HANDBOOK FOR U.S. FORCES IN VIETNAM

ARMED FORCES INFORMATION AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
FOREWORD

The enemy we face in South Vietnam today, both regular and guerrilla forces, is challenging us with many old fighting techniques and a few new ones. We have shown that he can and will be defeated.

I have had summarized in this handbook certain basic techniques and procedures which have evolved out of several years of combat operations against this enemy. The guidance furnished in these pages, when followed, will increase the effectiveness of our forces and preclude a repetition of past mistakes.

The importance and value of the training given to each member of the Armed Forces prior to entering combat is demonstrated clearly in the results of every action. This handbook will supplement and focus that previous training. This handbook is not the last word. Each of us must continue to display imagination, resourcefulness, and ingenuity in our combat actions.

W. C. WESTMORELAND
General, United States Army
Commanding

PETER M. SWARTZ
CORONADO
1968
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Republic of Vietnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. The Government Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. The Armed Forces</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Viet Cong</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Military Organization</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. Methods of Operation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. Weapons</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tactics and Techniques</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Winning and Maintaining Civilian Support</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. Reconnaissance and Surveillance</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. Patrols</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV. Counterambush Tactics</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Ambushes</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI. Airmobile Operations</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VII. Search and Destroy Operations</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Clearing and Securing Operations</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Operations in the Central Highlands Area</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Operations in Swampy and Inundated Areas</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. Defensive Considerations</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 Combat Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Air Support</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Artillery Support</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Naval Gunfire Support</td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Personal Hygiene Tips</td>
<td>164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Conversion Table</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Road Map of Vietnam</td>
<td>169</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FORCES

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) has been harassed by Communist-instigated guerrilla warfare throughout its existence. In order to meet this threat the government has committed a major portion of its human and material resources to defeating the Viet Cong. At the same time, it has attempted to provide its rural peoples with the economic and social benefits of development. Free World military and economic assistance programs are designed to support the efforts of the Vietnamese government and peoples toward both these objectives.

SECTION I. THE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

1. General

Political power in the Government of Vietnam (GVN) is concentrated at the national level; most important decisions and major programs originate and are directed from Saigon. The Prime Minister is the government’s operative head and is assisted in the development of policies by the heads of the various ministries. These policies, decisions, and programs are then passed to the lower echelons of the government -- province, district, village and hamlet -- for execution. Each of four corps commanders acts as the government representative in his Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ).
Not all instructions originating at the national level pass through the corps headquarters. Routine administrative instructions from the various ministers in Saigon normally go directly to the province chief, bypassing the corps and division headquarters, which are primarily concerned with tactical operations.

2. Divisions of Local Government

There are 43 provinces in the country. Below the province, the next subdivision of government is the district, which is similar to our county. Districts are divided into villages, with an average of 8-12 per district. Villages normally consist of 4-6 hamlets. Historically, the village has been the most important organization for local government, and even today it retains many essential legal and tax collecting functions.

SECTION II. THE ARMED FORCES

3. General

The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) consists of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF), the Vietnamese Navy (VNN), and the Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF). Each of these elements has a specific role in the overall strategy for defeating the VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) main force units, the VC local force units, and the guerrillas.
4. Army of the Republic of Vietnam

a. ARVN, the Vietnamese regular army, is primarily an infantry force, consisting of 10 infantry divisions plus separate infantry, airborne, ranger and armor units. ARVN is normally committed against the VC/NVA main force units in search and destroy or clearing operations. When not employed in offensive operations, ARVN units are often committed to securing areas where civilian police or pacification teams are operating and defending key installations or supply and communication routes. ARVN operations are closely coordinated with the local GVN province officials to insure that they support the local efforts and do not endanger local government forces.

b. MACV advisory teams work with all ARVN forces, normally down to battalion level, but in certain instances even at company level. These advisors provide a ready point of contact in coordinating combined operations.

5. The Vietnamese Air Force

a. The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) includes five tactical wings; each is organized differently and may include any number of fighter, helicopter, and transport squadrons. Fighter squadrons can engage designated targets with a combination of general purpose, fragmentation, concussion, incendiary, delayed action and fire (Napalm) bombs, rockets and 20mm cannon fire. The transport squadrons provide a capability for air dropping troops, equipment and supplies, flare drops for illumination of target areas in support of offensive air strikes and ground operations, and for air movement of troops, equipment, supplies and officials. The liaison squadrons are capable of performing forward
air control, visual reconnaissance and liaison operations. Helicopter squadrons, equipped with H-34 aircraft, furnish a limited capability for air movement of troops, equipment and supplies throughout RVN.

b. MACV advisors work with the VNAF at all echelons often accompanying them on missions. They provide a ready point of contact for liaison or coordination.

6. Vietnamese Navy and Marine Corps

a. The Vietnamese Navy (VNN) is primarily a defensive force, consisting of a small sea force for offshore counterinfiltration surveillance along the coast from the 17th parallel to the Cambodian border, a coastal force -- the junk fleet -- for patrolling of inshore coastal waterways, and a river force for inland waterway operations. The river force is organized into seven River Assault Groups (RAGs). Each RAG is capable of transporting by water a battalion of RVNAF and supporting them for 10-14 days.

b. The Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) consists of one brigade. It normally forms part of the general reserve and is stationed in the Saigon area.

c. MACV advisors work with the VNN sea, coastal and river forces and with the VNMC units; they are a coordination contact for combined and joint operations.

7. Regional Forces (District Forces)

a. The Regional Forces (RF) are a nationally administered military force assigned to and under the operational control of the sector commander (province chief). The basic combat unit of the RF is the light infantry company,
though in certain provinces there are also a number of RF mechanized platoons, intelligence platoons and squads, and river patrol companies.

b. Normally the RF unit is recruited locally, placed under the operational control of the sub-sector commander (district chief), and habitually employed in the same general area. The primary missions given to RF units are to secure key installations and communication routes, to protect the local government officials and key people loyal to the government, and to provide a sub-sector reserve for assisting village or hamlet defense forces under attack. When ARVN or Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) units are operating in an area where RF are located, the RF can often contribute to the success of the operation through their detailed knowledge of the local terrain and people.

8. Popular Forces (Village Forces)

a. The Popular Forces (PF) are a nationally administered military force organized and operated at the village level and consisting of light infantry squads and platoons. The PF units are commanded by their own noncommissioned officer leaders who are responsible, through their village chiefs, to the district chiefs. PF members are full-time volunteers recruited within their native villages and hamlets to protect their own families and property. Though legally this force may be supplemented with draftees, its primary motivation stems from the fact its members are recruited from the villages and hamlets in which they are stationed and in which their families live.

b. Because of their small size, light arms, and limited training, the combat capability of PF units is restricted to local defensive and counterattack operations. The basic concept of employment is for village platoons
and hamlet squads to defend their own area with the inter-
village platoons providing responsive reinforcement. Occasion-
ally PF units may participate in operations with other forces. In such operations, which are nor-
mally undertaken to reinforce, support or relieve a 
village or hamlet under attack, the PF are employed 
to act as guides, lay ambushes, protect flanks, or pro-
vide a rear guard for the main body.

SUMMARY

The Vietnamese have paid heavily in their long struggle 
against the communist insurgents. Despite the costs, they 
retain their determination to be victorious. We are assisting 
them in all their efforts -- militarily, economically, and 
politically -- wherever we can, in the field, with the rural 
peoples, and at the governmental and military headquarters. 
Success will ultimately depend on the effectiveness of our 
joint and combined programs and operations.
CHAPTER 2

THE VIET CONG

INTRODUCTION

The VC is well trained, organized, and equipped for his mission. He employs the tactics of the guerrilla because they suit his means. VC forces sometimes lack uniforms, but in most cases their weapons are modern and effective. If he is prepared to fight, or has good reason, he will stay and fight. But frequently when hit hard, he will break into small groups and melt away. On occasion he travels with his family and is not above using women and children to cover his withdrawal, leaving them to fend for themselves. He digs in well and uses concealed tunnels and bunkers extensively. He moves mostly at night and prefers to fight under cover of darkness. Normally he will not attack unless he has great superiority. The VC is smart but far from unbeatable -- even on his own ground.

SECTION I. MILITARY ORGANIZATION

1. General

a. The Viet Cong military organization is an integral part of the apparatus which controls all aspects of VC activity throughout the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). Each VC political headquarters at hamlet, village, district and
province levels includes a military component which exercises some control over Viet Cong military units assigned to its area of jurisdiction.

b. The Central Office, South Vietnam (COSVN) is the highest level VC headquarters in RVN. Under COSVN are six VC military regions. The Military Region is a political headquarters with a closely integrated military component which directs military operations of VC units subordinate to it. COSVN has overall responsibility for VC military operations in RVN and exercises direct control over certain units. At province and district levels, the VC political and military structure closely parallels that of the Government of South Vietnam, with some exceptions. For example, Long Dien and Dat Do Districts in Phouc Tuy Province are combined by the VC into Long Dat District. This organizational technique subordinates the military to the political and promotes unity of effort. VC organization is patterned after that used in North Vietnam.

2. Military Units

a. Military units are divided into three general categories: combat, combat support and militia. The combat units consist of three distinct types of military forces: North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units infiltrated into South Vietnam, VC main forces and VC local forces.

(1) During 1965 a number of NVA units were infiltrated into RVN and are presently integrated into the VC military structure. These units were encountered frequently during the latter half of 1965. Being regular
army units, they revealed a greater tendency to stay and fight than the local VC forces have in the past. They are better armed, equipped and supplied than other units because of their more direct ties with North Vietnam.

(2) VC main forces are those units directly subordinate to COSVN or to the military regions in RVN. They may be found as regimental, battalion, separate company and platoon sized units. They are better trained and equipped than VC local forces. Their leadership consists of experienced and dedicated Communist personnel with long experience in guerrilla warfare.

(3) VC local forces are organized in units up to battalion size and are normally subordinate to an individual VC province or district. Their operational area is usually defined by territorial boundaries.

b. VC combat support forces comprise VC headquarters personnel and special combat support units such as communication, engineer, reconnaissance and food production elements which are not assigned to a particular VC combat unit.

c. VC militia are subdivided into three types of irregular forces: guerrilla, self-defense and secret self-defense.

(1) The most important militia forces are the full time local guerrilla units. They are used to harass friendly units, conduct assassinations, and other acts of terrorism and sabotage. However, they do participate in actions in conjunction with local or main forces when
the latter operate within their areas. They are used as guides, porters and rear guard riflemen in this supporting role.

(2) VC self-defense and secret self-defense forces are part time irregulars primarily responsible for local security and for providing early warning of approaching enemy forces. Such defense forces rarely exceed a squad size. The self-defense units are normally found in VC controlled areas while the secret self-defense units are found in contested or RVN controlled areas.

3. Organization for Combat

a. NVA forces operating in Vietnam set the pattern for the organizational structure of the VC main force regiments. A typical regiment consists of two to four rifle battalions and one so-called artillery battalion (figure 1). On occasion, artillery battalions have employed 70mm and 75mm howitzers against RVN forces.

b. Separate main force and local force battalions are similar in structure. Each has three or four rifle companies and a heavy weapons company (figure 2). Main force units are usually distinguished by newer model small arms and heavier caliber crew-served weapons than local forces. Companies of main or local force battalions may operate separately or in conjunction with local guerrillas.

c. VC companies consist of three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon (figure 3). Each rifle platoon has three rifle squads, which in turn are composed of
Figure 1. Type VC Regiment
Figure 2. Type VC Battalion

SMG
RIFLE
3.5" AT WPN

STRENGTH 300 - 600

MINES
3.5" AT WPN
57mm RR
81mm MTR
.30 CAL MG
Figure 3. Type VC Company
three 3-man cells and a squad leader.

d. VC military units vary considerably in strength and equipment, depending on subordination, location, availability of food and recruits, and the degree of control exercised by the VC over the surrounding territory. Irregular units are usually encountered in platoon or squad strength, although special VC guerrilla operations may only require 2 to 5 man teams. The VC irregular units are characteristically flexible in organization.

SECTION II. METHODS OF OPERATION

4. General

a. The simple but effective code of the VC is "When the enemy advances, withdraw; when he defends, harass; when he is tired, attack; when he withdraws, pursue." VC tactics and techniques are simply embellishments on this theme. Emphasis is placed on speed, security, surprise and deception. The VC exhibit great skill in making the most of their enemy's weaknesses.

b. VC operations are planned in detail and are based upon careful reconnaissance and up-to-date intelligence. Detailed rehearsals, including the use of mock-ups, sandtables, and similar terrain prepare the troops for the mission, whether it be a raid, ambush, assassination or destruction mission. Once a plan is made and rehearsed, the VC seem reluctant to depart from it. They appear reluctant to attack units which have demonstrated skill in employing artillery and close air support. A
certain inflexibility is apparent in some VC operations, but on other occasions, VC forces have shown themselves to be masters of improvisation.

c. The VC are very cautious and attempt to determine in detail the size, disposition and direction of movement of their opponent before engaging him. They would rather let an opportunity slip by than act hastily without proper intelligence and preparation. In one instance, a three-battalion VC ambush force permitted two 155mm howitzers and accompanying ammunition trucks to drive through the killing zone unmolested because the VC had not completed laying wire lines and checking communications. In another case, four US advisors in a jeep were allowed to pass through a company size ambush because the VC were waiting for a ten truck convoy which was five minutes behind the advisors. The VC ambushed the trucks, destroying several and causing a number of ARVN casualties.

5. Offensive Techniques

a. Ambushes.

(1) In keeping with their emphasis on surprise, VC use the ambush as one of their most effective offensive tactics. Units establishing ambushes have been known to remain in place for periods in excess of ten days. The normal practice is to ambush along roads, trails, streams and other natural routes of movement. Unpredictable or unexpected tactics such as establishing ambushes close to friendly forces, are revealed by the following two examples:
(a) The VC positioned a company size ambush force along a road less than one hundred meters from a friendly guard post manned by six personnel. Rather than attack the guard post, they ambushed a small convoy and inflicted eight casualties.

(b) Approximately 65 VC ambushed a military vehicle transporting troops on a stretch of fairly open road between two ARVN outposts less than a mile apart. Twelve of the sixteen personnel in the friendly force became casualties.

(2) VC planning for ambushes is comprehensive. Rehearsals are conducted and friendly force patterns are studied in detail. Baited traps are often used, such as attacks designed to lure reaction or reserve forces into prepared ambush positions. Advantage is taken of any laxness in security on the part of friendly forces, such as during meal breaks. Another favorite tactic is to feign retreat by one unit to draw the friendly force into an ambush by another unit. VC ambushes are usually short, violent actions followed by a rapid withdrawal. The VC have frequently ambushed units whose security was lax while returning from an operational area.

b. Raids.

(1) Raids are another favorite VC offensive tactic and are conducted by units from squad to regimental size. They are most often executed during the hours of darkness.

(2) Two basic types of VC raids have been observed. The "surprise" raid is the most common. Secrecy and speed are key considerations in this type of action since
the VC raiding party may have less numerical strength than the defending force. The "power" raid is one in which the VC employ overwhelming strength and fire power in order to annihilate a defending unit. The time the raid begins is often a clue to its nature. Raids begun after 0200 hours are rarely power raids intended to overrun an outpost.

c. Harassing Operations. Harassment is one of the tenets of VC guerrilla warfare. Sniper fire is a form of harassment frequently used by the VC to frighten, confuse and mislead friendly forces. Personnel carrying automatic weapons and radios are often initial targets for VC sniper fire. Diversionary harassing attacks are used to draw friendly forces from vulnerable VC target areas. In other cases, what may appear to be harassment can have a totally different purpose. On one occasion, the VC fired 30 rounds of mortar fire at a small district outpost, none of which landed closer than 200 meters from the post. The mortar firing began at 1600 hours from a position approximately 2000 meters east of the outpost. Later in the evening a mortar attack on the same outpost was very successful, and all rounds landed on or near the outpost. The earlier fire, which appeared to be harassing in nature, was actually a registration.

d. Infiltration. The VC are experts at infiltration. Particularly important is their habit of infiltrating friendly positions during periods of reduced visibility and adverse weather, usually combining the infiltration with a feint or ruse. Objects of VC infiltration tactics are sabotage, assassination, demoralization of enemy troops and the collection of intelligence for future operations. Also significant is the technique of infiltrating agents disguised as friendly civilians.
6. Defensive Tactics

a. VC defensive tactics are centered around ways and means of escaping from ambushes, raids, meeting engagements, and surprise attacks. The VC make extensive use of rear guard personnel whose mission is to delay the pursuing friendly force until withdrawal of the VC main force is accomplished. Ambushes designed to slow friendly forces are also frequently employed. At other times, VC may evade capture by hiding or by blending in with the local populace.

b. Hiding places used by the VC are almost limitless, although underground locations appear to be the favorite. Underground means of hiding personnel and equipment range from simple "spider trap" holes to elaborate, reinforced rooms. From the surface these underground installations are most difficult, if not impossible, to detect (figure 4). Critical points are entrances and emergency exits, which are usually concealed in gardens, animal pens, under piles of straw, dung, etc. (figure 5), in or under structures (figure 6) and in river banks (figures 7 and 8).

c. Extensive and ingeniously constructed underground tunnel systems are one of the unique features of underground hiding places (figures 9 thru 13). Most are constructed in such a manner that they permit short term underground habitation. They are usually built in a zigzag, multilevel form with ventilation holes at various intervals. This type of construction may provide protection from grenades or discovery. When cornered underground by friendly forces, the VC will often eject a grenade from one of the holes and attempt to escape during the resulting shock and smoke.
CONCEALED TUNNEL ENTRANCES

Figure 4
HAYSTACK USED FOR HIDING PLACE AND MEETING PLACE

Figure 5
HIDING PLACES UNDER LOCAL HOMES

Figure 6
Figure 7
RIVER AREA POSITIONS

TYPE #1          RIVER BANK

WATER LINE ENTRANCE USUALLY ABOUT 1 FOOT HIGH, CAMOUFLAGED WITH WATER PLANTS, ETC.

This type of cave usually has entrance from below water line to about 1 foot above. There is about a 2 foot approach leading to the main room which is circular and about 6 to 8 feet across. Can only be entered from the water.

TYPE #2          RIVER BANK

Opening on side of river bank used as entrance or escape. Also used as firing position. Opening camouflaged.

Entrance about 1 foot high camouflaged with water plants. Used also as exit.

Figure 8
VC UNDERGROUND BUNKER

Bunker shown above was discovered in the vicinity of Da Nang during June/July 1965 by ARVN units.

It is a multi-bunker tunnel with angled connecting tunnels. Each bunker has space available for 3 or 4 men. The entrance to the VC bunker is built into the wall of the artillery shelter and skillfully camouflaged. A second bunker is concealed behind the first; each entrance in turn is camouflaged on the outside by local inhabitants.
GUERRILLA BASE

Figure 10
TUNNELS

Cave is constructed by trenching and covering trench with bamboo and 10 inches of dirt. Entrance and exit from either end. Difficult to clear unless approached from top and opened with demolitions.

TUNNEL ENTRANCE

Root system provides excellent reinforcement for roof of cave.

Figure 11
Figure 12  A Typical VC Fortified Village
(Note Tunnel System)
WELL - TUNNEL COMPLEX -- BEN CAT AREA

Well-Tunnel Complex above was discovered near Ben Cat in September 1965. It is a series of multi-bunker tunnels with angled connecting tunnels. Each bunker has space available for 15 to 20 men. The entrances to and exits from the VC bunkers are built into the walls of actual or simulated wells which are 20 to 30 meters deep. Access to these skillfully camouflaged entrances and exits is by way of notched dirt steps or by the use of long notched bamboo pole ladders. These wells also serve as deep pit man traps.

Figure 13
d. The VC prepare extensive defensive positions throughout their operational area. If surprised by friendly forces, they will, if possible, withdraw to a previously prepared position and defend until they can break out, most probably during the hours of darkness. VC positions are characterized by defense in depth, mutual support, overhead cover and maximum use of natural cover and concealment.

7. Special Techniques

a. General. Viet Cong tactics include many types of actions which are peculiar to unconventional warfare, such as assassinations and other acts of terrorism directed toward the RVN population. Subversion and sabotage may be directed toward military forces and installations as well as the civilian populace.

b. Booby Traps.

(1) Booby traps are favorite devices of the Viet Cong. Grenades, spike traps, poison arrows and a variety of other means are employed to harass, slow down, confuse and kill friendly forces. The forms of these weapons are limited only by the imagination of the designer (figures 14 thru 16).

(2) Grenades are commonly used as booby traps because they are light in weight, easy to carry and conceal, and readily adaptable. They are frequently put in trees or on fences and also along trails that friendly forces are expected to use, with trip wires strung across the pathway. Munitions, particularly artillery and mortar shells, have also been rigged for detonation as booby traps (figures 17 thru 23).
CARTRIDGE TRAP

Figure 14
STEEL ARROW TRAP

STEEL ARROW

PIECE OF WOOD

RUBBER BAND

PIECE OF BAMBOO

STEEL ARROW TRAP READY FOR USE

TRIP WIRE ACROSS THE ROAD

Figure 15
"SORRY BOUT THAT"

Figure 16
The most common type of booby trap consists of a trip wire stretched across a trail, anchored to a small bush or tree and to a friction type fuze in the grenade. Most other booby traps are a variation on this basic idea.

Figure 17
In most cases the grenades are buried (shallow) under the gate. A short trip wire is attached to the gate so that when it is moved even slightly, the grenade is detonated. Pressure release fuzes have also been employed. If there is heavy growth around the gate, the grenades will generally be hidden in the growth.

Figure 18
Recently the VC have been making bamboo arches across trails. A grenade is secured at the top of the arch and the trip wire secured to the grenade. Any contact with trip wire will detonate the grenade. This is employed most effectively at night as a warning device. The location of the grenade achieves a large casualty radius. During the day the trip wire is loosened from the ground and wound around the bamboo arch to allow use of the trail to VC.

Figure 19
Grenades have been attached to large punji stakes in helicopter landing zones to provide booby traps for helicopters.

Figure 20
The daisy chain of grenades is made by first attaching a grenade to a tree or bush and tying it in such a manner that the handle is free to activate if the safety pin (which is attached to a trip wire) is pulled. Successive grenade handles are held under tension by a line from the preceding grenade. All grenades but the first one have their safety pins pulled.

When the trip wire to the first grenade is tripped, the safety pin is pulled and the safety handle flys off, allowing the grenade to detonate. As the grenade detonates, it releases the string to the next grenade allowing the handle to fly free, detonate and, in turn, release subsequent grenades in the line.

Placed along a trail this arrangement is very effective against closely spaced members of a patrol.

Figure 21
Above booby trap found by the 3rd Marine Div, 27 Sep 65, in I Corps. Consisted of two bamboo poles, 15 feet high, spaced 30-40 feet apart with barbed wire suspended between poles. Lowest part of wire is about 10 feet above ground. Two grenades are attached, evenly spaced to the wire.

A tank, or other vehicle, passing between the poles will strike the overhead wire and detonate the grenades. The grenades are placed at such a height as to cause injury to tank mounted infantry, or other vehicular mounted personnel. The booby traps will cause no damage to the tank itself.

Figure 22
In this situation the VC have tied a series of hand grenades to bushes, trees or in grass clumps along trails or avenues of approach to their position. The safety pins of the grenades are linked by fish cord or wire to an enemy position overlooking the site. When our patrols pass the enemy grenade ambush point the one or two man team, by pulling the string or wire, can detonate one or any number of grenades without warning.

Figure 23
(3) Spiked foot and man traps are common types of booby traps found throughout Vietnam. The spikes may be sharpened bamboo sticks, or they may be barbed wood or metal spikes emplaced in wooden, concrete or metal blocks. The spiked devices are placed in holes along routes of movement and carefully camouflaged to prevent detection or they can be placed on top of the ground (figures 24 thru 29).

(4) The VC also employ crude but effective trip wire type devices along trails and paths which release arrows, bamboo whips and other swinging, barbed, club-type objects. Barbs are often dipped in poison to compound casualty effects (figures 30 and 31).

(5) Explosive pens and cigarette lighters have been put in obvious hiding places by the VC for the unsuspecting soldier to find.

c. Mines. (figures 32 thru 35).

(1) Antipersonnel and antitank mines are used extensively in VC operations. They may be of the crude homemade variety or similar to those in the US inventory. When AT mines are employed they are placed exclusively on roads and trails capable of carrying vehicular traffic. However, AP mines are employed on defensive terrain nearby so that personnel taking to the high ground to protect a disabled vehicle are then subjected to the AP mines and booby traps. AP mines are used to defend entrances to VC underground hiding places and along trails.

(2) AT mines are placed in hollowed-out places on bridges or in holes which have been dug in roads. In order
A man stepping into the punji pit hits two boards or steel plates with steel spikes affixed, the boards or plates then pivot, wounding the leg above the area protected by the boot.

Figure 24
SPIKE TRAP PIT

CROSS BEAM LOCK

4 METERS

Spike Trap PIT

BAMBOO
TOP
AXLE

SPIKES

2 1/2 METERS

SPIKE TRAP BOX

TOP

40CM

SPIKES

60CM

40 CM

Figure 25
GULLEY TRAPS

Quite often short stakes are employed on banks of gullies and streams, in areas where it is likely that troops might jump from one bank to another. The stakes (2" to 3" long) are usually hidden in grass or other growth on the stream banks.

Figure 26
Schematic drawing of Man Trap (Prone shelter constructed with concealed punji stakes). All dimensions shown are approximate.

Figure 27
BRIDGE SPIKE TRAP

cut at the middle and
covered with mud

Figure 28
GUARDED AND SPIKED COMBAT TRENCHES

Figure 29
BAMBOO WHIP

5 FEET

TRIP WIRE ACROSS THE ROAD

BARBED SPIKE PLATE

THE TOP OF THE BARBED SPIKE PLATE

BOTTOM OF SPIKE WELDED

Figure 30
THE MACE
(OVERHEAD VIEW)

TRIP WIRE

PATH OF MACE

ROPE OR VINE
(USUALLY CAMOUFLAGED)

SPIKED ROCK

Figure 31
The VC use artillery projectiles and mortar rounds as overhead mines. The projectile or round is hung on the limbs of trees over a trail or likely route of approach, an electrical detonator is attached and wires are run to an overwatching enemy position. When a patrol or other unit comes under the camouflaged round the VC detonate it using a battery power source.

Figure 32
MINED COMBAT TRENCH

Figure 33
This mine is made from a hollowed out coconut filled with black powder. Using a friction type fuze this mine is employed in much the same manner as hand grenades. It is usually buried approximately six inches underground. It has been covered by rock and brick for missile effect. These mines have been used effectively near gates.
This mine is made from a large joint of bamboo. It is cleaned out and filled with plastic explosive or black powder. In addition to the explosive the section is also filled with nuts and bolts, rocks, nails and scrap metal or whatever material is available. Although usually detonated by a pull friction type fuze, other means can be readily substituted.

Figure 35
to make the hole difficult to discover, the VC may scatter
dirt across the road for several hundred meters or dig
several dummy holes for deception or for mine employment
at a later date. Water buffalo dung is also used for camou-
flage. Shoulders along roads are often mined and occasionally
the VC tunnel in from shoulders to plant electrically controlled
mines directly in the center of the road. This latter practice
permits "selective targeting" of vehicular traffic. On some
occasions, the VC will bury firing wires to a location but will
not emplace the mine. If friendly troops fail to discover the
wires, the VC then emplace a mine to destroy the next target
that appears.

SECTION III. WEAPONS

8. General

The present VC weapons inventory consists of a mixed
grouping of French, US and Communist Bloc individual and
crew-served weapons. The local manufacture of crudely
made small arms has decreased since the early stages of
the insurgency but some grenades, mines and other demoli-
tion devices are still being produced in RVN.

9. Small Arms

The individual weapon of the VC guerrilla is most likely
to be a modern weapon. VC main force soldiers are often
found to possess recently manufactured weapons. Some of
these units are partially equipped with 7.62mm small arms
which are CHICOM manufactured copies of weapons in the
current Soviet Army inventory. Captured US carbines, Mls
and BARs are still found among Viet Cong local or main force units. Pistols are normally reserved for political and military cadre and serve as possible identifiers of these personnel.

10. Machine Guns

The VC have a wide variety of machine guns from several countries of origin. German 7.92mm WWII LMGs and Soviet and CHICOM 7.62mm light and heavy machine guns are the most common types. Some units are equipped with 12.7mm (.50 cal) heavy machine guns which are highly effective against low flying aircraft.

11. Recoilless Rifles and Mortars

The VC also employ recoilless rifles and mortars in heavy weapons support elements of infantry battalions, companies and platoons. CHICOM 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, plus those captured from the US, are available to the VC at the present time. Also used are locally manufactured rocket launchers and CHICOM copies of the Soviet RPG-2 grenade launcher. US 60mm, 81mm and CHICOM 82mm mortars are found throughout the VC units.

SUMMARY

The VC is an elusive and determined foe. He is well organized politically and militarily, and employs both conventional and guerrilla tactics. He is an expert in the arts of camouflage, deception and ambush. He is a hardy and ruthless fighter, but not an invincible one. He can and will be defeated.