



Stark  
News  
Photos

# CEASE FIRE AT 50

Photos of the Vietnam War



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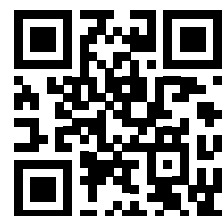
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## Digital Restoration: Sharper, Cleaner, Brighter

These photographs, those brave souls depicted within the photos and the opportunity to restore them commands absolute respect, and it was clear from the very start that this project deserved our staff's full, undivided attention. During the restoration process, our staff meticulously sorted through thousands of photos, utilizing cutting edge techniques to render these photos in higher resolution. We are proud, honored and privileged to be a part of upholding history, as well as grateful to every person who served and fought the enemies of freedom during the Vietnam War. May God Bless them all.









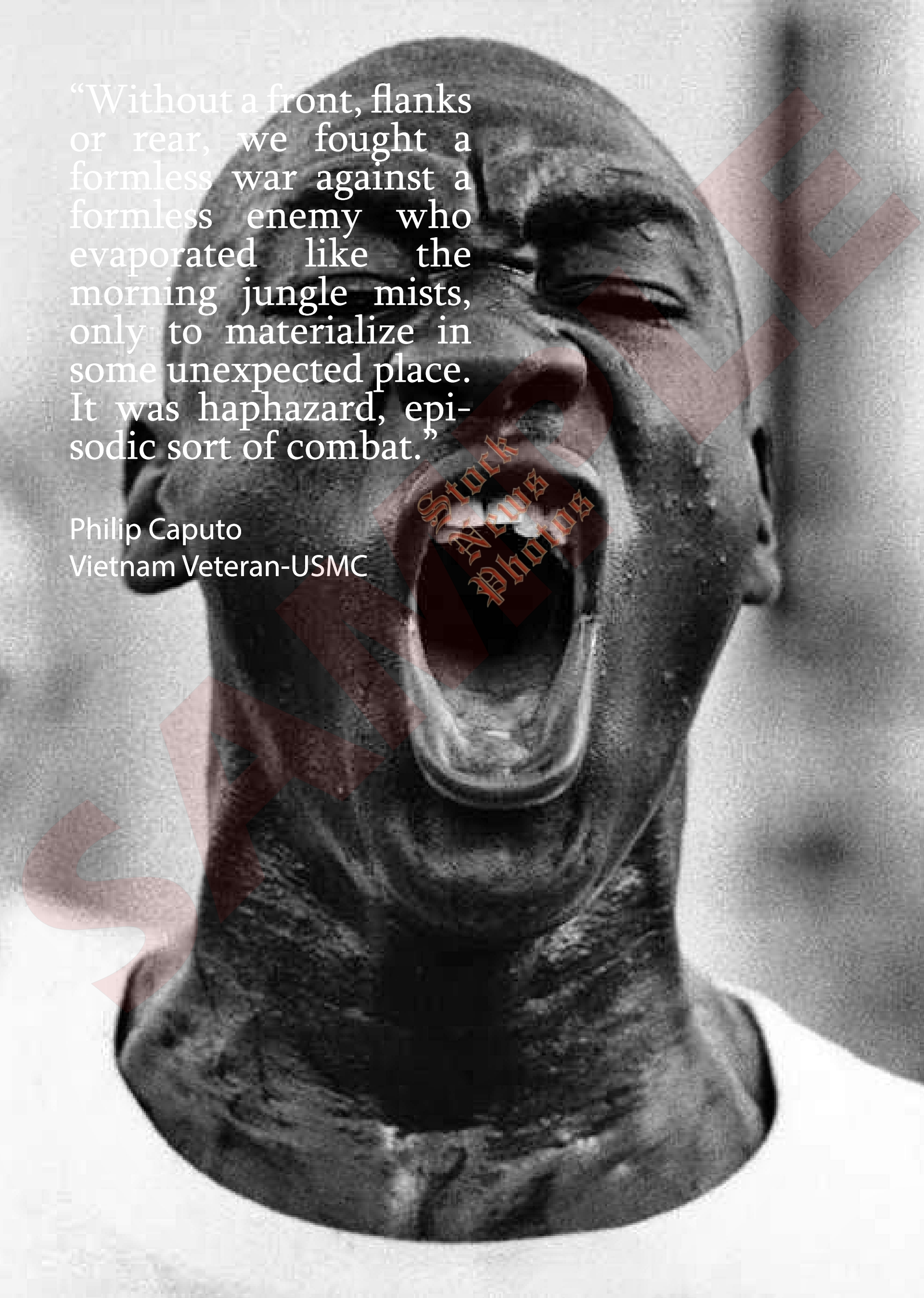


## The Vietnam Veteran's Prayer

Gracious and Almighty God, every year on the 29th day of March, Vietnam veterans and those who love and care for them come to You asking for healing of memories, forgiveness for misdeeds, and blessings for the freedom we enjoy in America. May our observance be a timely reminder that our freedom was purchased at high cost and should not be taken for granted. Bless the families and friends of those we honor today, and bless the veterans who share memories, stories, and tears to enrich this day. Finally, dear Lord, grant eternal rest for all those whose names are inscribed on The Wall and for those You have called to Yourself since the war ended. Let us not forget those who never returned. We pray that a full accounting of them will be attained one day soon.

*Amen.*

Father Phil Salois, National Chaplain, Vietnam Veterans of America



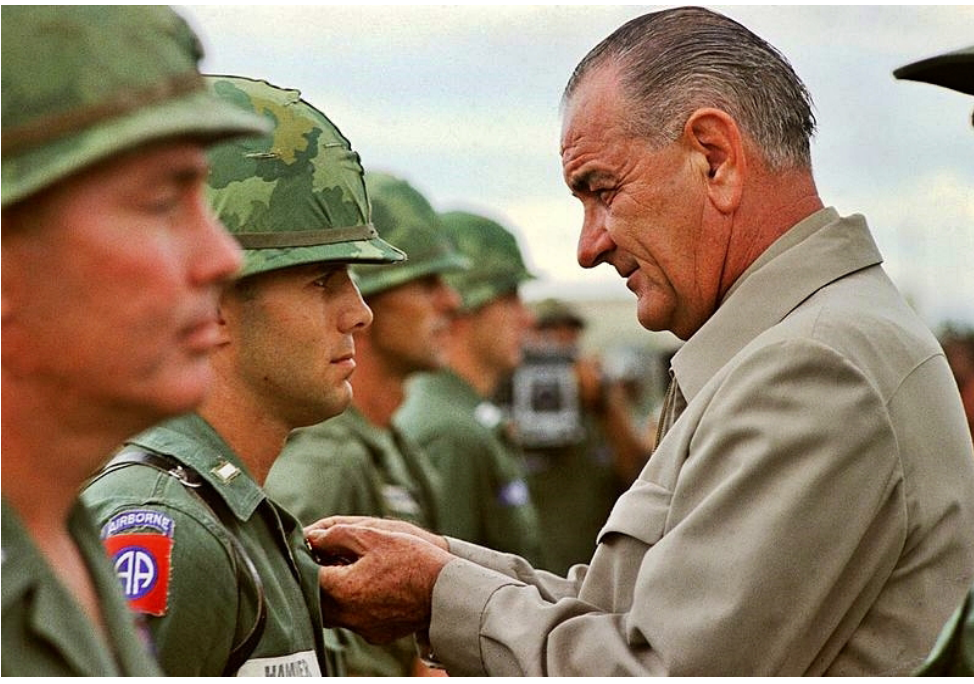
“Without a front, flanks  
or rear, we fought a  
formless war against a  
formless enemy who  
evaporated like the  
morning jungle mists,  
only to materialize in  
some unexpected place.  
It was haphazard, epi-  
sodic sort of combat.”

Philip Caputo  
Vietnam Veteran-USMC

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# Infantry

in · fan · try

*noun*

- 1) a: soldiers trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot  
b: a branch of an army composed of these soldiers
- 2): an infantry regiment or division

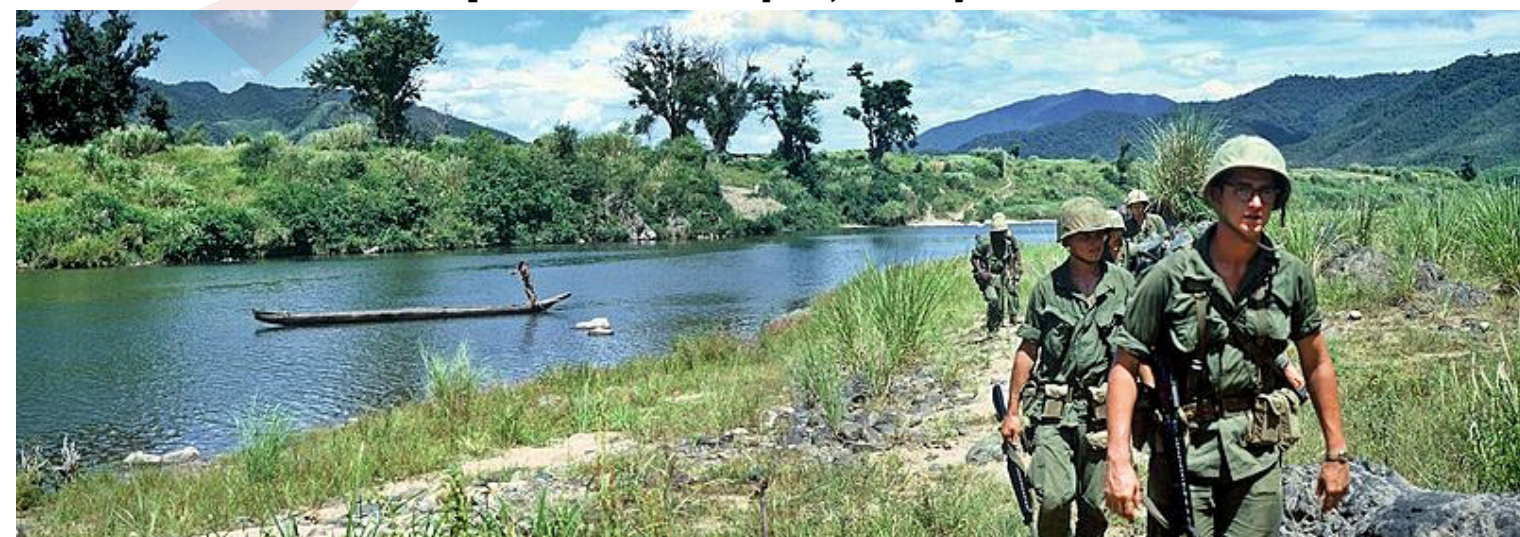


## Presidential Decoration

TOP: Soldiers receiving a personal decoration from President Lyndon B. Johnson at Cam Ranh Bay on October 26th, 1966. Photo taken by Yoichi Okamoto, courtesy Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

## President's Kin

MIDDLE: President Lyndon B. Johnson's son-in-law, Captain Charles S. Robb is seen in the foreground while observing the battlefield. Once upon a time, the politicians who lead us into wars often had 'some skin in the game', either they themselves had served during wartime or they had a close relative currently serving, as is the case shown in this photo taken on May 22, 1968 by Eddie Addams.



## On Patrol

ABOVE LEFT: Members of 3rd Platoon, Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines photographed on patrol down the Quang Tri River area in June 1967.

## Aged Youth

ABOVE RIGHT: Private First Class Russell R. Widdifield photographed in 1969.



**Searching for the Enemy**

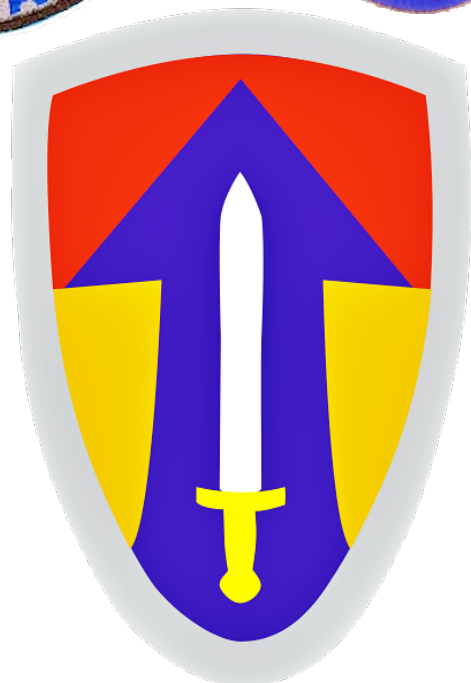
RIGHT: A telephone operator from the 1st Air Cavalry, A Company searches a Village for VC activity. Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration-Signal Corps Photographs of American Military Activity.

**Airlifted Out**

BELOW: Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment being airlifted out of the Filhol Rubber Plantation during Operation 'Wahiawa'. Photo taken May 16th 1966 by James K. F. Dung, SFC.

**Patches of Merit**

BOTTOM: Various service patches from the War.





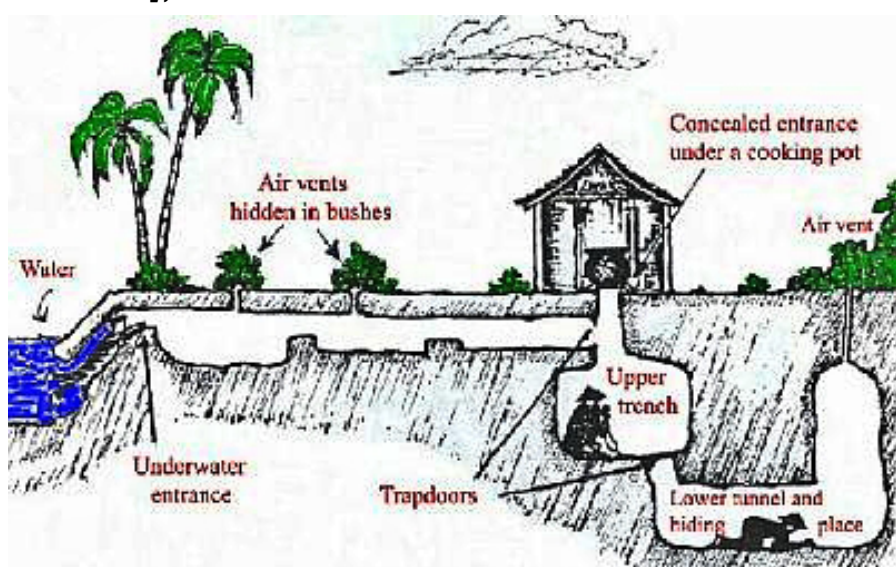


## Tunnel Rats

TOP: During Operation "Cedar Falls" in Cu Chi, Sgt. Ronald A. Payne of Atlanta, Ga cautiously studies the entrance to a tunnel in preparation to enter. The tunnel, one of many discovered during the operation, was found in the Hobo Woods region by the 1st Battalion, 5th Mechanized Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. The harrowing task of infiltrating an enemy tunnel takes personal characteristics of a different nature. This photo was taken by a Signal Corpsman on January 24, 1967.

## Tunnel Diagram

BELOW: This document by the U.S. Army corps of engineers from a training program at Fort Belvoir, depicts an illustrated diagram of a typical enemy tunnel. Note the various advantages highlighting the complexities of the tunnel system including concealed air vents, multiple trapdoors and even an underwater entrance. Courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of History, volume no. 62.



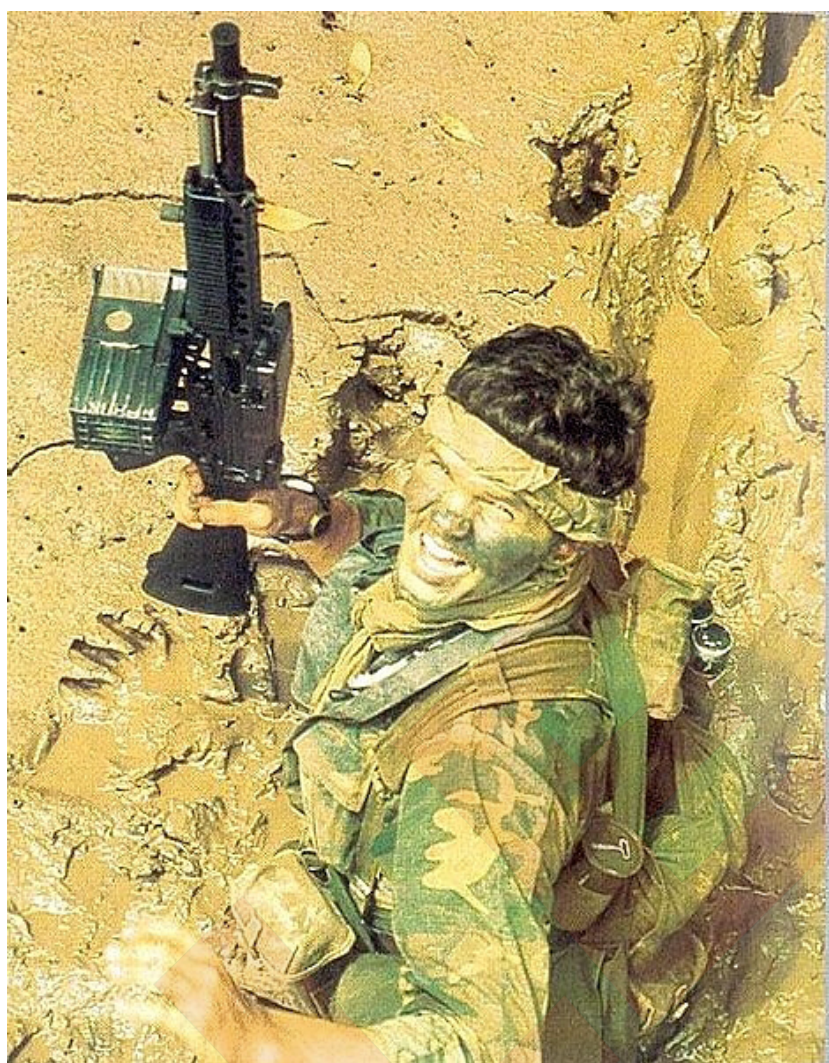
ABOVE: Troop B, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), shown on a search and destroy mission conducted during Operation "Oregon" near Duc Pho, Quang Ngai Province. Fellow soldiers lower an unidentified infantryman into a tunnel in search of VC.





## The "Pig"

ABOVE: The M-60 was plagued with design flaws, poor weight balance and unreliability issues in the jungle environment, however when it was fully operational the weapon could lay down preposterous amounts of suppressive fire. This photo shows a soldier from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines C company firing one during the Battle of Hue.



## Navy Seal

TOP RIGHT: In May of 1970, a SEAL team member trucks through a deep field of mud, making his way ashore from a boat drop. The distinct camo patterns and face paint were clearly an influence on Hollywood Director Michael Camino ala his highly fictional film 'Deer Hunter'.



## M-107

MIDDLE: The above photo shows an M-107 175mm Self-propelled Howitzer being fired by its gunnery crew during Operation Jeb Stuart. The M-107 was an integral piece of artillery for U.S. Infantrymen, allowing batteries to employ Shoot-and-scoot battlefield tactics.



## Towards Khe Sanh

BOTTOM: During Operation Pegasus in early April 1968, Soldiers from the First Cavalry Division march west towards Khe Sanh Military Base. The operation was part of an effort to relieve the combatants stationed there as it had been under siege since January.







### Meeting The Duke

ABOVE: American Icon, John Wayne is seen autographing the helmet of Private First Class Fonsell Wofford. Wayne visited the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, in Chu Lai during the summer of 1966.



### M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon

LEFT: An M72 rocket launcher (Light Anti-Tank Weapon, LAW) is shown slung over the shoulder of a soldier from 2nd Platoon, D Company, known as Airmobile. Contrary to what many Movies and Video Games may depict, the M-72 cannot be reloaded as the firing mechanism is destroyed upon launch, preventing the weapon from falling into enemy hands. Rumors exist regarding The PAVN loading M72 launchers with thermite rounds for use as makeshift flame throwers, though this has never been confirmed.

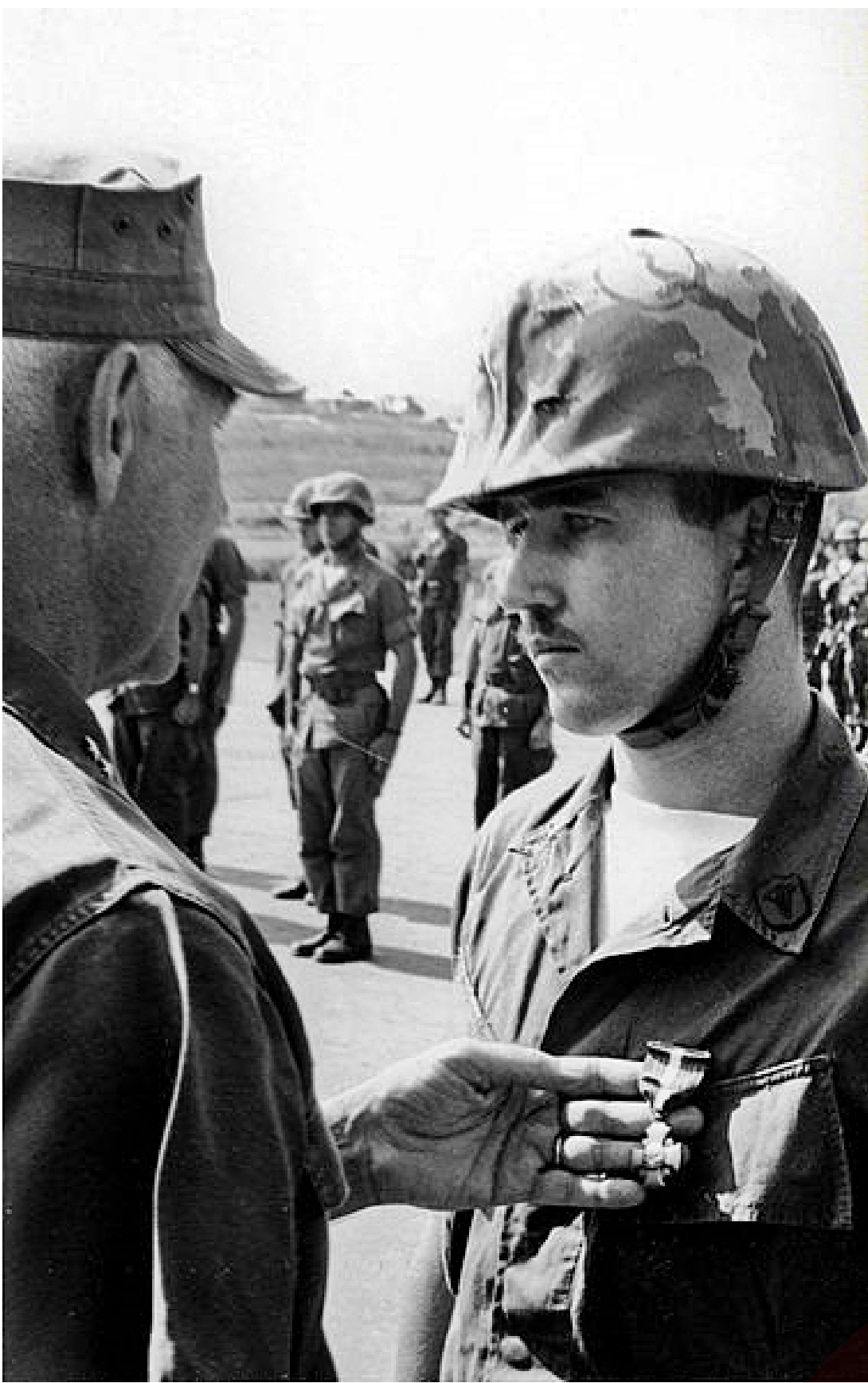


ABOVE: Firing in support of Marines fighting in the Da Nang Valley, crews from Battery B, 8th Battalion, 4th Artillery Regiment unleash their massive 175mm projectiles. Photo taken by Staff Sergeant M. M. Upton on January 1st, 1968. Courtesy Jonathan F. Abel Collection #3611, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division.



## Extraordinary Heroism

LEFT: Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Donn J. Robertson, is shown presenting the prestigious Navy Cross to Hospital Corpsman second class Gerald Strode. Strode earned the award during Operation Swift when on the 4th of September, 1967 he displayed 'extraordinary heroism under fire...saving the lives of several wounded Marines'. The Navy Cross is the nation's second highest military decoration that a Grunt or Hell Cat can achieve. HM2 Strode is aged 21 at the time of this photo.



## Advancing Position

ABOVE: After a Viet Cong attempt to overrun American artillery positions during Operation Hawthorne, soldiers press forward to assault the final VC position. Photo taken on June 7th, 1966 in Dak To, South Vietnam.



## Hill 742

BOTTOM: Smoke is seen deployed by soldiers of B and C companies of the 1st battalion, 8th Infantry division to guide incoming choppers to an established LZ about 5 miles northeast of Dak To. Photo taken November 14-17, 1967.



## The Fissure

BELOW: Walter Cronkite was the most trusted journalist in history. The thoughts and opinions of Millions of Americans hinged on his every word. In essence, he was the top "Influencer" of his day. While revisionists desperately try to re-write certain events, the cold reality is that the 'Cronkite Effect' or 'Cronkite Moment' was real, and shaped the outcome of the war in a profound way. In fact, it was so impactful that the most powerful person in the world at that time, President Johnson, was said to have commented "If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost Middle America."



"Television is an instrument which can paralyze this country."

General William Westmoreland





**STAB**

ABOVE: A Seal Team Assault Boat carries members of U.S. Navy Seal Team One down the Bassac River. Photo taken on November 19th 1967 by Journalist First Class J.D. Randal.

**Letter of Citation**

RIGHT: Bronze Star Citation for Sergeant First Class Edward T. Verdonck earned the Bronze Star for, among other factors, ‘Energetically applying his sound judgment and extensive knowledge’.

**Pinned Down**

BELOW: Pinned down at My Tho by .50 heavy fire, soldiers of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, Privates First Class Carl Badenand from New Orleans and Arcadio Carrion from Puerto Rico patiently wait in deep mud while American artillery takes out the Machine gun bunker. Photo taken April 4th, 1968 by Specialist Four Dennis J. Kurpius, 221st Signal Company.

**Citation**

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

**THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL**  
(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)  
IS PRESENTED TO

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS EDWARD T. VERDONCK, 051-18-3311  
UNITED STATES ARMY

who distinguished himself by outstandingly meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. During the period

September 1968 to August 1969

he consistently manifested exemplary professionalism and initiative in obtaining outstanding results. His rapid assessment and solution of numerous problems inherent in a combat environment greatly enhanced the allied effectiveness against a determined and aggressive enemy. Despite many adversities, he invariably performed his duties in a resolute and efficient manner. Energetically applying his sound judgment and extensive knowledge, he has contributed materially to the successful accomplishment of the United States mission in the Republic of Vietnam. His loyalty, diligence and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.







### Concussion

TOP: Gunnery crew Sargeant Max Cones of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 83rd Artillery, 54th Artillery Group fires the M107 during operations sometime in 1968. Photo courtesy United States Army Heritage and Education Center.



### G.I. Glasses

LEFT: Unidentified member from the 1st Signal Brigade stationed in Qui Nhon, Vietnam pictured in 1969-1970. Photo courtesy Tennessee State Library and Archives

### Stamp Act

BOTTOM RIGHT: Almost as much of a propaganda battle as it was a conventional war, the forces of International Communism utilized every distortable fact at their disposal. Shown here is a contemporary postage stamp of the USSR from 1966 which reads: "Hands off Viet Nam!".



### Look Out Post

BOTTOM LEFT: Perched in a bunker atop a rock formation off of the east bank of the Tra Bong River, Company "A", 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Rifleman Private First Class Roy D. Martin keeps diligent watch for enemy movement along the river bank. Photo taken by Staff Sergeant Howard Breedlove on April 18th, 1967 during Operation Oregon near Chu Lai.





## Tasty Turkey

TOP LEFT: An unidentified soldier from the 9th Infantry Division, enroute to Bear Cat base camp, carries what appears to be an American Bronze turkey. 57,000 turkeys were airlifted into combat zones across the theater of operations in 1967 to accommodate the nearly 500,000 U.S. troops now in country. This photo was taken by Stars and Stripes photographer John Olson sometime before Thanksgiving Day.



## Feeding the Pig

MIDDLE LEFT: An unidentified soldier fires his weapon in this photo from iconic Photojournalist Eddie Addams.

## Dangerous Talk

BELOW: A pair of soldiers communicating via an AN/PRC series radio while on patrol. One of the most dangerous roles for an infantryman in war, the Viet Cong generally targeted radio operators first upon engagement to introduce miscommunication and prevent a squad unit from calling for reinforcements or air support. The radio was fairly heavy, up to 20 pounds and only had a range of 5 miles in optimal conditions, 8 miles with a 7 section fish-pole antenna. Photo courtesy San Mateo Public Library.



## AK-47 Wound

BOTTOM LEFT: This radiograph shows the utter destruction of an AK-47 wound. Firing a 7.62 x 39 mm cartridge, upon impact the bullet produces around 1600 foot pounds of energy. The projectile core along with heavy fragmentation can easily be seen on the left. The injured soldier received a stent to the upper urethra. Radiograph photo courtesy the Office of the Surgeon General, the Borden Institute.





## Tough Terrain

TOP: The Jungle is indescribably wet. Orman Osborn, Specialist 4th Class of the 1st Infantry Division, lugs his M-60 slung over shoulder as he trucks across a tributary sometime during 1968. Note his platoon behind him following in the distance. Photo courtesy the United States Army Heritage and Education Center.

## Only Good Guys Provide Medicine

BELOW: 21 year old Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class and member of the 1st Medical Battalion John F. Chetister of Ohio, can be seen providing medical care to a young child in need during a MEDCAP(Medical Civilian Affairs Program) visit. The child lived off Chu Lai on the island of Ky Hoa, in a village called Hoa Thuan. This photo was taken on January 1st, 1966 and is part of the Jonathan F. Abel Collection (COLL/3611) at the Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division. Courtesy USMC Archives from Quantico, US.



CLEARED FOR RELEASE  
BY MACOI



"Let us understand:  
North Vietnam  
cannot defeat or  
humiliate the United  
States. Only  
Americans can do  
that."

President Richard Nixon



ABOVE: A medic treats an injured Lieutenant whose leg has been badly burned by an exploding Viet Cong white phosphorus booby trap. White phosphorus is highly incendiary, and can reach temperatures of about 815 degrees. By some estimates, 11% of all U.S. fatalities during the war were caused by enemy booby traps.









## Returning Fire

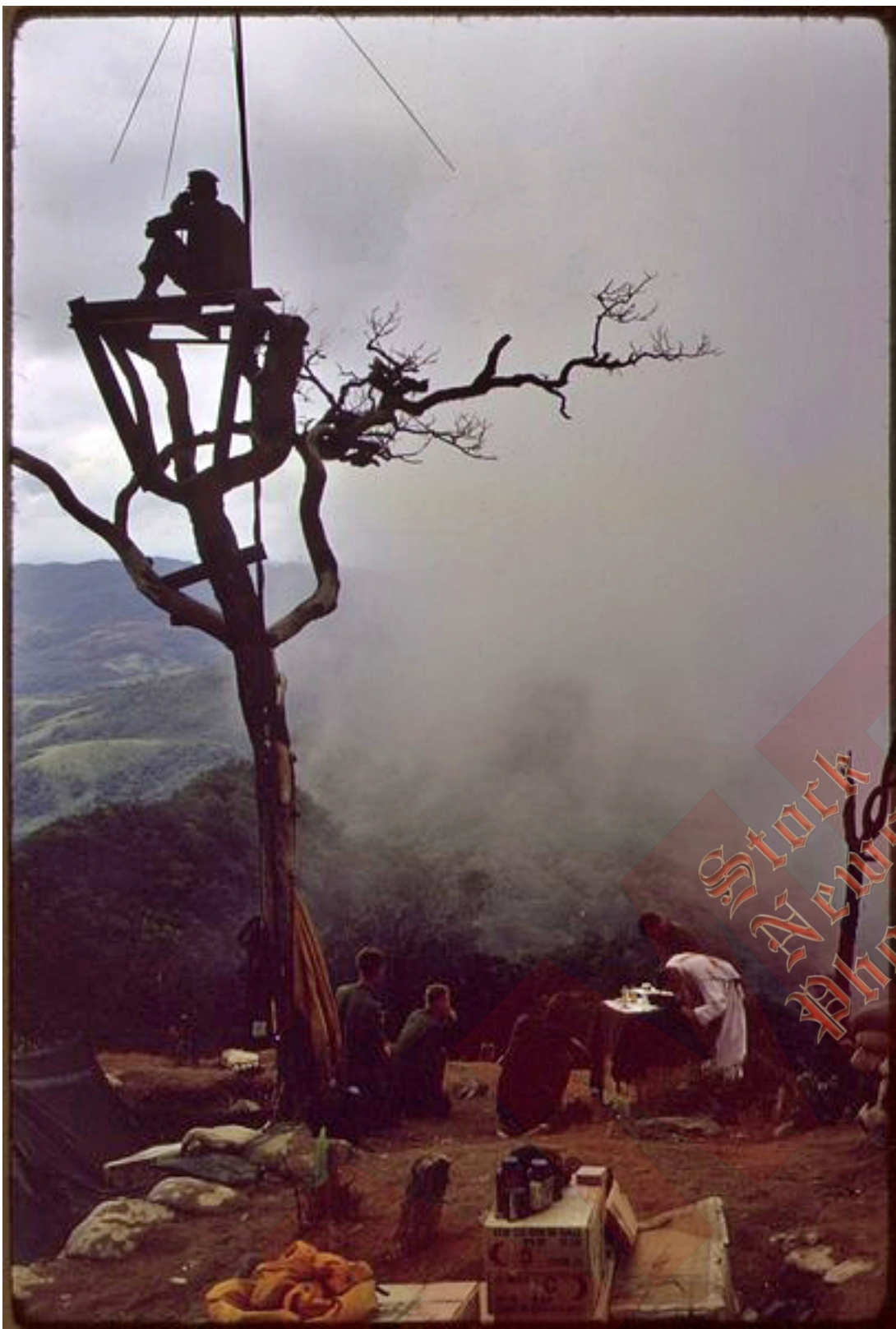
TOP: Soldiers return fire with their M-16 rifles during an engagement with Viet Cong on an unknown date. Photo courtesy Center of Military History, U.S. Army.

## Operation Crazy Horse

BELOW: Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division truck through the Suoi Ca "Happy Valley" located in the Binh Dinh Province during Operation Crazy Horse in 1966. The operation was a U.S. victory, seeing American soldiers scoring a 6-1 kill ratio in some of the harshest terrain that was also in enemy controlled territory, and it was a true display of the American Fighting Man at some of his best.







## Sunday Mass

TOP LEFT: 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines chaplain Lieutenant Commander John W. McElroy conducts Mass on an overcast Sunday Morning atop Hill 950. Note the Marine standing guard from an observation platform, as the Viet Cong soldiers were well aware of a platoon's vulnerability to ambush during Sunday service. Photo courtesy U.S. National Archives at College Park, Still Picture Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division(532396).



## Life in the Trenches

ABOVE: A soldier uses a small mirror for a morning shave while inside of a sandbag reinforced bunker. Photo by Eddie Adams.



## Happy 194th

Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines celebrate the Marine Corps 194th Birthday. 1st Lieutenant Raymond Horn can be seen cutting a slice of cake. This photo courtesy the 1st Marine Division Press Releases and Photographs Collection (COLL/4532), Quantico U.S.A.





## Citadel Hue

**TOP: Soldiers in front of the Citadel Imperial City Hue. Photo taken by Pulitzer Prize recipient Eddie Adams.**

## Clearing Dodge City

**RIGHT:** During Operation Allen Brook, Marines from Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines concentrate their fire on an enemy position. Operation Allen Brook was intended to sweep Viet Cong and PAVN combatants from the highly dangerous Go Noi Island. Due to the countless VC ambushes of U.S. soldiers on the island, it was nicknamed 'Dodge City'. Official Marine Corps Photo # 371490 taken on May 8th, 1968.



# Welcome to ITR

**BOTTOM:** Published in 1968 by Stewart Enterprises, this training publication is familiar to many who served as it was presented to new Marines upon arrival at Camp Pendleton, California.







## Hill 937

**ABOVE:** By 1969, the A Sau Valley had become a thorn in the side of the United States Military, as it had become a vein feeding the Viet Cong war effort. Despite killing over 2,000 enemy troops during three previous strategic Operations, Delaware, Dewey Canyon and Massachusetts Striker, the Viet Cong were still dug into the valley. So, brass conceived Operation Apache Snow, a strategic operation that was to involve ten total battalions of soldiers. The goal of this new operation was straight forward on paper, to block enemy escape routes, destroy as many Viet Cong targets as possible and cease enemy activity in the valley thus preventing them from using it as a staging point to continually attack civilian and military units in the nearby coastal provinces. Hampered by densely forested, hilly terrain and fortified enemy positions, the plan soon began to take new shape. During the operation, command decided on a full frontal assault of Viet Cong occupied portions atop mountain Dong Ap Bia. Soon, one lone piece of the mountain would become a household name, Hill 937. The task of taking the hill would fall on the shoulders of 101st Airborne, the 'Screaming Eagles'. After 10 brutal days of combat and 11 infantry assaults, the 101st took Hill 937. In homage to the battle of 'Pork Chop Hill' during The Korean War, the men euphemistically called 937 'Hamburger Hill'. Unlike the well known battle 16 years prior that helped bring about an armistice, this one would erode support for the cause at home. While the operation was technically a military victory, it was a long term strategic loss. The valley was still used as a staging area for the enemy, but most detrimental was the effect it had on the weak constitution of the American civilian. Much like the 'Cronkite Effect' and the Tet offensive before it, the battle was one component in a series of events that turned public opinion of the war, and the ominous nickname 'Hamburger Hill' was seared into the minds of Americans repeatedly by an all too eager media complex. The final insult for many, both military and civilian, was when the U.S. abandoned the hill just weeks after the battle that cost 72 American lives, 7 of which were killed by friendly fire.



## Laid Waste

**LEFT:** Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, 'Screaming Eagles', survey a smoldering landscape left in ruins following the intense fighting that took place on Hill 937. This photo was taken on May 31st, 1969. Courtesy United States Army Military History Institute, Melvin Zais Photograph Collection.





## Demo Team

**TOP:** The Stoner 63A light machine gun seen in the hands of A U.S. Navy SEAL, who stands at guard while the rest of his team sets demolition charges to destroy a Vietcong bunker. Photo taken March 26th, 1968 and courtesy Navy/National Archives.



## Harrowing Passage

**MIDDLE:** Constructed by the 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry and units from the 7th Engineer battalion, Red Devil Road began operations in 1971. A narrow mountainside path, it ran from fire support base Elliott to Khe Sahn and allowed American forces to penetrate much further into enemy territory. Courtesy Mounted combat in Vietnam, Department of The Army by Donn A. Starry.



## Wounded Arriving

**BELOW:** In this masterful photo by Warren K. Leffler, severely wounded servicemen are seen being carried off of a Lockheed C-141A-LM Starlifter by stretcher as they arrive at Andrews Air Force Base. Photo taken on March 8th, 1968 and courtesy the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division, ppmsca.03208.



## Free Donuts

TOP LEFT: Marine Staff Sgt. Ross A. Riepman of Memphis, Tennessee can be seen serving donuts to G.I.'s stationed at Camp Books, Da Nang. Operated by Rations Company, Supply Battalion, Force Logistic Command's donut shop churned out 200 dozen donuts every day. Riepman said "the Marines that come in here from the field really appreciate the service. They like it so much that we use about 180 gallons of milk each day, along with 80 gallons of fruit drink and 30 gallons of iced tea." Courtesy Jonathan Abel Collection(COLL/3611), Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections, Quantico, U.S.A.



## Hill 882

ABOVE: Mahlon S. Jenkins of the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade shown in action on Hill 882 during the battle of Dak To in November 1967. Photo courtesy Joel D. Meyerson, Images of a Lengthy War. Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1986.



## Tracking the Enemy

BOTTOM: Tracker Team Commander, 4th Infantry Detachment (War Dog Provisional), Sergeant William Cariy and an unidentified Platoon leader shown during a tracking mission on March 18th, 1969. Photo taken by Specialist 5th Class Bryan K. Grigsby.





## Hill 170

TOP: During Operation Essex, a machine gun crew from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines fire an M-60 at the enemy on November 20th, 1967. a continuation of Operation Swift, its objective was to flush Viet Cong combatants from the Hiep Duc District of Que San Valley, known as 'Antenna Velly', towards U.S. soldiers lying in wait who were conducting the counterpart to the offensive, Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. Courtesy National Archives 5891336.

## Wow Factor

BELOW: Mesmerized by incoming helicopters, a little Vietnamese girl is seen being held by Staff Sergeant Hugh L. Maple while the pair are waiting in chow line. Soldiers near Thuan Giao, RVN from the the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division were there providing humanitarian aid including food and medical attention to local villagers. Photo taken on November 10th 1967 and courtesy the National Archives, NAID 100310252.











## 1000 Yard Stare

**ABOVE:** Manning a well stocked M60 machine gun during the Battle of Dak To, the Squad Leader of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade stares past the perimeter, on the ready for attacking Viet Cong enemies as his company commences a final assault on Hill 875. Photo taken November 22nd, 1967 by Staff Sergeant Alfred Batungbatal.





Military Payment Certificates

Beginning shortly after World War II, Military payment certificates were issued as a form of currency to American soldiers in order to prevent the regional monetary instability that accompanied U.S. soldiers circulating American currency. By the end of WW2, arbitrage had become a serious problem, threatening the economic and political stability of newly liberated territories. In an effort to curb this issue, the MPC was introduced. In fact, during the Vietnam War the military was so serious about preventing the damage done to civilian economies, ‘C-Day’, conversion day, was always a classified event and soldiers were strictly confined to base on those days. To further prevent counterfeiting, hoarding and black market profiteering of the certificates, multiple series were reissued with frequent design changes during the course of the Vietnam War. This earned the certificates and their flagrantly colored designs the nickname “Uncle’s monopoly money”. In total, 13 different series were produced by the United States Military between 1946-1973. Military payment certificates were discontinued altogether after the Vietnam War ended, and the U.S. did not institute a similar program until 1997, when the United States Department of the Treasury launched the ‘Eagle Cash’ program.







**Series 641**

BOTTOM P. 26 & ABOVE: Series 641 were issued between 1965-1968.

**Series 661**

BELOW & TOP P. 28: Series 661 were issued between 1968-1969.







## Series 681

BELOW & TOP P. 29: Series 681 were issued between 1969-1970.







**Series 692**

BELOW & TOP P. 30: Series 692 were issued between 1970-1973.



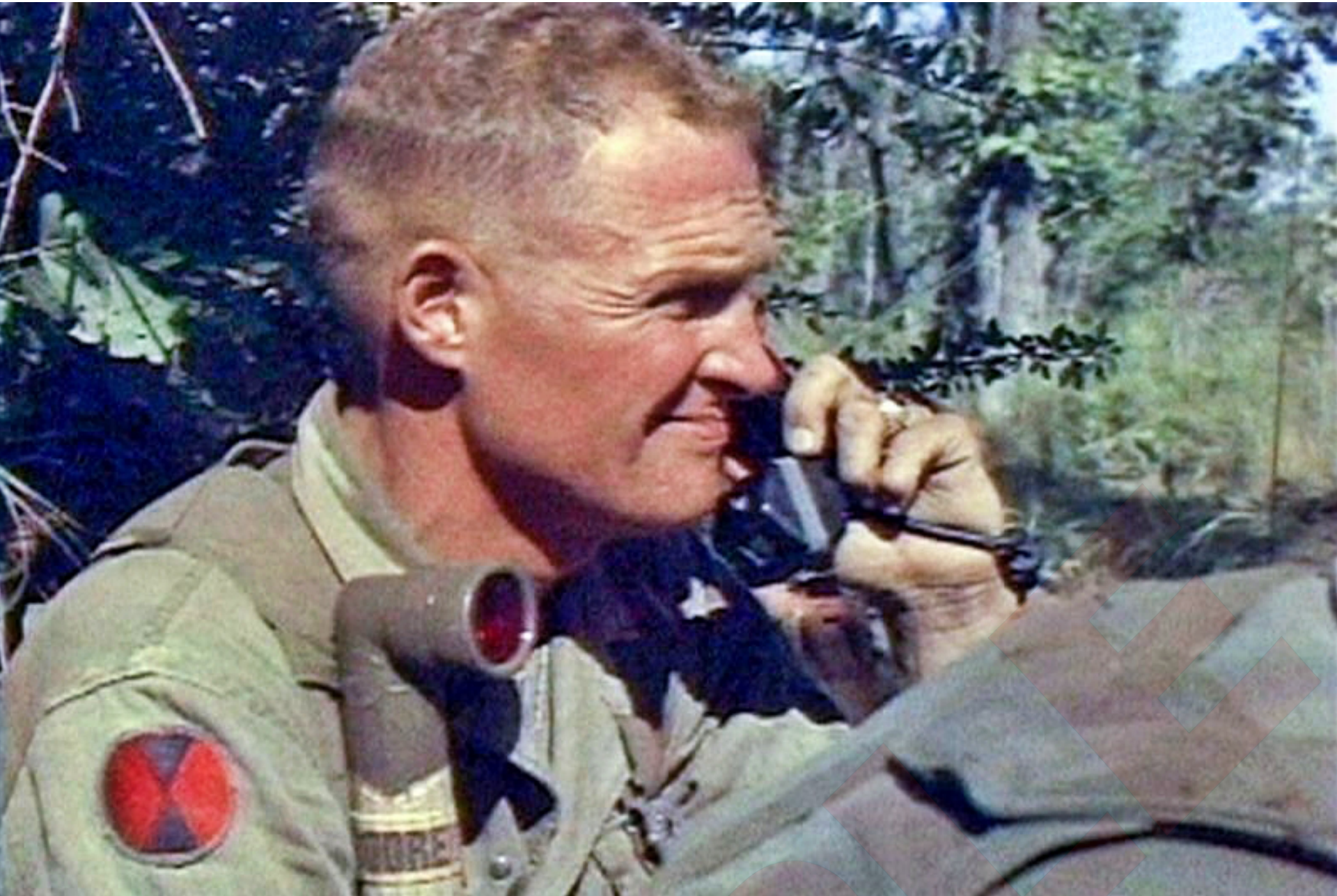




## Battle of La Drang Valley

ABOVE: Medal of Honor recipient Major Bruce P. Crandall pilots his UH-1D helicopter back towards fire support base Falcon after airlifting Marines into Landing Zone 'X-ray' during the Battle of La Drang. A bounty of firsts, the Battle of La Drang was groundbreaking in military warfare terms. In addition to being the first major engagement between US and communist forces in Vietnam, it was the first wide scale use of an air cavalry style helicopter assault and it was the first use of Boeing's strategic heavy bomber the B-52 Stratofortress in a close air support role. Commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore, earned the Distinguished Service Cross for his "leadership by example" against overwhelming odds. At one point, the entire perimeter was surrounded and being overrun by enemy combatants, yet the soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division fought back a force that outnumbered them nearly 2 to 1. While the battle was a resounding victory and showed the clear superiority of the U.S. fighting force, it set a pattern for the entire war, a pattern of victory with high kill ratios of up to 10:1 yet a perception back home of defeat. It would expose a hard truth: the same qualities that made America a great and special land, the demand for no American casualties, would also be the very thing that cost her the war. The battle uncovered another ugly truth, that simply put, the communist enemy was willing to kill as many of its own soldiers as necessary without victory, and without remorse. For those interested in history, 'We Were Soldiers Once...and Young' is a highly esteemed book about the subject written by Lieutenant General Hal Moore and reporter Joseph L. Galloway.





**Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore**

ABOVE: Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) commander, calling for air support during the of Battle La Drang.

”It seemed like they didn't care how many of them were killed. Some of them were stumbling, walking right into us. Some had their guns slung and were charging bare-handed.”

**Sgt. Ernie Savage**



## Mine Detection

TOP LEFT: While hoofing a trail in Cambodia, Engineers are seen sweeping for mines. Photo courtesy Donn A. Starry: A Mounted combat in Vietnam.



## Hurry Up and Wait

ABOVE: Soldiers in this photo can be seen sitting around with nothing much to do in between grueling combat operations and enemy engagements.



## The Rice Paddy

BOTTOM: During Operation Chinook II, Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines truck across a rice paddy. Operation Chinook II took place from 19 February 19th, 1967 to April 4th, 1967. Photo taken February 20th, 1967, courtesy DEFENSE DEPartment, MARINE CORPS #A801223.









### **On Patrol**

**TOP:** Photo of Marines on patrol through the brush taken by Photojournalist Eddie Adams.

### **'Cheese'**

**MIDDLE:** Soldiers pose for a quick photo on a blistering tropical Vietnamese day.



### **Silhouette of War**

**BELOW:** The silhouette can be a striking, dramatic way to capture a photography subject. Such is the case in this photo of Private First Class John Sizemore from Company C, 1st battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division. During combat operations near Dak To, PFC Sizemore stands guard on hill 742 sometime in November, 1967. Photo courtesy U.S. Army.







## Fast and Brave

**ABOVE:** As the enemy attacks Fire Support Base Russell, Lance Corporal T. J. Gledhill, squad leader of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, streaks from position to position distributing much needed ammo to his besieged men. Photo taken on December 12th 1968 by Corporal J. G. McCullough. Courtesy Jonathan F. Abel Collection (COLL/3611) at the Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division.

## Humanitarians

**BELOW:** Despite many societal stereo-types, by large the United States was on a humanitarian mission and provided food, medical care and countless other forms of aid to Southeast Asian civilians. This fact that has been rarely depicted throughout most of popular culture was actually the true reality.







### Heavy Machine Gun

ABOVE: In Support of Units from Company D, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry. Division, a crew manning an M-45 Quadmount provide heavy fire during Operation Pershing. Photo courtesy United States Army Heritage and Education Center.



### Ignoring Enemy Fire

BOTTOM LEFT: During Operation Wheeler Staff Sergeant Oscar C. Gallegos of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, undeterred under heavy enemy fire, carefully takes aim with his M-72 Light Anti-tank Weapon. Culminating in a kill ratio of nearly 15 to 1, Operation Wheeler/Wallowa was by far a strategic and military victory for the United States. Photo taken in September/October 1967, courtesy United States Army Institute of Heraldry.



### Beat the Heat

BOTTOM RIGHT: Located below the Tropic of Cancer, monsoons and unrelenting heat could make life miserable for the soldiers. In this photo, soldiers in country try to stay cool.



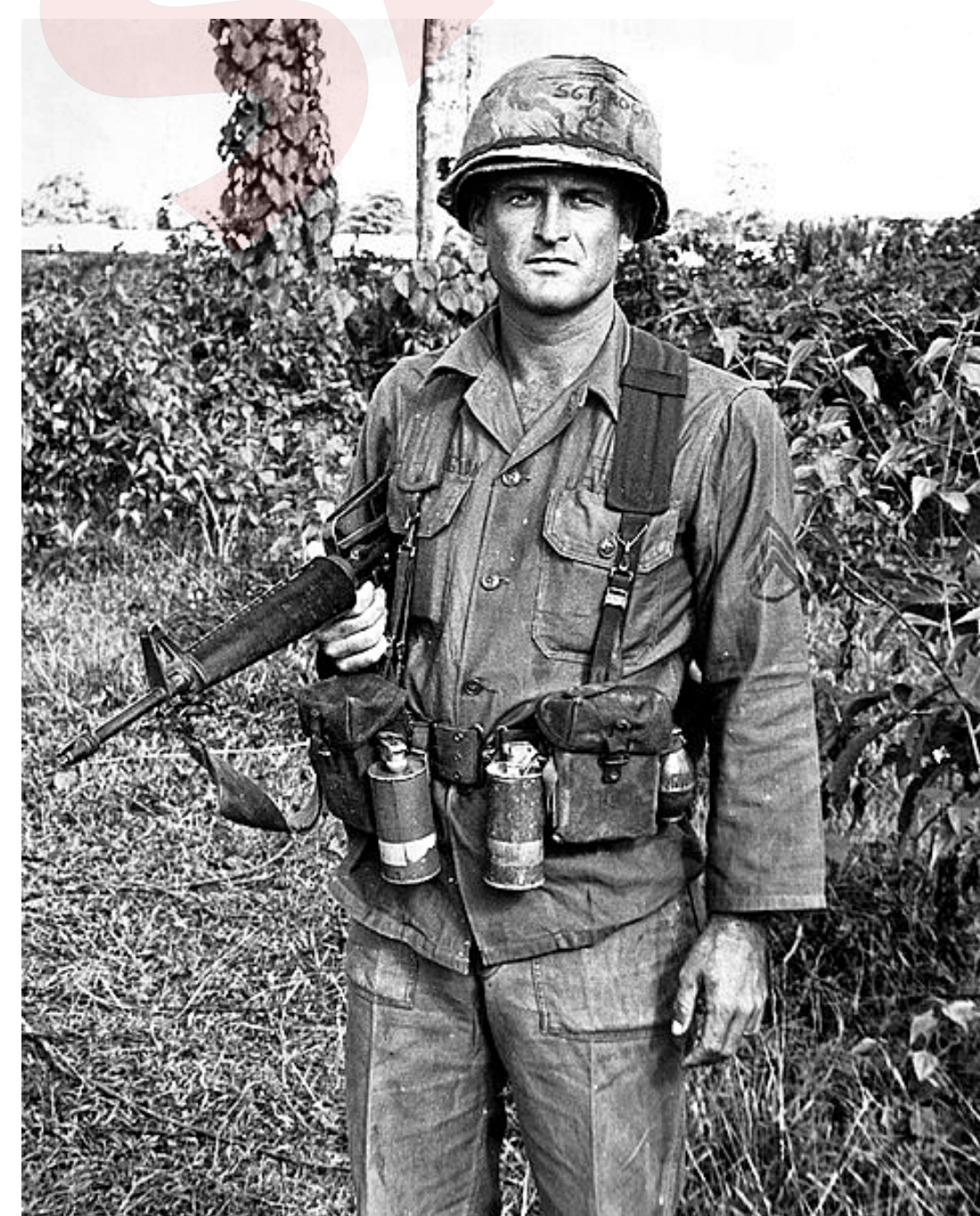


### **Sometimes Cute**

**TOP:** Sitting atop an M113 armored personnel carrier, Specialist 4th Class Jackie Coulter of Lafayette, Georgia, is seen holding a puppy that his 1st Infantry Division unit found during Operation Buckskin. The pooch miraculously survived an air strike near Laike, Vietnam. Photo taken January 18th, 1966 by a U.S. Army photographer, courtesy National Archives and Records Administration NAID# 100310258.

### **Living Action Figure**

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Bearing the iconic look that would define the standard for the ideal American G.I.s until the desert motif of the early 1990's, Staff Sergeant Russell C Fordham of D Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry is shown posing in full jungle camo and gear. Photo courtesy United States Army Heritage and Education Center.







## Raising Standards

**ABOVE:** When American combat troops began to enter the country in March 1965, the vast majority of Vietnamese people lacked even the most basic medical care. In Summer 1965, the U.S. military began to send medical personnel into South Vietnam to conduct MEDCAPs, Medical civic action program, in order to provide the Vietnamese people with quality out-patient health care. The United States Military would end up providing hundreds of thousands of civilians with some of the finest care available for the time. Soon after tangible successes of the MEDCAPs, the United States Military would also launch a similar program called MILPHAPs, Military Provincial Hospital Assistance Program. MILPHAPs were crucial in assisting the civilian population, as the programs would send a sizable team of medical personnel to help augment hospitals and their staff. Every MILPHAP team consisted of one medical administrative officer, three skilled physicians, and a dozen enlisted medical technicians. Eventually, more than half of the provinces in South Vietnam would have a Military Provincial Hospital Assistance Program and by 1970, 25 of the 44 provinces located in South Vietnam would field a MILPHAP team. The remarkable care, never before seen in the tropical region, improved the quality of medical treatments in Vietnam for generations, and helped raise the standard of living for millions of people throughout Southeast Asia. In the picture above, an American Medical personnel can be seen inoculating Vietnamese civilians. Still seeing periodic outbreaks of the Plague countrywide at the time, United States Air Force Captain John R. Vydareny provides a Vietnamese woman with a plague vaccine. This photo was taken on January 23rd, 1970 in the village of Phu Gia, near Phu Cat Air Base, during a Military Provincial Hospital Assistance Program visit. Courtesy the National Archives and Records Administration, NAID# 542310.

## Watercolor of Service

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** This watercolor painting, named **AMERICAN DOCTOR EXAMINES VIETNAMESE CHILD** by Samuel E. Alexander, CAT IV, 1967, depicts the wonderful work of American medical personnel during the Vietnam War and is a beautiful example from the U.S. Army Combat Art Program. Courtesy of the National Museum of the U.S. Army.







## Burning Bush

TOP: Sergeant Robert E. Fears uses a flamethrower to clear an area of brush near Da Nang on May 22nd, 1970. Photo captioned 'Pearson, CPL, Photographer', courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, National Archives at College Park, NAID# 532491.

## Hitchin' a Ride

BELOW: Soldiers from the 3rd Marine Division ride atop LVTP-5(Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Personnel 5) amphibious tractors in 1966. Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, NAID# 532508







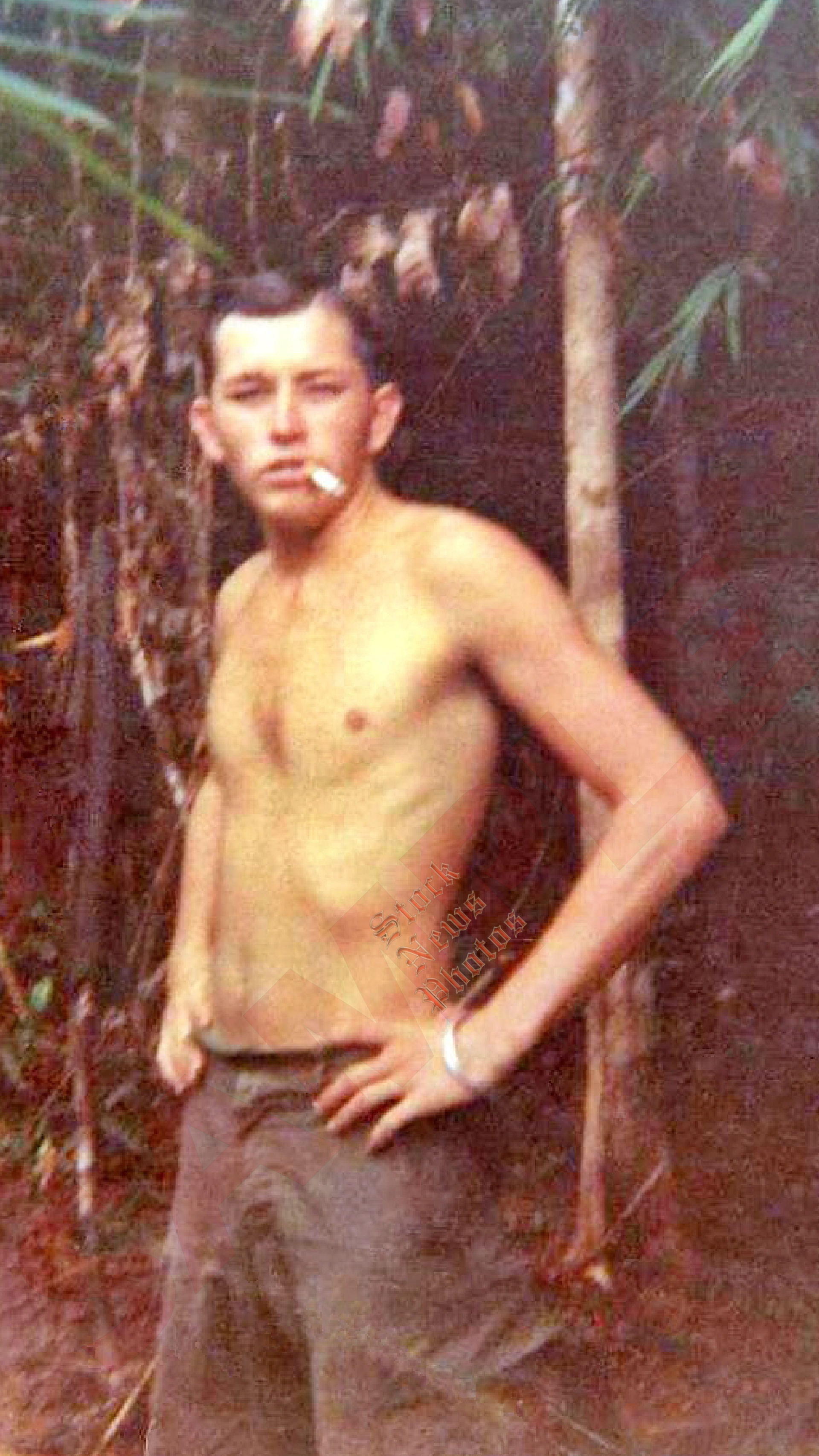
### **Operation Van Buren**

TOP: During Operation Van Buren soldiers from the 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Brigade, truck across a rice field in search of the enemy near Tuy Hoa. Operation Van Buren was a joint allied military operation consisting of Forces from the Republic of Vietnam, Republic of Korea and the United States. Its objective was to deny Viet Cong forces the necessary rice harvest that was so important to enemy operations. Photo by Robert C. Lafoon, courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, NAID# 17331378.

”The Vietnam War required us to emphasize the national interest rather than abstract principles.”

**Henry Kissinger**

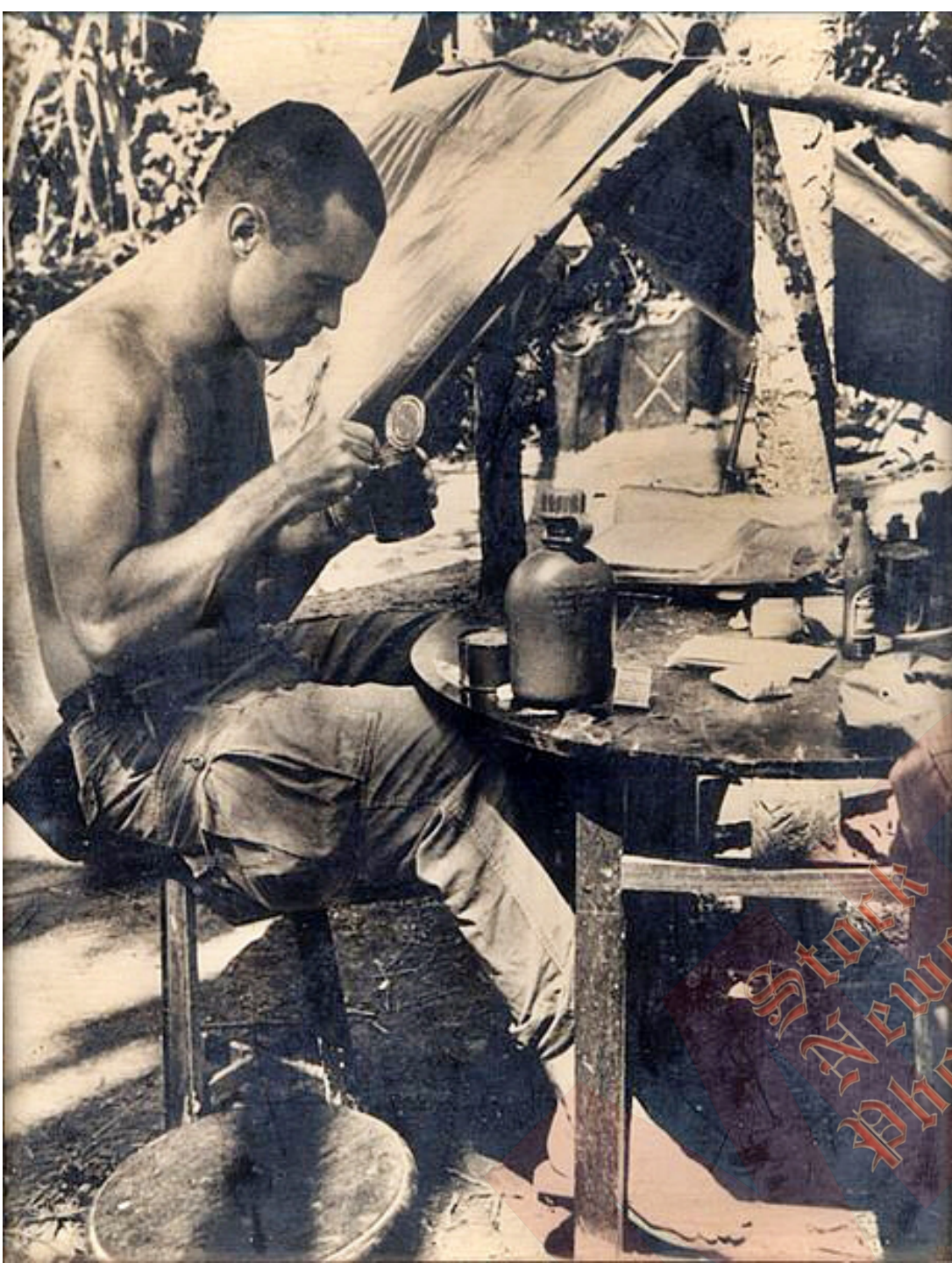






### Sitting in Country

TOP RIGHT: First Sergeant Koebbs from the First Cavalry Division, pictured in country. Photo courtesy the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. After hoofing dozens of miles through the jungle in extreme heat with full fatigues and gear on, often the only relief a leg weary soldier could find was the hard ground, often full of hazardous wildlife or booby traps.



### Chow

TOP LEFT: Soldier Thomas Taylor seen eating a C-ration in camp.



### Operation Toan Thang III

BOTTOM: During Operation Toan Thang III, gunnery crew members of Battery Company C, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery, 25th Infantry Division fire in support of infantrymen fighting south of TAY NINH. Aerial projectiles fired from a 105mm howitzer can be seen bursting in the distance. Photo taken May 2nd, 1969 by Specialist 5th Class Joseph T. Primeau, courtesy the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Collection: Marshall, S.L.A.





## A Braver Generation

**TOP:** Rick Rescorla was a British born commissioned United States Military Officer during the Vietnam War. He is shown here fighting in the Battle of La Drang with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Airmobile. Recipient of the Silver Star, a Purple Heart, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, he vigorously rejected the title of War Hero and was quoted as saying "The real heroes are dead". Legendary military commander Lieutenant General Hal Moore once described him as "the best platoon leader I ever saw", a true testament to his heroism. However, his finest moment likely came many years after the War on the dreadful Morning of 9/11. A well respected security consultant who with the help of counterterrorism specialist and friend Daniel Hill warned of both World Trade Center attacks, he intuitively defied the foolish orders given by authorities to stay in place after the North tower was struck. Rescorla personally led thousands of individuals out of the South Tower moments before it collapsed, only to be killed heading back up into the burning building in search of more survivors. He and many of his generation were born from a mold that has been discontinued by God. Photo courtesy the U.S. Army.

## Basic Transport

**RIGHT:** Soldiers pictured riding in the back of a military truck, enroute to active duty combat operations. Photo taken by Pulitzer Prize winning Photojournalist Eddie Adams. Courtesy Public Domain, University of Texas at Austin.







## Writing Ma

TOP: Soldier writing a letter home, one of very few luxuries afforded to soldiers during wartime.

## No One Left Behind

BELOW: Racing towards stretcher bearers in wait, Marine Sergeant Lyle Lewis of Tacoma, Washington piggy-back carries a wounded Marine on April 28th, 1965. The two Marines were part of a larger patrol that had penetrated deep into Viet Cong territory, many miles away from Da Nang Air Base. Photo by Eddie Adams.

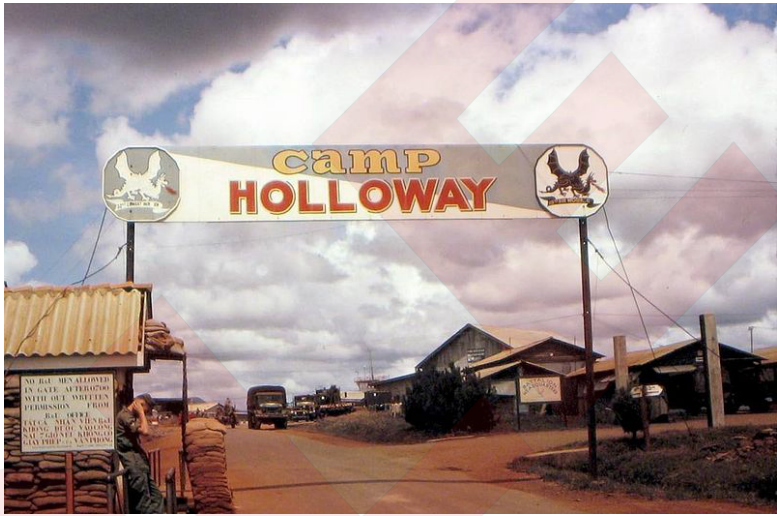






### Platoon Leader

TOP LEFT: Platoon leader Lieutenant James F. Gregory leads soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division into a village in north Vietnam. Photo Courtesy the United States Army Heritage and Education Center.



### Camp Holloway

ABOVE: Established in 1962, Camp Holloway was built in support of allied military operations in the II Corps Tactical Zone, located in South Vietnam. The Viet Cong 409th Battalion hit the base with a surprise attack on February 7th, 1965 that sadly killed one American, but cost the Viet Cong 7 men and 10 aircraft. Photo by Hampton Broeker.



### Herritage Matters

BOTTOM: While at Landing Zone Baldy, a group with Marines of Mexican heritage take pose for a brief picture. Shown Left to Right, the original photo caption reads: "Red Garcia; Joe (a truck driver from Tucson); Chino; Tony "Tramp" Castillo; Jose; and Efrain Hinojosa. According to Red Garcia, company cook, Efrain Hinojosa, would look out for his buddies, occasionally providing them with extra helpings during meals." Photo courtesy the Red Garcia Collection (COLL/5065), Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections, Quantico U.S.A.





### Dark Underworld

**ABOVE:** A Tunnel Rat can be seen preparing to enter an enemy tunnel, well concealed in the bush. Part of an Engineer Tunnel Demolition Team, explosive charges are seen being lowered into the narrow opening. Photo courtesy U.S. Army.



### Dust Off

**LEFT:** Soldiers try to avoid the inevitable whirlwind of dust and debris as a helicopter lifts off from camp near a cemetery. This phenomenon, called rotor downwash, would create Foreign Object Debris(FOD) which didn't often mix well with precision instruments of war. Photo taken by Eddie Adams, courtesy the University of Texas Austin.





## Down Time

**ABOVE:** Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, Private First Class Edward, Private First Class Falls and Private First Class Morgan shown in the bunker they had dug during Operation Worth. The men hung a sign on the bunker with a tongue in cheek expression that read "Home is where you dig". Photo taken 1968 and is courtesy National Archives at College Park NAID# 532482.



## Hydration Is Key

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Lance Corporal Daniel W. Magner, a grenadier with the 2d Platoon of E Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, age 20 of Lansing, Michigan, takes a swig from his standard issue canteen on a sweltering Vietnam day. Located southwest of Da Nang, Lance Corporal Magner was participating in Operation Allen Brook. Photo taken May 1968 by USMC Corporal A. V. Huffman, courtesy the Jonathan Abel Collection (COLL/3611), Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections, Quantico, U.S.A.



**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Special Forces camp at Plei Me. Photo courtesy the Mel Elliott Collection via Harry Ettinger.





### Move Fast

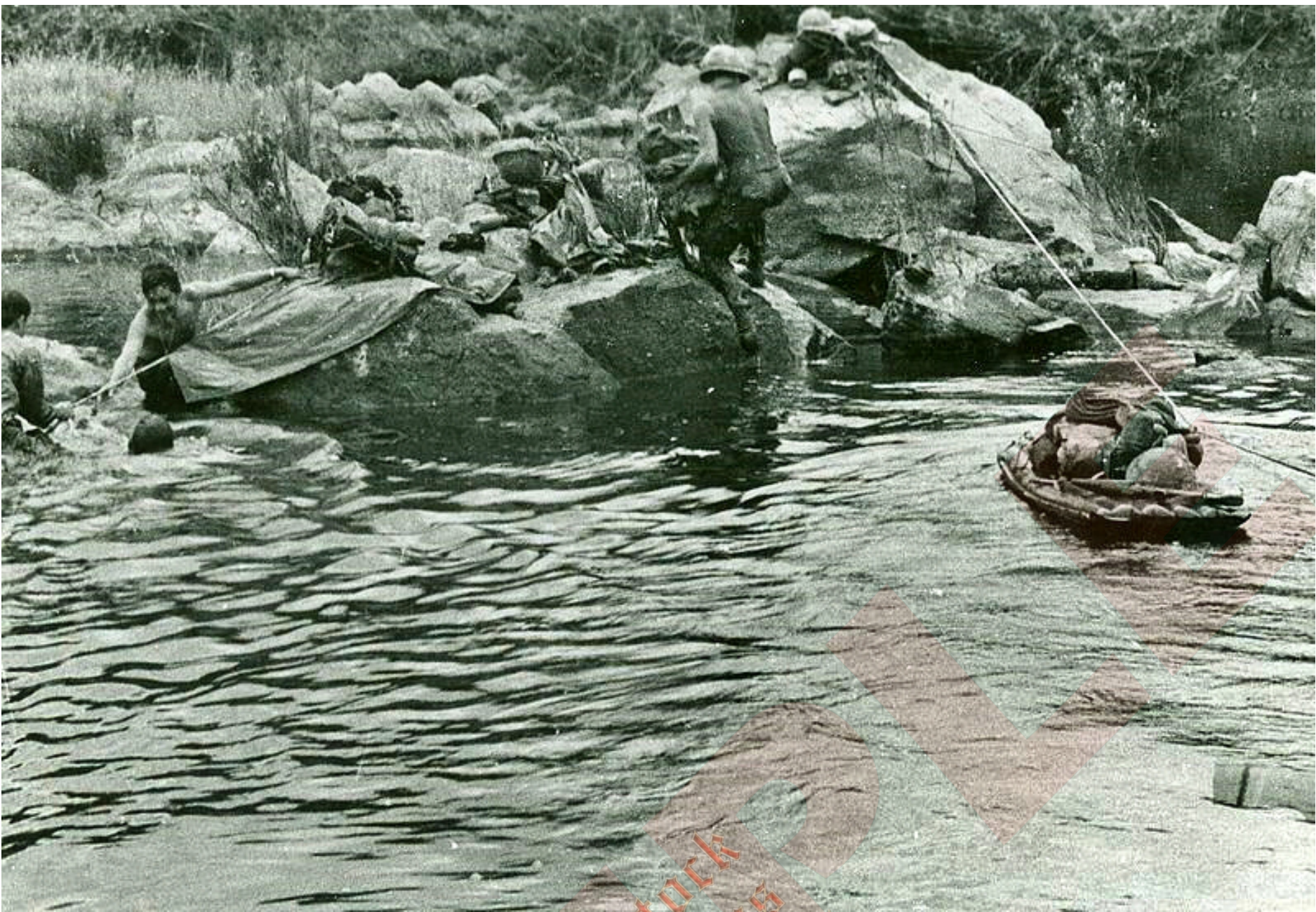
**ABOVE:** A soldier is seen moving quickly through the brush. In his hand he carries with him an M-79 grenade launcher, well known for the 'bloop' sound made when fired. Photo by Eddie Adams.

### Waist Deep

**BELOW:** Near Dong Ha, Central Vietnam, Soldiers from Company H, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment truck through a swollen river in effort to catch up with the other troopers from their battalion. Operation Hastings successfully drove communist forces back across the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone in the Summer of 1966. The operation saw American losses reach 126 Killed In Action, to an estimated 700 enemy dead, better than a 5 to 1 kill ratio. Photo courtesy National Archives at College Park, Still Picture Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division, NAID# 532443.







## Deep Waters

ABOVE: A makeshift pulley system is shown being rigged up in order to ferry the weapons, gear and packs across a wide stream for soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. Photo taken by Specialist 4th Class Michael Sullivan on April 23rd, 1969. Photo courtesy U.S. Army.

## Devisive Policy

BOTTOM LEFT: A Selective Service notice for an 18 year old Minnesota man, Vernon Wright Jr., who was drafted in late October 1972 for service in the Vietnam War. Due to the United States never having formally declared war on North Vietnam or its allies, the draft took place under the legal authority of the peacetime draft. President Kennedy was a defender of the peacetime draft, saying ridiculously in 1962 “I cannot think of any branch of our government in the last two decades where there have been so few complaints about inequity.” President Johnson, pledging peace in his presidential election campaign, vowed not to send “American boys 9 or 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.”. However, by breaking campaign promises to de-escalate the budding conflict, he infuriated many Amreicans including most of his own supporters. Under President Johnson, the draft peaked at about 300,000 young men annually. For many, President Johnson earned the moniker ‘Lyin Lyndon’ for in fact multiplying the amount of young men being drafted. It was not until 1969 that a lottery system, a more fair albeit still flawed system, was put in place by President Nixon. About 25% of the American fighting force was composed of drafted soldiers.

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM  
NOTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

VIETNAM WAR ARCHIVE.COM

1. STATE NO. 21 LOCAL BOARD NO. 88 LOCAL BOARD NO. X  
ISSUING THIS FORM OF RECORD OF RECORD CHARGE SELECTION  
DATE OF BIRTH 1954 RANDOM SEQ. NUMBER  
AUG 23 1954  
IF AVAILABLE

276-300

WRIGHT, VERNON CHARLES, JR  
1040 S PRIOR AVE  
ST PAUL, MN 55116

FOLD  
SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM  
THIS IS YOUR Notice of Classification. It is the responsibility of your selective service to see that you are properly classified. You are required to have a Notice of Classification in your possession at all times. If you are a student, you are required to have a Notice of Classification in your possession at all times. If you are a student, you are required to have a Notice of Classification in your possession at all times. If you are a student, you are required to have a Notice of Classification in your possession at all times.

2. WRIGHT  
FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME  
VERNON CHARLES, JR  
SELECTIVE SERVICE NUMBER 21 88 54 1138 1 H  
DATE OF CLASSIFICATION OCT 24 1972  
BY: LOCAL BOARD UNLESS OTHERWISE CHECKED

BY: APPEAL BOARD VOTE OF YES TO NO  
BY: NATIONAL APPEAL BOARD  
DATE OF HEARING OCT 24 1972  
LOCAL BOARD NO. 88  
Ramsey County  
U.S.P.O. & Customhouse  
180 E. Kellogg Blvd.  
St Paul, Minn. 55101

THIS IS YOUR CLASSIFICATION CERTIFICATE WHICH YOU ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION. (SEE OTHER SIDE)

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 3	CLASS 4
Class 1-A Registrant available for military service	Class 2-D Registrant deferred because of study preparing for the ministry	Class 3-A Registrant deferred by reason of extreme hardship to dependents; and registrant with a child or children	Class 4-A Registrant with sufficient prior service to satisfy the requirements of law (veteran)
Class 1-A-O Conscientious objector registrant available for noncombatant military service only	Class 2-S Registrant deferred because of activity in study	Class 4-B Official deferred by law	Class 4-C Alien not currently liable for military service
Class 1-C Member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or the Public Health Service		Class 4-D Minister of religion	Class 4-F Registrant not qualified for military service
Class 1-D Qualified member of reserve component, or student taking military training, including ROTC and accepted aviation cadet applicant		Class 4-G Registrant exempt from service during peace (surviving or brother)	Class 4-W Conscientious objector who has completed alternate service contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest in lieu of induction into the Armed Forces of the United States
Class 1-H Registrant not currently subject to processing for induction			
Class 1-O Conscientious objector available for alternate service contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety or interest			
Class 1-W Conscientious objector performing alternate service contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest in lieu of induction into the Armed Forces of the United States			
CLASS 2			
Class 2-A Registrant deferred because of civilian occupation other than agriculture or non-degree student			
Class 2-C Registrant deferred because of agricultural occupation			

555 FORM 110 (REVISED 5-1-72) REGISTRANT COPY





### Another Day, Another Engagement

ABOVE: A pair of soldiers under fire from company D, 151st (Ranger) Infantry, fight the enemy deep in the jungles of Vietnam. Sergeant Billy H. Faulks, foreground, calls for an air strike while behind him, Sergeant Curtis E. Hester returns fire with his M-16. Photo taken in 1969, courtesy the United States Army Heritage and Education Center.

### More Fun Than the Viet Cong

BELOW: Two young Vietnamese boys take the lead in a sack race against a United States officer. The race was part of a Christmas party for the local children that was sponsored by S-5 of the 5th Marine Regiment. Photo taken December 5th, 1967, courtesy the 1st Marine Division, Press Releases and Photographs Collection (COLL/4532), Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections, Quantico, Virginia.



### City of Jamie

BELOW: A soldier stands next to a sign that reads 'City of Jamie International Airport' as an incoming helicopter approaches in the distance.









“Whatever the case, after you see the damage a mortar round can do, the word incoming! becomes the scariest word you know.”

Dennis Bourret





## "Crack the Sky, Shake the Earth"

**ABOVE:** This haunting photo shows a pair of Marines attempting to render aid to a fellow fallen soldier. The soldier on the right has been identified as Richard Prince, however the two other men including the wounded warrior have never been positively identified. This photo was taken on February 16th, 1968 by Robert Capa Gold Medal winning photographer John Oson during a grueling battle for control of Dong Ba Tower which guarded the Eastern Gate of the walled city Hue. Part of a larger 31 day fight to regain tactical control of the whole city, communist forces viciously besieged and occupied the territory during The Tet Offensive. The Battle of Hue City was one of the bloodiest battles for the Allies in the entirety of the War.

## Battle of Hamo Village

**BOTTOM:** During the Battle of Hamo Village, a combined force of U.S. Marines and ARVN soldiers hunker down to defend a position against an enemy attack. Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration NAID# 532451, Department of Defense.







## Trecherous Plans

ABOVE: The Tet Offensive was truly the cause and effect of a realization by the communist enemy that despite a campaign with some victorious incursions and highly successful guerilla tactics, ultimate defeat on the ground was inevitable. By this time it was clear that the communists could win many decisive battles in Vietnam, but not sustain the war efforts against the Americans indefinitely. While slow, grinding and painful especially in terms of American casualties, the Allied war efforts were beginning to weaken the enemy.



BOTTOM: VC Regulars Pose Before the Snaek Attack.



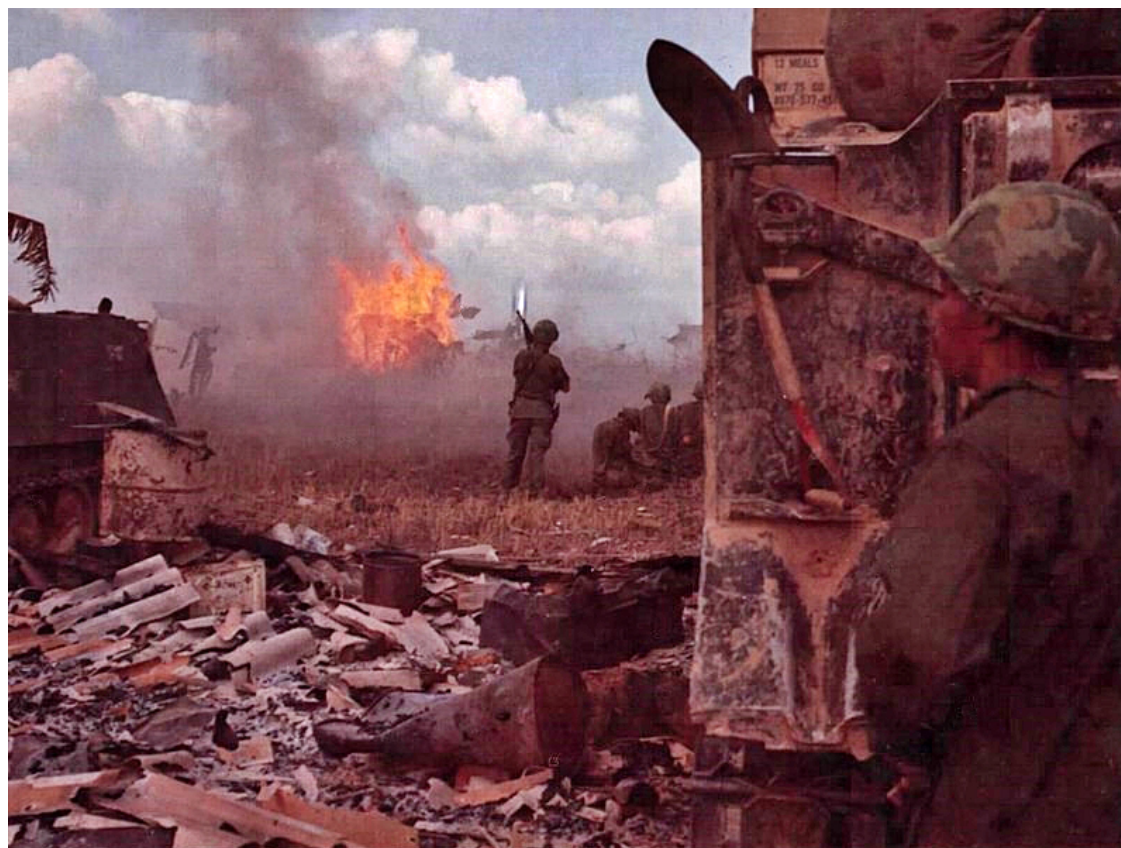


## Wide Spread Fighting

ABOVE: Soldiers stand guard atop M113 armored personnel carriers and protect Vietnamese refugees as they evacuate the village of My Tho after a bloody communist attack. Photo by the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief Signal Officer. Courtesy the National Archives at College Park NAID# 531451. The real goal of the communist invader was the hope for one or more of three outcomes. The first objective was to gain more territory, if possible. For instance, hitting the air base at Khe Sanh had little downside for the communists. If the attack on the air base was successful, then the enemy would gain the territory. If not, then the Americans would need to send troops to reinforce the fighting at Khe Sanh, which would still be a small victory as it would leave targets in South Vietnam under fortified and thus vulnerable to the coming surprise attack. Regardless of outcome for any particular engagement the communists were certainly aware of the propaganda value both stateside and with their own enslaved citizens that even a single American casualty was worth. The second objective was to inject terror and unrest into the Vietnamese people through a show of brutality. In line with the sociopathic, megalomaniacal ideology that marxism is, the communists actually believed that a popular civilian uprising would happen once they attacked, even after their heinous treatment and murder of Vietnamese urbanites, rural farmers and villagers. Fact of the matter, they believed it so much that they were counting on the uprising to win the battle. The second objective, which was to a small extent a success, was to force defections in the South Vietnamese Army. Defections did increase by 6% in the months following the atrocities they committed during Tet. The third, in no small terms, was the main objective for the enemy which was to force a stronger presence at the negotiating table. The communists were aware that negotiation of a ceasefire was possible, as the White House had previously initiated discussions with the enemy. Frankly, it can be argued that by proverbially 'flinching', President Johnson had opened the door and invited this attack inside by entertaining negotiations with the communist menace in the first place, and Nixon graciously welcomed it into the house with his backdoor dealing and relentless presidential ambitions. Simply put, there can be no peace with an enemy who despises life, liberty and peace.

## APCs On The Move

BOTTOM: Original caption, declassified on February 15th, 1968: "Armored Personnel Carriers move in order over the rubble of houses that had been occupied by Viet Cong, and cautiously advance toward a pocket of enemy resistance 250 meters outside of the II Field Forces during the Lunar New Year holidays. Long Binh, Republic of Vietnam." Photo taken on January 31st, 1968 by Specialist 4th Class of 221st Signal Company. Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, photo 111-CCV-49-CC45848.







## Early Mis-steps

**ABOVE:** Breach hole that was blasted in the wall of the U.S. Embassy by communist soldiers. The Offensive did not begin as the enemy had planned and there is still much uncertainty as to why. But the facts are that the Viet Cong and PAVN leadership botched the initial round of attacks allowing allied forces to form stronger defensive positions and fortify many perimeters. Still, the fighting was hellish and nearly country wide. Battles took place as far north as Quang Tri and as far south as Ca Mau. Virtually no target seemed safe, as even the U.S. embassy compound in Saigon was breached by enemy soldiers. Three places in particular however would see vicious, extended fighting, Saigon, the City of Hue and Keh Sanh.







## High Casualties

ABOVE: On February 18th 1968 Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) posted the casualty reports for the week, and the numbers were staggering. At 543 killed and 2,547 wounded, It was the highest U.S. casualty statistics for a single week during the Vietnam War. The higher than ever casualty rate caused by the offensive was a single moment in a rapid chain of events during 1968 that included the Cronkite moment and the very public execution of murderer Nguyen Van Lem. These events in tandem would serve as a three punch combo to the gut of a war-weary American public. Already beginning to sink under water, contemporary polls of the time show that by December 1967 the number of Americans who thought that the U.S. had made a mistake by shipping troops to Vietnam, a 20% increase from just two years earlier. By all available metrics public support for the war effort plummeted sharply after Tet and continued to do so thereafter.





**BOTTOM P. 56:** On the other side the communist losses were grotesque, but not to an enemy as ruthless as a Marxist. Some estimates put the communist losses at 45,000, though there are those that dispute this. However, even the most conservative estimates place the enemy killed at 30,000. Those nearly incomprehensible numbers included many of their best soldiers and special units, and represented nearly 40% of the 80,000 enemy soldier fighting force. The Offensive was a turning point for the communists, who would struggle to fill the ranks of these massive troop losses for the remainder of the war. To maintain regularity within ranks, 7 out of 10 Viet Cong soldiers were conscripted from North Vietnamese forces.



**Communist Brutality**

**ABOVE:** South Vietnamese villagers, desperately hoping to identify loved ones murdered by the communists during the Massacre of Hue, sift through shreds of clothing and other belongings in hopes of finding remains of lost friends and relatives. Photo courtesy Vietnam Virtual Archive, Douglas Pike collection. Throughout the war, the communists slaughtered soldier and civilian alike, and Tet would be no exception. The communists murdered tens of thousands during Tet, including up to 6,000 in the Hue Massacre alone. During the Tet Offensive, communist forces assassinated so many South Vietnamese soldiers and their families that Republic of Vietnam officials were unable to keep count of all the murders during this period of time. It is entirely possible that the total number of murdered civilians by communist forces nears 4 million souls. According to the most authoritative sources on the subject, from 1945 to 1956 the Vietnamese communists murdered up to 922,000 civilians. Post-American intervention (1975 and on), the slaughter included up to 2,438,000 Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians. However, the communist murdered so many civilians from 1956 until 1975, that the true number is forever lost to history. It is in the Millions, that is most assured. Genocide is certainly one area that the United States could not hold a candle to the communists. Using the highest academically accepted number of civilian casualties for both sides, the communists dominated the United States in regard to murdering civilians with a kill ratio of 760 to 1. Still, to this very day, the Vietnamese Socialist regime oppresses Montagnards. The Communist Party of Vietnam continues to seize their lands, oversee police brutality against Degar children and babies, and make extensive use of torture methodology including electro shock and vicious beatings.



**Seized Weapons**

**BOTTOM:** A captured cache of North Vietnamese weapons with Chinese or Russian markings are shown. The weapons were commandeered by the Leathernecks of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines during operation Operation Napoleon/Saline. Photo taken on May 8th, 1968 by Staff Sergeant J. Reid, courtesy Jonathan F. Abel Collection, USMC Archives, Quantico, U.S.A.





## Change of Opinion

ABOVE: With concern brooding from their faces, an American couple watches footage of the Tet Offensive at home. During the 1960's, the American living room became a hidden frontline of the war, fueled by multi-faceted propaganda and the most open journalistic coverage of a war that had ever been seen before. Photo taken by Warren K. Leffler. The coordinated attacks of Tet created chaos within the Johnson administration who were under increasing public and press scrutiny for what became, rightfully so, termed as the "credibility gap". In truth, every single Administration that Presided during the War years should have earned this label. The lack of believability was certainly not confined to the President or his Presidential Administration. National Security Advisor Walt W. Rostow began a propaganda style campaign flooding the news media full of reports which were oozing with grandiosity and mind spinning optimism. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey appeared on the "Today Show" in mid-November, outright saying to the American public "We are beginning to win this struggle". And there were even more boastful instances, including Robert "Blowtorch Bob" Komer, Pacification Chief (no that is not a made up title), who insisted that his brainchild "pacification" program was a success, boldly continuing with the fact that a mere seventeen percent of the Vietnamese population was under the control of the Vietcong. In a gaff that would become the epitome of egg on the face, Commander of the United States Military Forces General Westmoreland erroneously stated that the enemy was "unable to mount a major offensive..." Furthermore, Westmoreland's direct subordinate General Bruce Palmer, Jr. would go on to say "the Viet Cong has been defeated". The sum of all these lies: an American public that by large simply did not buy what the talking heads of the time were selling.







## Tons of Shells

**ABOVE:** Soldiers of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines Regiment fire their powerful 105mm howitzer in support of fighting soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines near Con Thien. The huge 372 mm shell casings can be seen accumulating like a brass snowstorm on the ground behind the gunnery crew. Photo taken November 25th, 1967, courtesy Defense Department (Marine Corps) Photo A371011.

## Pure Terror

**BOTTOM:** Vietnamese villagers hide from a bloody communist attack as American Soldiers fight to keep them safe. Perhaps this photo best puts into perspective the large differential between the good guys and the bad guys. Those Vietnamese women and children are not terrified and in hiding from being hunted by the Americans, protected by the communists. It is vice versa. Photo taken by Pulitzer Prize winner Eddie Adams.







## Lethal Snipers

**ABOVE:** Soldiers from Company C, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, move quickly to find cover as snipers target the men. Coming under sniper fire was a constant risk for soldiers in Vietnam. Photo taken October 4th, 1965 Specialist 5th class Allan K. Holm, Courtesy national Archives and Records Administration photo 111-CCV-561-CC32296.

## Elders Day

**BOTTOM:** A Vietnamese villager is administered cough medicine by Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Thomas J. Higginbotham, aged 23. On January 8th, 1967 soldiers of the 3rd Tank Battalion sponsored an elders' day festival in the hamlet of Phong Bac, south of Da Nang. Elders in the Hamlet received badly needed medical treatment, entertainment, free gifts and a hearty dinner. Courtesy USMC Archives, Quantico, U.S.A.

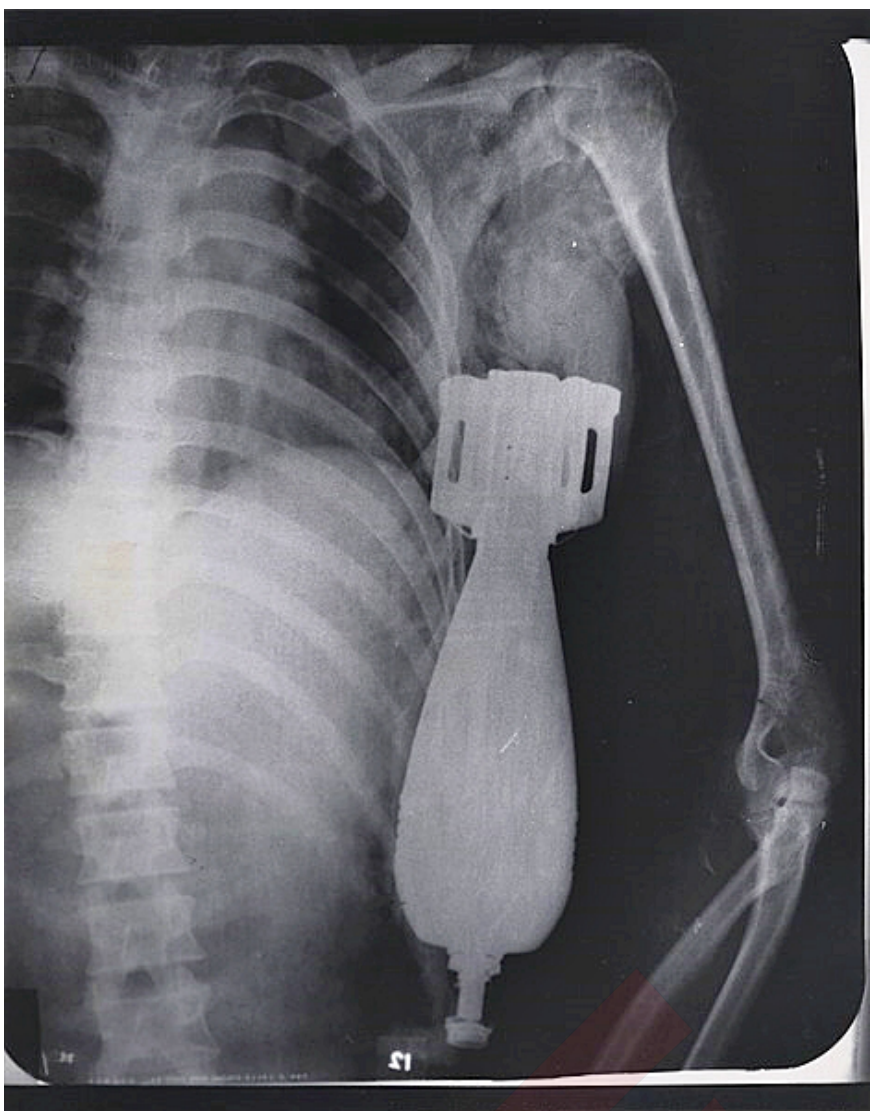






### Always Wet

TOP RIGHT: Soldiers of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines truck through a standing body of water during the second phase of Operation Blue Marlin. Photo taken November 17th, 1965, courtesy Defense Department, Marine Corps photo A186108.



### Unexploded

TOP LEFT: This imaging shows a 60 mm mortar lodged within the chest wall of Private 1st Class Nguyen Loung, of the The Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The ordnance was live, and proved to be a very dangerous surgical procedure. While potentially lethal to the medical staff involved, the surgery was one of the most cutting edge, innovative medical procedures ever. Image taken October 1st, 1966, courtesy navy medicine.



### Amphibious Landing

BOTTOM: Delayed by more than an hour due to heavy surf, Soldiers from Battalion Landing Team 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines storm ashore at RED Beach 2, northwest of Da Nang. The Marines are shown being ushered into battle by an LCM-6(Landing Craft Mechanized). Commonly referred to as the "Mike Boat", the LCM-6 had a top speed of only 9 knots and was designed to haul 34 tons of cargo or carry up to 80 soldiers amphibiously into battle. Photo taken March 6th, 1965, courtesy United States Marine Corps, Photo A183676.





“We often said to each other back at the base, we were probably treating a guy, making him better for whatever it was, that’s going to come around our base tonight and try to get in and kill us.”

Dr. Lee H. Strohl







