Communist bodies in the Van Hanh street after the Feb. 8 battle.

A VC prisoner taken on Trieu Da street.
South Vietnamese Marines deployed on a street in Cholon

Firing on the enemy
break the enemy's grip in this area, the Third and 
es of the 33rd Ranger were brought in from Binh Chanh 
own Berets did their best to eliminate the infiltrators 
eight days to reduce the enemy pressure. By that time 
g had been killed, eight taken prisoner and 37 wea­ 
ich included two crew-served weapons.

ing the night of 4 February small groups of three to 
oved along many of the alleys that lead from Phan 
t to the Vuon Ba Lon area on Nguyen Thien Thuat 
 they went, the people became frightened and did their 

e again the 38th Ranger Battalion was dispatched to 
rown Berets immediately set up their command post 
 building on Nguyen Thien Thuat Street. They set 
emy, especially in alley 2/3, a 30-yard large blind 
 up of apartment houses facing Phan Thanh Gian and 
Streets.

main V.C. resistance group had elected to stay in a 
located at No. 613/23 Nguyen Thien Thuat from 
ed the government troops. The Brown Berets imme­ 
th intense counterfire from taller buildings in the 
their comrades in the street. The enemy fire remain­ 
ne arrival of government reinforcements later in the 

re assaulting the enemy position, government troops 
insurgents to surrender and requested the population 
area. The Viet Cong not only refused to stop fighting 
their fire at loudspeaker positions. Immediately gun­ 
in to dislodge the enemy from the Do Huu Vi ancestral 
Ba Lon area. Viet Cong troops responded by setting 
civilian houses to help them escape.

fire started at two different places spreading from 
Street to Vuon Ba Lon and vice versa. At its very 
 had arrived on the scene but they were shot at by 
thus prevented the gallant copper-helmeted agents 

at very moment Police Director General Nguyen 
ed aboard a jeep equipped with a 90mm recoiless
rifle. Two well placed rounds immediately resulted in the death of four enemy soldiers at the Communist command post. The event was followed by a ground assault by the Ranger troops who immediately killed another three insurgents.

Government troops then began a sweep of the area, raking and thoroughly searching each house. In one of these, a moving spectacle offered itself to their view: amidst the thunder of destruction, a Buddhist monk was deep in meditation. The soldiers withdrew at once, respectful of the religious leader as they always have been told to be. But the priest turned out to be a fake, and drew out a pistol and shot, killing one of the soldiers. He then tried to escape. He had hardly made three steps when another soldier grisly fired his gun at him, killing the fake monk and confiscating his pistol.

Taking advantage of the great confusion, the Viet Cong withdrew in the direction of Ba Hat and Su Van Hanh streets leaving the area under government control. A fleet of 20 fire engines was immediately brought to the scene and by 1700 hours, the fire was extinguished. Three hundred houses had been burned to the ground. In the meantime government soldiers had killed ten insurgents and captured another two.

Faced with such a situation, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (GVN) did its best to keep the population calm. It issued a series of measures to help stabilize the situation.

On the third day of the Year of the Monkey President Nguyen Van Thieu went on the air requesting the population to keep calm and help Allied troops in re-establishing order in the cities. He also declared martial law throughout the land and temporarily closed down all amusement centers while forbidding all gatherings.

That very day, General Cao Van Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces issued an order of the day to all his troops, charging the Viet Cong with violating the truce order they had themselves ordered. He also gave the people an idea of the military situation throughout the Republic and urged the troops to defeat the Communist plan of offensive at any costs.

That morning the Cabinet also met in a special session that resulted in a special condemnation of the National Liberation
reminding the people of the martial law order
establishing press censorship and promising to take
measures to come to the help of war victims.

February 1968, President Thieu signed Decree 644/
committees in Saigon as well as in the provinces
President Nguyen Cao Ky Chairman of the Central
The following day General Vien again issued an
itory citing, before the Armed Forces, all corps
such branches as Airborne, the Ranger, the
Forces, the Capital Security Group, Regiments,
the Air Force, the Armored branch, and reward-
tier.

After this, General Vien also ordered the launching of
Dao to dislodge the enemy from Saigon. At that
Saigon had much improved but the enemy was
Estimate:

under the operational areas only scattered action was
Zone "D", where besides instances of fighting near
Police Station, the Viet Cong still made their pre-
tedly in the northwest part of the Sixth Precinct
part of the Eighth Precinct.

the night of 4 February enemy elements took over
Distillery installation. The 41st Ranger Battalion
atched to reoccupy the installation. The Viet
the Nguyen Van To Police Station and attacked the
Station in the Eighth Precinct. Another group of
penetrated the staging area on Ly Thai To street.

fighting at Kieu Cong Muoi Police Station, govern-
Viet Cong and captured five individual weapons.
insurgents on Phan Dinh Phung street, killing
capturing two and confiscating one B. 40 rocket.

another Thong Tay area too, contact was established
the security belt around the capital city U.S.
slashing with the insurgents on more than one

general situation in Saigon it can be said that by the
main force units had withdrawn to the out-
opened elements still did their best to hide
One of the many Communist fortifications prior to the battle of Xom Dua.

VC bodies in Xom Dua on 6 February 1968
Xom Moi Church after the VC Tet offensive

Xom Moi area after the battle
within the population, especially in populous areas such as Binh Dinh, Phu Tho, and Go Vap. On the following day they initiated 18 incidents especially in outlying areas bordering on the Fifth, Sixth and Eighth Precincts and Zone "A". Most significant of these actions are the following.

In zone "D" the enemy assaulted the Tran Van Chau Police Station and the headquarters of the Eighth Precinct. The Vietnamese policemen were forced to leave the police station but were able to return the following morning. An estimated 200 insurgents also made their pressure felt in such areas as Road 46, Truong Dinh Street, Road 39, and the Phu Lam area. A ranger unit operating in this part of the city sprang many successful ambushes against intruders. The Rangers lost in one of these ambushes, at the corner of Tan Da and Binh Dong Streets, six of their comrades. By early afternoon once more a fire broke out, destroying quite a few houses in a rectangle delineated by Tran Hoang Quan, Minh Mang and Tran Nhan Ton Streets.

In zone "C" enemy troops tried to block the 114th Airborne Company at the corner of Tong Doc Phuong and Khong-Tu Streets when this unit was dispatched to reinforce the "D" Commando. But the most remarkable of all battles recorded that day was the one that took place at the Xom Moi area of Go Vap district where an element of the Third Airborne Task Force opposed a Communist battalion less than a mile northeast of Co Loa Camp.

At the start of the battle an armored element dispatched to the Lang Son and Xom Dua wards was attacked by withering fire from machineguns and B.40 individual rocket launchers. This fire resulted in the destruction of an armored vehicle and damage to an M.41 tank. At that point helicopter gunships were brought in resulting in the upturn in the morale of friendly troops and a sentiment of desperation on the part of the enemy who immediately hoisted a white flag.

South Vietnamese troops immediately stopped all offensive actions, getting ready to welcome their stray brothers. But the Viet Cong did it simply as a tactic to escape the noose around their neck which was simply too tight to break away. A total of 120 Viet Cong were killed and 35 of their weapons captured while the government troops recorded 16 dead and 42 wounded. On the following day, the airborne troopers continued to meet with strong Communists
February, however, enemy pressure in that area much in evidence. Many squad or company groups acted in the Su Van Hanh area, burning a ranger jeep, and four government soldiers on Tran Hoang Quan to extinguish. They set fire to a paper factory Hau Giang and Dong Thap Streets. There was a big fight on Minh Phung Street and Tran Nhat. 114th Airborne Truong Tu Commando was the cornet of five government soldiers killed, another ten of an armored car.

Fellows the story of that important battle:

February, the 38th Ranger Battalion began a sweep with the objective of eliminating the V.C. intruders large area. Starting from Lo Sieu Street, the battalion with two wings, one under the command of its com- as Captain Bang, and the other under the deputy Lieutenant Nghenh.

Bang led Companies 1 and 2 in a sweep of the to the bridge of Phu Lam. Lieutenant Nghenh companies in another sweep of the triangle Tran Quoc Toan, Minh Phung Street and troops were supported by an armored group, a civil operations troops from the Political War- as this second wing which clashed with the enemy

purs as the Third Company under the command lived at Duy Linh Park, it came under intense troops apparently had captured a bus with Phung Street and from where they attacked in spite of the intensity of the enemy fire, Phinh's company continued its counterattack.

100 troops were hitting from all directions.
at the Viet Cong resistance spot, forcing the enemy to withdraw in the direction of Alley 235. The V.C.-held bus was captured. But at every minute V.C. machinegun fire was directed on the attacking position from a multistoried building nearby. Two armored cars immediately advanced in that direction but a hail of B.40 rockets prevented them from doing any good.

At the same time the local population poured out into the street in an effort to get away from the battle zone. This forced Rangers to temporarily cease fire while Polwar troops continued to encourage those too scared to leave the battle area. In spite of the enemy's effort to keep them as hostages, the people turned their backs to the foe and left.

By 1600 hours the battle resumed with government soldiers fanning out under the protection of gunships crisscrossing the sky and firing on enemy positions as indicated to them by the troops through smoke grenades. In their effort to resist the advancing Rangers, the insurgents succeeded in wounding Lieutenant Nghenh, the deputy battalion commander simply had his bloody nose banded and continued to lead his troops in the attack.

After restoring order in Minh-Phung, the troops started sweeping the many alleys in this area. The Viet Cong retreated in the direction of Xom Dat and to protect their withdrawal set fire to many houses. The fire spread rapidly but it only reached Huynh Tan Phat shop where it was extinguished by the soldiers and firemen. The rangers also turned relief workers when they helped people take their possessions to the Minh-Phung Elementary School which served as refugee center for the following months.

By early evening the whole area was liberated. An aspirant or warrant officer and a private second class who had been kidnapped by the insurgents were freed. They told the operating troops that enemy strength in the area was about 30 Viet Cong armed with AK.47 automatic rifles, B.40 rocket launchers, and machine guns.

Meanwhile a combined Police-Ranger force had also clashed with the enemy in the area of Su Van Hanh, Tran Hoang Quyen, Tran Nhan Ton, and Minh Mang Streets. While losing only two dead and 15 wounded the government troops killed 15 Viet Cong, captured 17 others including a senior captain who was deputy commander of the Binh Tan Sixth Battalion, and confiscated 17 weapons including B.40's.
be said that early that evening, enemy troops of the U.S. Ambassador in a different area did it from the Mac Dinh Chi cemetery on the villa of Mr. Ellsworth Bunker.

It can be said that although enemy activity, especially in the suburban areas, of the Fifth and Sixth Precincts was very close as possible to the people from food and information and among whom they gained once government soldiers left for another

Communist pressure was determined to be most command was to be given additional troops.

Mechanized company to replace the 30th Ranger Seventh Precinct, an American infantry and Tho Hoa in replacement of the 33rd Ranger Signal students named Battalion Tran signal of artillery students baptised for that occasion Vuong.

February, the military command of zone "D" the form of two task forces. Task Force One and 38th Ranger Battalions, a Ranger reconnaissance squadron, and Battalion Tran Nguyen control of the Phu Lam area and all areas to also had the task of preventing any enemy against the Sixth Precinct.

Two which included the 41st and 30th Ranger An Duong Vuong was to take over control Precincts. It also had the task of protecting astrial installations in this important area.

February the command of zone "D" had moved from where it directed all operations. Prior Tran Hung Dao, a battalion of airborne student Development cadre dispatched to Saigon
Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky inspecting pacification cadres recently arrived from Vung Tau to take part in operation Tran Hung Dao (5 Feb.). On the left is Major General Nguyen Duc Thang, Pacification Minister.

This banderol reads: 'Pacification cadres are determined to heal the wounds of the people inflicted by the VC.'
Buddhist Chaplains join in the relief campaign for those made homeless by the war.

All government and private agencies assist victims of the VC Tet offensive
from their training center at Vung Tau. Arriving in Saigon aboard Navy ships on 5 February, they immediately opened dozens of refugee relief centers throughout the city. Prior to sending them to their new assignment, Vice President Nguyễn Cao Kỳ visited them on 7 February.

A total of 37 refugee centers were established by the Red cadres. Most were located in schools and churches and catered to an estimated 86,000 refugees. These refugees were located at the Dinh Tien Hoang Primary School, the Tan Dinh Church, the Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, the Chua Cuu The Church, the Thanh Can Center, the Labor Inspectorate Camp, the Saint Thomas Church, the Phat Diem Church, the Vuon Chuoi Primary School, the headquarters of the Red Cross, the Nhi Dong Hospital, the Bac Ha Church, the Hoi Duc Anh Association, the Cho Ray Hospital, the Cha Tam Church, the Duc Minh School, the Giac Ngan Pagoda, the Chan Phuoc Liem School, the Bosco School, the Bui Phat Center, the Vinh Son Church, the Huyen Si Church, the Tu Du Hospital, and many privately contributed sites.

Along with the troops all other segments of the South Vietnamese population joined in the common fight. On 9 February 1968, both Houses of Congress met in a joint session at Dien Hong Palace following the publication of a five point resolution grouping the signatures of 41 members of the Upper House. These points are roughly as follows:

1. Denounce the Viet Cong for taking advantage of the truce order to assault the cities of South Vietnam, bringing about death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, and for making use of pagodas, churches, hospitals and schools for military purposes;
2. Request the government to help war victims and demand better protection for the people;
3. Welcome the effective assistance of Allied troops;
4. Express their gratitude for all those who have contributed to the defense of their fatherland; and
5. Welcome all efforts that may result in better unity and stronger solidarity among the people and the government in their task of self-preservation.

The House of Representatives, too, was to issue a similar proclamation, giving their support to the fight against Communism.

A few hours after the Representatives and the Senators met, the Viet Cong again launched an attack on the Nguyễn Văn Quá Police Station on Nguyễn Tri Phương Boulevard. From the corner of...
and Nguyen Tri Phuong Boulevard the enemy hit the city with machinegun fire and B.40 rockets. But they could not overcome the withering fire directed at them from a multistoried building occupied by police nearby.

Stopped in this direction, the insurgents sent B.40 rockets direction, damaging part of the Minh Mang Primary School fire to an Army vehicle. This was to draw in their direction 100 grenades of the M.79 type. Meanwhile Viet Cong in small alleys behind the police station rallied for a force in the target but this too failed. In the course of this battle, captured eight AK.47, one B.40 rocket launcher, two in Communist China, and killed 15 enemy soldiers.

A few hours following this battle, an element of the Viet Regiment - which is part of the CT.7 Division - tried to dislodge from the area by airborne February. The infiltrators immediately began a ground Depot 531 and the fuel storage area called Camp 30. This hit in 20 government troops wounded, the destruction of two V.C. losses were 16 killed and nine weapons captured.

During the same night enemy troops also harassed guards Station and resisted, often briefly, Allied patrols in the Tran Dinh, Hau Giang, Road 46 and Tran Hoang Quan Street

The following two days enemy activity drastically in all above mentioned areas as the commanding element Binh Tan Six and the 101st Regiment recorded paralyzing within the city of Saigon itself only scattered action was so action was initiated by especially armed propaganda behind by the enemy in such areas as Tran Hoang Quan, My Tho, Trieu Da, Tran Nhan Ton.

The enemy situation was recorded as follows: the Binh battalion had completely withdrawn from the city, enemy operating in Xom Moi had crossed the small river of Ben refuge in An Phu Dong, Battalion Di An Three had left for a further area, Battalion Thu Duc Four had chosen Long Truong some five miles Southeast of Thu-Duc, Ha Be Five had retired to Long Dien, Battalion 508 had moved to Da Phuoc some four miles southwest of the Seventh and Battalions 267 and 269 had sought survival by making
Airborne troops launching the final assault against an ammunition depot.

Explosion of 2,000 rounds of 105mm ammo.

Blockhouse at Depot 351 following VC attack.
Loc about six miles west of Ba Queo.

About 100 stray soldiers remained from the Viet Cong initially attacked Saigon. They sometimes betrayed themselves "A", "D" and "C" by foolishly firing on patrol boats on the Lo Gom river, medical teams operating in the Minh, and some troops of the 30th Ranger Battalion north of etc... 

Again on 12 February South Vietnamese Ranger elements sweep of the suburb of Phu Lam, which went through the stages:

Early that day as element of the 38th Ranger Battalion at Rach Cau Sat, they killed a Viet Cong and captured another. The battalion immediately got the order to continue its march with the 30th Ranger Battalion which was controlling the Lo Gom Canal. It was planned that from a southeastern battalion would drive the enemy to the areas of Hoa Thuan.

Earlier the 41st Ranger Battalion had been heliborne to an of the Rach Cat Road in Phu Lam, and an armored element patched to help the attacking troops to advance in the direction of Dong and My Thuan. In the ensuing fight the 30th Ranger led a total of 26 Viet Cong and captured eight weapons.

Exactly successful, this battle was to mark the beginning of the Viet Cong in the city. All later fighting was to take urban areas or areas adjoining on the outskirts.

Of the many battles recorded just outside Saigon, let it be that most successful was one involving a U.S. element on the afternoon of 11 February. In this encounter the 47 dead, two captured, and 34 weapons confiscated Americans were killed and 15 wounded. Captured documents most Viet Cong killed were part of the "R" Vanguard escort elements. It was also said that V.C. General killed in this encounter. This information however, has been by intelligence agencies.

In a night operation launched by U.S. troops, U.S. Batached with the enemy in Hung Long, killing 154 Communists one. The P.W. told his interrogators that he belonged dependent Battalion in Long An. Most enemy casualties
General Cao Van Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff, addressing the troops at the end of the Tran Hung Dao campaign.

From right to left:
MG Nguyen Van La, Tran Thanh Phong, Lu Lan, Du Quoc Dong and BG Tran Van Minh, Ngo Dru.
Major General Nguyen Van La, Deputy Chief of the Joint General Staff, decorating LTC Dao Ba Phuoc, Commander of the Fifth Ranger Group.

General Cao Van Vien decorating Colonel Tran Van Hai, Ranger Commander.
were credited to air strikes. The ground troops suffered no

At this point it became evident to everyone that the Viet Cong attack on Saigon had failed. All intruders had been outside the metropolis. In the following days normalcy was restored and the operational command of Operation Tran Hung Dao, which was under General Cao Van Vien, was disbanded on January 1.

This was marked by a simple but moving ceremony at the General Staff Headquarters in the course of which General Viet Nhom himself presented well deserving soldiers with the nation's most coveted decorations.

Operation Tran Hung Dao, however, was not yet over. It became the responsibility of Lieutenant General Le Ngue Van, who was serving as III Corps commander. The division of Zones "A", "B", "C", "D", and "E" was retained. Their commanders were also retained except for Lieutenant Colonel Dao Ba Phu, commander of Zone "D", who took over from Colonel Tran Van Viet. Zone "F" which had been an American responsibility was added to Zone "D".

MAJOR ATTACKS IN AND AROUND SAIGON

U.S. Embassy

During the night of January 30-31 at a little past midnight, a Citroen sedan carrying 19 Viet Cong sappers sped into the area of the U.S. Embassy in downtown Saigon. Driven by Nguyen Dinh Muoi, it stopped near the American Chancery on Mac Dinh Chi Avenue.

There the sappers rushed from the small car, killing one of the two U.S. military policemen standing guard at the gate. Meanwhile, another Viet Cong using a 3.5 recoilless rifle blew a hole in the wall, permitting the group leader to enter the Embassy Building and break the lock of the gate.

In the matter of minutes all the group penetrated Embassy grounds. Clad in black and blue with a red arm band, they recognize one another in the dark easily, they immediately organized themselves and began attacking the Embassy compound.

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At the time of the assault there were six civilian
workers in the communications room on the fourth floor
building. Immediately notified of the Viet Cong presence, they
locked themselves in the bunker like building.

Two U.S. Marines, standing guard on the ground floor
the teak wood gate to try to defend it. A B-40 rocket-grenade
hit one of them. However, the Americans succeeded in locking
the gate, successfully resisted all Communist attempts to break
through it.

Twenty four minutes later an M.P. reinforcement group
arrived, but found it impossible to break through the Com­
terminated fire. Two of the M.P.'s tried to get through but were
stopped by the V.C. sappers who took advantage of the darkness and
took up a most effective resistance.

To dislodge the Communists from the Embassy, the U.S.
Marines had to bring in troops by helicopters but V.C. fire-
intense that all attempts to land failed until about 9 a.m.
A group of American M.P.'s assaulted the Communist
the main gate.

THE US EMBASSY

(1) 0254h The wall is breached
(2) Enemy fires B-40 at the Embassy's main gate
(3) Enemy looks for a way in
(4) A U.S. security officer fires at the enemy from a church
(5) U.S. M.P. Come for rescue
(6) U.S. M.P. Fire at V.C. from the building
(7) 0530h: U.S. helicopters try to land on top of the Embassy
(8) U.S. M.P. Make a breach to enter the Embassy
(9) V.C. Fire at the landing helicopters
(10) U.S. M.P. Occupy a dominant position
(11) 0635h, Helicopters land on the Embassy
(12) 0900h: The M.P. hurl the last enemy and col.
Jacobson kills him to end the fight.
Immediately after Communist sappers were dislodged from the US Embassy, American military police took dead Viet Cong away for burial.

On that first day of the Communist offensive, General William C. Westmoreland, US Commander in Vietnam, came for a look at the embattled embassy building in up town Saigon.
Thanks to Private First Class Paul Healey who took upon the task of leading his comrades, the M.P.'s succeeded in getting through. A hand-to-hand fight ensued that resulted in the killing of all but one of the Viet Cong who sought refuge in a two-storey house next to the main building. The house was occupied by (ret.) George Jacobson, a member of the Embassy staff.

As the Viet Cong took possession of the ground floor of the house, Colonel Jacobson was defenseless upstairs. Troops in 60 m directed their fire at suspected V.C. positions.

Finally they threw a few tear gas grenades and a pistol Jacobson, who was then in a position to kill the last Viet Cong. This brought the Battle of the Embassy to an end.

It took six hours for the U.S. troops to kill the nineteen American losses were five fatalities.

Headquarters

In the early hours of the second day of the Year of the Ox exactly at 0250 hours, a sapper squad group of 12 Viet Con men of the South Vietnamese Navy equipped with automatic rifles of the AK family, hand explosive, they arrived on the scene clad in civilian attire with the armband of the Capital Security Service. They targeted a civilian car, one painted green and white and bearing the plate number of ED.6473. Immediately on arrival the Communists opened fire on the car guard on the Cuu Long Bridge that stands opposite Hung Dao. The first Communist car stopped close to the Cuu Long Bridge that stands opposite Hung Dao. The first Communist car stopped close from where the insurgents directed their in-endy position.

The guard post two Navymen returned the fire and the explosions brought to the scene a group of insurgents as reserves. One of the attackers, immediately brought down as they approached the scene.

Insurgents continued their advance from the Me-range of fire grew more intense. By about 0305 the scene from the direction of the Thu-
All Viet Cong troops taking part in the assault on the Navy Head were killed. This photo taken on 31 January 1968 show some of the bodies and the car they had used to come to their death row.

VC sappers killed by Airborne troops in front of the Radio Bridge, one of whom was wounded, tried to come in through the entrance to the city. A steady rate of fire brought in some of the gate and penetrated the Communist's strong positions from where two men entered.

Four reconnaissance teams were led by the man who had barely reached the area. There were seven AK rifles and explosives confirming the supreme attack.

The enemy tried to occupy the Navy and had planned to use a strong resistance.

Some other attacks in various

Meas...
ridge, only to be hit by Communist fire. Two U.S. patrolmen were wounded and the American jeep turned upside down when its driver tried to veer right to get out of the firing zone.

Meanwhile, the enemy continued his pressure on the Navy Headquarters. While a Viet Cong group kept a high rate of fire on the defending Navymen, another group tried to use some explosives with the evident intention of blowing up the building and penetrating the headquarters building.

From the first floor of the building Navymen tried to repel the intruders at a distance. Three of the intruders were shot before they reached the gate. The exchange continued but some of the intruders succeeded in blowing a hole in the wall of the sentry post where two of them tried to sneak in. They were killed as they fell.

Fifteen minutes later the fight came to an end. A reconnaissance team was at once dispatched to kill the remaining Viet Cong or to take them prisoners. One of them tried to flee but the intruders barely reached the BGI building when he was captured by U.S. Marines in the area.

The final result was ten Viet Cong dead, two captured, AK rifles, one Chinese Communist pistol and 200 pounds of explosives confiscated. On the government side two Navymen made the supreme sacrifice while another nine were wounded.

The relatively speedy repulse of the Communists from the Navy headquarters can be explained by one single development. As a rule only the guard are armed, but on that night following the alert order Joint General Staff that came a little before midnight, all the personnel present were issued individual weapons. Therefore, when the Viet Cong tried to breach the defense perimeter his troops met with resistance from the defenders.

According to the Viet Cong plan they had planned to take the Navy headquarters speedily and from there sweep troops anchored ships to take possession of the vessels. They also planned to use the capture ships to support a contemplated mass attack.

**Other attacks**

Meanwhile, the intruders also tried to stage many other attacks in various strategically important positions in the capital.

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They tried in the very first hours of the offensive to take possession of the Phu Dong Armored Camp from where they could deploy captured vehicles against other installations. For this undertaking they brought quite a few drivers along but although they succeeding in taking over the camp the enemy found no vehicles. All these had been issued to the units in the field just prior to the holiday season.

However, the Communists could claim to have occupied one of the most important military installations in town. But this was not much of a feat since the Armor Headquarters was guarded by only 40 troops. The enemy succeeded in capturing these 40 troops immediately after entering the camp.

Prior to their withdrawal from the area the insurgents killed practically every one including Lieutenant Colonels Nguyen Tuan and Huynh Ngoc Diep. All of the Tuan family were murdered except for a ten year old child.

A few days later residents in this area saw commando cars going up and down the street. They had come from the Go-Vap subsector and besides taking care of the defense of the area they took upon themselves the task of evacuating wounded soldiers from battle area to the nearby Cong Hoa general hospital.

A similar development was recorded in the artillery area, which groups the Co Loa and No Than camps, that houses the Artillery Command and the officers of some artillery battalions. Unable to penetrate the strongly defended No Than camp the enemy succeeded in entering the weakly defended Co Loa Camp.

Although warned of an small impending attack, the local garrison found itself resisting a large scale onslaught. The intrusion struck suddenly in force at the Northwestern Gate. The camp was saved from occupation and destruction by the speedy reaction of a group of gunners who fired their big guns at pointblank range at the enemy.

Following this first unsuccessful attack, the enemy brought in more troops from Go Vap. These troops came to the battle scene on motorcycles. Meanwhile they pounded the installation with mortars and tried their best to penetrate the officers'quarters in an effort to capture as many prisoners as possible.
Throughout the second day of the New Year the insurgents stepped up their pressure and tried to take over the military in the vicinity. They failed in all their attempts in spite of inability to bring in reinforcements.

On the following day a Marine task force came to the aid of the besieged garrison. In the wake of quite a few bloody engagements the two battalion task force got the situation under control. On the fourth day of the Year of the Monkey the enemy again tried to make his way into the artillery base. At one point he penetrated the perimeter but pointblank cannon fire again drove him back. Another attack drove him from the No Than Camp and restored normalcy.

More than one ARVN officer was killed in this battle, whom were Lieutenant Colonel To Ngoc Tho of the Fifth Infantry Division and Captain Tran Manh of the Artillery Command. Two howitzers were destroyed during the fight.

The radio station

The attack on the Saigon Radio Station took place at about eight by a group of Viet Cong masquerading as riot police elements. Intruders took control of the government building which had been under the protection of a squad of riot police troops.

After entering the building, the sappers destroyed most machinery but left alone the newly-built wing where most papers and were stored. Although occupied by the enemy, Radio Saigon continued to broadcast since the transmission center was located in the perimeter of the Quang-Trung Training Center which was never taken by the enemy.

By 0500 hours a group of airborne troops were dispatched to the scene and within two hours dislodged the intruders. A total of 14 Cong were killed and some ammunition was captured.

It was learned a few days later that, immediately after the central radio station was occupied by the enemy, the political warfare officer at the Quang-Trung Training Center - only identified as Mr. Hung - immediately reported the facts to his commanding officer, Colonel Le Ngoc Trien, and began broadcasting taped music over the air. The following morning listeners of the Voice of Vietnam still hear VTVN and some short news bulletins as conveyed to
View of the Saigon Radio Station after reoccupation.

At Headquaters

One gate was silenced. Gate Number Five. Gate Five was in the compound, the car of an unit to assault to gate.

The street on a bus was attacked by attackers spread to indicate that situation and taken refuge.

When on the bus tried to the speedly react there - especially chinagun at the area.

Not scene and see soldiers in communist at Lai all the American at where Chinese guard at what was...
The Viet Cong were less successful in their attack on the presidential Palace which they tried to infiltrate from the back gate. Shortly after the enemy was able to fire only two B. 40 rockets before the defenders reacted strongly, killing four NVA soldiers, capturing two, and confiscating five AK-47 automatic rifles as well as a truckful of explosive.

The remaining enemy troops withdrew to a five-storied residential mansion on Nguyen Du Street and from there directed their fire on the Vietnamese General headquarters. It took two days to reduce the Communist headquarters.

One of the first targets selected by the Viet Cong was the residence of a high-ranking Vietnamese general located near the American Embassy. The enemy tried to storm this apartment building but was repelled by the American embassy guards. The Communist troops came from Truong Quoc Dung Street, a nearby bus stop, and spread out and assaulted their target. Later reports stated that some of the attackers had arrived on the scene before dawn.

When the assault came about, those remaining behind and trying to protect the attacking troops. Thanks to the reaction of the five military policemen standing guard especially Corporal Thao who immediately fired his submachine gun at the assailants - the Viet Cong failed to break in.

At that moment an American patrol jeep arrived on the scene to see what was happening - immediately upon arrival the driver fired on the Viet Cong in civilian clothes, killing three of the Viet Cong. The Hoa Pagoda reacted at once by killing or wounding several of the enemy. The Communists again tried to assault the gate with the help of a group of American sentries standing guard at the residence of a U.S. general in the vicinity. Witnessing the spike in the attack, they directed their fire at the Communists,
It took government soldiers quite a few tricks to dislodge the Viet Cong from a multi-storied building on Nguyen Du street from where they had fired on Independence Palace.

What remains of an AG building following the unsuccessful VC attack on the General Headquarters of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.
reducing the Viet Cong pressure on the gate. While the exchange fire was continuing, a U.S. truck arrived, bringing replacements for sentries at the VIP’s house. The truck was hit by a B.40 rocket, starting fire, causing the death or wounding of the Americans of the truck. All these developments helped to keep the intruders from breaking in.

It was to be learned later that the assaulting troops belonged to the F.100 unit which had the mission to get into the headquarters and capture all the high-ranking officers. Coordinated attacks had been planned on Gate Four on Vo Di Nguy Street and on Gate Two on Tanh Street. Only Gate One was left alone.

At Gate Four a group of sappers had penetrated the compound of the Armed Forces Language School. But for some unknown reason, they were unable to coordinate their attack with those from the other side. Thus their attack started at 0700 hours, five hours later. Later, several B.40 rockets were fired at the watchtower which caused it to collapse. All the soldiers standing guard there were killed. An element of the Headquarters Company immediately responded to the enemy threat. However, the Commander of the element, Tran Le Tai, was slightly wounded in the first minute of the battle. He ordered his troops to a line of defense about 200 yards from the watchtower.

The enemy could have used another gate in his attempt to enter the Joint General Staff compound, but thanks to the intervention of American M.P.'s at Gate Four, he did not have enough men to deploy in the direction of the other gates. Thus, the plan for the attack on the South Vietnamese Army headquarters was a failure.

On the morning of the following day, Viet Cong troops in the Xom Thom area penetrated Gate Four but were unable to communicate with other groups; therefore, they failed to achieve initial success. Since it was daylight when they broke into the compound, they were again put to a great disadvantage. At that time there was only an 80-man company, made up of staff and soldiers, supported by a handful of tanks defending the area. If the enemy had continued their attack, the situation could have grown serious since there were not enough resources available.

Outside the compound U.S. troops guarding the VIP's sentries at Gate Five continued firing through the night.
Elements in Long Hoa pagoda returned fire sporadically. They apparently thought the defense of headquarters had been strengthened.

At dawn an MP car went out of camp for a patrol. It was able to travel from Gate Number One to Gate Number Five without encountering any enemy fire. Meanwhile the duty officer at JGS, Major Nguyen Dang Chat, received a specific order from Major General Tran Thanh Phong, the Chief of Staff, for the deployment of troops for the defense of this vital installation. However, Major Nguyen Dang Chat was wounded in his attempt to deploy the forces.

At 0900 hours the following morning an airborne element arrived at the headquarters. One knew then that the Communist threat had subsided. When the shooting started at Gate Number Five, practically no one at JGS thought it was a Viet Cong attack. It was fortunate the Communists did not succeed in penetrating the compound at the first try for such a development would have consequences impossible to predict.

Meanwhile during that night a two battalion force of Viet Cong penetrated Hoc Mon from the north. At 0300 hours the intruders began their attack on Chau Van Tiep camp after setting fire to a nearby school and village administration office.

The sentry, it was later learned, did not think they were Viet Cong but he fired a warning shot into the air. The lone shot triggered a volley of bullets from the assailants. That was the beginning of the end for the intruders for a newly installed machinegun immediately spit fire in their direction. Unable to resist, the Communists spread along the moat line outside the camp but, unfortunately for the machinegun was set up to fire in that direction too. A total of six Viet Cong died in that contact while six of them were captured. The garrison troops captured over 30 weapons of all kinds. The defense casualties were two killed and five wounded.

The following morning troops of the Quang Trung Training Center undertook to mop up the neighboring area and the unit again killed a number of Viet Cong.

As a rule each guard post consists of six soldiers warned by headquarters of an impending enemy attack, each post reinforced before midnight with three additional soldiers and a gun. These reinforced guard posts caused the Viet Cong defenders probably another factor was the V.C. inaccurate assessment forces.
The Viet Cong Tet offensive, which was launched against 28 provincial cities and important military installations with an estimated 97 battalions of troops, included both combat and support troops. The offensive failed rapidly except in the former imperial capital of Hue, where, due to cloudy weather and the resulting poor observation, the Communists were able to fight nearly a month.

In other parts of the country the intruders were expelled from the cities but were apparently unable to see the true situation. So, they were to mount a second wave offensive on 17 February. This phase was quite a few locations but was rather short in duration and intensive than the initial phase. Although having the capability of sending troops to the outlying areas of various cities, the enemy did not have the will and the ability to turn these movements into victories.

Most remarkable was his ability to continue pounding ammunition centers with mortar and rockets of all calibers. He also used the new rocket manufactured in Russia, the 122mm rocket, which has a range of eight miles and has an explosive power equivalent to 40,000 lbs of TNT.

In Saigon the enemy began this new offensive phase with the bombing of the Tan Son Nhut Airport. The bombardment began at 0120 hours, besides the sprawling air base, Communist warheads also hit the MACV Headquarters, the National Police Headquarters, and the Radar Station. A total of nearly 100 rounds of 82mm mortars and 122mm rockets exploded in the air base.

One of these warheads hit the waiting room where 88 U.S. soldiers were waiting to return to the U.S., killing the homegoing troops and wounding quite a few others. Six rounds hit the headquarters of General William C. Westmoreland, and there were no casualties. One C.47 transport plane of the VNAF was destroyed and another damaged while five U.S. C.47s were destroyed or damaged. The attack resulted in a total of 1 dead and 131 wounded, of which 67 were evacuated.

At Police Headquarters five policemen lost their lives but were wounded when the enemy lodged some 20 rounds of 122mm mortar into the compound. This general area was to be attacked by the following day but all the warheads fell into a poor}

"Fighting in the suburbs"
section behind the Inspectorate General of Labor which is usually referred to as the Indian Buddha Section.

In addition to these aerial attacks in the dark hours of February 17, the enemy also mounted a ground action to destroy the Binh Loi and Highway bridges, but his troops were repelled the following day by South Vietnamese Marines dispatched to bar them from penetrating the city. They also launched an attack on the road from Hoc Mon to Xom Moi, which was under the tactical responsibility of the Second Airborne Task Force and included such important installations as the Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the Vinatexco Company, the Quang Trung Training Center, and others.

Throughout the night the VC Quyet Thang Battalion, an element of the Phu Loi Regiment, clashed with the Eighth Airborne Battalion in an area northwest of Tan Thoi Hiep. The fighting started a little past midnight, beginning with many mortar barrages and following with a ground assault that included B.40 and B.41 fired point blank against the defense perimeter of the airborne position.

While the paratroopers were successfully resisting attempts to overrun their position, they also discovered some VC artillery positions firing in the direction of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base. These positions were a bare 200 yards from the Airborne command post and were soon destroyed by airpower called to attack them.

The Communists continued their assault but, with armored reinforcements and flares illuminating the sky, the defenders kept them at bay and were in full control of the situation at dawn. The battle resulted in 78 Communist dead, one taken prisoner, and a number of captured weapons and ammunition to include one 60mm mortar tube, two Carl Gustafs machineguns, 13 B.40 and two B.41 individual rocket launchers, AK.47 automatic rifles, one Carbine, one colt, and one submachine gun. On the government side, seven soldiers were killed, 35 wounded, and an armored vehicle damaged.

The following night (19 February), the Communists attacked the area of Phu Lam using two Main Force battalions in hope of destroying a government Ranger battalion and continuing to march into the city. The two enemy battalions were the First and Sixth Battalions, with the first unit frontally assaulting the government position while the second battalion served as reinforcement. Nam Xuan and Tu Vu, respectively commander and deputy commander of one of the battalions, had been killed in a previous attack on the city along with their staff.
Marines operating in the vicinity of Binh Loi bridge on the 18 of Feb. 1968

Trophy taken by Marines during the battle near Binh Loi bridge (18 Feb. 1968)
Marines from the 3rd Marine Battalion counterattacking the Binh Loi bridge area on 18 February 1968.
At 0215 hours, the insurgents resorted to an intense mortar barrage to give additional punch to their frontal thrust. Mortar rounds and B.40 rockets continuously pounded the command post of the government battalion but due to the positions fortifications, no casualties were recorded. Ten minutes later their ground troops began the real attack.

They did not reckon with the presence of a reconnaissance squad lying out of camp ready to "welcome" them. As soon as the enemy showed themselves, they were cut down. The whole attacking force was mowed down by machinegun fire. Following this a total of 40 dead VC bodies were counted, including that of a man named Muoi, the Deputy Commanding Officer of the First Battalion. Government soldiers also took six B.40 rocket launchers, two machineguns, two mortar tubes, 36 AK.47 automatic rifles, 20 pounds of TNT, and about a ton of ammunition.

This victory was credited to the reconnaissance squad which initially had the simple task of alerting the main body of troops of the Viet Cong attack. These reconnaissance troopers struck the enemy a deadly blow at the initial minute of the encounter. The insurgents never had the chance of doing anything before they were decimated. The extent of their failure can be measured by their inability to even take away the bodies of their dead, that of their Deputy Commanding Officer included.

Another truism also has begun to slowly emerge from this battle. The Viet Cong battalion's inability to even approach the command post of the Ranger unit can be traced to their very poor mobility. Indeed, following the incredibly high losses recorded by this unit in the first wave of attacks, it had to fill up its depleted ranks with youths forcefully drafted. These constituted the majority. According to a prisoner of war he had only two weeks of training before being assigned to his unit and sent to war.

A little past noon on 2 February a mechanized infantry element of the U.S. Army clashed with the Viet Cong just over one mile out of Hoc Mon and about ten miles northwest of Saigon. The encounter lasted until early evening. At about the same time, government troops sweeping through the Binh Hoa intersection area and the Xanh section also inflicted some losses on the enemy.

During the night fighting again flared up in the Tan Son area. The enemy apparently had received some reinforcements and intensified his pressure just north of the Quang Trung Training
Center. Communist soldiers also made their presence felt in Thu Duc, blowing up a watchtower guarding the bridge of Go Dua just a mile from Thu Duc and destroying the bridge with TNT.

The following day enemy pressure in the Thu Duc area became more intense as his gunners mortared an equipment company, installation and occupied the Sicovina textile factory there. A battle was also reported in the general area two miles northwest of the race track. The heavy fighting in this area was joined by planes and artillery from the friendly side and anti-aircraft machineguns from the Communist side. The Communists did their best to protect this infiltration route from where they had sent hundreds of mortar rounds into Saigon during the preceding days.

The battle started at the Cemetery of the Trieu Chau (Chinese) Congregation when the 33rd Ranger Battalion came to relie an American unit. This move followed the decision to merge Zones "D" and "F" and make both divisions the area of responsibility government Rangers. The enemy had avoided contact with the Americans but when South Vietnamese troops arrived the Communist immediately struck.

A Vietnam press correspondent was with the Rangers when fighting broke out between the Viet Cong and the crack government unit, which then was under the command of Captain Nguyen Th. The correspondent was marching with the Third Company and its commander, young Lieutenant Trinh Thanh Xuan. Here is his description of the battle:

"Binh Thoi Firing Range, 20-2-68(VP). -- It was past noon when Lieutenant Trinh Thanh Xuan got ready for lunch. That precise moment however, the youthful leader of the Third Company, 33rd Ranger Battalion, got word from his commanding officer that the enemy was about to strike.

"The enemy has infiltrated many troops in the Trieu Chau Congregation Cemetery which is 200 yards from the Binh Thoi Firing Range. His troops also were most numerous in a triangle up of Tan Hoa, Cau Tre, and Phu Binh. This situation had the immediate effect of spoiling Lt. Xuan's lunch.

"After acknowledging the order to move against the enemy, the company divided itself into three parts: 1st platoon under Sergeant Tran Xoong, a veteran with over 30 years of service, was assigned the task of hitting the enemy from the right flank; 3rd platoon, under Lieutenant Thong Tran, focused on the left flank, and the rest of the company, under First Sergeant Pham Thanh Loi, was to take up a position on the front."

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Sergeant Tang Ly, was given the task of protecting the command post and attacking the enemy from the left flank; and 2nd platoon, Warrant Officer UT, was to hit the enemy in a frontal attack in conjunction with the crack reconnaissance section.

'The waiting period did not last long. As soon as the left Village Road 14 and were in view from the cemetery, the opened fire on them. Tran Xoong's troops who were in an aid did not have any alternative but to hit back as forcefully as they could. They charged with fixed bayonets. The first Viet Cong line rapidly collapsed.

'Xoong and his troops immediately surged forward and, taking possession of the enemy trenches, continued to direct their Communists who then were behind every tomb in the big cemetery. The opposing troops were so close to one another that they were one another's face. The Viet Cong were a curious mixture of white clad elements with some of them half naked.

'Immediately at the start of the battle it became evident the Cong were MainForce troops well equipped with such weapons as rocket launchers and other collective arms. Their individual arms were mostly AK.50, which are newer and better versions of the AK.47. All this firepower did not prevent the Rangers from moving once more and occupying a small vermicelli factory.

'But here the troops under the command of Lieutenant Dac Hiep were forced to meet with strong enemy resistance. The Viet Cong had machineguns which were silenced by a series of M.79 grenades launched by the company commander. (The M.79 is a shaped grenade with an incomparable destructive power).

'In spite of intense pounding of their position, the VC machineguns refused to budge, creating the feeling among the Rangers that they were chained to their arms. Meanwhile a bare 20 yards separated the Rangers on both sides as they continued to fire at each other.

'Seeing red at what he called Viet Cong stubbornness, Dac Hiep, took over the M.79 launcher and directed it at the position in a house. In the other position in a house, a Viet Cong, with an AK.50, tried to stop him. Both fired at the house and both collapsed simultaneously. Hiep was killed by a bullet through his helmet and the Viet Cong was slain among his machinegunner friends.
"Lieutenant Xuan had had only time to tell Hiep to be careful when the young soldier was mortally wounded. He immediately tried to retrieve the body of the young hero but enemy gunners had followed his movements carefully and he could not get anywhere near Hiep.

"In the face of the Lieutenant's dilemma a civilian in his forties, who along with an old lady had been caught in the fight, volunteered to recover Hiep's body. The man, Mr. Ho Van Hai, told the soldiers, "Let me do it. Since I am in civilian clothes it might be a little easier".

"And without waiting for an answer, Mr. Hai went into the open, trying in the meanwhile to light a Bastos cigarette to calm his nerves. He trod slowly amidst explosions, reached Hiep, and led the lifeless body back to the safety of the command post.

"Meanwhile on the left hand flank Captain Thiet was talking on the radio, ordering Lieutenant Xuan to withdraw his troops that an armored element could finish the job. Three tanks, nicknamed "Crabs", appeared from nowhere, causing the enemy to regroup and withdraw to the frontline within sight of the government soldiers.

"The 'Crabs' surged forward slowly but surely. A volley of bombs from enemy rocket launchers flew in the direction of the enemy vehicles, reducing one of them to a burning heap of metal. It did not stop the Rangers from continuing the assault. Captain Thiet's soldiers mounted the 'Crab' and converted the vehicle into a fire machine.

"Fighting grew more intense with each passing minute. The second tank arrived as reinforcement only to be hit by a rocket bomb and set afire. Enemy troops immediately took advantage of the surprise to start a counterattack. But they did not realize the usefulness of the commander of the 33rd Ranger Battalion men.

"At a simple order a totally different formation emerged from the confused battle scene with masked men, moving as if supernatural beings, surprising Viet Cong by the dot and the Rangers had been equipped with gas masks and they had practiced this tactic to defeat an enemy determined to overrun them in numbers.

"In this engagement Viet Cong losses reached considerable proportions.

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"By then with only a wall separating the two opposing sides, a group of government tanks pounded the Viet Cong line so vigorously that the Communists died by the dozens. By 1420 hours, jets and helicopter gunships also joined in the battle. It was two hours since the battle began and turned the area into an exploding inferno.

"Troops on both sides were intermingled in a free for all fight, growing in intensity with each passing minute. One of the helicopters hit as it tried to support the ground troops more effectively. An immediate order was issued to prevent the enemy from approaching the helicopter.

"By 1600 hours the fight grew into a hand-to-hand affair, troops on both sides trying to dislodge the others from tomb after tomb. Two hours later as night was approaching, another group of planes pounded the target while the Rangers consolidated their positions for the night. The day's fighting had resulted in 211 Viet Cong whom at least 20 were women.

"The following morning (21 Feb) the Rangers received the enemy down and let jets and artillery finish the job. After the pummeling of the Communist positions, the Rangers again tried to move but it took them over an hour to cross 300 yards of land before assaulting the buildings close to the enemy lines.

"From these buildings they had to use M.72 rockets and rifles to break through and engage the enemy. By midday, and artillery again were called in, creating a battle scene best war movies and prompting the incorrigible Vietnamese to climb the rooftops of their houses and watch the fight.

"From these positions many civilians told the Rangers that enemy troops had gone. And so, after a two-hour wait and with most all the Rangers of the 33rd Ranger Battalion in at the cemetery. Here and there newly dug tombs with their contents of AK.47 rifles scattered about.

Thach, could be seen on a burnt out M.113, showed the man in a firing position. Next to him, the driver. Both had made the supreme sacrifice over many enemy positions armed with the deadly B. rocket launchers.
All over the place Viet Cong bodies could be seen, making the task of this reporter practically impossible. Domestic animals killed in the fight also created an unforgettable picture with hogs as big as cows littering the area and a lone and wounded cow crying while standing fast.

Many tombs had been opened by the violence of air raids, yielding skeletons of those dead years ago. For them death had arrived twice. But all these horrors did not stop the Rangers who continued the sweep until early afternoon.

The battle had raged for over 24 hours. From one of the tombs still intact, Lieutenant Trinh Thanh Xuan, Commander of the Third Company, reported:

"In this battle we have captured many masks with which the Viet Cong apparently had intended to fight a gas war. These masks look rather strange as they are made of nylon with green oxygen tubes. The total Viet Cong losses amount to about 300, of which some are buried under collapsed buildings.

The enemy continued to try to enter the city from its northwestern gates. Most indicative of this intention was a battle opposing a battalion of Regiment 272/CT. 9 and the Third Brigade of the US 25th Infantry Division. The battle took place on 21 February at the Village of Vinh Loc district of Tan Binh, a mere four miles northwest of Saigon.

After this battle enemy pressure continued to be maintained in that area, especially in the second half of February when elements of the crack Viet Cong Ninth Infantry Division made their appearance in the region of Hoc Mon. In addition to their presence one also has to reckon with their determination to redeem themselves with something better than the series of beating they had recorded in the preceding months.

In their attempt to infiltrate Saigon, the Ninth Division had one of its regiments, the 272nd, mauled by US troops with 132 dead body count. Another regiment, the 273rd, tried to come in through Vap but was stopped by Vietnamese airborne troops. Its third regiment, the 271st, was in better shape, since it was kept in Hoc Mon to be used as reinforcements for the other two regiments.

To cope with this situation the two Allied commands had to maintain quite a few troops in the Capital Military District. On the Vietnamese side there were two airborne task forces, a Marine
force, a Ranger group and many newly created units formed with cadets and staff members of the many military agencies in Saigon. On the American side there were two US brigades operating in the suburbs, under the command of Major General Keith L. Ware. Both commands ordered a rapid improvement of the defense of the many military installations in the capital.

During the night of 22 February a clash was reported between government troops and an unidentified Viet Cong unit in the POL area of Go Vap, resulting in a speedy defeat of the enemy. The following day the situation in Saigon's many suburbs was described by Allied personnel as "calm". But in the early hours of 24 February, more specifically at 0440 hours, Communist gunners again pounded the Tan Son Nhut Air Base and Saigon's northern outskirts.

A total of some 20 rounds of 82mm mortar and 122mm shells fell in two volleys on the sprawling air base, killing three soldiers and wounding another 17. The bombardment also resulted in damage to three aircraft. A lone warhead fell on the Vietnamese Joint Staff compound, wounding two servicemen, and another had hit a civilian house in the Lang Cha Ca area just outside Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

In this last instance the house was completely destroyed, the entire family of 11 killed.

It was learned later that the enemy had shelled the air base and neighboring installations from other cemeteries in an area north of the air base.

Following his failure against the Go Vap POL installation, the enemy tried his luck once more during the night of 24-25 February, and the attack was preceded by an intense mortar and rocket barrage but it too failed.

Within the city the enemy was only strong enough to initiate sabotage actions, mainly terrorist activities. His troops destroyed two bridges: one on the Giong Ong To River about five miles south of Thu Duc and the other on the Cau Kinh River, a bare two miles northeast of Gia Dinh City.

During the mortaring of the capital, enemy gunners mortared populated areas such as the Nguyen Van Thanh Quay where two were destroyed and three civilians killed, the Tu Do Rest-
engaged in other harassing actions such as the ones recorded against the Newport and the bus station in Gia Dinh.

On the morning of 24 February a combined US-Vietnamese force, supported by armor and air strikes, swept through an area 11 miles from Saigon in search of a Communist element known to be operating in the villages of Xuan Thoi Son, Xuan Thoi Thuong and Xuan Thoi Trung. A heavy clash ensued at Tan Thoi Trung, between a South Vietnamese airborne element and the Viet Cong, that continued into early evening.

In this clash the ground troops were supported most effectively by gunships and artillery and, as the fighting slowed at dark, a total of 20 Communists had been killed, five captured, and 10 individual weapons confiscated. The enemy force was about 400 strong and was equipped with anti-aircraft machineguns that shot an Allied helicopter out of the sky. This fortunately resulted in no casualties among the passengers.

In another operation in this general area three miles northeast of Saigon, an airborne battalion (-) with only two companies met with the enemy in one of the fiercest battles of the campaign. The Sixth Airborne Battalion, including only Companies 61 and 64, met and fought an element of the Phu Loi Three Battalion for six hours. In the course of the battle government troops killed 72 Viet Cong.

After securing control of the area, the government soldiers captured two machineguns, ten AK-47 individual weapons and Chinese Communist pistols. Against a loss of 72 killed on the Communist side, the South Vietnamese unit lost five dead and seven wounded. Among the Viet Cong killed was Dinh Huu Chinh, who had commanded Company B2/A7, and his political commissar, Tran Van Ngu.

Also beginning that first day of March, Allied troops in the Saigon area launched a series of operations that sought to bring the Communist noose around the city. In the area of the Binh Loi one such operation was launched that is typical of many other campaigns.

To reduce enemy pressure in this area, a combination grouping thousands of Allied soldiers was conducted, with the objective of killing as many Viet Cong as possible. The operation was planned to take place in a triangle made up of the district towns of Thu Duc, Di An, and Di An. Here the enemy maintained important installations in Dong An Woods, the Forest of Dau, the Lo Chen Area, Truc, and the Co Mi Woods.
Outside this triangle an important task force of South Vietnamese Marines, Rangers and infantrymen, supported by armor and elements, were given the task of blocking the retreat of an estimated 10,000 communists, including Main Force and regional force troops and failed in two attempts against the city.

However, this big operation failed to bring about any of contemplated results. The enemy avoided battle and scattered across, reported resulting in light casualties on the Communist side.

On the second day of March the Tan Son Nhut Air Base was attacked for the third time. This time enemy gunners shelled the installation until 0900 hours. Although only light casualties resulted, significant material losses were recorded, the attack was more than on previous occasions. Warheads also fell on populated Cholon.

On 7 March airborne troops, operating in the Ba Diem Thoi Trung areas, again reported an important clash with the enemy. The battle raged for three hours. The government force supported by four jets which took turns strafing Viet Cong positions. Following this battle, the situation in the Capital Military returned to normal.

Losses on both sides during the months of February and the Saigon area were as follows:

A total of 323 government soldiers lost their lives, 907 and 28 weapons, including five crew-served, were lost. On side a total of 5,289 soldiers and cadres were killed, 415 prisoners, and 1,934 weapons were confiscated, including dual and 390 crew served weapons.

These figures were taken from statistics released by the Staff for the months of February and March 1968.

The intense fighting, which the people of Saigon have witnessed in the early days of the Year of the Monkey, had the effect of changing the atmosphere in this war capital. Instead of being so prone to having, the people of Saigon began living with the war was on their doorstep.

Little traffic was seen in the streets; the citizens went to their work with little other movement. Night life came to a standstill. All restaurants and places of entertainment closed their doors. Even schools were closed until 1 April.
The cost of living also rose dramatically. A bowl of soup that prior to Tet cost only VN$30, could only be found at 40 piastres. A few stem of spinach doubled in price to VN$15 and people had to pay 900 piastres for a kilo of pork. The price of rice remained steady.

Business ground to a halt because inland communications had become difficult and the people were less willing to spend money except on food. This trend however, had been noticeable for some time before the New Year. Psychologically, business circles here also suffered and no expansion of any kind was reported.

But following the unprecedented Viet Cong attack, President Nguyen Van Thieu's prestige recorded a dramatic upturn. Many political groups that thus far had opposed the government chose support it in the difficult days of the nation's history. Moreover hard measures had been taken by the government without any opposition.

Most indicative of this were the enactment of the General Mobilization Law, the recall of reserves, the creation of the People's Self Defense Corps and the drafting of students. This absence of opposition can be traced to the Viet Cong offensive, which showed the communists in their true light: a group of bad soldiers, killers and criminals, who died by the hundreds, taking to their heels in the face of determined resistance.
2nd PHASE OF V. C. OFFENSIVE AGAINST SAIGON
(From 5 May to 12 May 1968)

Durations of the battles:
- Battle at Thi-Nghiep from 5 May 68 to 7 May 68
- Battle at Binh Lai Bridge from 5 May 68 to 5 May 68
- Battle at Bay Hien Intersection from 6 May 68 to 7 May 68
- Battle at Binh Thai - Minh Phung from 5 May 68 to 12 May 68
- Battle at Binh Tian from 8 May 68 to 9 May 68
- Battle at Tan-Thoi-Hiep from 8 May 68 to 11 May 68
- Battle at Y Bridge from 9 May 68 to 12 May 68
2nd phase battles

The 2nd Phase of the Communist Offensive can be divided into two periods, the first from 5 to 12 May and second from 25 May to 16 June 1968.

Unlike the initial phase, Communist troops during the second phase did not seek to attack any of the military installations and nerve centers in Saigon but simply tried to penetrate populated areas to create as much destruction as possible. The tactics employed by the enemy can be called one of city guerrilla warfare, since they simply dug themselves in while trying to keep the fight on for as long as possible, thus creating as much damage as possible.

The first period of this phase of offensive ended speedily for the Allies readily accepted the risk of destruction of civilian homes. Although expelled from the city the enemy soon returned. His efforts were successful because of the great extent of the front line and the tiredness of the defenders, who had been fighting for many weeks without any respite.

The second period was to last longer, for enemy troops by then had acquired some experience in the street fighting. During this period, although the enemy succeeded in bringing about the destruction of thousands of houses, he lost two full regiments of troops through fighting or surrender. Most noticeable in this period was a mass surrender of over one hundred hardcore enemy, a phenomenon that proved the low morale of the enemy.

FIRST PERIOD

5 May 1968. The attacks on Saigon began with a mortar and rocket barrage a little past midnight. The Communist warhead fell on many areas of the sprawling capital and its suburbs. They be broken down as follows:

Many rockets fell on Tan Son Nhut Airport but resulted in no extensive damage. One round fell near the residence of Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. Another round impacted near Central Market. Still another destroyed a power transformer on the Phuoc Thien Hospital and a building nearby on Nguyen Trai. Eleven others scattered on Tu Do, Thong Nhut, Hoang Dieu, Thuc Khang and Ngo Duc Ke Streets.
Premier Nguyen Van Loc is shown here inspecting a battle area near the 'Y' bridge.

MG Tran Thanh Phong inspects the troops in Gia Dinh (25 May 1968)

BG Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Police Director General, before he was wounded in trying to assault a VC position near the radio station.

Saigon Mayor Colonel Van Van Cua in Cholon just before he was wounded on 3 June 1968.
Following this aerial attack, enemy ground troops attacked a South Vietnamese Marine element standing guard on the Bien-Hoa Highways, the Binh Loi and Xa Lo bridges, as well as another bridge much nearer to Saigon. They also assaulted the Cau Tre Police Station in the Binh Loi area. All these attacks took place between 0030 hours and 0500 hours but were not successful.

However, the enemy had penetrated many populated areas in Thi Nghe, a section of the Dakao district in Saigon, and the Binh Thoi ward in Cholon, through such attacks.

Meanwhile, at dusk many Communist elements within the city began harassing the forces of order and took to the streets, trying to sell their cause through loudspeakers. This task was given Viet Cong armed propaganda teams and special sapper troops who made their appearances in various parts of the city, especially on Pho Co Dieu, Nguyen Trau, Tran Quy, Phan Van Tri, Co, Giang, De Tham, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Cao Dat, and Tran Binh Tho Streets.

These groups started distributing leaflets while speaking to the people through loudspeakers. Most leaflets were supposed to have been originated from the so called Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF). Police reported later that a total of twelve different leaflets were distributed in Saigon.

These Viet Cong documents did not differ from one another very much. They were, on the whole, calls to revolt and encouragement for insurgent acts by the local troops and population. One of these was a document entitled "The Nine Policies in Newly Liberated Cities".

The first three commands dealt with the confiscation of the people's property. The six following commands were promises, as they called them, "repentant" civilian and military personnel and civil servants. Besides, having learned a lesson during the unsuccessful Tet offensive, the Communist High Command instructed its cadre to make full use of the military and civilian proselytizing tactics, in an effort to win over some of the GVN troops and civilian servants.

In addition, the Communists attempted to penetrate a police station of the Eighth Precinct. Unable to make a penetration, they entered the unguarded administrative office of the Fifth Precinct, raised their flag, and set fire to some documents.