactics. The plan called for the three-phased warfare outlined in Mao Tse-tung's early writings. One, the enemy is harassed and weakened by guerrilla-type attacks. Two, he is engaged in mobile warfare by units up to battalion size. And finally, in all-out warfare by regular forces, the ultimate victory is won.

Phase one of the battle occurred from 1954 to roughly 1960. During this period the United States had first assisted the Vietnamese government with economic aid and then added military advisors to assist the country's military and police forces.

Other countries of Europe and Asia and the Americans had economically helped the fledgling South. U.S. aid totalled about \$1.5 billion between 1954 and 1961.

In 1960 the guerrilla warfare intensified and by 1961 had reached the point of open warfare. By now the Viet Cong was reinforced by practically the entire 325th North Vietnamese Regular Army Division. Communist arms and equipment had standardized the supply system of the Viet Cong.

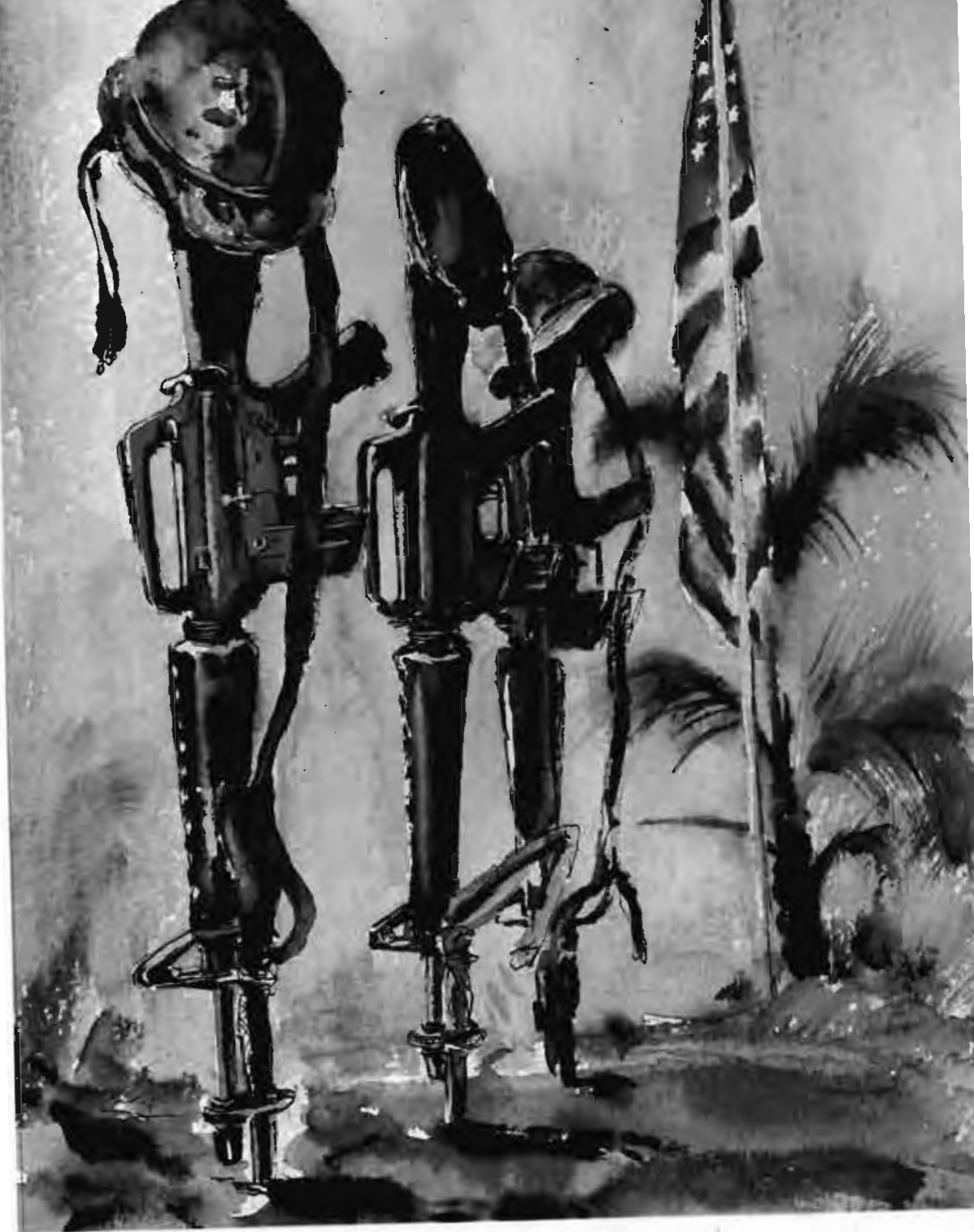
The American advisory forces had grown to approximately 700 men by 1961. It was apparent more assistance was needed to meet the expanded Communist military threat.

In that year President Kennedy made the decision to increase America's commitment to South Vietnam by increasing the number of advisors and by adding pilots and supporting personnel. The President felt he could not abandon South Vietnam without undesirable consequences throughout Asia and the world.

The decision had been made. South Vietnam would not be abandoned. The United States would assist in stopping the spread of aggression in Southeast Asia. In the next three years more decisions would be made. Decisions that would prove America, indeed, was not allowing a "red wave" to sweep over Asia.

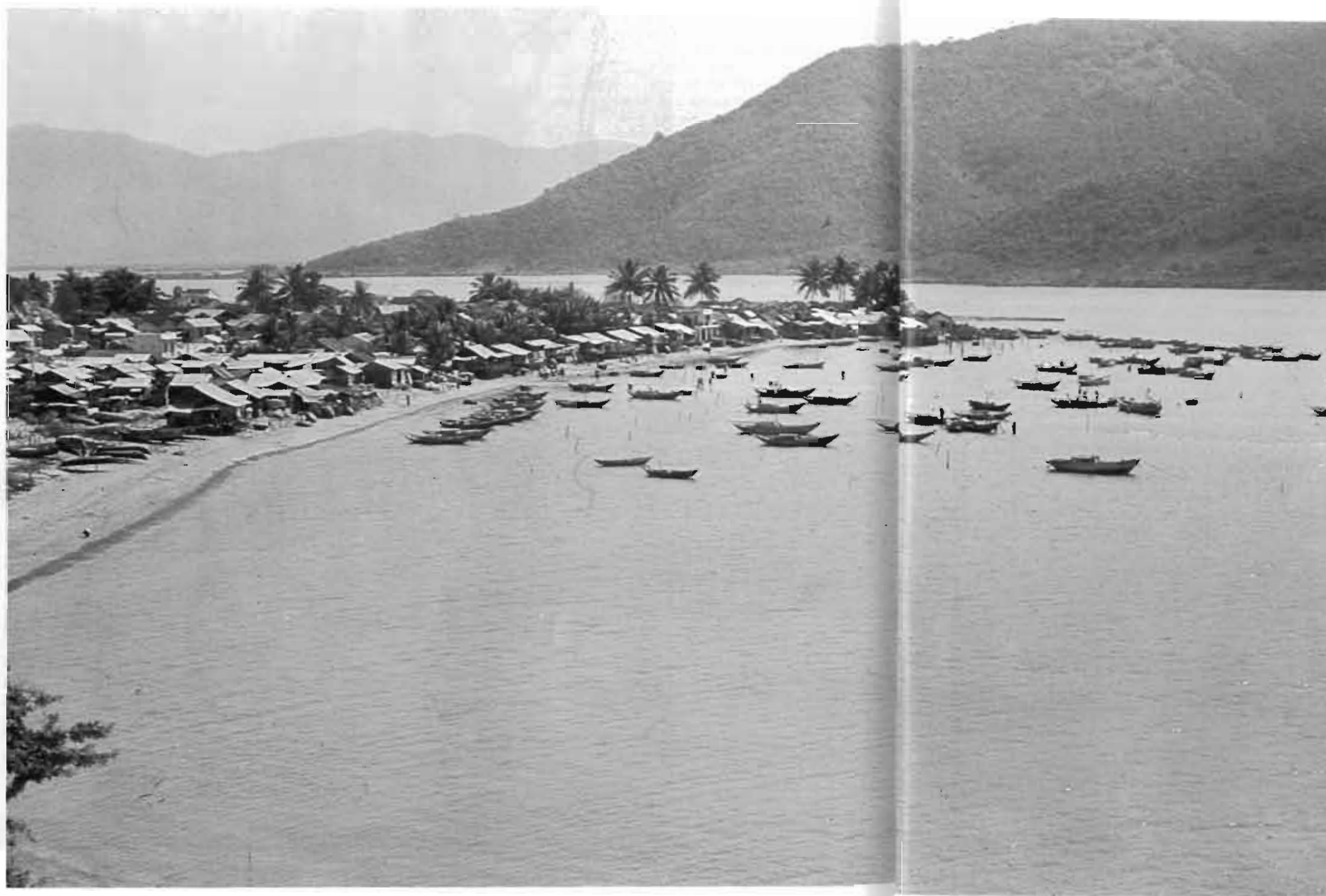


A defiant, hard core Viet Cong soldier glares at the camera as ARVN Rangers prepare to take him back for interrogation.



In Memorium

Three days before Christmas, 1961, the first American died by Viet Cong bullets. In memory of the soldiers of USARV who have given their lives here; they shall not be forgotten.



The beauty to be found in Vietnam is shown by this hamlet north of Nha Trang. At the right is the statue of Buddha which overlooks the city and harbor of Nha Trang. Top photo by SSgt. Robert Peterson; right photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan.



1961-1964



The Darkest Era

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 less 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.



Vo Chi Cong

Born in 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 an unknown.

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 attached to it U.S. Army advisory teams. 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 percent 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



Tran Nam Trung

Like Party Chairman Vo, Tran is a militant revolutionary. Born in North Vietnam in 1913 and formerly an officer in the North Vietnamese Army, he is now secretary general of the People's Revolutionary Party, the party that claims to represent the South Vietnamese people.



Helicopters return from lifting ARVN soldiers into battle during the early months of 1963.

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

Although denying any ties with Hanoi, Peking or Moscow, beyond the "fraternal ties of Communism," Radio Hanoi announced the PRP's formation on January 18, 1962.

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 January 1, 1961, and August 10, 1964, 181 Americans gave their lives in combat alongside the Vietnamese. Over 900 were wounded during the same period.

The situation was gradually growing more serious. In November, 1963, the political scene was disrupted by the overthrow of the South Vietnamese 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



Savage VC terror attacks kill and maim innocent Vietnamese civilians. Here an Army sergeant helps a child seriously wounded in a Saigon attack.

"The Vietnam People's Army is a true child of the people. The people, in return, give it unsparing affection and support. Therein lies the inexhaustible source of its power."

—General Vo Nguyen Giap, Commanding General, Viet Minh Forces.

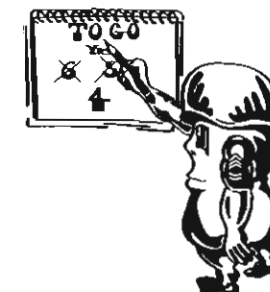
Every Communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." —Mao Tse-tung, Chairman, Chinese Communist Party.

"Freedom is the right to choose; the right to create for oneself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing." —Archibald MacLeish.

"Those who voluntarily put power into the hands of a tyrant or an enemy, must not wonder if it be at last turned against themselves." —Aesop.



The USS Maddox was attacked off the coast of North Vietnam on August 2, 1964, thus leading to the Tonkin Resolution.



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 Lyndon B. Johnson requested and received permission from Congress to use armed force in the protection of Southeast Asia. Photo by Sp4 Billy McBride.



For Valor, For Service



Distinguished Service Cross



Distinguished Service Medal



Silver Star



Legion of Merit



Distinguished Flying Cross



Soldiers Medal



Bronze Star



Air Medal



Medal of Honor



Joint Services Commendation Medal



Army Commendation Medal



Purple Heart



Good Conduct Medal



National Defense Service Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



Vietnam Service Medal



Vietnam Campaign Medal



Presidential Unit Citation



Valorous Unit Award



Meritorious Unit Commendation



1965

The Buildup Begins

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 Dong Hoi 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.

DEPENDENTS EVACUATED

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 from the attack.

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

173rd AIRBORNE ARRIVES

In May U.S. forces began to build up in earnest. The Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade was landed in-country and



The old U. S. Embassy in Saigon with many of its windows blown out after a car filled with explosives was detonated beside it. Thirteen died in the vicious enemy attack.



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 deep-draft port and airfield at Cam Ranh Bay. 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 round Quang Ngai City resulted in about 500 ARVN casualties. A four-day battle at Dong Xoai, 55 miles north-east 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 Due 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.

BUILDUP CONTINUES

American troops continued to arrive. In July the 2nd 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 designated 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 Gihraltar 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 took a staggering toll of the attackers. Seven hundred Viet Cong died in the encounter.

KOREA CONTRIBUTES DIVISION

Another Free World Force entered Vietnam in October. The Republic of Korea sent its Capitol Division into South Vietnam to help aid a country invaded from the north by Communists as Korea was a decade and a half earlier. During the same period the remaining elements of the 1st Infantry Division arrived.

By November the 1st Cavalry was conducting tactical operations. The prelude to the largest-scale action 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. At the same time the 173rd Airborne battled VC units in War Zone "D" 30 miles northwest of Saigon. The two engagements resulted in over 600 enemy dead and nearly 20 captured.

IA DRANG VALLEY

To the west of Plei Me Communist forces were moving into the Ia Drang Valley intent on colliding with the 1st Cavalry and winning a victory over their "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 that number of 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 American buildup in South Vietnam required large quantities of supplies and equipment. Saigon Port is lined with ships unloading. Photo by Sp5 Jim Thornberry.

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 as a result of the attack.

Before the year closed, the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division deployed from Hawaii. This brought the total strength of U.S. and Free World Military Forces in Vietnam to 181,000 from a beginning figure of 24,000 men—an increase of over seven times. Meanwhile enemy forces had increased from 103,000 at the beginning of the year to an estimated 230,000.

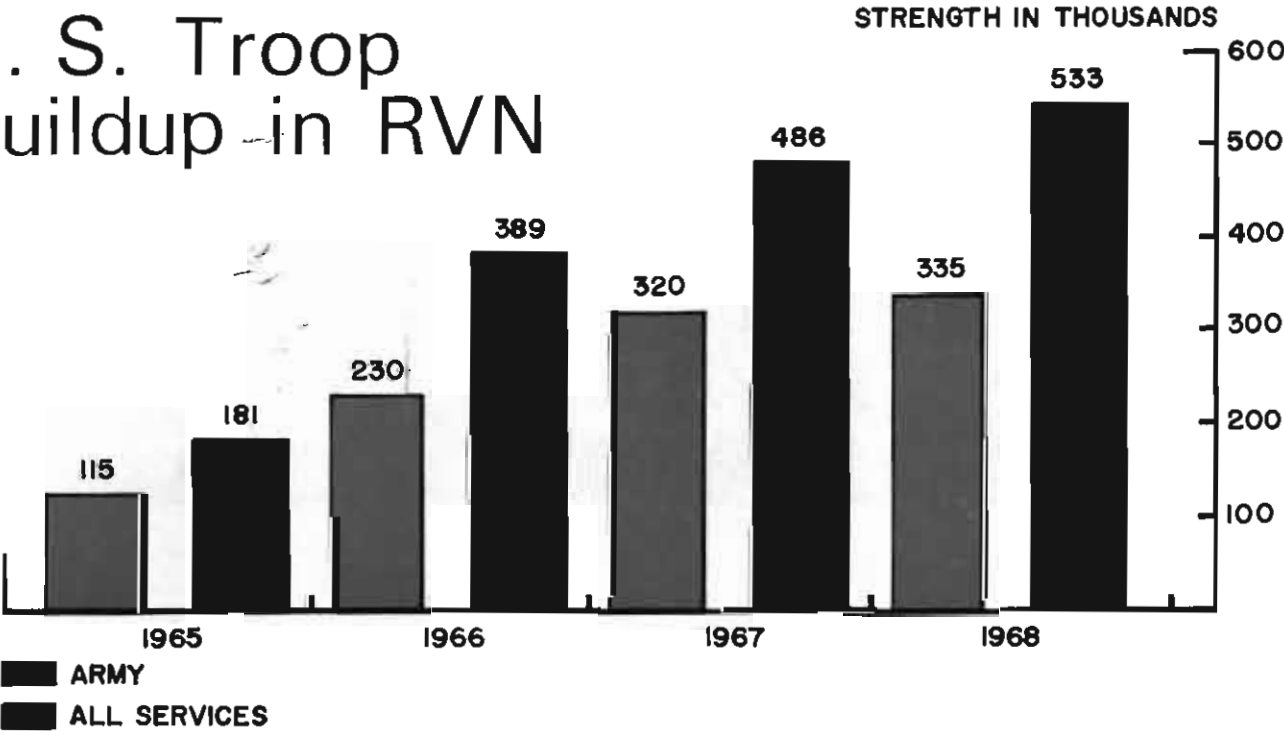
The year had seen U.S. troops penetrate into areas Communists had controlled for years. With the aid of saturation bombing by B-52 bombers, the 1965 monsoon offensive the VC had promised was little more than a small splash. Superior firepower, rapid artillery and air power response, coupled with the helicopter's mobility, were proving that the Communists' attempt to wrap up the war by 1966 was not going to materialize.

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

1961—1965 CASUALTIES

ENEMY KILLED	
27,191	
HOI CHANH	
11,112	
VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS KILLED	
1,800	
ARVN CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
1,124	23,118
FWMF CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
31	139
U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
U.S.—1,369	U.S.—6,114

U. S. Troop Buildup in RVN



PROVINCES AND CAPITALS

- I CORPS

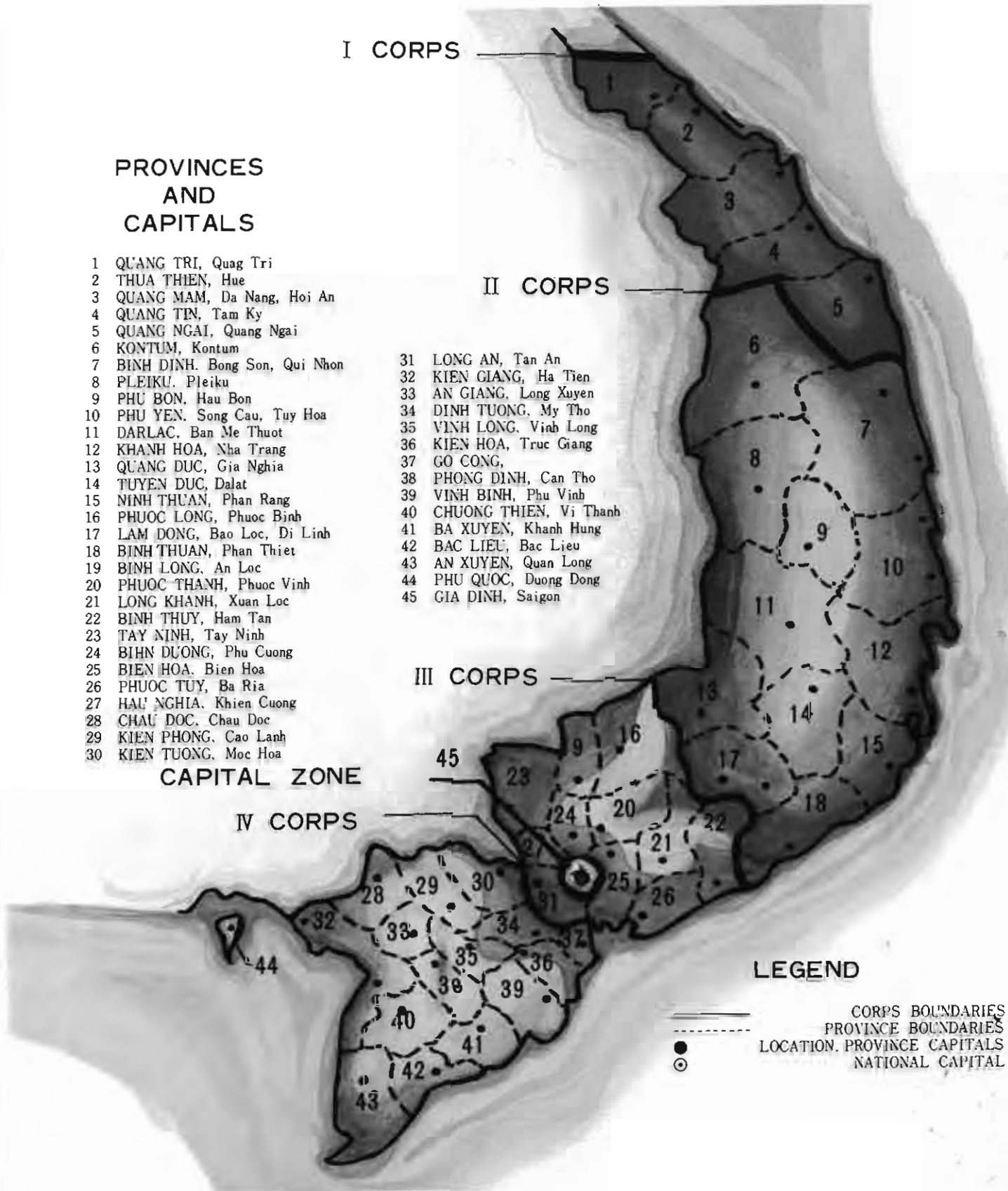
1 QUANG TRI, Quang Tri
2 THUA THIEN, Hue
3 QUANG NAM, Da Nang, Hoi An
4 QUANG TIN, Tam Ky
5 QUANG NGAI, Quang Ngai
6 KONTUM, Kontum
7 BINH DINH, Bong Son, Qui Nhon
8 PLEIKU, Pleiku
9 PHU BON, Hau Bon
10 PHU YEN, Song Cau, Tuy Hoa
11 DARLAC, Ban Me Thuot
12 KHANH HOA, Nha Trang
13 QUANG DUC, Gia Nghia
14 TUYEN DUC, Dalat
15 NINH THUAN, Phan Rang
16 PHUOC LONG, Phuoc Binh
17 LAM DONG, Bao Loc, Di Linh
18 BINH THUAN, Phan Thiet
19 BINH LONG, An Loc
20 PHUOC THANH, Phuoc Vinh
21 LONG KHANH, Xuan Loc
22 BINH THUY, Ham Tan
23 TAY NINH, Tay Ninh
24 BINH DUONG, Phu Cuong
25 BIEN HOA, Bien Hoa
26 PHUOC TUY, Ba Ria
27 HAU NGHIA, Khiem Cuong
28 CHAU DOC, Chau Doc
29 KIEN PHONG, Cao Lanh
30 KIEN TUONG, Moc Hoa
- II CORPS

31 LONG AN, Tan An
32 KIEN GIANG, Ha Tien
33 AN GIANG, Long Xuyen
34 DINH TUONG, My Tho
35 VINH LONG, Vinh Long
36 KIEN HOA, Truc Giang
37 GO CONG,
38 PHONG DINH, Can Tho
39 VINH BINH, Phu Vinh
40 CHUONG THIEN, Vi Thanh
41 BA XUYEN, Khanh Hung
42 BAC LIEU, Bac Lieu
43 AN XUYEN, Quan Long
44 PHU QUOC, Duong Dong
45 GIA DINH, Saigon
- III CORPS

45
- IV CORPS

44
- CAPITAL ZONE

44



LEGEND

— CORPS BOUNDARIES
- - - PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
● LOCATION, PROVINCE CAPITALS
○ NATIONAL CAPITAL



The Presidential inauguration included the oath-taking ceremonies of President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, and a parade celebrating both the inauguration and National Day.



1966

The Counteroffensive

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 strongholds, breaking the enemy's strangle-hold on the people. Charlie was losing his rice, ammunition and weapons caches. The FWMAF were beginning the first phase of the counteroffensive.

Politically the year produced some of the worst setbacks of the new government's history. Armed forces were used on occasion to control riots. The turmoil was resolved by governmental reform and resulted in improved conditions for the Vietnamese people.

The diplomatic scene was one of harmony with several high-level meetings taking place during the year to smooth out strategy and policy for the war.

VC SANCTUARIES CRACKED

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 of this one time sanctuary resulted in over 400 enemy deaths.

The 25th Infantry Division teamed up with the 173rd and 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, a Special Forces camp, and a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) outpost to 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 kidnaped in another action.

The truce was marred by over 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.

OPERATIONS HURT CHARLIE

Military action in the next two months took a heavy toll of the enemy's ranks and base camps. The 1st Infantry

A patrol winds its way through the fertile fields in the never-ending search for the enemy.



Phase I

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 Darlae Province; and the combined force in the Song Be River operation all turned up 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.

The VC later attacked the 1st Cavalry's base camp at An Khe, resulting in seven deaths on each side. The supply ship SS Paloma was sprayed with machinegun and 57 mm recoilless fire southeast of Nha Be. The ship, although heavily damaged, arrived at Saigon port under its own power.

CHIEU HOI PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL

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 with a record-setting 2,336 Hoi Chanh (returnees) in the 31-day period.

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.

HAC's first chore was to increase security of Saigon's installations to protect against terrorist attack. The explosion of approximately 450 pounds of explosives at the Victoria BOQ, extensively damaging the first three floors and killing six and injuring 116, demonstrated the need for additional security precautions.

BUILDUP CONTINUES

The buildup 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 operations. One found the 1st Infantry Division penetrating deep into War Zone C near Tay Ninh. No friendly troops had been in the area 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 CTZ 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



A Hoi Chanh asks his trapped comrades to surrender during a 101st Airborne Division cordon operation.

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 Force outposts and small CIDG units.

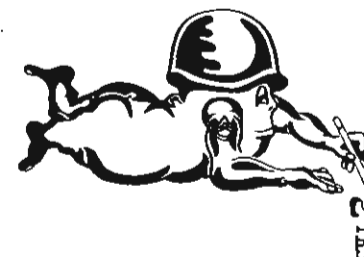
U.S. planes faced an increasing number of Russian-made surface-to-air (SAM) missiles over North Vietnam. Twenty-five SAMs were launched against American planes during one day without recording a hit. In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh announced a partial mobilization of the country.

Units continued to arrive to support the counteroffensive. 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 (PHILCAG) 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.

ENEMY OFF BALANCE

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



The Counter-Offensive



Brigade and elements of the 1st, 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions and 173rd Airborne Brigade mauled the 9th VC Division, killing over 1,100 in Operation Attleboro. The force captured the largest rice cache of the war with a 1,121-ton find.

October action saw a combined force of the 1st Cavalry, Koreans and Vietnamese killing 681 Viet Cong in Operation Irving. To avoid the superior firepower of the Americans the enemy tried to break contact as quickly as possible. The enemy confined their raids to the northern provinces where their supply lines were shorter, and to scattered attacks on ARVN outposts.

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

November was marked by increased VC raiding. The 4th Infantry Division, operating west of Plei Djereng, withstood

a mortar barrage of over 500 rounds; National Day celebrations in Saigon were interrupted by two dozen 57 mm recoilless 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, resulting in 11,000 rounds of 105 mm ammunition destroyed.

The dump was struck again in December and Tan Son Nhut airbase sustained a raid in which guerrillas penetrated the perimeter. The airfield attack cost the enemy 31 dead and three Americans were killed.

The high ratio of enemy deaths to U.S. losses was exemplified by an ambush of a recon platoon of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Rapid reaction by artillery, air strikes and relief troops turned the ambush into a defeat for the Viet Cong. Only one American lost his life while the enemy sacrificed 94 men.

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 German hospital ship Helgoland provides floating medical and surgical facilities to care for sick and wounded Vietnamese. Photo by LTC Roy Wells.

DIPLOMATIC HARMONY

The year was marked by harmony on the diplomatic front. To set the stage for high-level discussions, 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. Secretary of Defense McNamara visited Vietnam prior to the Philippine meeting.

Attending that conference were the chiefs of state of the United States, Australia, Korea, New Zealand, Thailand, South Vietnam and the Philippines.

POLITICAL FRONT IN FLAMES

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



A monk uses a loudspeaker to talk to a crowd during the Buddhist demonstrations throughout the country.

ENEMY KILLED	
55,436	
HOI CHANH	
20,242	
VIETNAMESE ABDUCTED	
3,507	
VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS KILLED	
1,618	
ARVN CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
11,953	20,975
FWMF CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
566	1,591
U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
Army—3,073	Army—18,363
U. S.—5,008	U. S.—30,093

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 by 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 old imperial 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 against Communism alongside the government.

The National Political Congress closed with the announcement that a constituent assembly would be elected in five months. An apparent calm settled over the country.

In late May the political waters were again muddied by Buddhist and anti-government forces 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 the I Corps 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.

Things settled down for the remainder of the year: however, the Saigon dock strike broke the seeming serenity. On the positive side the new South Vietnamese constitution's first three articles were approved.

... 1966 CASUALTIES

Does He Care? You Bet He Does!



*He cares enough to build for those
in need, to help
the young,
the old,
the apprehensive.*

He will stop a moment and play

*with the
children,
or
play
for
them.*





Military Assistance
Command, Vietnam



United States Army,
Vietnam



I Field Force, Vietnam



II Field Force, Vietnam



Americal Division



1st Cavalry Division
(Airmobile)



1st Infantry Division



4th Infantry Division



9th Infantry Division



25th Infantry
Division



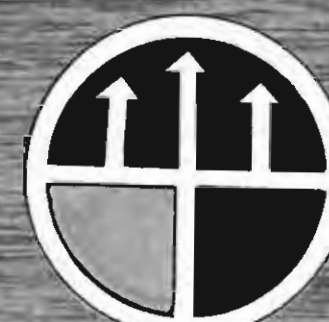
5th Infantry Division
(Mech) (1st Bde)



82nd Airborne Division
(3rd Bde)



101st Airborne
Division



U.S. Army Engineer
Command, Vietnam



18th Engineer Brigade



20th Engineer Brigade



1st Aviation Brigade



1st Logistical Command



1st Signal Brigade



5th Special Forces Group



11th Armored
Cavalry Regiment



18th Military
Police Brigade



44th Medical
Brigade



123rd Airborne
Brigade



11th Light
Infantry Brigade



196th Light
Infantry Brigade



198th Light
Infantry Brigade



199th Light
Infantry Brigade



34th General Support Group

1967 — The Squeeze Period

The Counteroffensive

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 bombing raids made his routes of supply difficult to use, curtailing his operations further. His cause was weakened by thousands of Viet Cong, political cadre and North Vietnamese who turned themselves in to the government's Chieu Hoi Program.

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

His losses for the year included 87,534 killed in action and over 31,000 weapons of all types captured. He lost almost 14,000 tons of rice and 162 tons of salt. His ammunition supply was reduced almost 2.5 million rounds. His ranks were depleted by 27,178 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 over 4,000 South Vietnamese and wounded over 8,000 in their attacks. Kidnaping accounted for another 5,454 persons, all in an attempt to control the people.

More people 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 months 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, the draft constitution for South Vietnam was put before the Constituent Assembly for debate; 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.



Jungle clearing by Rome plows denies the enemy his sanctuaries. Photo by Sp6 Jay J. Smith.

Continues

At the beginning of 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 and the month saw the termination and beginning of many operations.

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 over 2,000 enemy soldiers.

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 gradual U.S. and ARVN weakening of the Viet Cong's dominance of Delta waterways.

LARGEST OPERATION BEGINS

Other 9th Division units joined elements of the 1st, 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions 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 aircraft.

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. Large stores of ammunition, weapons, clothing, food, documents and utensils were confiscated.

PARACHUTE ASSAULT

During one phase of Operation Junction City it was decided to employ paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade in a surprise combat assault along Highway 4 to block enemy escape routes from the battle area. On February 22, 1967 the only mass jump of the war took place at 9 a.m. when over 700 troopers from the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry and supporting elements parachuted into a drop zone north of Tay Ninh. Twenty-three Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft delivered the men and their equipment over the drop zone. The force blocked the enemy and released badly needed helicopters to 1st and 25th Division troops attacking the enemy.

Eighty-one days later 2,728 enemy lay dead from the operation and War Zone C was no longer a VC stronghold.

Cargo ships unload at Newport, Saigon's newest harbor facility. Newport was built to relieve congestion in Saigon Port. Photo by Maj. Don Blake.





Troops move through a village while on a patrol in War Zone C. Photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan.

Their bases were destroyed; many of their supplies were gone. The Free World Forces counteroffensive was making remarkable advances.

Further north the 1st Cavalry Division had begun Operation Pershing and the Communists pounded the Da Nang Airbase with over 50 Russian-made 140 mm 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 active diplomatically. The Manila Conference countries and their ambassadors met in Saigon in preparation for a two-day conference on 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 a copy of the new constitution. It was ratified a few days later.

In Thailand, B-52s 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.

The 9th Division's Operation Kittyhawk began in March. While the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were trying to keep out of the way of the major operations, they made small-scale attacks on Vietnamese Popular Forces and surprise attacks on other installations.

U.S. forces 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 percent 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 fall elections would take place to select the upper and lower houses of the new government and to choose a new president and vice president.

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

Operation Adams was completed during the month by the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division in Phu Yen Province with an enemy death toll of 491. Elements of the 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions began Operation Francis Marion in Pleiku Province which resulted in 1,203 enemy deaths.

Enemy pressure was building in the I Corps Tactical Zone (I CTZ) in the vicinity of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). It became apparent Marine units would have to be moved to counter the threat. The 196th Light Infantry Brigade was moved into the Chu Lai area to replace relocated Marine units. This was one of the first of many major ground combat units from USARV to operate in the northern provinces.

Other units joined the 196th in I CTZ. They were the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and, in May, the 1st Brigade,

101st Airborne. The Army troops in the zone were placed under the operational control of Task Force Oregon (TFO) which was controlled by the III Marine Amphibious Force.

Early in May a Hoi Chanh led men from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division to a weapons cache which consisted of 2,000 mortar rounds, 1,200 grenades, 20 claymore mines, 1,000 small arms rounds and 400 rifles.

The 101st Airborne's brigade launched Operation Malheur in Quang Ngai Province which in 28 days accounted for 392 enemy killed and 150 weapons captured.

While elements of the 25th Infantry Division began Operation Kole Kole, the 2nd Brigade of the same unit terminated Operation Ala Moana in Hau Nghia Province, accounting for 382 enemy deaths.

The Mobile Riverine Force clashed with the enemy for its first major engagement in the delta 15 miles west of My Tho.

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

The next day three new operations began: Operation Dallas by the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division and Operations Barking Sands and Diamond Head by elements of the 25th Division.

The enemy struck the 25th Division with 100 rounds of mortar and recoilless rifle fire. However, most guerrilla attacks were concentrated against ARVN and Vietnamese irregular forces during this period.

Seven new operations began during June. Most units in USARV were involved in Operations Coronado, Bluefield, Malheur II, Akron, Kawela, Billings, and Greeley. More than



Villagers have their registration checked prior to voting in hamlet elections. Almost 77 per cent of the eligible voters turned out.



Parachutes lower supplies to troops as they are dropped from Air Force C-130s. Photo By Maj. John Shanahan.

1,500 enemy died from U.S. action during the month.

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.

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 1st Signal Brigade headquarters, Saigon Area Command and many subordinate units.

Significant enemy attacks in July killed 37 civilians and wounded 29 when two civilian buses in the northern provinces were hit. The Viet Cong attacked the base camp of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry and the airfield at Phuoc Vinh. More than 150 mortar and rocket rounds struck the area. In Phu Loi a 1st Aviation Brigade unit was also hit by mortar and rocket fire later in the month.

The 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division began Operation Riley in Bien Hoa Province. Elements of the 9th and 25th Divisions along with ARVN units conducted a seven-day operation, Coronado II/Song Thang 3, that resulted in 441 enemy casualties.

1967 OPERATIONS

WHEELER/WALLOWA, Americal Div
Sept 11, 1967-Nov 11, 1968

MALHEUR I & II, 101st Abn Div
May 10-Aug 2, 1967

MACARTHUR, 4th Inf Div, 1st Cav Div, 173rd Abn Bde
Nov 1-Nov 26, 1967

FRANCIS MARION, 4th Inf Div & 25th Inf Div
April 5-Oct 11, 1967

SAM HOUSTON, 4th Inf Div
Jan 1-April 5, 1967

CEDAR FALLS, 25th Inf Div & 173rd Abn Bde
Jan 7-Jan 20, 1967

SHENANDOAH II, 1st Inf Div
Sept 28-Nov 19, 1967

BILLINGS, 1st Inf Div
June 12-26, 1967

ENTERPRISE, 9th Inf Div
Feb 13-March 10, 1967



The USNS Corpus Christi Bay is the world's only floating depot maintenance facility. The Army's 34th General Support Group operates the facility. Photo by Sp4 Steve Kopels.

A company from the 199th Light Infantry Brigade captured an enemy sampan which yielded 220 pounds of TNT and over 2,300 rounds of ammunition.

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 Thuot airfield in Darlac Province was struck by mortars twice during the month.

Two more American operations started in August. The 21-day Operation Benton resulted in 397 enemy killed and over 150 weapons captured by elements of the 101st Airborne and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. A 20-day operation, dubbed Coronado IV, was launched by elements of the 9th Infantry Division. It accounted for 101 enemy deaths and 180 weapons seized.

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 percent of the voters turned out, the slate of Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky for president and vice president respectively receiving the voters approval. The voters also chose an upper house for the new government.

New operations during the month included: Task Force Oregon's 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.

In Nha Trang a satchel charge exploded in the Neptune NCO Club killing one civilian employee and wounding several civilian and military personnel. Terrorists struck the Republic of China Embassy in the capital with explosives and sniper fire. Extensive damage was done to the building and many casualties resulted.

At the 9th Division's base camp at Bear Cat, Thailand's Queen Cohra Regiment settled into their new home and readied themselves for future operations.



Mobile Riverine Force boats move down the waterways of the Mekong Delta searching for Charlie. Photo by SSgt. Robert Peterson.

AMERICAL DIVISION FORMED

At Chu Lai, Task Force Oregon was redesignated the Americal Division, becoming the only named division on active duty in the U.S. Army. Now the blue patch with the white stars of the Southern Cross was to be seen in the Pacific area once more.

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 the 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 percent 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.

Following the inauguration a parade of civic and military forces marched to celebrate the South Vietnamese National Day. Flags of seven nations, representing the Free World Assistance Forces in Vietnam, led the march order.

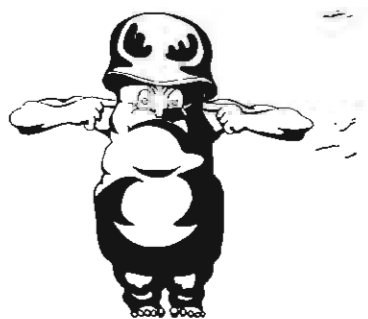
In I CTZ Army forces were increased as the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry joined the Americal Division. The brigade immediately began Operation Wallowa, which was later combined with Americal's Operation Wheeler.

HUEYCOBRA ARRIVES

October also saw the introduction of a helicopter especially designed for ground support—the Huey 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, 17th Cavalry joined the Ivymen in the Central Highlands during the month. Also the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry arrived at Qui Nhon to further increase U.S. strength in Vietnam.

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.



A 175 mm gun speaks its piece to the enemy in I Corps Tactical Zone. The 2nd Battalion, 94th Artillery fires the big guns in support of operations along the DMZ. Photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan.



ARVN losses were only 10 killed to the Communists' 130.

VC DEFEATED AT LOC NINH

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. This was accomplished after difficult street fighting and digging the enemy out of the perimeter bunkers they had occupied. When the ARVN, Special Forces and 1st Division troops finally forced the enemy to break contact, other troops of the 18th Infantry were waiting as a blocking force to cut them down.

The enemy retreated to a rubber plantation five miles south of the Cambodian border to avoid air strikes and artillery that harassed their move to high ground. On the third day of the battle the enemy began to return the artillery fire. Air strikes soon reduced the VC's fire.

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 were met by American and ARVN patrols that hounded them until they withdrew from the area, losing over 1,000 men killed in the over-all action.

WEAPONS CACHE UNCOVERED

Thirty miles east of Saigon in Phuoc Tuy Province, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry and Company B, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry were searching the area during the 9th Division's Operation Akron III. A concrete slab with wire hinges and handles was discovered. When it was opened, the troops found an entrance to a tunnel complete with steps cut into the side. Upon examination, a large supply of weapons, ammunition and medical supplies were found. Further tunnel discoveries were made in the immediate area. More arms, ammunition and supplies were uncovered as each tunnel was searched. The list of equipment brought out grew to tremendous size and included such weapons as 75 mm pack howitzers and .50 caliber machine-guns.



HueyCobra gunships were introduced in October of 1967. With its speed, maneuverability, and firepower, the AH-1G has proven to be combat ready and reliable.

Final count made this find the largest ever discovered. Besides other types of equipment and medical supplies, there were 1,140 weapons of all types, 95,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 3,634 grenades and 452 mortar rounds. Many of the weapons were still packed in grease, cosmoline and plastic.

November began quietly with the 9th Infantry Division units starting Operation Coronado IX and joining with the 11th Armored Cavalry, Australian and Vietnamese troops in Operation Santa Fe I in the Delta. Vietnamese Marines joined the 9th in Coronado IX after the exercise began, causing the 502nd Local Force Battalion to slowly get chewed up in the operation 65 miles southwest of Saigon.

BIGGEST BATTLE TAKES PLACE

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 is 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 hills soon resounded to the sounds of the battle, which 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 recon 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 presently 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, C-47 Dragonships and giant B-52 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 murderous fire to slow his advance. Casualties mounted on both sides, but gradually the NVA troops were forced back toward the Cambodian border and sanctuary. 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 in the



Part of the largest enemy weapons cache ever found which totaled over 1,140 pieces.



area. 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 B-52 bombers. Many hills looked like jumbled piles of huge matchsticks and splinters as great trees had been felled by the battle.

The battle was the largest in the war to date—exceeding the Ia Drang Valley battle of 1966 and the Loc Ninh battle of the preceding month.

Other November action: the enemy's shelling of the base camp of the 2nd Brigade of the 25th Division and the division main base camp at Cu Chi, plus the start of Operation Strike/Uniontown in Bien Hoa Province by the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. The operation was to account for 100 enemy losses.

THANKSGIVING IN THE FIELD

Despite battles raging from the North to the South of this war-torn nation, the 1st Logistical Command delivered — 57,000 whole turkeys and 325 tons of boneless turkey meat plus all the trimmings of the traditional Thanksgiving feast. The impressive figures included 28 tons of cranberry sauce, 15 tons of nuts, 8 tons of candy, 11 of olives, and 33 of fruit cake.

The new "Three C Concept" of speeding supplies to the

user was introduced during the month. The Cs stand for one container, one customer and one commodity. The operation begins at a factory where a truck trailer is loaded. The trailer is then sealed and driven to port where the trailer is placed on a ship bound for a foreign port. Here it is unloaded and delivered, still sealed, to the using combat unit. The system virtually eliminates pilferage and speeds the vital supplies to units in less time. Once unloaded, the empty 35-foot trailer is returned to port for another round trip.

DAK SON TERROR

Year-end saw one of the most atrocious terror attacks in Vietnam's bloody history. In the Montagnard village of Dak Son two battalions of Communists struck on December 5. The VC regulars quickly pushed the local defense force into a small area, then rampaged up and down the hamlet streets systematically burning down more than half the 150 thatched homes. With flame throwers and grenades the Communists slaughtered people 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



A lone woman sits in the rubble of her village following the VC terror attack on Dak Son where 252 Montagnards were killed by flame throwers and hand grenades.

days later to complete the huge airlift from Fort Campbell by giant C-141 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.



ENEMY KILLED	
83,386	
HOI CHANH	
27,178	
VIETNAMESE ABDUCTED	
5,357	
VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS KILLED	
3,707	
ARVN CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
12,716	29,448
FWMF CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
1,105	2,318
U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES	
Killed	Wounded
Army—6,514	Army—33,556
U.S.—9,353	U.S.—62,025

1967 CASUALTIES



Trailers are stacked high on the deck of a Sea Land transport ship that is ready to unload at Cam Ranh Bay.



A trooper from the 173rd Airborne Brigade calls for a medic to aid his wounded buddy during fighting on Hill 882 near Dak To. Photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan.



Photo by Sp4 Ron Sehorn



Nation Building:

Since the division of Vietnam in 1954, the Communist government in Hanoi has sought to take over South Vietnam. Through terrorism, assassination, and military aggression, Hanoi and the Viet Cong in the South have tried to overthrow the government in Saigon.

In 1954, President Eisenhower, in a letter to South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem, promised the support of the American people in Vietnam's struggle against aggression. This pledge was renewed by President Kennedy, who sent in large numbers of American advisers for the ARVN forces.

Despite these efforts, the Communists continued to wage a successful war of subversion, and by mid-1965 had come dangerously close to achieving their objectives. In July of that year, President Johnson restated the pledges of his two predecessors and sent American combat units to assist the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

The United States was not the only nation to respond to South Vietnam's call for help. The United States provides the bulk of military assistance, but Korea, Australia, Thailand, and New Zealand also have armed forces here, and no less than 40 nations of the free world have rendered vital nonmilitary aid in the struggle against aggression. This aid may be divided into five main categories:

- (1) Medical Aid
- (2) Educational and Vocational Aid
- (3) Technical Assistance Programs
- (4) Agricultural Aid Programs
- (5) Resettlement Programs

MEDICAL AID

The shortage of trained medical personnel has been a serious problem in the Republic of Vietnam. Currently 13 Free World governmental and private organizations are helping meet this need.

To bring medicine to remote areas of Vietnam, medical teams from New Zealand, Korea, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Australia, the Republic of China, Germany, Japan, Spain, and the United States are stationed throughout the Republic. Here are a few examples:

- * A 12-man Spanish medical team is now operating in a provincial hospital and in Go Cong.
- * A Korean mobile medical unit works in the coastal city of Vung Tau.
- * New Zealand has an 8-man surgical team at Qui Nhon.
- * Philippine teams have operated in several provinces, including Tay Ninh Province.
- * Quang Ngai clinic and Quang Ngai hospital both have Canadian doctors and Cuban refugee doctors on their staffs.
- * The Republic of China has sent a 10-man medical team to work at the Phan Thiet hospital.

A Free World Effort

* The United States has medical teams serving in many of the provinces of Vietnam.

* Over 150 private physicians from the United States, on leave from their practices, have volunteered and served in Vietnam under a program sponsored by the American Medical Association.

* The German hospital ship "Helgoland" docks at several ports along the coast to provide medical services as a unique floating hospital.

Medical teams could not operate were it not for the existence of adequate medical supplies. By 1967, more than \$10,000,000 in vital medical supplies had been donated by 10 different nations. A few examples:

* Canada provided $\frac{1}{2}$ million doses of anti-polio vaccine for a massive immunization program being conducted by the Vietnamese Department of Public Health.

* In September, 1966, three tons of medical supplies were donated jointly by the Brazilian government and 14 private organizations.

These are only a few of the varied and extensive medical assistance being given to the people of Vietnam by nations of the free world. In a country engaged in war, good medical service for the civilian and military populations is essential. Thanks to the free world, Vietnam today is enjoying the highest standard of medical treatment in its history.

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL AID

Key targets of Viet Cong assassins are the teachers of Vietnam. The enemy realizes that the destruction of the schools is necessary for the final subversion of society. To counter these atrocities, and to expand and improve the educational facilities of Vietnam, nations of the free world have been giving various forms of educational aid to South Vietnam:

* Over 1,400,000 textbooks have been provided for all school grades.

* Free World professors are now lecturing in the Republic, many of them on leave from their universities.





Photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan

*Thousands of scholarships have been made available to deserving Vietnamese students for the purpose of study abroad.

*Australia, New Zealand and Germany are providing technical training aids to Vietnam. Machines and equipment for two technical schools, one at Dalat and one at Gia Dinh, were given by Germany.

Free world educational aid is aimed in several directions. It seeks to give to Vietnamese people technical training in order that they might manage their own specialized industries; it seeks to give Vietnamese students the opportunity to study abroad; and above all, it tries to expand educational opportunities for as many young people as possible. As the military provides security in hitherto insecure areas, it will be possible for the students of Vietnam to pursue their education without fear of Viet Cong terrorism. Free world assistance will provide them with the tools and facilities for a better tomorrow.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

There is no greater indication of the free world's belief in the future of South Vietnam than in the long range technical assistance projects now being undertaken in the Republic.

*South of Da Nang lies the An Hoa/Nong Son industrial complex where South Vietnam's only coal mine is being developed with the aid of French and German investment. Germany has provided machinery for the construction of chemical plants near this complex and has funded many millions of dollars in long-term capital investments. Such a project will not only create jobs for the people in the surrounding areas, but will also stimulate many other sectors of the economy and provide benefits far above the initial investment.

*The United States has given 48 locomotives and 225 freight cars for the Vietnamese national railway, an important contribution in the effort to reestablish communications with all parts of the nation.

*Australia constructed a 55-kilowatt radio station at Ban Me Thuot. This station helps bring the government's message to remote areas of the Central Highlands.

*At Thu Duc, the United States has completed a water purification plant which now services the entire Saigon area. For the first time, the Saigon/Cholon areas can enjoy the benefits of pure water.

With the improvements and maintenance of Vietnam's communications, it will be possible to keep the country united,



and prevent the Viet Cong from isolating portions of the countryside.

Industry, communications, power—these are the fields in which free world technical assistance is now being given. When the war is over, these projects will remain to help the Vietnamese people and economy.

AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

Vietnam is one of the richest rice producing nations in all of Asia, and the development of agriculture is of prime concern. Many free world nations are seeking to further the development of cooperatives to promote agricultural development.

*The Republic of China has had an agricultural mission in Vietnam since 1959. Working through the Ministry of Agriculture and local farmers, the 74-man mission has been seeking to promote better crop development in the Hue, Phan Rang, Dalat, Bien Hoa and Long Xuyen areas.

*Australia has provided valuable material including an experimental dairy farm, irrigation equipment, farm tools, livestock and poultry breeding equipment, a milk plant, rice silos, and animal vaccine production equipment.

*Germany has provided \$4,000,000 in long-term investment for the importation of machines, tools and fertilizers.

*The largest contribution, in terms of money, has come from the United States, whose agricultural aid program by



1966 had totalled \$640,000,000.

RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

Today, an estimated seven percent of the Vietnamese population are refugees. The South Vietnamese government has been providing for these unfortunate people, but the magnitude of the problem demands much more. Free world governments and agencies are attempting to fill this need.

*Germany has provided \$6,000,000 for the construction of refugee centers and a refugee village for 2,000 people.

*Australia has donated milk, blankets, roofing materials and earth moving equipment for refugee resettlement.

On a more personal level, the drive to aid the refugees of Vietnam was felt in the Japanese city of Niigata. Hearing of the plight of the refugees of Song Be in Phuoc Long Province, the citizens of Niigata lauded together and sent

2½ tons of blankets, clothing and home medicine kits. Soon after this generous donation was made, the mayor of Niigata came personally to Song Be, where he was greeted by the local population. It was a fitting demonstration of Asian brotherhood and free world solidarity in the face of Communist aggression.

NATION BUILDING

The military side of the war is emphasized day after day, on television and radio and in newspapers around the world, but frequently too little is said of the successful fight against poverty, ignorance, disease and fear. This aid, now being given by nations of the free world, is as vital in the struggle against aggression as is the military effort. The Republic of Vietnam, the United States, and nations of the free world are not waiting for the war to end in order to help the Vietnamese people. They are building a nation now.



Photo by SSgt. Charles Washington



1968

Prelude to Attack

The year 1968 opened with an unwarlike quietness because of the New Year Truce. Only isolated squad-size VC units were involved in any fire fights. Army units found several rice caches. A company from the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 503rd Infantry found one rice cache of slightly over 1000 pounds hidden in bushes near its perimeter.

No sooner had the truce ended when the Viet Cong mortared, and tried to overrun the base camp of the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in Tay Ninh Province. Shortly before midnight on New Year's Day, human wave attacks struck the base's perimeter from three sides. The attack broke off before the morning of January 2. The defenders found 347 enemy bodies strewn about the defensive area. It was later established that the attackers were from the 271st and 272nd VC Regiments.

Action elsewhere picked up. In the North both the Americal and 1st Cavalry Divisions reported increased contact with the enemy. In the highlands the 4th Division made contact with guerrillas near Pleiku and Dak To, and the 101st Airborne Division discovered several VC tunnel complexes west of Cu Chi in III CTZ.

During the next few days heavy contacts were made in the Americal's Operation Wheeler/Wallowa area of action in southern ICTZ, and along the Saigon River, 15 miles northwest of Saigon, in the 25th Division's Operation Yellowstone.

On January 7 a new \$500,000 Dial Central Office was opened in Phu Bai to provide a 1,000-line exchange for Marine and Army elements in the area.



PROVINCE CAPITAL HIT

Guerrilla forces made a pre-dawn terror attack on Hau Nghia's province capital of Khien Cuong. Following a mortar and rocket barrage, the VC penetrated to the center of town. Vietnamese National Police, Regional Forces and American advisors broke the attack at the market place. One policeman, alone at his post, was credited with killing five insurgents with hand grenades.

Two battalions of the ARVN 49th Regiment rushed to the aid of the city. By dawn 20 enemy bodies were counted in the center of town and four enemy suspects were detained. American casualties were three killed and 15 wounded. The Vietnamese police and Regional Forces casualties were described as light; however, the cost to the civilian populace was severe. Eighty civilians were wounded and 150 families were homeless from the surprise assault.

Heavy action continued through the next week centered in the Americal's battle area of southern I CTZ and the 25th's area of operation northwest of Saigon. Many units reported enemy resupply activity. Recently vacated tunnels and bunkers were also discovered, but there were only sporadic contacts. The 9th Division launched sweep operations 25 miles southwest of Saigon against a reported buildup of enemy forces; however, only light enemy contact was made.

During the month large and small enemy rice caches were discovered from one end of the country to the other. In the north, NVA forces were building up in the vicinity of the Marine base at Khe Sanh. This base sits astride the main infiltration route that skirts the DMZ through which enemy reinforcements are funneled toward Quang Ngai City and Hue. Units of the 108th Artillery Group at Camp Carroll were firing constant support for the bastion, 18 miles away.

Rice and weapons caches turned up regularly. The most unusual capture was made by the 11th Armored Cavalry near the Cambodian border, 70 miles north of Saigon. A North Vietnamese Regular was spotted carrying 60-pound bags of rice on a bicycle. He tried to out-pedal an Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicle (ACAV), but he was no match for the ACAV's speed. The Blackhorse troops ended the NVA soldier's rice smuggling days.

Sporadic action continued through the third week of January with small engagements reported and many more caches being discovered. On several occasions base camps

The Vung Chua Mountain site, located near Qui Nhon, is a major communications relay link between the northern and southern commands of USARV.



INNOCENT. OR...? Sampans make a tranquil setting on the waterways of the country. They are one of the main modes of transportation and commerce in Vietnam, and are used by the Communists to deliver large quantities of arms and ammunition. Photo by SSgt. Robert Peterson.

received harassing mortar fire.

The 1st Cavalry Division encountered an enemy force estimated at two battalions near Bong Son in Binh Dinh Province. The 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry was moving into the area when a lone enemy soldier was sighted. When the armored vehicles moved into an attacking position, heavy resistance was met. Gunships and airstrikes were called in and a blocking force moved in behind the enemy. After a day of fighting 128 enemy lay dead on the battlefield. The cavalry lost four men.

In the closing week of January, gunship crews from the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion spotted large sampan flotillas 31 miles southwest of Saigon in Dinh Tuong Province. Thirty-one of the sampans were sunk. Enemy sampan activity seemed to have suddenly increased as gunships reported sinking 98 more of the boats.

The Viet Cong attacked the town of Trang Bang, 28 miles northwest of Saigon, attempting to overrun the district headquarters. In typical VC fashion the insurgents struck from three sides with recoilless rifle and rocket fire at the buildings. The Viet Cong soldiers were caught in a crossfire from Popular Forces bunkers when they assailed. Six enemy soldiers were killed in the fighting, as were a policeman and a civilian woman. Thirty-five civilians, including 16

women and eight children, were victims of wounds in the attack. The enemy was forced to withdraw from the town, never achieving his objective.

Although weapons and food caches continued to be turned up by searching troops, enemy contact was rare. The planned 36-hour Tet truce was approaching. In I CTZ the Communist threat was so severe the entire truce period was cancelled there. Heavy daily enemy artillery and rockets pounded away at Khe Sanh while North Vietnamese troops moved in on three sides.

A DEADLY HOLIDAY

Across the rest of the nation civilians and military were planning family reunions and celebrations for the three-day holiday starting the last day of the month. Already fire crackers were being shot off in happy anticipation of the Buddhist New Year. Tet being a time of family gatherings, made movement of large groups of people possible without suspicion. This was exactly what the Communist guerrillas needed and during the days preceding Tet, large numbers of the VC and NVA moved into the nation's major cities.

Arms and ammunition were smuggled into the cities inside loads of farm produce and materials carried in trucks and sampans. They were then moved to cemeteries inside coffins



USARV and 1st Logistical Command headquarters buildings at Long Binh Post form a geometric pattern in what was once jungle. Photo by Sp4 James Lynch.

War Reaches The Cities



Military policemen lead away a Viet Cong who was captured in the vicinity of the American Embassy during the Communist attack January 31. Corporal George Moyer, left, and Sp4 James M. Singer, 527th Military Police Company, were rushed to the Embassy to assist guards in repelling an assault on the compound. Photo by Sp5 Donald A. Hirst.



in mock funerals. Even the flower pots were used to hide magazines of ammunition and hand grenades. By evening of January 30 most cemeteries in the major cities had become VC arsenals.

TET ATTACKS BEGIN

The first of the Tet attacks occurred at Nha Trang at 1:15 a.m. on January 30. The assault was apparently aimed at the U.S. Military Assistance Compound in downtown Nha Trang. By nightfall the next day, attacks took place in 27 of the 44 province capitals. The U.S. Embassy was one of the first targets in Saigon. Strikes were also made at Da Nang, Hue, Quang Tri, Qui Nhon, My Tho, Tan Phu Trung, An Khe, Pleiku, Kontum, Dalat, Ban Me Thout, Hoi An, Tuy Hoa, Hoc Mon, Tay Ninh, Ben Tre and Soc Trang. Also hit were military airfields at Da Nang, Chu Lai, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Pleiku and Tuy Hoa. Major military installations were also subjected to ground and mortar attacks, including the huge ammunition dump and the II Field Force Headquarters at Long Binh.

Many of the cities overrun were cleared of guerrillas within 24 hours; however, several cities were held by the enemy for longer periods. These included Saigon, Hue and Dalat.

ANGRY PEOPLE

The Communists had hoped to rouse the people to a popular uprising with the attacks. The NVA and VC troops had been told the people would greet them with open arms. Instead, by violating the sacred family celebration of Tet by bombing, burning and disrupting city life, and by executing civilians, the Communists angered the people.

EMBASSY ASSAULTED

In Saigon 19 Viet Cong blasted a hole in the compound wall of the U.S. Embassy at about 3 a.m. on the last day in January. Several unsuccessful attempts were made by the terrorists to penetrate the embassy. The thick cherry wood door at the main entrance took a rocket hit and stood fast. Insurgents who entered the compound through the shattered wall and by scaling the rear wall were stopped in a 6-hour battle with Marine guards reinforced by military police from the 716th MP Battalion. To insure no VC had entered the embassy building a helicopter loaded with 101st Airborne paratroopers landed on the roof to search the building from top to bottom. The last insurgent died in a civilian aide's quarters in the rear of the compound, killed by the civilian himself with a pistol thrown to him by the MP's.

The attackers attempted to enter the Independence Palace grounds, but were driven into an incomplete hotel where they held out for two days. Other guerrillas struck military and government installations all over the Saigon-Cholon-Tan Son Nhut area. The MACV compound was struck by sniper fire and the sprawling Tan Son Nhut Airbase was invaded by about 700 guerrillas. Tropic Lightning troops of the 25th

Infantry Division were called to help drive the enemy out of the base. American and ARVN soldiers supported by helicopter gunships rushed to the city.

Communist political cadre paraded through the streets in an attempt to rally the people to assist them; they found few takers.

Throughout the country superior firepower and logistical support turned the tide against the Communists dramatically.

The 1st Cavalry in the north secured Quang Tri; 4th Division troops had secured Pleiku and Kontum, and so it went to the south where 9th Division troops freed My Tho from the VC. Through all the fighting, ARVN troops displayed conspicuous bravery. They proved that this is their country and they are willing to fight for it.

COSTLY ATTACKS

The fierceness of the fighting was attested to by the casualty figures. In three days the Communist death toll was esti-



A helicopter lands on the U. S. Embassy roof, recalling the manner in which troops of the 101st Airborne Division were landed to aid in clearing the compound.

mated at over 10,000. Some 3,000 suspects were being detained. South Vietnamese losses reached 632 killed and 1,588 wounded. American deaths were 281 with another 1,195 wounded. Other Free World Forces lost 34 men. At least 3,000 civilians died and another 350,000 were left homeless.

Destruction of property was high. In Pleiku, 50 per cent of the homes were destroyed by the fighting. But the worst catastrophe struck Hue, which was completely overrun by the Communists. When the fighting to retake the city was over, near the end of February, 80 percent of the city had been destroyed, including many irreplaceable art treasures of the Citadel, the historic home of Vietnamese emperors for centuries.

Free World Forces quickly moved to block off escaping Communist soldiers on the outskirts of the cities and to destroy guerrilla mortar and rocket crews harassing military installations.

Ten days after the first attack, the brunt of the Communist effort was broken everywhere except in Hue, where the 1st Cavalry Division blocked additional North Vietnamese units from reinforcing the insurgents in the city, who were slowly being dug out block by block by U.S. Marine and ARVN forces.

The most reliable intelligence estimates indicated a second wave of attacks would take place by mid-month. Vietnamese and American forces conducted sweeps in the vicinity of the

large cities to break up the possibility. One Delta city, Bac Lieu, was attacked by the VC, but the invaders were turned back by ARVN soldiers in a day-long battle.

In the Saigon-Bien Hoa area, the 25th and 9th Infantry Divisions, joined by the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and 11th Armored Cavalry, clashed with Viet Cong guerrillas frequently. Artillery and helicopter gunship supporting fires caused the Communist death toll to mount at an incredible rate. During early portions of the Tet attacks, the only available aerial gun support was provided by the 1st Aviation Brigade and 1st Cavalry Division gunships.

FRESH TROOPS ARRIVE

By mid-month President Johnson decided to send 10,500 more U.S. troops to Vietnam. The first major unit to answer the call was the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. The brigade was rapidly deployed to the I CTZ to alleviate pressure on Marine forces who were fighting in Hue and who were facing an estimated four to five North Vietnamese divisions.

On February 18 the second wave of attacks was launched by the Communists. This time they were not as severe as the initial attacks, with no major ground assaults being initiated. The attacks were basically mortar and rocket barrages. Nearly every military installation hit during Tet was struck again, including the ammunition dump at Long Binh and the airfields at Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. Sixteen provincial

capitals were also shelled.

The next day a 122 mm rocket struck the civilian passenger terminal at Tan Son Nhut Airbase killing one and seriously wounding 21 American military personnel, most of whom were preparing to return to the United States after the completion of their tour.

Heavy fighting broke out on Saigon's northern perimeter as the Viet Cong bombarded Tan Son Nhut and MACV headquarters again. Aviation Brigade gunships reported sinking many sampans attempting to resupply Communist forces surrounding Saigon. Enemy antiaircraft guns were located 2½ miles south of the Tan Son Nhut Airbase.

During the last week in February the attacks on Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa began to taper off. Marine and ARVN troops were digging the last enemy soldiers out of Hue. Throughout the countryside reconstruction was beginning. Curfews were still in effect, but the people were slowly starting to rebuild. Prices in the major cities were getting back to normal.

THE COST IS HIGH

The cost to both sides of the Tet attacks was heavy. U.S. losses were 2,371 killed during the period of slightly over 30 days. Also, 11,664 were wounded with some 5,500 being returned to duty without hospitalization. One hundred fifty-five soldiers were reported missing in action. The enemy paid even more dearly for his attempts to take over the cities. During the same period, the enemy lost an estimated 25,000 soldiers killed. No statistics are kept on enemy wounded. They lost over 16,000 weapons and a half million rounds of

ammunition. They also lost their biggest bid to win the war.

March began with optimism in Vietnam. Two major operations got into full swing in the Republic: Operation Truong Cong Dinh and Operation Quyet Thang.

The 1st and 2nd Brigades of the 9th Infantry Division launched Truong Cong Dinh March 7 with beach landings east and west of the provincial capital of My Tho, 50 miles southwest of Saigon. Entering the area from the north was the 7th ARVN Division. In the first seven days of heavy fighting, 145 enemy soldiers were killed.

Quyet Thang (Resolve to Win), a multi-division offensive, began four days after Truong Cong Dinh. This operation was centered in the four provinces surrounding Saigon. Elements of the 1st, 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions joined with the 5th and 25th ARVN Divisions, plus Vietnamese Marines and began the push to clear the provinces of Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Bien Hoa of the enemy guerrilla units that still remained after the Tet attacks.

In four days, 215 Viet Cong were killed and 22 suspects detained. Large stores of ammunition and weapons were captured, including 45 122mm rockets.

NEW SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The world waited with anxiety for any change in Washington's policies concerning the conduct of the war when it was announced that Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara would leave to become president of the World Bank. President Johnson named Clark M. Clifford to succeed McNamara. At the swearing-in ceremony, Clifford assured the world that he intended to continue the war policies in accordance with



Their homes destroyed by the Viet Cong attack on Saigon, Vietnamese citizens search through the rubble for material with which to rebuild.



Infantrymen spread out from their assault chopper after landing on the edge of a forest.



A patrol moves through a dense jungle on a reconnaissance-in-force mission.

Operation Coronado XI, the 9th Division's massive push in the Delta, terminated in mid-month. The operation began February 4 when two battalions of the division made a beach assault five miles south of Can Tho—the deepest penetration to that date into the Delta by an American unit. As a result of that operation, 246 of the enemy were killed, with 45 weapons and 20,700 rounds of small arms ammunition captured. In addition, the Old Reliables destroyed 28 bunkers and sank seven sampans.

Khe Sanh continued under intense siege by more than 20,000 enemy soldiers. The 5,000 Marines and a few U.S. Army and Vietnamese units continued to hold out against the daily barrage of Communist shells. But the friendly casualty figures mounted. In one crash of a C-123, 49 persons were killed.

Near Khe Sanh, enemy tanks were sighted for the first time in the war. Elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, on a cordon and search mission a few miles from Lang Vei, sighted what later were confirmed as PT-76 light amphibious tanks. The 14-ton tanks mount a 76 mm main gun, plus a 7.62 mm machinegun.

Another first in the war was the shelling of the sprawling U.S. Army Base and support command headquarters at Cam Ranh Bay. Damage to the base was extremely light with no loss of life.

With more than an estimated 70,000 Communists massed for a strike against the allies in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces in I CTZ, Provisional Corps Vietnam was established. Though the attack never took place, PROVCORPSV continues to serve as a command echelon between III Marine Amphibious Force and Army and Marine Divisions in the northern area.

The enemy's capability to harass in the Saigon/Long Binh area was sharply pointed out when a 30-vehicle convoy moving from Long Binh to Newport was ambushed nine miles northeast of Saigon on Highway 1A. One American was killed and three others wounded.

As the month drew to a close, U.S. and Vietnamese forces killed 419 Communists when enemy forces launched two massive human-wave attacks against two widely-separated allied positions. South Vietnamese Regular and Popular Forces troops and infantrymen from the 25th Infantry Division killed 284 Reds when the Communists flung themselves time after time against the PF outpost around the village of Trang Bang, 28 miles northwest of Saigon. The morning attack of March 25 lasted into the early morning hours of the next day.

In the other battle, a multi-battalion force of North Vietnamese, supported by flamethrowers, attempted to overrun a U.S. fire support base. At 3:30 a.m. on the 26th of March, an estimated three NVA battalions charged the base about 19 miles west of Kontum City. The bloody, close-in fighting continued for four hours before a counter-attack by the defenders drove the Communists from the perimeter. The attack cost the insurgents 135 killed. American losses for both battles were 19 killed and 51 wounded.

STEPS TO PEACE

Lyndon Baines Johnson startled the world when he announced Sunday, March 31, that he would not seek reelection to the Presidency of the United States, and that he was ordering all bombing north of the 19th parallel stopped.

the wishes of the President.

Also announced were the appointments of General William C. Westmoreland as the new Chief of Staff and Lt. Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Vietnam, as the new vice chief of staff. Replacing General Westmoreland as Vietnam commander would be General Creighton W. Abrams, deputy commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam.

Fighting was fierce in I Corps Tactical Zone during the month of March. Elements of the Americal Division and the 1st Cavalry Division recorded more than 1,000 enemy soldiers killed during the month. Three operations accounted for the heavy kills: Operations Wheeler/Wallowa, Jeh Stuart and MacArthur.

Since its beginning last November, Operation Wheeler/Wallowa took a toll of 3,335 North Vietnamese, 3,086 Viet Cong killed, and 1,089 individual and 238 crew-served weapons captured.

A 100-foot NVA trawler was destroyed four miles southeast of Duc Pho during the second week in March. Americal units participated in the action. Weapons taken from the ship included 700 rifles, 44 submachineguns, 15 light machineguns, 170 rifle grenades, 52 82mm mortar rounds and 27 hand grenades.



Aerial resupply is one of the many missions of the Chinook helicopter. Carrying supplies either internally or slung, it can deliver needed materials to the remote parts of the country.

In announcing the cessation of air action, the Chief Executive said that there "is no need to delay the talks that could bring an end to this long and bloody war." He called upon the Soviet Union and Britain, as co-charimen of the Geneva Conference, to do all in their power to bring peace in Vietnam. "I call upon Ho Chi Minh," President Johnson also said, "to respond positively and favorably to this new step toward peace." North Vietnamese leaders procrastinated for some weeks on the call for preliminary peace talks, but finally agreed on Paris as the scene for the talks that could lead to peace.

Advocates of peace and non-violence in the civil rights struggle lost a leader when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot to death on a Memphis motel balcony Thursday night, April 4. King's death came one day after he had told associates that he was not disturbed by reports that he would be subjected to physical harm while in Memphis. President Johnson set April 7 as a national day of mourning for the slain civil rights leader.

The month of April was marked by three major operations. Operation Carentan II began April 1 to prevent enemy troop movements around the imperial city of Hue. Operation Pegasus/Lam Son 207, a joint mission, effected the relief of the besieged U.S. Marines at their Khe Sanh combat base. And Operation Delaware invaded the North Vietnamese stronghold in the A Shau Valley, destroying tons of enemy equipment and supplies.

The 1st and 2nd Brigades of the 101st Airborne Division and the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division encountered fierce fighting throughout the Carentan II area of responsibility.

One of the bloodiest battles to date in the operation oc-

curred three miles northwest of Phuoc Yen. Elements of the 101st Airborne had cordoned off an NVA battalion and hit it with artillery, airstrikes and small arms fire. After killing key officers and three company commanders, the paratroopers used loudspeakers to encourage the remaining enemy to surrender. Ninety-five prisoners were taken that day and more than 300 NVA regulars were confirmed killed. Subsequent actions by the 82nd's 3rd Brigade resulted in about 140 more enemy soldiers killed during an assault on the village of Thon Bon Tri, four miles west of Hue. The paratroopers, members of the 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry, used heavy concentrations of artillery against the entrenched enemy force.

The 77-day siege of Khe Sanh was lifted Friday, April 5, when elements of the 1st Cavalry Division and ARVN Rangers swarmed up Highway 9 into the foothills surrounding the Marine base. For the first time since September, American forces traveled the twisting mountain road that linked the 5,000 Leathernecks with coastal supply areas. The three-pronged relief force pushed toward the base from the east, north and south. Sporadic artillery and mortar fire was encountered, but no ground resistance was met. Of the 20,000 enemy troops surrounding Khe Sanh before the operation began, only about 7,000 remained when the task force reached the outskirts of the base.

More than 1,000 Communists were killed in the operation. In three days of scouring the hillsides around the Marine base, cavalrymen from the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry captured a vast arsenal of weapons and supplies.

AFTER TWO YEARS

The A Shau Valley was described as a "weird piece of terrain...like a ditch cut out of a hunch of mountains."

Fleeing Reds deserted their weapons, ammunition and rations when thousands of helicopter-borne cavalrymen invaded the Communist command's military supply base in South Vietnam—the A Shau Valley, close to the Laotian border. After more than two years, American forces again entered the valley, despite what one official termed "damn good antiaircraft forces." The Americans paid a heavy price for their assault. North Vietnamese long-reaching 23mm and 37mm guns and .50-cal. machineguns destroyed or damaged 30 choppers in the first 24 hours of the operation. Some of the helicopters were hit at 6,000 feet. The operation

A check of identification papers is a necessary step in each cordon and search operation.



was to last until mid-May.

Tropic Lightning infantrymen repelled a predawn attack Friday, April 13, on a battalion defensive position 49 miles northwest of Saigon. The attack came at 4:04 a.m. when enemy troops launched a mortar attack on the camp, followed by a ground assault. The 25th Division soldiers battled the estimated two battalion-size force until 7 a.m. when contact was broken. An initial sweep of the battlefield yielded 51 assault rifles, 13 light machineguns, and other equipment in addition to the 137 enemy bodies. A detainee taken in the battlefield sweep identified the enemy unit as part of the 271st VC Regiment. This unit had taken part in the Trang Bang battles earlier which netted Tropic Lightning, Air Force and South Vietnamese troops 470 enemy dead. Sixteen U.S. soldiers were killed in the action and 47 others wounded.

The two largest enemy caches ever found in Vietnam earned the finder the largest amount of reward money ever given to a Hoi Chanh. Nguyen Van Lieu received 1,088,000 piasters (\$9,222 U.S.) for leading American, Australian and Vietnamese soldiers to the caches containing more than 1,000 rifles, 60 mm mortars, light machineguns, grease guns,

Bangalore torpedoes, cases of ammunition, explosives and more than one ton of rice.

Lieu had been a Viet Cong for seven years before turning himself in at the Phuoc Tuy Provincial Chieu Hoi Center last September. Part of the reward Lieu turned over to the Phuoc Tuy and Saigon Tet Aggression Relief Projects.

April ended on an optimistic note when Clark M. Clifford, the new Secretary of Defense, announced that he foresaw a cut in troops in Vietnam. The increased effectiveness of the South Vietnamese will permit a leveling off of U.S. efforts in the war and "in due time" permit a gradual troop reduction, Clifford said. In his first public address since becoming Secretary seven weeks earlier, Clifford said his statement was based on a comprehensive review of American policies and programs in Vietnam, which were ordered by President Johnson after the setbacks suffered by the Communists during their Tet attacks. "The results were clear and encouraging," he said. "They disclosed that Hanoi could not bend South Vietnam to its will by military force."

Action during May was fairly heavy, especially around the city of Saigon. The peace negotiations also went into full swing in Paris.



The USS Topeka fires at inland enemy positions in I Corps Tactical Zone from her position off the coast. The Navy supports land forces throughout the Republic with various types of ships.

MASS SURRENDER

In one of the largest mass surrenders by North Vietnamese in the war, 97 NVA regulars, including five women nurses, turned themselves over to paratroopers of the 101st Airborne at Phuoc Yen. The prisoners said their unit was the 8th Battalion, 90th NVA Regiment, which had been sent to Hue to serve as occupation forces after a takeover by the North Vietnamese forces.

Other elements of the NVA regiments were hit hard by the Screaming Eagles and the Panther Company, 1st ARVN Division when Thon Duong, northeast of Hue, was cordoned off. The Panther Company drove into the village under intense fire while four companies of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 501st and 502nd Infantry blocked escape routes. Covering fire was provided by gunships of the 308th Aviation Battalion. In the two days of fierce, close-in fighting, more than 350 enemy soldiers were killed, including a battalion commander, a battalion executive officer and three company commanders.

The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry of the Big Red One slugged it out with the enemy for 10 hours May 4 near Tan Hiep, four miles north of the division's basecamp at Di An. Throughout the early morning and into the afternoon, Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery at Di An and Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 13th Artillery at Phu Loi poured over 1,600 rounds of 105mm howitzer shells into the area. The infantrymen inched forward into the village and as darkness set in, the enemy broke contact, leaving 236 dead behind.

For three days following the initial encounter, the division engaged in heavy fighting. Utilizing tanks and armored personnel carriers to crash through the wooded terrain near Phu Loi, the division's 4th Cavalry forced the enemy to break into small, disorganized groups as gunships firing overhead supported. The three-day total for the fierce fighting rose to 661 enemy killed, while U.S. losses were put at seven killed and 18 wounded.

Viet Cong terrorists used a taxi loaded with explosives to blast the Allied television station in downtown Saigon Friday, May 3, six hours before the North Vietnamese Government agreed on Paris as the site for the preliminary peace talks. As the talks continued, the VC stepped up their attacks of terror against the capital city, shelling it almost daily with 122mm rocket and mortar fire. The government station was apparently the prime target for the explosives, but the blast also smashed the windows and collapsed the ceiling of the adjacent Armed Forces Vietnam Network studios. A building of the university center was completely destroyed. Three Vietnamese were killed in the blast and 30 wounded, including five Americans.

Enemy shelling of Saigon and other major cities in the South commenced in earnest on Sunday, May 5, in a coordinated mortar attack before dawn. Probes against three points on the edge of Saigon were made, but no major ground offensives occurred against the capital. Newport docking facilities, the village of Thanh My Tay, and the municipal water plant at Thu Duc were sites of attacks. A U.S. military billet near the central market place was sprayed by an exploding mortar shell. There were numerous other reports of rounds hitting various sections of the city. Casualty figures revealed that 49 persons had been killed in the shelling and 360 wounded.

The heaviest of the fighting and attacks centered in Saigon's Chinese district of Cholon near the Phu Tho race track. Scattered street fighting erupted and 110 VC were killed during Sunday's action. In addition, six news correspondents were killed as they covered the action. The West German Embassy announced that First Secretary Baron Hasso



Ruedt von Collenberg was executed by the VC and that his body had been found near the race track. A few blocks from the U.S. Embassy, Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, head of the National Police of South Vietnam, was seriously wounded when leading an attack on Viet Cong snipers. Elements of the 9th Infantry Division intercepted the enemy's Phu Loi Battalion trying to enter Saigon two days later and killed 213 in a factory area near the edge of the city.

More than 2,000 Communists were killed in the three days of the new attacks.

In Paris, peace talks commenced with the delegates agreeing to exclude representatives of South Vietnam and other Allied governments, as well as those of Russia, China and the Viet Cong from the initial talks. From the beginning, Hanoi insisted that the only problem to be discussed was the unconditional ending of the U.S. bombing of the North. The U.S., however, maintained that the North must also show some military restraint before the talks could develop into full fledged negotiations of peace in the country.

North Vietnamese Ambassador Xuan Thuy called on the United States to end the rest of the bombing and "all other acts of war" against his country but did it in softer words than had been expected. Ambassador Averell Harriman, the U.S. delegation head at the conference, asked in turn for restraint on the part of the North Vietnamese to match the cessation of bombing imposed by the U.S. Harriman charged that instead of restraint, the North moved "substantial and increasing numbers of troops and supplies from the North to the South since the bombing halted March 31."

KHAM DUC EVACUATED

Allied forces evacuated the U.S. Special Forces camp at Kham Duc with a heavy cost in lives and equipment on May 14. The evacuation of the camp resulted in the loss of five helicopters and four airplanes, one of which was known to be loaded with Vietnamese soldiers and their dependents. More

than 120 men, women and children were in the C-130 aircraft when it was shot down on takeoff just over the Kham Duc airstrip. There were no survivors. Evacuation of the camp meant that the Air Force could bomb the area with tactical airstrikes and B-52 saturation raids.

Operation Delaware closed May 17 when the allies pulled out of the A Shau Valley. The entire area was to be kept under close observation and interdiction fire.

The campaign cost the Americans 139 killed and 662 wounded. Communist forces lost 726 dead. In addition, 128 helicopters were hit during the operation. All but 20 of these were recovered and repaired. Weapons and equipment captured during the sweep included a Soviet-built tank, tracked vehicles, two bulldozers, 66 trucks, one jeep, electronics and radio equipment, 2,200 rifles and machineguns, flamethrowers, antitank and antiaircraft guns and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition.

The 4th Infantry Division kicked off a new drive in the Central Highlands near the end of the month, attempting to envelop North Vietnam's 325th Division. The Communist division had moved south after participating in the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh.

LONG, HOT SUMMER

With the coming of June, the incidents which foretold a long, hot summer began. Enemy activity increased in and around Saigon as the Communists continued their shelling of the capital city in support of their negotiators at the preliminary peace talks in Paris. Hanoi boasted that beginning with the 19th of June, 100 rocket rounds would be fired into the city each day. The enemy failed to live up to this boast, though the city continued to suffer damage from what little rocket fire did come through. General Creighton Abrams assumed command of U.S. forces in the Republic on June 16 and stated that the shelling of Saigon would be stopped. Immediately, infantrymen from the 9th and 25th Infantry

Divisions began sweeping the outskirts of the city. Within the city and at its edges ARVN soldiers also made successful sweeps, adding to the daily total of Communists killed in the struggle for the safety of Saigon and its citizens.

At home, Americans watched in horror as another leader, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was struck down. The senator was killed shortly after learning of his victory in the California presidential primary election. The senator from New York was killed four years and seven months to the day after his brother, President John F. Kennedy, was assassinated in Dallas.

In another mass surrender to Government forces, 110 Viet Cong turned themselves over to Vietnamese forces Tuesday morning, June 18. The VC were the remnants of two regiments battered by Government forces for a week. The original 400-man force was reduced to 200, including 80 wounded, after a battle with South Vietnamese forces. Their commander was killed, and their deputy commander, a VC captain, surrendered to GVN forces Monday.

The worst single disaster to strike the Saigon administration during the war occurred Sunday, June 2, when a malfunctioning rocket hit a temporary Government command post in Cholon, killing six high-ranking Vietnamese officials and wounding four others. The mayor of Saigon was among those wounded.

Fresh Communist forces moved into the Saigon area as the month wore on. At least seven separate regiments were identified as being around the refugee-filled capital city as June ended. Forces from the 1st, 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions, plus ARVN Rangers and Marines swept the area surrounding Saigon for a week killing several hundred enemy soldiers. Many of the enemy dead were identified as North Vietnamese Army regulars.

"BOMBS AWAY!"

America's B-52 bombers wound up three years in the war in Vietnam in late June without a single combat loss, while at

the same time dealing the enemy many severe blows. They proved their worth again and again. They were credited with preventing a major attack against Khe Sanh and with spoiling enemy efforts to launch a major counter-offensive in the Central Highlands. Now that 11 of Hanoi's divisions are committed to fighting in the South, the Stratofortresses have a much simpler task than they first did. Larger troop concentrations require lengthy, and thus visible, supply lines which are extremely vulnerable to the 30 tons of bombs each of the mammoth bombers can carry. A North Vietnamese document captured in the North said that one regiment had been hit six times by the B-52s from the time the enemy had left their base in North Vietnam.

The evacuation of Khe Sanh began June 28 because of "...significant changes in the military situation in Vietnam since early this year." The evacuation was decided upon because of "an increase in friendly strength, mobility and firepower..." in the area.

Operation Nevada Eagle in the 101st Airborne's area of operation continued with fierce firefights during the last of the month. Screaming Eagles paratroopers and Popular Forces units have been scouring the area around Hue in a continuing effort to eliminate the enemy forces still located in the area. In addition to the several hundred enemy killed in the I Corps operation, several large supply caches were uncovered.

Also in mid-June, Lt. Gen. Frank T. Mildren succeeded Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., as deputy commanding general of USARV. Gen. Palmer succeeded Gen. Ralph E. Haines, Jr., as Army vice chief of staff.

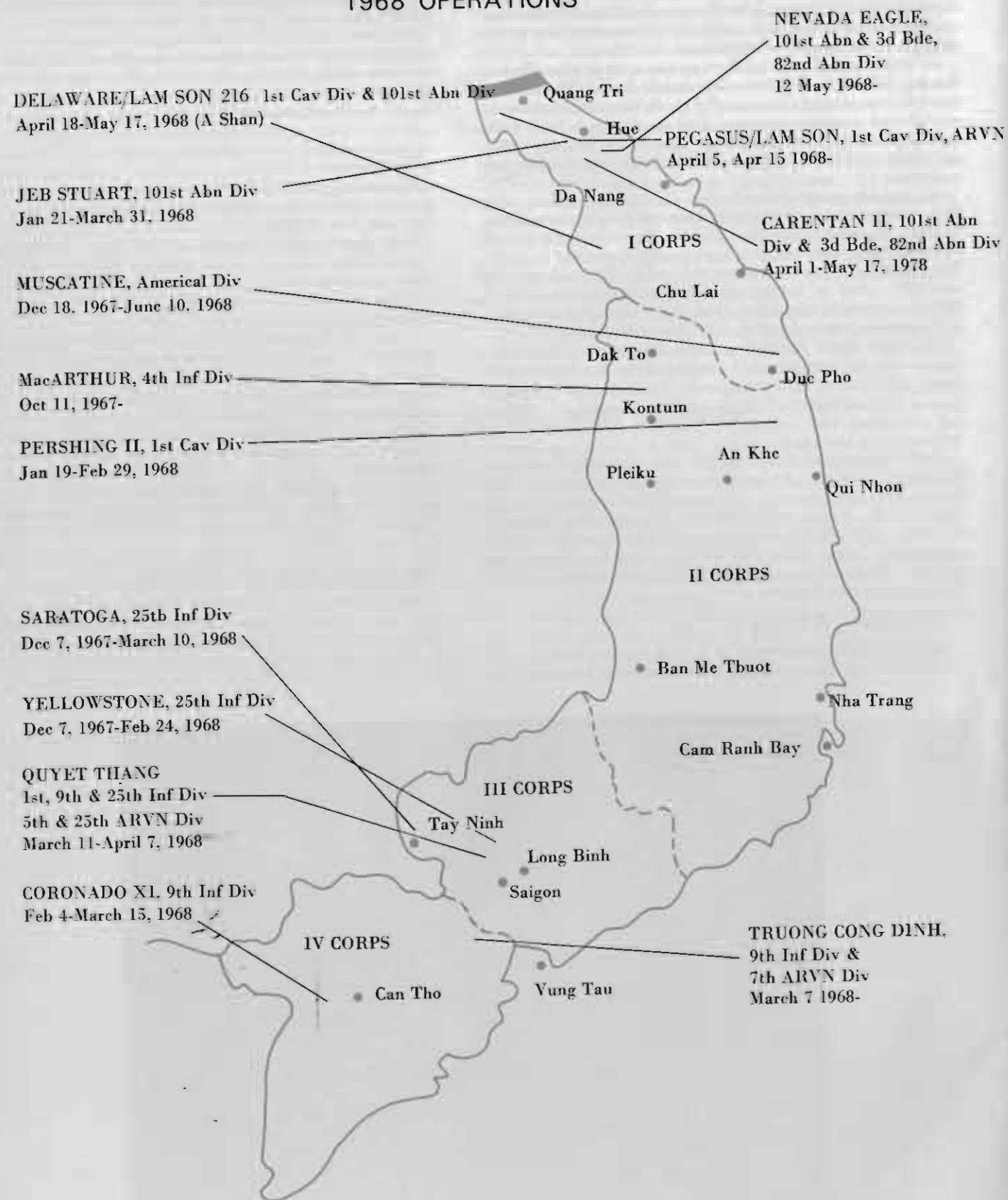
VILLAGE PUT TO TORCH

In one of the worst atrocities of the war, Viet Cong guerrillas entered the village of Son Tra shortly before midnight Friday, June 28, and killed 88 persons—73 of them being civilians—and leaving another 103 wounded. More than 85 per cent of the villagers' homes were destroyed by the

A 122 mm rocket is fired from its launching tube to demonstrate the weapon, which has been used by the Communists to shell Saigon. Pictured on the opposite page Saigon is shown under a rocket attack. Right photo by Sp5 George Saunders; opposite photo by Maj. Charles B. Moore.



1968 OPERATIONS



Son Tra was almost totally destroyed by Viet Cong guerrillas, who put the village to the torch on June 28. Photos by Sp5 Michael A. Faherty.

1968 CASUALTIES*

ENEMY KILLED

152,387

HOI CHANH

9,272

VIETNAMESE ABDUCTED

6,672

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES**

1,180,491

CIVILIANS ASSASSINATED

4,234

TERRORIST INCIDENTS

7,387

ARVN CASUALTIES

Killed	Wounded
18,230	43,081

FWMAF KILLED

804

U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES

Killed	Wounded
Army—6,607	Army—49,202
U. S.—10,503	U. S.—78,493

terrorists, leaving 4,000 people homeless. Most of the dead were killed by the flames. They died in their homes as they slept. Those that reached bunkers were burned to death as they huddled inside. The terrorists were Viet Cong who had been operating throughout northern Quang Tri Province for several months.

Culminating eight months of sweat and toil, in which five American engineers lost their lives to enemy fire, the Phu Cuong Bridge over the Saigon River was opened June 29. The bridge represents the last link in the Saigon by-pass, which will permit supplies from Long Binh to reach basecamps of the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions without traveling through the crowded streets of the capital city. The largest bridge ever built by Army engineers in Vietnam, the 1,002-foot concrete and steel span shortens the route to the infantry basecamps by 11½ miles! The bridge and approaching roadway 25 miles north of Saigon were constructed by the men of the 20th Engineer Brigade.

June closed with a note of optimism in the peace talks in Paris. Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford said that the "current negotiations may move out of the public propaganda stage toward private negotiations." The U.S.'s negotiator, Cyrus R. Vance, told North Vietnam that the U.S. "was prepared to cease bombardment of North Vietnamese territory," but was unable to do so because Hanoi had intensified its war efforts while the U.S. had been trying to de-escalate. And for the first time, Hanoi offered to discuss a Vietnam peace based on the 1954 agreements of the Geneva Conventions. But Hanoi's offer was tied to another demand for a total halt in the bombing of the North. "We think there is a proper basis for peace in Southeast Asia that conforms to the legitimate interests of all the countries of that area and that we and others should move steadily toward it," Vance rebutted at the session on June 26.

The Vietnamese have paid heavily in their long struggle against the Communist insurgents. Despite the cost, they maintain their determination to be free. We are assisting them in all their efforts—military, economic, and political—wherever we can: In the field, with the rural people, and at the military and governmental headquarters level. Success will depend ultimately upon the effectiveness of our joint efforts.

*From 1 Jan-30 Sept 1968

**Total number of South Vietnamese refugees on 30 Sept 1968



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375



Your tour in Vietnam is now behind you. It has been a year of hard fighting--certainly a period in which the American soldier has performed in the best traditions of the US Army. You may leave this land of Vietnam--the jungles, mountains, and coastal plains--with that inner satisfaction of knowing you have served the cause of free men everywhere. The Republic of Vietnam and, indeed, our own nation, are greatly in your debt for your efforts.

Now you are going home to rejoin your family and friends. They are proud of you and are anxiously awaiting your return. With you goes a world of knowledge and impressions based on the experiences you have had in Vietnam. Your friends, neighbors, and the people with whom you will work will look to you as an authority on what is happening in the Republic of Vietnam. This magazine, a history of this country and the year you spent here, may help you to tell your story.

You are commended for the fine job you have completed in Vietnam. Warmest wishes for success in your future endeavors.

Frank T. Mildren
FRANK T. MILDREN
Lieutenant General, US Army
Deputy Commanding General



Cam Ranh Bay

Front Cover: Emerging from the darkness of night into the light of a new day; Lifting a country from the grasp of Communist aggression and instilling instead a hope of peace and freedom; this is the goal being pursued by the USARV soldier from the Highlands to the Delta.

The title, TOUR 365, signifies the normal tour of one year, 365 days.

Back Cover: A pretty girl with a smile greets servicemen who have completed their tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam and are now homeward bound.



