

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 anti-aircraft 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



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, Jeb 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.

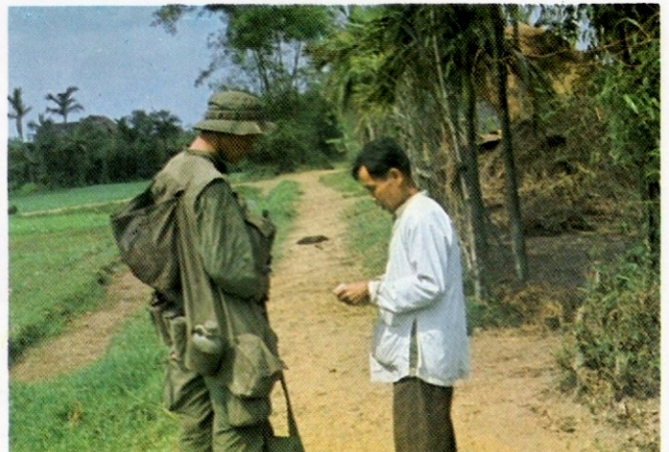
More than 1,000 Communists were killed in the operation. In three days of scouring the hillsides around the Marine base, cavalrymen from the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry captured a vast arsenal of weapons and supplies.

AFTER TWO YEARS

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

A/63^{1st} Involved!



*A/Co 3rd WAS INVOLVED IN
THIS ACTION*

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 anti-aircraft 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

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.

