The local prison was completely destroyed in the 2nd wave of attacks.

Behind what was the prison building.
- Friendly side: 99 killed, 344 wounded and two missing, including 6 Americans soldiers killed and 100 wounded; 36 weapons lost including 27 police weapons, one M113 carrier was destroyed.
- Enemy side: some 450 killed including coolie laborers, 28 captured, three surrendered and 199 weapons and one AN/PRC-10 radio seized. The weapons captured included four recoilless rifles, two mortars and twelve B40 and B41 rocket launchers.

The enemy launched his second ground assault on Phan Thiet city around 0100h Feb 18. It was a two-pronged action. The first column consisted of the 482nd Battalion reinforced by the 485th Artillery Company and a number of sappers and coolie laborers moved from the northeastern side of the city to attack the Quang Trung Camp. This camp houses the staff of the Binh Thuan sector command and the city's military command. The enemy might well be in a position to seize the adjoining provincial administrative compound if he could attack through this camp. The second column, which was composed of the 840th Battalion and a number of sappers and coolie laborers, assaulted the Sector Command headquarters and the jail. At the same time they assaulted the police station which they had failed to attack during their first assault over two weeks earlier.

The enemy's second column did a better job than the first one. It overran the jail easily, liberating some 700 prisoners, and then occupied the populated areas adjoining the sector command headquarters. The fighting resulted in extensive destruction of these residential sections. A recounting of their actions follows:

This column first opened heavy weapon fire on one of the two half-underground bunkers guarding the entrance to the sector command compound. The enemy followed this up with a ground assault which brought him into the compound. One of the bunker guards was killed. The few remaining guards killed three enemy before withdrawing in the face of the superior enemy force. An estimated two enemy companies overran part of the sector compound through this entrance. A PF element, led by Nguyen Van Dai, was assigned to intercept the enemy and slow down his invasion of the compound. It simply avoided contact with the superior enemy force. Using heavy volumes of small arms fire the enemy also pinned down the policemen manning the nearby police station. The enemy main force, meanwhile, stormed into the jail guarded by one RF platoon which failed to react. After liberating some of the prisoners and taking away a number of others the enemy entrenched himself inside the jail and prepared to attack.
those portions of the province administrative headquarters and the sector command compound which he had failed to overrun earlier. He slammed mortar and rocket shells into the sector and administrative headquarters from the jail compound. The watch-tower on top of the headquarters was almost destroyed by enemy rockets.

Simultaneously the enemy's first column entered the girl elementary school from where it attacked the Quang Trung Camp. This column appeared to have failed to time its attack on the camp to coincide with the second column. This delay helped the city's deputy military commander, Lt Col Nguyen Huu Dinh, to regroup his troops for an efficient counterattack. All the enemy assault waves on the camp were turned back with the defenders suffering no fatalities.

Fighting continued all day long and with neither side gaining the upper hand. Meanwhile civilian refugees from the nearby Phu Trinh hamlet fled from their homes across the city's only steel bridge toward the safer southern bank of the city.

During the night of Feb 18 the enemy shelled the Y gate killing one field policeman and wounding another. Three rounds of enemy mortar fire landed on the Vo Tanh, Nguyen Tri Phuong downtown section around daybreak but caused no casualties. One round was a dud.

The situation worsened on the following morning as the enemy continued to entrench in concrete structures including the Heal Service and Labor Service offices in Phu Trinh Hamlet. An enemy group moved against the house of a Nationalist Chinese medical unit which fought back. This team included two doctors and eight nurses who later managed to escape after killing six enemy. The team suffered one wounded. The Dinh Cong Trang Camp was only subjected to harassing mortar fire which killed one ordnance soldier. The Trinh Tuong Camp which is located in the same general area was left undisturbed.

The friendly forces of the sector included one armor troop which was blocking the enemy's infiltration routes and two RF recon platoons plus the 954th RF Company which were positioned to block the eastern side of the jail compound. The city's one steel bridge, though only about 100 meters away from the closest enemy position was still firmly held by friendly troops.

A company of the US Mike Force and a company of the US Task Force 3/506, supported by Ontos tanks equipped with six recoilless rifles each, reached the Phan Thiet Girls Elementary School and engaged the enemy before they could be taken by surprise. Meanwhile the Phan Thiet Girls Elementary School was under fire of the enemy as it moved toward the safer southern bank of the city.

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School around 1000h, Feb 18, to reinforce the Quang Trung Camp defenders. These American units assaulted the school under the covering fire of the Ontos. As the covering fire lifted, they had to withdraw since the enemy held out fiercely from their entrenched positions. The enemy positions were so close to the friendly ones as to make close air support almost impossible. Airstrikes were conducted against enemy positions in other areas such as Binh Hung, Phu Vinh, Dai Tai, the city's slaughter-house, and Giang Thanh. An estimated company also held out in the jail compound. More friendly reinforcements came. Two companies of the 3/44 Vietnamese Infantry Battalion reached the city's sector command headquarters in the afternoon. The commanding officer of the 23rd Tactical Zone, Col Truong Quang An arrived aboard a chopper around 1600h.

Col An ordered the relief battalion to recapture the jail before sundown. The Battalion, commanded by Maj Mai Nang Luong, was taken over by Col An after the major was hit in the stomach while trying to take a good look at enemy positions from a vantage point in the multi-storied Chinh Tam School. Col An fired his pistol and hurled rocks from behind his men to encourage them to storm the enemy positions. The assault on the jail was so strong that the enemy was cornered in one of the wards. A grenade assault wiped out the last enemy remnants. Thirty seven enemy bodies were counted. One Paillard Bolex movie camera containing a short strip of exposed film was seized from an enemy body. The film strip contained pictures of the enemy's attack on the Trinh Tuong Camp filmed during his first assault two weeks earlier.

The jail was completely retaken about 1700h, Feb 18. This action also resulted in the relief of the besieged police station which had come under enemy mortar fire from the Bun Quang pagoda area.

From 0200h to daybreak Feb 19 the enemy attempted to attack other points in the city but failed everywhere. Throughout the day of Feb 19, the enemy still held out in the populated areas of Tran Cao Van, Cho Go and the city hospital.

Other enemy elements positioned from Phu Tai Hamlet to the slaughter house as well as in the Phu Khanh and Phu Phong B hamlets across the river were strafed by jet planes from dawn to dusk.

The American units, meanwhile, fighting the enemy in the girls' elementary school and neighboring populated areas, still failed to flush him out of these positions. The enemy had dug solid trenches and...
foxholes from which they successfully withstood heavy fire from the American Ontos tanks. The enemy fought back at the assaulting American troops to pin them down again and again. This seesaw battle lasted two days until sundown Feb 19 when airstrikes and heavy tanks were called in. From their positions inside the school the enemy continued harassing fires on the Sector Command headquarters throughout the night. Airstrikes to support the Vietnamese troops, who had taken over from the American force on this battle front were resumed around 0730 hours Feb 20. When the Vietnamese troops, commanded by Lt. Tay Tuu, moved in they met only scattered, weak enemy resistance by a rear-guard element of platoon size. This element had been assigned the mission of fighting a delaying action to help the main force pull out from the school under cover of darkness. The rear guard also managed to escape later. The school was left a shambles.

Around 0900h the enemy attacked the Vietnamese position in Phu Khanh and Phu Long B hamlets. He was thrown back as airstrikes were called in and a CIDG company attacked from his rear.

During the night friendly artillery and gunships struck enemy positions in suburban areas. No results were reported.

The following day, Feb 21, the enemy pulled back to Phu Khanh and Phong Phu B hamlets on the northwestern outskirts of the city. They also pulled back to Vinh Thuy and Vinh Phu hamlets on the eastern outskirts. Refugees came in from Lai An and crowded all public places inside the city. The Lai An area, which had been seriously damaged during the last assault, was not a good staging area for the enemy.

Post fighting searches of former battle areas ended at 1100 h. Thereafter the people were allowed to go about freely.

All the civilian houses and public offices in the areas of the girls school, Tran Cao Van, Hai Thuong Lan Ong, Nguyen Ho, Phuong market, Forestry Service and city police station were either destroyed or seriously damaged by the fighting. Refugees returned to their wrecked houses to salvage all that could be of some use to them and then returned to live temporarily in the safer business sections on the southwestern bank of the river. The few houses which luckily escaped serious damage were also emptied of all their furniture.

The civilian property damage sustained was the greatest in the city's memory. All the houses between the girls elementary
The Phu Long Bridge
school and the end of Tran Cao Van Street were burned down. Not one house on either side of Tran Cao Van Street remained standing. Some thirty concrete houses on Hai Thuong Lan Ong Street were more than 30 per cent damaged. A great many of the slum houses within 250 meters of the Forestry Service Office were levelled to the ground while the houses between this office and the police station were almost total losses. In the Binh Hung area many houses which were adjacent to the jail, the public works service and the military dependents' quarters were gutted. Several houses which had been lightly damaged during the enemy's first assault were now totally destroyed.

The three days of street fighting cost the friendly forces 43 killed including 13 Americans, 168 wounded including 46 Americans. There were three weapons lost, two armored vehicles damaged and 80,000 litres of fuel destroyed. The enemy lost some 200 killed, 20 captured and 78 weapons, including 17 crew served. One AN/PRC 10 radio and one movie camera were seized.

The enemy's third attack on this highly vulnerable city took place on Feb 25 and 26, only four days after his second attack ended. His attacking force included elements of the 482nd Battalion and the 480th Regional Guerrilla Company reinforced by some small support units. These elements attacked the city on two fronts, one from the inside and the other from the outside.

The first enemy column included two companies of the 482nd Battalion. It attacked the Phu Long Special Zone more than 10 kms northeast of the city. The second column, which included a small element of the 482nd Battalion and the 480th Regional Guerrilla Company, attacked the Vietnamese force positioned at the Y gate area.

Oposing these enemy attack columns were the 443rd and 510th RF Companies plus the Ninth PF Platoon in the Phu Long Special Zone and the 127th RF Company at the Y gate.

According to captured enemy documents the enemy sought to overrun the Phu Long compound in order to obtain badly needed foot and medicin.

The enemy attacked these two areas simultaneously around 0800h, Feb 25. At the same time a small enemy unit initiated harassing and diversionary actions in the northwestern suburbs of the city.

In the face of stiff resistance from the defenders led by 3rd Lt Hai the hero of the counterattack, the enemy attack on Phu Long failed. The friendly forces, Compan...
Long failed miserably. The second column attacked the 127th RF Company positioned in a cemetery in the Y gate area on its flank from the direction of Kim Hai hamlet. The enemy was outmaneuvered by the Luong Son CIDG Company and an armor platoon. These friendly elements cornered the enemy within the beachside hamlet. The enemy was backed against the sea with no apparent route of escape. He had to fight a desperate battle from his sandy foxholes and trenches. Two RF recon platoons, led by Lt Lu Tay Tuu, were rushed into the area the following morning to surround the enemy even more tightly before closing in for a decisive battle. Hand grenades were the key weapons used in this battle by the troops seeking to destroy the enemy in his trenches and foxholes. These two recon platoons accounted for 27 enemy killed and 28 weapons seized, while suffering two killed and seven wounded. The house-to-house fighting left the hamlet a shambles. The Buddha statue, behind which the troops formed for their assault, lost its head. Throughout the fighting no air support was provided friendly troops in the area.

Enemy gunners slammed nine rounds of 82mm mortar on the Phan Thiet airfield complex while the fighting raged in this area. Six rounds hit the Army ammunition depot destroying some 300 tons of assorted ammunition. The ammunition continued to explode for several hours, until about 0800h, the following day. Exploding artillery ammunition caused light damage to the American camp inside the airfield. It also burned down the Air Vietnam lounge and destroyed a number of vehicles, radio equipment and weapons.

The fire also marked the end of the enemy's third attack on Phan Thiet. This attack cost friendly forces nine killed, 65 wounded. Lost were: 2 carbines, 300 tons of ammo, two crew served weapons, 3 radios, 3 vehicles and one water tank trailer. The enemy suffered 138 killed, 10 captured, including the underground administrative chief of Phan Thiet. 43 of their weapons were seized 12 of which were crew-served.

The enemy's fourth attack on Phan Thiet consisted only of an assault on the Phu Long Special Zone where he had suffered heavily from his third attack only two weeks earlier. The fourth attack took place around 0100h, Mar 12. The enemy drove the troops out of the Phu Long Special Zone compound sometime before daybreak killing five defenders and wounding 45.
A number of factors contributed to the outcome of this section. The garrison had just gotten a new commander who had directed losing battles during previous enemy assaults on the city. The new commander replaced 3rd Lt Hai, who was sick and hospitalized. His takeover so demoralized the troops that they were reluctant to fight. In addition the enemy was more experienced now than during his third attack.

The compound was retaken by relief forces around noon the same day, about eight hours after it fell into enemy hands. The recapture of the compound was achieved by a superior friendly force which attacked from two sides. One column consisted of the 3/44 Battalion and an armor troop while the other column included two companies of the Luong Son CIDG Task Force. The relief force suffered 12 killed. The entire Phu Long and adjoining areas were secured during the day. Enemy casualties and losses were unknown.

B. IN THE WAKE OF THE OFFENSIVE.

Scenes of destruction, grim reminders of death and glaring evidence of misery could still be seen in the city one month after the offensive.

The daytime curfew imposed during the offensive caused a severe shortage of potable water. Most, if not all, of the city's private wells were shallow, hand-dug holes with unpalatable brackish water. The people had relied on the machine-drilled deep wells in Duc Long and Phu Khanh hamlets. These unfortunately were located in ongoing battle zones. Normally two cans of water from these wells cost the local consumer five piastres about 4 US cents for every eight gallons. By the fifth day or Tet, Feb 3, the price had soared up to 20 then 30 piastres, water dropped to 10 piastres on the following day.

Most public schools and offices were damaged or destroyed following these four enemy attacks. Percentage of damage was as follows: the boys elementary school on Tran Hung Dao 10%, the Duc Nghia A 40%, the Duc Nghia B 30%, the girls elementary school 80%, the Phan Chu Trinh semi-public high school 100%, the Phan Boi Chau high school 30%, the Phu Trinh A 80%, the Binh Hung B 80%, the Phu Tai water plant 40%, the slaughter house 100%, the Health Service office 80%, the Forestry Office 70%, the Irrigation Office 30%, the Public Works Office 60%, the Animal Husbandry Office 60%, the Land Registry Office 60%, the jail 100% and the city police station 30%.
Most of the military installations were untouched. Only a few were lightly damaged. Two military dependents' quarters burned down making a total of 233 families homeless.

Several places of worship such as the Buu Quang, Chua Cat, Gia Hoa pagodas, the Protestant Church and the Stadium Catholic Church were also destroyed. The Binh Quang pagoda took one mortar round and lost a corner of its secondary building which then collapsed.

Some 100 citizens were killed and twice this many wounded and hospitalized. Some 3,383 families or a total of 19,961 persons were left homeless since one out of every five civilian houses was destroyed or seriously damaged. Those structures destroyed included 737 concrete houses, 1645 tin-roofed shacks and 233 thatch houses. Structures damaged but still repairable included 284 concrete, 413 tin-roofed shacks and 63 thatched huts. Most of the property destruction was suffered by the people of suburban hamlets except those in the Duc Thang and Vinh Phu hamlets which saw no fighting. Hardest hit was the Phu Trinh hamlet which was regarded as a complete loss.

There were ten refugee centers in the city. Most of the refugees preferred to take shelter on the beach. They believed the enemy would not be naive enough to move there and get exposed. Most of the refugees came from Phu Trinh and Binh Hung hamlets, the hardest hit areas during the offensive. They pitched tiny makeshift tents on the sand. Here they spent the nights. In the daytime they ventured back to their hamlets whenever they thought they could in hopes of salvaging what consumables they could. One month after the end of the offensive the signs of distress, abject misery and semi-starvation were still on their faces and in their haggard appearance for every visitor to see. The fishermen, who made up the larger part of the local working people, were not allowed to go off-shore to fish because of the nightly curfew. They were closer to starvation than any of the other people.

C. A FEW REMARKS

During the offensive against the city, the enemy suffered a shattering military defeat and over four times as many fatalities as friendly troops.
Some 172 Vietnamese and American troops were killed in action, some 650 wounded, 42 assorted weapons lost, the city's fuel reserves almost completely destroyed 700,000 litres of fuel burned and some 300 tons of assorted ammo destroyed. Last but not least, a fifth of the city's public and private structures were destroyed or irreparably damaged whereas another two-fifths of the civilian property was either moderately or lightly damaged.

On the other side of the balance sheet the enemy lost about 800 killed. These personnel losses included coolie laborers drafted from among the civilians living in enemy controlled areas to carry ammunition and supplies. He also lost 359 assorted weapons, including 63 crew served ones.

The government side also suffered the loss of some 700 prisoners, only a few of whom were recaptured later. Many of these prisoners served the enemy. The number of prisoner-turned guerrillas may have made up for some of the enemy casualties.

According to Maj Vo Kham, commander of the 44th Infantry Regiment during the counter-offensive, the enemy might well have captured the Trinh Tuong Camp had he thrown his 840th and 482nd Battalions into the battle at the same time. The enemy had waited for two days before committing the 840th battalion to reinforce the 482nd. This caused the enemy to take more casualties. The enemy's delay in committing the 840th Battalion gave the friendly side enough time to send in reinforcements and to defeat both enemy battalions in the battle.

Perhaps the enemy had underestimated the camp's ability to resist long enough to be reinforced by other friendly forces. Maybe the enemy was simply unable to commit the 840th Battalion in time.

During the second attack the enemy tried to correct this mistake. He committed these two battalions simultaneously into one major objective - the Sector Command headquarters. But it was too late for him to succeed. The enemy's hugging tactics hampered friendly use of air and artillery support yet the fighting still caused extensive property damage to the city. The enemy's tactics were skilful and daring indeed. The enemy's defeat can be attributed to the youthfulness of his men - 15 to 16 years old - and their lack of experience and training in street fighting.
Dalat

A. - BEFORE THE OFFENSIVE

Unlike Nha Trang where a unified command was on hand at the time the enemy offensive broke out, Dalat found itself in a rather embarrassing situation as no specific assignments had been defined among the various forces stationed in the area.

In principle, more than 3,000 soldiers belonging to the Military Academy, the riot police training center and the Sector Command should have been available in Dalat City at anytime. But when the enemy attack occurred, although it had been predicted two days before, the number of the city's reserved element turned out to be too small (only 40 men and 5 V-100 armored vehicles). Other forces remained in passive defense positions within their barracks, instead of taking combat positions in and around the city.

As Dalat had been a peaceful, romantic city away from the war, its residents, military and civilians alike, found it hard to believe that their beloved city could ever become a battle ground. This explained the unpreparedness of both sections of the community when the Communists launched their offensive.

It was, the afternoon of the second day of Tet when the Communist offensive against South Vietnamese cities had already spread throughout the country that the Tuyen Duc Sector Command decided to place its troops on alert. But only 60 per cent of the local force could be found and called back to duty from their Tet celebrations although military patrols made house-to-house calls on off duty soldiers. Some of them were found amid excited gambling parties. Commanding officers will learn from this bitter experience that the more peaceful the location of their assignments might appear, the more vigilant they should remain for its defense.

Life in Dalat was normal throughout the third morning with many vacationers from Saigon flocking into the city. They were very worried by news reports broadcast by the local radio on fighting flare-up across the country including Saigon.

On the evening of the same day each of the local forces were watching from their own location while Sector Command troops positions at two strategic points; the command headquarters and
the local administrative building.

B. - THE BATTLE OF DALAT

Before the offensive enemy forces operating in Tuyen Duc province numbered around 200 men divided into two mobile companies for the whole province and four regional platoons for its four districts. Their activities had been limited to scattered attacks against government outposts, minor ambuses against convoys while evading our large-scale operations. Their main purpose had been to destroy our infrastructure at the village and hamlet level around Dalat, seeking influence on, and supply from the local population.

As their regional forces were too weak the Communists had to bring in reinforcements from other places for their offensive against the city. One enemy battalion was reportedly dispatched by the Communist command to the south of Don Duong district a few days before Tet. It was identified as the VC 186th Battalion.

Commanding and staff officers at the Tuyen Duc Sector Command were restless throughout the night of the 3rd day of Tet as they did not know when the enemy would attack (no intelligence reports had indicated they would) or whether the Communists would choose the city itself as their target of their offensive as had been the case throughout the rest of the country.

The officers had thought of reinforcing the defense of Dalat by bringing back troops from regions around the city, but they were afraid such measure would adversely affect the morale of the regional authorities and leave open gaps for the enemy to move through. This led to no decision by the sector command gathered in their conference room only for a long wait-and-see session.

And suddenly in the cool spring night of Dalat, the enemy opened fire at exactly 0145h. Following a barrage of 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds from the southeast part of the city toward the sector command headquarters, enemy infantrymen emerged from the dark and launched their assault on the headquarters. They met with fierce resistance by the defenders. Sergeant Tai, who commanded a platoon guarding the headquarters main fortress, was fatally hit by the enemy gunfire minutes after the fighting broke out. However, the fortress did not fall as its defenders helped by our V-100 counter-fire succeeded in repelling the attackers out of the headquarters compound. One of the V-100's was set fire by an enemy
At dawn the Sector Command found that aside from the attack on its headquarters, the Communists had taken control of the former Imperial Residence Number Three (since 0130 h.), the Dong Tam Hamlet, the transmission center (abandoned by a Popular Force platoon that fled into the Psywar College), and the Hoa Binh market place.

The command immediately held an emergency meeting of all commanding officers to discuss counter-offensive measures.

Shortly before the meeting started three ARVN officers were killed at the Hoa Binh square. Major Le Tap and two other officers of the Command Staff College were killed by enemy gunfire as their jeep was passing the Hoa Binh Theater on their way to a restaurant near the market. They had not been aware of the overnight developments with the Communists taking control of the market place. Killed with Major Tap were Major Nong Van Thang and Capt. Vu Xuan Sinh. Two other officers Major Nguyen Dinh Tai and Capt. Tran Luong Dong who were on the same jeep escaped unhurt by running into a nearby villa known as "La Tulipe Rouge".

Meanwhile, the command meeting decided to dispatch a company of Dalat military cadets to the Hoa Binh market place to help clear the area. The cadets failed in their mission.

Reinforcements started arriving at 1300h. First to move in was a Regional Force platoon of 25 men from Da Nhim and two armored vehicles heli-borne into the city’s stadium. With these reinforcements the local command launched a counterattack at the Hoa Binh Square area, but the advance was hampered by enemy snipers firing from civilian houses. It was only after helicopter gunships were called in that our troops could proceed to destroy the enemy gun positions one by one thereby regaining control of the situation at about 1600h. The battle cost the enemy 22 dead and a loss of 16 weapons of various kinds. Friendly casualties were one killed and 2 wounded. The Hong Chau photo shop was burned by gunfire. The remainder of the enemy force withdrew to Phan Dinh Phung street but no government troops pursued them.

At 1700h, the Regional Forces 306th Company arrived from Duc Trong district and the Sector Command sent the company of cadets back to their academy.
Only sniper fire was reported in the evening while
government troops took positions to check further enemy advances.
During the night developments, brought the enemy to other areas
of the city namely the Du Sinh hill, the Public Works Service, the
Pasteur Institute, The Ma Thanh area, the civilian hospital, the Trai Hanh
street, the Hill 1506, the Chinese Pagoda. The enemy also was able
to infiltrate into the city's shopping center. The military schools
remained quiet.

At this point it was noticed that the number of enemy
troops was not considerable with only more or less of a platoon at
each of the occupied positions.

On the 5th day of Tet government forces were divided
into two columns. The first column, composed of the 306th RF Com-
pany, the Da Nhım platoon and the V-100 tank, and commanded by Maj.
Dao Mong Xuan, Deputy Province Chief for Security, was to clear
the Public office building, the Pasteur Institute and the Special
Residence was recaptured by the government forces after several
assaults.

The second column was composed of the 302th RF Co-
pany which had just reached the city from Thai Phien village. Oper-
ated under the command of Maj. Nguyen Phuc Nghiep it quickly dislodged
the enemy from the Ma Thanh area.

The two columns then joined in counterattacking the
enemy at the civilian hospital. Heavy enemy fire from the city
cemetery prevented the troops from advancing and an air strike
failed to help the operational force reach their objective. Therefore,
they had to withdraw into the city at 1700h to take up defensive posi-
tion for the night.

As soon as the troops left the area, the enemy re-
occupied the Public Works Service compound. The Special Residence
was at that time under control of the 490th RF Company but this unit
was removed for another operation the next morning.

The Sector Command requested new reinforcements
from the 23rd Tactical Zone. On the 6th day of Tet a CIDG company
arrived from An Lac and immediately joined the other forces at their
drive to dislodge the enemy from the Public Works - Pasteur Institute
area. The operation this time was successful. Twenty-two Communist
soldiers were killed in the Pasteur Institute itself. However, the

nearby Du Sinh hill remained quiet.

reinforced by the 96th RF company in Dalat was engaged in combined action
and much more.
nearby Du Sinh Hill as well as other surrounding hills and a hamlet in the area still remained under enemy control.

During the night of the 5th day of Tet the enemy was reinforced by the 145th VC Battalion. The cause of its delayed arrival in Dalat was not known but had it reached the area in time for combined action with the 186th VC Battalion the city would have suffered much more serious damage.

With its newly arrived reinforcement the enemy launched a new attack against the Sector Command headquarters at 0130 h. The attack was again repelled with artillery support from the Military Academy. The enemy left behind 5 bodies and 3 AK's.

Early in the morning of the 6th day of Tet enemy forces again occupied the Special Residence and Pasteur Institute areas.

In order to clear the enemy from the Special Residence two government forces were in operation one attacking from behind as a diversionary move, the other launching the main assault uphill. The An Lac CIDG Company was used for the first assaulting wave. It was stopped by enemy fire from bunkers built during the night. Armored vehicles also failed in their try to climb the hillside. The diversion force on the other side of the hill could not move forward either. Air support was called in but only the surrounding hills were strafed to avoid causing damage to the building. Toward the evening the enemy withdrew from the Special Residence but still occupied the surrounding hills. At nightfall one government platoon took position at the Special Residence while the remainder of the friendly forces returned to the city.

The city's shopping center was cleared during the same day but police operation continued on Phan Dinh Phung street.

In the meantime, the 23rd Ranger Battalion, dispatched as reinforcement by the 23rd Tactical Zone Command, arrived in the city at nightfall. The battalion had by mistake crossed an area under enemy control and lost 3 killed and 20 wounded in an unplanned clash with the Communists.

Enemy troops attacked the Sector Command headquarters again during the night but were again driven back by the headquarters' fierce defenders and artillery support as during the previous night. This time the enemy left behind 25 bodies, 15 weapons of various kinds and a quantity of mines and grenades. It was the last enemy
assault against the headquarters.

The next day, the 8th day of the Lunar Year, government troops reoccupied the Pasteur Institute and the Du Sinh Hill. This and its surrounding hills were recaptured after a day-long battle marked by intensive air intervention. The enemy left 4 bodies behind the church and 5 others on the Du Sinh Hill along with some individual weapons. The Du Sinh Hill sustained the most extensive damage caused by the fighting as compared with other areas in the city.

Meanwhile, another government force composed of elements of the 23rd Ranger Battalion on their way to clear the kilometer 4 area was stopped by heavy enemy fire near the Church of Our Lady.

On the 9th day of the Lunar Year, the 304th RF Company from Don Duong district and the 308th RF Company from Duc Trong district were moved into the city to replace the battle weary 302nd and 406th RF companies. The two newly arrived companies were assigned search-and-destroy missions in the Du Sinh Hill area.

On the 11th day new reinforcements reached the city. They included the 11th Ranger Battalion and the Command of the 2nd Ranger Group. Government troops then launched their attack against the last enemy position in the city: the Ma Thanh area and the city cemetery. Dalat was finally cleared of all enemy forces.

On the following days the Rangers continued their operations to areas around the city but no significant contact with the Communists was made as the defeated enemy had quietly vanished.
Three days before Tet on January 26, 1968 intelligence reports indicated the presence of three enemy regiments in the jungles just north of Bien Hoa provincial town. They were the 274th and 275th VC Regiments and the DKB Regiment equipped with 122mm rockets.

On January 29 the population at Ho Nai were very worried by reports that the VC had come as near as north of Dong Lach and an enemy reconnaissance team armed with AK 50 rifles had been shot dead by guards in front of the gate of the III Corps Command headquarters at one o'clock in the morning.

Local authorities, however, did not pay much attention to the reports as they did not believe the enemy would violate the Tet Truce and attack the provincial town. That turned out to be what the enemy was preparing for.

The Communist offensive plan was two-fold; the 274th Regiment plus a regional company was to attack the Bien Hoa airfield while the 275th Regiment was to assault the Frenzel Jones camp (Long Binh base) and the III Corps command headquarters.

The two attacks were launched simultaneously at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 2nd day of Tet with a barrage of mortar and rocket fire against both town and airfield. The shelling was concentrated to the eastern side of the airfield while on the west side the VC broke through barbed wire into the perimeter. They were approaching the airfield's hangars when helicopter gunships intervened, firing rockets, machineguns into swarms of panicky enemy soldiers running for cover in all directions.

The enemy was soon forced out of the airfield. Later at day break they withdrew to the north, leaving behind 114 bodies, 41 weapons of various kinds and 24 prisoners including several who caught by the 57th Regional Force Battalion guarding the airfield, had carried explosives intended for the destruction of our planes.

While they attacked the airfield the Communists launched elements of the 275th Regiment against the III Corps command headquarters. Fierce resistance by the defenders forced them to withdraw into civilian houses on both sides of the street.
Another enemy force also composed of elements of the 275th Regiment in the meantime took positions at the Gia Vien area and the Ke Sat cemetery (Ho Nai) about 500 meters away from the Frenzel Jones camp of the US 199th Brigade (Long Binh). The enemy kept firing heavily into the camp in support of a sapper unit that was attempting to penetrate the perimeter through an underground water-pipe. They were not successful and were uncovered before they could emerge.

In the morning of the 2nd day of Tet US armed helicopters repeatedly attacked enemy positions and destroyed Communist anti-aircraft guns between the Ho Nai church and the Phu Tao (Ho Nai) area. They also supported a formation of tanks that attacked the enemy's rear from highway One. Two of the tanks were destroyed by VC B.40 rockets near the Phu Tao church. The others returned to their base.

Toward noon upon learning of the failure of their sapper unit the Communists decided to withdraw to the Dia spring north of Trang Bom. Pursued by helicopter gunships they left behind 100 bodies. Members of the enemy command of the Bien Hoa front were reported among the dead.

The following day ARVN forces and the US 199th Brigade launched a joint search-and-destroy operation around Bien Hoa. A total of 527 Communists were killed and 40 captured.

About 500 civilian houses were burned down during the fighting in front of the III Corps command headquarters, and in the Gia Vien and Phu Tao (Ho Nai) areas. Civilian casualties included 10 dead and 50 wounded.

As the fighting ended six refugee centers were immediately set up by the local authorities at the Nguyen Du school, Tan Lap Temple and four other places.

The Roman Catholic priest of the Ho Nai parish later reported that 19 Communists who surrendered at his parish had been overcome with fear and said they had been deceived by their superiors.

The majority of enemy soldiers launched into the battle consisted of North Vietnamese teen-agers who were complete strangers to the area. Ordered by their superiors to "take over" the province they had expected little resistance from our side. Their ranks were completely shattered and destroyed by our heavy fire-
power and in particular by the accurate firing from helicopter gunships during the day and throughout the night as flares lit the sky and countryside.

Although only 30 per cent of our forces were available at the time of the surprise attack, the battle was won without many government casualties because of the Communist over confidence.

THE BIEN-HOÄ ATTACK
Can Tho

Two communist battalions attacked Can Tho. They were the 303rd battalion and the U Minh battalion with a total of more than 500 men. They infiltrated into the city through the swampy fields to the west.

Two days before Tet many Viet Cong groups had reached the western edge of the city without the local authorities knowing it. In support of their planned attack against the city they even set up a logistics network composed of three stations; one at Cau Nhiem, one at Ba Xe and one at Phong Dien. In the meantime, VC sapper units also infiltrated into the city to conduct sabotage and promote propaganda before the offensive.

A group of Communists disguised as tourists came to the Nam Phuong Hotel planning to use it as a liaison center. They were arrested by local police soon after their arrival. No information could be obtained about the presence of the two VC battalions around the city, and no alert was ordered as a result. Only a company of Rangers was stationed at the Sector Command. Personnel at other military installations remained reduced to 30 per cent.

The enemy launched their offensive against the city at exactly 3 o'clock in the morning of the 2nd day of Tet according to the following plan:

- The 303rd Battalion, also known as the Tay Do Battalion, with the help of the sappers was to attack the IV Corps command headquarters and its transmission center while the U Minh Battalion with the assistance of underground political cadres, was to occupy the radio station, the university and the connecting streets.

With this plan the Communists were seeking a military victory coupled with a popular uprising they expected to bring about through announcements over local radio station. They failed to reach either goal.

Government reinforcements came at daybreak and a counter offensive was immediately launched. Our forces quickly had the situation at the Command Headquarters and Transmission Center under control, but enemy pressure remained heavy at the radio station, the university compound, the Nam Phuong Hotel and
A building of the University of Can Tho following the May offensive.
the market place. Through house to house fighting, our troops were advancing rather slowly for the sake of civilian lives and properties.

The enemy pressure ended the next morning as the Communist forces had withdrawn from the city during the night. They remained on the city's outskirts.

During the night of the 6th day of Tet the enemy returned to the city and occupied the university compound. Air strikes were called in to dislodge the Reds. The three storey, newly constructed building was destroyed.

The battle of Can Tho cost the enemy 100 killed and 40 captured. Government casualties were 44 dead and 70 wounded. In addition, 1,032 civilian houses were destroyed.

**FIRST PHASE ATTACK IN CANTHO CITY**

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**Kien**

from Loi's personal memoirs:

Communist forces had encircled the local station.

The enemy fire into the station administra
tion.

Infantry returned to the bunker and explained that the town's Red guards kept firing.

The Indian command of the 10th division ordered to maintain the station's command quarters.

The Indian commander ran back to the head of the stadium he
Kien Hoa

On the morning of the 3rd day of Tet a BBC broadcast from London announced that Kien Hoa town had been overrun by the Communists. In reality, the Reds only took control of the town's commercial area while at the administrative area, they were still encircling government civilian and military installations.

The time the Communists entered the town was unknown, but the first outbreak of gunfire occurred at 4 AM at the local stadium where a government artillery unit was positioned.

The enemy offensive began with a barrage of mortar fire into civilian and military agencies particularly the provincial administrative office and the command headquarters of the 10th Infantry Division.

As Kien Hoa had been facing a constant enemy threat the bunker complexes built within the city were relatively solid. This explained why the enemy did not launch any major assault on any of the town's strategic positions. Instead, from 4 AM until dawn, they kept firing into those locations at scattered intervals.

Lt. Col. Huynh Van Du, the province chief, was able to maintain communications with all agencies and units under his command. Also in town were Lt. Col. Nguyen Tuong Dien, commander of the 10th Regiment and 70 other members of his staff. He was ordered to move the 3/10 Battalion and 4/10 Battalion from the outskirts into the city the next morning.

Col. Dien was anxious to know why the artillery unit at the stadium remained silent and unable to communicate with headquarters. At daybreak, as the enemy gunfire was extremely sporadic, and probably thinking that the Communists had withdrawn as usual, he decided to dispatch a reconnaissance team on two trucks and one jeep equipped with machinegun to the stadium about 300 meters from the regimental command headquarters. At halfway between the headquarters and the stadium, the men were caught by enemy gunfire. Some were killed or wounded. The others abandoned the vehicles and ran back to the headquarters. Col. Dien then personally went out at the head of another reconnaissance group. Upon reaching the stadium he was fatally hit by enemy sniper fire from nearby civilian
What remains of the Market at Kien Hoa
It was 5 o'clock in the morning.

At 10 o'clock the 3/10 and 4/10 Battalions reached the city and successfully cleared the administrative and military areas from enemy pressure.

The 4/10 Battalion, commanded by Maj. Nguyen Duc Kim, killed more than 50 Communists at the provincial hospital area.

The government forces however could not reach the city's commercial quarters where enemy firepower was extremely heavy. Meanwhile, the attackers tried hard to capture the local radio but failed in their attempt because of fierce resistance by a squad of government soldiers defending the station.

US reinforcements arrived in the afternoon, and continued to arrive the next morning bringing the number of American troops in the city to two full battalions. Both battalions belonged to the 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.

Combined US - Vietnamese operations throughout the day finally drove the enemy from the city and part of the suburbs.

During the following days, continued allied operations supported by air strikes forced the Communists to withdraw completely.

About 2,000 Communist soldiers had taken part in the battle. They belonged to two newly formed battalions (the 3rd and the 4th), two regional companies, and local guerrilla units.

On our side the following units were involved in the battle:
- Two battalions of the 10th Infantry Division;
- One reconnaissance company at 40% strength;
- 200 police and regional force men and 4 armored vehicles at the Sector Command;
- One artillery platoon with two 155mm How. stationed at the airfield;
- One crew of 105mm How. at the local stadium.

Casualties on our side were 100 soldiers and 90 civilians. Over 50% of the town's civilian houses were damaged. The Truc Giang market was burned down.

The enemy suffered 300 killed and lost 100 weapons of various kinds.
Vinh Long

The enemy was almost 100 per cent sure he would win in Vinh Long as up to 3 Communist battalions had infiltrated into the city to prepare for the offensive at a time when both authorities and population were relaxing before Tet celebrations.

But the enemy plan failed to materialize and this again was evidence of his inability to conduct open conventional warfare. That he decided to attack a city openly was a senseless action on his part.

As far as the defenders were concerned quick reaction against a surprise assault and efficient air intervention were instrumental in defeating the enemy's thrust. But what actually encouraged the soldiers most although they were outnumbered by a modernly-equipped enemy was the enthusiastic support they received from the population which displayed a clear-cut anti-communist attitude.

PHASE ONE:

Three enemy battalions were launched into the battle of Vinh Long; the 306th and 308th main-force battalions and the 857th mobile battalion. Most of the soldiers of these three battalions managed to infiltrate into the city days before Tet disguised as civilians. According to some reports a number of Communist soldiers even posed as students of the Tong Phuoc Hiep and Nguyen Truong To schools arriving in the city for a year end meeting on the eve of Tet.

The infiltrators were scattered throughout the city mostly near the local prison. Apparently they had the intention of liberating the detainees as soon as the offensive began.

The Communists planned to occupy the residential and commercial areas first then to encircle and attack the city's main government buildings. After taking complete control of the city they would organize a new administration with their own political cadre.

On our side military personnel on duty were at 30 per cent strength the remainder being on leave for the Tet holidays. On combat positions at the Sector Command were a company and three commando cars.
The enemy offensive began at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 2nd day of Tet with a barrage of 82mm mortar rounds fired into the provincial administrative building, the Sector Command headquarters and the military airfield. Those Communist soldiers who had infiltrated into town then opened fire at the local prison, the administrative building and the military airfield. At the same time, other Communist troops moved in from the city's outskirts toward the same targets.

The Reds planned to take over the local prison and liberate the 844 Communist prisoners being detained there and who would join the attacking force.

Quick reaction by government troops prevented the attackers from attaining their goals, although at some places the Communists had almost entered the defense line and were repelled by hand grenades thrown from inside. The enemy kept firing from surrounding civilian houses. Their gun positions were destroyed one by one by government troops using M79 grenade launchers.

The heaviest enemy attack was against the prison. The Sector Command had to dispatch two commando cars with two accompanying squads to reinforce the compound's defenders. With their accurate machinegun fire they were able to take control of the situation for a while before both commando cars were hit by enemy rockets and destroyed. However, as daylight came the enemy withdrew into surrounding houses.

At the provincial administrative building the enemy attack began with a barrage of B.40 rockets followed by a wave of ground assault troops. Two heavy machineguns firing from a building rooftop near the Mieu Ba temple supported the attack and prevented reinforcements from the Sector command from reaching the scene.

Government troops put up fierce resistance from their solid bunkers inside the compound. Many Communists were seen lying on the street either killed or badly wounded. This forced the enemy to give up the attack and take defensive positions.

At the airfield the attacking force was completely destroyed. Immediately upon their first wave of assault helicopter gunships intervened and killed all the attackers. A second wave met with the same fate. As a result of their suicidal action which lasted only 10 minutes 70 Communists were killed on the airfield's barbed wire.
In the meantime, four enemy companies crossed the Co Chien River and took positions at the Ben Da pier, the marketplace and a number of public offices and schools, preventing the population from fleeing the area.

On the morning of the 2nd day of Tet government reinforcements arrived from the Corps Command and a counter offensive was launched which soon cleared both the administrative building and the prison areas from enemy pressure. At the same time an enemy attempt to stage a demonstration with people being gathered by force from the Ben Da and Gia Long areas was disbanded by government troops. The Gia Long area and part of the fish market were burned as a result of the fighting.

The next day search and destroy operations were conducted by government troops from house to house. Enemy snipers firing from rooftops were eliminated one by one.

Air support was called in to help clear several areas such as Ly Thai To, Phan Thanh Gian and the public servants residential quarters.

On the 4th day of Tet with new government reinforcements arriving on the scene enemy forces were completely driven out of the city. The battle of Vinh Long ended on the 6th day of Tet.

**PHASE TWO**:

On the night of February 14 the enemy launched a new attack against Vinh Long with the same units freshly replenished.

Their plan was as follows:

- The 306th Battalion infiltrated into the city from the West was to take over the stadium and the whole western part of the city;

- The 308th Battalion infiltrated from the South and reinforced by two companies from the 857th Battalion was to occupy the provincial administrative office building, the local prison and the Sector command headquarters.

- The 857th Battalion as a reserve force was to take positions along Tong Doc Phuong street to check the arrival of government reinforcements. The Communists failed to reach their goals as...
they met with heavy fire from the city defenders stationed on rooftops and in bunkers at street intersections across the city. They however succeeded in reaching the commercial area.

Government troops launched their counter offensive the next morning and recovered full control of the city two days later.

Both offensive phases cost the enemy 300 soldiers killed, 200 individual and 20 crew-served weapons captured.

Government casualties were 30 dead. In addition, 200 civilians were killed or wounded 4,500 houses were completely destroyed and 1,850 were damaged.

A number of refugee centers were set up by the provincial authorities at Vinh Liem street, the province's main church, the School of Pedagogy, the primary schools for boys and girls, the kindergarten, and the Chua Ong pagoda.
CHAPTER III

HOW THE VIET CONG PLANNED THEIR GENERAL OFFENSIVE AND GENERAL UPRISING?
In preparation for their general offensive and general uprising, the Viet Cong started revamping their structure and reforming their activities as early as in the second half of 1967. This included reorganization of military areas, redeployment of combat units, increased infiltration of men and weapons, modernization of armament and special training on street fighting.

A. - REORGANIZATION OF MILITARY AREAS

Before the Tet Mau Than offensive Communist military areas in South Vietnam were divided into 8 Zones and 1 Special Zone as follows:

- Zone Tri-Thien-Hue comprising Quang Tri and Thua Thien province;
- Zone 5 including the provinces of Quang Da, Quang Nam, Kontum, Quang Ngai, Gia Lai (Pleiku), Binh Dinh, Dak Lak (Darlac), Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa;
- Zone 6 composed of Tuyen Duc, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan and Lam Dong provinces;
- Zone 10 with Quang Duc, Phuoc Long and Binh Long provinces.
- Zone 1 comprising Tay Ninh, Thu Dau Mot and Ba Bien (Ba Ria and Bien Hoa);
- Zone 4 including Saigon - Cholon and Gia Dinh province and parts of Bien Hoa, Hau Nghia, Long An and Binh Duong provinces.
- 'Rung Sat' Special Zone consisting of the Rung Sat forest.
- Zone 2 made up by the provinces of An Giang, Kien Phong, Kien Tuong, Long An, My Tho and Ben Tre.
- Zone 3 with Rach Gia, Vinh Long, Can Tho, Tra Vinh, Soc Trang and Ca Mau provinces (1)

(1) Several names of provinces are not mentioned in the Viet Cong military zones as one VC province often is comprised of 2 RVN provinces. For example: the Communists' An Giang province includes Chau Doc, Binh Thuan province includes Binh Tuy, while both their Can Tho and Rach Gia include our Chuong Thien.
The Communist military zones were defined on a geographical basis for command and logistics reasons. Most of the zones stretch along the border and the coast to move supplies easier from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the neighboring countries and the sea. Usually under each zone command was a hierarchy of province, district and village commissioners. Zone 4 in particular had no provincial commissioners whose job was assumed by the zone command itself.

In view of their general offensive and general uprising the Communists in the III Corps Area decided to disband Zone 1 in the eastern area, Zone 4 (Saigon - Gia Dinh) and part of Zone 2 and reorganize them into 10 sub-zones which included 5 sub-zones in charge of the 5 army wings encircling Saigon. The reorganization was completed early in November 1967. The territories of the 5 sub-zones encircling Saigon included: Saigon city, Cholon, Gia Dinh (the former Zone 4) and the connected provinces of Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Bien Hoa. These sub-zones were placed under the direct command of:

- Sub-zone 1 north of Saigon with the Boi Loi and Bung Cong areas as base for operations toward the northern part of Saigon.

- Sub-zone 2 to the west and southwest of Saigon with the Vam Co Dong area as base for operations toward Ba Queo, the western part of Saigon and the Phu Lam area.

- Sub-zone 3 to the south with the southeast part of Ben Luc and the Nha Be river as base for operations against Saigon's "Y" Bridge and Khanh Hoi areas.

- Sub-zone 4 to the east of the capital with the Giong Ong To and Hiep Binh areas as base for operations toward the Highway and Binh Loi bridges.

- Sub-zone 5, northeast of Saigon, with the northwest part of Tan Uyen as base for operations toward the west of Thu Duc or the Highway and Binh Loi bridges through the Bung intersections and Hiep Binh village.

As far as the I Corps area was concerned it was...
regarded as of prime importance both strategically and tactically by the Communists because it is adjacent to North Vietnam whose front-line is in the South. The Tri Thien area, furthermore, serves as supply channel from the North to the South. Consequently, to the Communists, the city of Hue is just as vital as Saigon from both military and political points of view.

At the same time as their military areas in the III Corps were reorganized, the Communists also revamped their Tri Thien Zone into four areas, each forming a battlefront in the same way as the sub-zones in the III Corps. The Tri-Thien-Hue zone had formed until then two distinct fronts, one called B5 front running from Highway 9 to the North, and one called B7 from Highway 9 toward Hue.

As Hue had been the hotbed of several anti-government movements, and a Communist victory there would entail significant developments, the enemy decided to form two other fronts, one running from Thua Thien to Hue and the other from south of Thua Thien and Phu Loc to the Hai Van Pass.

The four fronts were established by May, 1967 with special assignments to a total of 50 Communist battalions, under combined commands in preparation for the general offensive. Territorial components of the four areas were as follows:

- Area I : Gio Linh, Cam Lo, North Hung Hoa, Hy Lap.
- Area II : Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, Quang Ha city.
- Area III : Huong Thuy, Phu Vang, Huong Tra, Quang Dien, Phong Dien (Hue area).
- Area IV : Phu Loc (South of Hue vicinity of Hai Van Pass).

This shows that any reform, territorial or otherwise, made by the Communists implies serious planning for action, and that their general offensive of 1968 had been prepared since mid-1967 with Saigon and Hue as the two main targets.

During the 26 days of fighting in Hue they were able to set up a revolutionary administration with the so-called Alliance of Democratic and Peaceful Forces. The Communists considered this as a major political victory that could serve as a pattern for future attacks against the cities. Although the battle of Hue was characterized by a relatively strong, combined US - Vietnamese force which included the US 1st Marine Division, 1st Airborne Division, and the RVN 1st
Infantry Division. The Communists were able to control the city for 26 days. Was this the result of their military territorial reorganization, which enabled the enemy to attack with equal strength on all fronts, and to launch a direct assault against Hue while retaining the US Marines at Khe Sanh?

The same pattern was seen in the Saigon area, although here the enemy failed in his attempt to foment a popular uprising, their five attacking forces coming from the five zones around Saigon were nonetheless able to penetrate the capital city before the offensive was repelled.

That they could reach the city’s suburbs without encountering any resistance was due to the fact that our villages around the capital had not been well defended, and the cause of this defective defense system came from the territorial organization itself:

In 1956 the Saigon military district included four sectors; Tay Ninh, Cholon, Gia Dinh and the capital city. By the end of 1956, the reorganized capital military district comprised Saigon, Cholon and the provinces of Gia Dinh and Long An.

Early in 1961, when the country was divided into four Corps Areas, the capital military district was transformed into the Capital Special Zone and reduced to Saigon and Gia Dinh province only.

By the end of 1965 the Capital Special Zone was renamed again to the Capital Military district with the same territories plus the Con Son special zone.

Since July 18, 1966, with the same territories, it was changed to the Special Zone and placed under the direct command of the III Corps with the responsibilities and prerogatives of a tactical zone and no longer under direct command of the General Staff as before. This organization still prevailed at the time of the 1968 Communist general offensive.

The RVN and Communist military territorial organizations thus can be described as entirely different from each other. It was not known whether our military authorities at the time, when defining our various military areas, had taken into account the enemy situation, since the villages around the capital as well as a number of towns across the city happened to be heavily infiltrated by the Communists. No countermeasures had been taken on our part.
Before 1954, security belts of our townships had been well organized. The Viet Minh delegation to the 1954 Geneva Conference had to admit that the country's cities and their surrounding areas were under nationalist control.

Only after the Communist Tet offensive against the cities including the capital, where the enemy had been able to infiltrate without difficulties, did we realize that the areas adjacent to cities and townships were of much interest to the enemy. The question that could be asked then was whether the military territorial organization of the Special Zone had been logical and appropriate. Since emphasis on security matters was within the zone's perimeter and operational matters around the city were entrusted to the Gia Dinh Sector. The fact that the Special Zone was also in charge of the Con Son area furthermore indicated that emphasis in the organization of the Zone had been placed on management rather than initiative defense.

B. - REVAMPING OF COMBAT UNITS

Before their 1968 general offensive, the various Communist commands in the I Corps Area, including the Command of the 324B Division, were disbanded and revamped into "Groups" of regiment level.

Before April 1967, enemy forces in the Tri-Thien-Hue military zone included the CT4, CT5 and CT6 Regiments, the 802nd and 804th mobile battalions, the D12 sappers battalion and a number of city units.

In April 1967, these were reinforced by two more battalions belonging to the 9/309A Regiment newly infiltrated into the South.

During May 1967, while reorganizing their military areas into 4 fronts, the Communists revamped their forces into "Groupes" after disbanding the various commands including the commands of the 324B Division and the 803rd, 812th and 90th Regiments.

In July 1967, seven enemy worksite regiments were formed in the area. Beginning in August 1967 these were called "Groups".

Why this new name? "Group" means a mixed force of regiment or combat group level, operating on its own. Each group
is organized according to the needs of the battle front to which it is assigned. Usually, one group consists of: 3 infantry battalions, one sapper battalion, one artillery battalion, one supporting battalion, 8 or 9 specialized companies like the specialized units in an infantry regiment, reinforcing elements such as a ranger unit, a worker unit and vanguard youth elements (depending on each battle front), and special organization for arms production, health, liaison and post-office.

When the Communist general offensive began, 13 enemy groups had been set up, numbered from 1 to 13. Their assignments were as follows:

- **Combat**: Groups 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9.
- **Support artillery**: Group 12.
- **Logistics and Reserve**: Groups 1, 3, 8 and 10.
- **Sapper action in the city**: Group 11 (Hue city unit)

In addition, Group 559 was in charge of logistics for all battle fronts in I Corps.

Only Groups 5 and 6 plus part of Group 9 were involved in the Communist attack against Hue. In the face of fierce resistance and counter offensive by government troops backed by heavy air raids, they had to withdraw after three weeks of fighting and as their nationwide general offensive campaign had failed.

As far as Saigon was concerned, the attacking force was no less sizeable. Three Communist divisions and many regional units were deployed near the capital city or at about two days walk from it. According to confirmed intelligence reports, the enemy force consisted of Worksites 9 (a Worksites unit is similar to a division), composed of the Q761, Q762 and Q763 Regiments based in the Hoc Mon - Thu Duc area; Worksites 7 composed of the 165th, 141st and 101st Regiments stationed in the Lai Khe - Binh Duong area; Worksites 5 composed of the 274th and 275th Regiments operating in Bien Hoa; the independent Dong Nai Regiment on the Binh Duong - Bien Hoa border; the 267th and 269th Battalions belonging to the main force of Sub-Zone 2 in Gia Dinh; and the F.40 Sapper Battalion in Saigon - Gia Dinh.

In addition, there were a number of regional units such as the 506th Battalion in Hau Nghia, the 508th Battalion in Gia Dinh, the Phu Loi Battalion in Binh Duong, the 2nd Battalion in Go
Mon and Go Vap, the 3rd Battalion at Di An, the 4th Battalion in Thu Duc, the 5th Battalion at Nha Be, and the 6th Battalion at Binh Tan. These were supported by a number of mobile artillery units.

In total, more than 40 infantry battalions and a number of support unit involving more than 20,000 men (1), 18,000 of them were regular troops and the remainder regional troops who were deployed around the capital city.

Only thirteen infantry battalions were involved in the first round of the Communist offensive. Committed to the second round were 15 to 17 battalions, with the remainder of the enemy force keeping pressure on the city.

The enemy was able to maintain pressure because the defense system in the hamlets and villages around the capital had been inadequate. The Communists could move in and out of the hamlets and villages without being discovered. By mid-1967, assassinations and other acts of terrorism by the enemy often occurred in the Go Vap area, a suburb of Saigon City. Perhaps it was the last area in the city's outskirts where the defense system was still solid thereby forcing the Communist to intensify their terrorist activity to completely destroy the infrastructure. Also by the end of 1967, enemy infiltrators were seen in action in the Phu Lam - Cholon area where they would attack a police post or check vehicles in some streets for a few hours and withdraw before national police arrived. Life would return to normal after such incidents as if nothing had really happened. An apparent security still prevailed although enemy soldiers had reached the doors of the city.

The concentration and development of the enemy forces around the capital was stepped up during the same second half of 1967 when the military situation across the country appeared quiet with military authorities inclined to believe that the enemy no longer had the capability for major drives at the battalion level.

Although some big battles by regimental size units were initiated by the enemy in the course of 1967, they all ended in Communist defeats and heavy losses. These were the Con Tien battle which started in June and ended in July, the Loc Ninh battle in October and November, and the Dak To battle in November.

(1) Each enemy battalion has from 300 to 400 men. A Communist regiment has more than 1,000 men, a worksite from 5,000 to 6,000 men.
Optimistic observers maintained that the battle of Con Tien lasted nearly 3 months because the enemy's rear consisted of a border sanctuary from where they could launch infantry or artillery attacks against allied positions at Con Tien, only 12 kilometers from the Laotian border and 8 kilometers from the Ben Hai River.

Similar conditions prevailed at Loc Ninh, only 14 kilometers from the Cambodian border. The enemy attack against Loc Ninh was mainly aimed at creating a psychological impact on world public opinion while the attacking forces could withdraw into safety across the border.

The Dak To front also was seen as having the same characteristics as it was on the Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia border area.

The same observers would conclude that all the enemy attacks were desperate military attempts aimed only at influencing world opinion, without significant success however.

To be more objective, we should take into consideration the fact that, starting from June 1967, the Communists worked hard on the revamping and redeployment of their forces in preparation for their 1968 general offensive. The enemy attacks in late 1967 therefore could be described as battle ground testing actions with different tactical characteristics. At Con Tien, for example, the enemy installed their artillery units in artificial caves dug in mountain slopes. They would pull them out for sudden barrages against allied positions and push them back into the caves as soon as the barrages ended to avoid allied counter fire and air strikes. In the meantime, their infantry troops would advance into Con Tien through converging trenches. They kept fighting while digging and seldom emerged above the ground level. The attack was similar to Dien Bien Phu which they wanted to repeat with the attacking troops advancing through multiple trenches. But in the face of an allied airforce twenty times more powerful than the French airforce in 1954 and a counterattack from outside the base by our infantry elements in September 1967, the Communist 324B Division finally had to withdraw from Con Tien.

At Loc Ninh and later on at Phuoc Qua, the Reds launched their attacks with the hope of luring our troops into a selected battle ground near the border which could only be advantageous to them. They were using a new tactic which they called "three attacks, selected by the enemy in the highlands, especially Plei Mei and Don Da, to launch heavy losses to our II and V Cavalry Divisions. The resistance was intense all along the border, but the bloody battles there did not affect our control of the region.

Communist also could be described as having its own front line pointing to its own goal. The Communist

(1) The "battle ground testing actions" does not differ from the enemy's objective was to lure the troops of Loc Ninh and later at Phuoc Qua to the post where the enemy forces had major thrusts, with the aim of diversion action.

(2) The battle of Con Tien was fought with 6,000 enemy forces and lasted several days, and led to the defeat of the Communists.
three points" (1). With this tactic, the enemy launched flame throwers from more than one side into the Loc Ninh post and the district headquarters as well, burning down the whole compound and its defense structure. Only an underground fortress, built by the Japanese during World War II was able to resist until reinforcements arrived the next morning. The Communists then tried hard to maintain their pressure on the post while hitting at the newly arrived reinforcements (cong don da vien), using many antiaircraft guns. But they were finally defeated by the numerous reinforcements with a powerful air support and operating on a relatively flat battlefield.

The battle of Dak To also had the characteristics of a selected battleground almost similar to the Plei Mei battle on the highlands in October 1965. There was a difference however: while at Plei Mei enemy forces withdrew in complete disorder and suffered heavy losses as they went. They were pursued by the US First Air Cavalry Division up to the Chu Phong mountain. Well organized resistance positions were set up by the enemy at Dak To and throughout the battlefield to check the allied pursuit operations. As a result bloody battles were fought and our forces were only able to take control of the battlefield after suffering heavy casualties (2).

The enemy initiated battles of late 1967 therefore could be described as testing actions through which the enemy weighed its own forces while diverting allied troops toward the border area with the cities being left without proper defense.

C. - INCREASING INFILTRATION OF ARMS AND MEN

In preparation for their general offensive, the Communists also increased their infiltration of arms and men into the South.

(1) The "ba cong ba mui" (three attacks, three points) tactics actually does not differ much from the "nhat diem luong dien" (one primary objective with two secondary objectives) tactics because in the battle of Loc Ninh the enemy launched three simultaneous attacks against the post while the "nhat diem luong dien" tactics would consist of one major thrust against the weakest target with the two "dien" being diversion and support.

(2) The battle of Plei Mei lasted more than a month during which time 6,000 enemy soldiers were killed. The battle of Dak To lasted 22 days, and both sides suffered casualties, with the heavier losses on the Communist side.
All signs had been in favor of the RVN since; the arrival of American troops in Vietnam on February 7, 1965, followed by successive operations which destroyed much of the enemy's strength, and by the escalation of air raids against the North.

Some observers would think that the increased enemy infiltrations had only enabled the Communists to station their regular forces along the borders in support of their guerrilla and popular forces who were waging a terror war in rural areas in an attempt to destroy the RVN pacification program.

Enemy infiltration of arms and men from North Vietnam into the South actually started at a relatively low rate in 1961.

It took the Communists two years to establish their infiltration channels.

There were about 3,700 men infiltrated into the South during 1961. This figure went up to 5,400 in 1962, down to 4,200 in 1963, and up again to reach the 7,000 mark in 1964. This means that from 1959 to 1964, a total of 20,000 men were infiltrated into the South. These included officers, servicemen and specialized cadre. Most of these men were Southerners who had been regrouped in the North after the Geneva Agreement. They were sent back to the South to strengthen the developing Viet Cong forces.

The intervention of US troops in 1965 prompted North Vietnam to change their plan. In Autumn 1965, Hanoi decided to send south entire regular regiments. Up to the end of 1964 only one North Vietnamese division had infiltrated into the South and was concentrated in the Kontum area. The division had the mission of taking over the Highland and making it the Capital of the National Liberation Front.

By Autumn-Winter 1965, after nearly half a year of no action following the arrival of American troops and the escalation of air raids against North Vietnam the Communists started some attacks at regimental level and higher. Typical of these attacks was the battle of Ba Gia in Quang Ngai and the battle of Plei Mei in the Highland. All these attacks failed, causing much confusion among the Viet Cong ranks.

In the course of 1955-1956, combined ARVN and allied troops launched many operations into VC strategic and secret zones, causing heavy casualties to the enemy. The VC strength was conse-
sequently reduced from 70,000 regular men to 35,000 or 36,000. Hanoi had to maintain a high infiltration rate to replenish the Communist forces in the South.

In 1967, an average of 7,000 men infiltrated from North Vietnam into the South each month. The figure for January 1968 only rose to 22,000 men. It went down to 15,000 men in February 1968 and rose again during the following months.

By the end of 1967, there were 95,000 North Vietnamese troops in the South.

The Viet Cong, who had had recruiting problems since early 1967, were able to recruit only 3,500 men each month during 1967 as compared with 7,500 men each month in 1966.

Before the general offensive of Tet Mau Than, the enemy strength was estimated at 325,000 men including 147,200 belonging to combat and guerilla units. There were at least 79,000 North Vietnamese soldiers belonging to purely North Vietnamese units, and 16,000 North Vietnamese in the so-called Viet Cong ranks. In reality, 75% of the enemy combat regiments were North Vietnamese. This figure could even be higher.

In the meantime, enemy efforts were being made toward the formation of a number of regional units.

The enemy had 129,200 combat and guerilla soldiers before the general offensive and 147,000 when the offensive started. These belonged to 10 divisions (instead of 9 before the offensive), 52 regiments (instead of 45 before the offensive) and 274 battalions (instead of 230 before the offensive).

Thus, the entire military strength of North Vietnam was deployed into the South through infiltration in the course of 1967. Communist returnees from the VC 308th and 320th Divisions at Cam Lo (Quang Tri) on January 26, 1968 revealed that only 3 or 4 divisions stayed behind in North Vietnam and these were composed of youths in military service. Documents published in Hanoi showed that by the end of 1967, North Vietnam's potential military manpower was 3,200,000 including all male citizens from 18 to 45 years old. Half of this number was used in military, para-military and civilian activities as follows: 425,000 men in the regular forces (including those on duty in the South); 230,000 men in the security force; 160,000 dead; 1,000,000 in the popular and public service force.
making a total of 1,815,000 men. The remaining 1,400,000 men were serving in other branches of activity.

This means that if North Vietnam elected to send South all young men from 18 to 25, the infiltration figure could reach 350,000.

\[
(1,400,000 \times \frac{7 \text{ year groups } 18-25}{28 \text{ year groups } 18-45} : 350,000)
\]

Such a military buildup in the South, however, would jeopardize the economy in the North and would create huge logistical problems. It would also cause resentment among Communist South Vietnamese cadres because of its being entirely North Vietnamese.

As a matter of fact, enemy units involved in the Tet offensive already were composed mostly of North Vietnamese soldiers. They were all young men, many still under 14 or 15. They had been infiltrated into the South for a few months and had never participated in any battle before.

While increasing their infiltration of men into the South, the North Vietnamese also sought to modernize the weaponry of the Communist forces in the South, beginning late in 1967. Arms and ammunition were continuously sent South through the Ho Chi Minh trail and by sea.

During the last three months of 1967, the Communists infiltrated into South Vietnam from 107 to 320 tons of military equipment per day. By mid-1967, North Vietnamese trucks were seen at the three-border area, while at sea the enemy used 100-ton boats or motored boats disguised as foreign fishing vessels to transport their arms. These boats would navigate in international waters and reach secret ports on the South Vietnamese coast at night. Their transportation system was faultless thanks to a well-organized liaison and information network that had been set up throughout the military areas. The system consists of liaison stations installed along the infiltration routes, at intervals of 4 to 8 hours walk depending on the length of each route segment and its dangers. Several stations on the same route are called a liaison line. Connected lines form the enemy's liaison network across South Vietnam. Personnel at each station consists of two to four agents depending on its importance and headed by a chief of station. The stations and their transportation of arms and equipment were seldom discovered. It has to be noted that the enemy's liaison and information system was thoroughly reorganized in the course of 1967 probably as part of the general offensive plan.
What a 122mm rocket can do.

A 122mm rocket after explosion
12. 7mm machineguns manufactured in Communist China were used again allied planes.

122mm rocket and its launching pad.

Two types of recoilless rifles produced in Communist China: the 75mm and the 57mm recoilless rifles.
View of the exhibition of VC arms and equipment following their "Tet" offensive. Rifles with bayonet are the famous AK automatic rifles.
## MODERNIZATION OF WEAPONRY FOR THE COMBAT FORCES

The modernization of the Communist weaponry in South Vietnam was carried out in several phases. First in 1959 when they re-launched their military drive for a Communist take over in South Vietnam the Viet Cong were using arms left over from the resistance war against the French.

Later, they used arms captured from RVN forces. However they could not rely only on captured arms and ammunition as the war developed, for they needed modern weapons to modernize and expand their armed forces now deploying as larger units.

By mid-1967, arms made in various Communist countries were introduced into South Vietnam by the Viet Cong. A government document showed that from mid-1962 to 1965, more than twenty different kinds of Communist weapons were seized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
<th>DATE OF CAPTURE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MP-82 Rifle</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>10.5.1962</td>
<td>Binh Dinh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>57 mm Recoilless rifle</td>
<td>Com. China</td>
<td>25.11.1962</td>
<td>Quang Tin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>K. 50 Sub-machinegun</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>Phuoc Thanh</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>60 mm Mortar</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>7.1.1963</td>
<td>Tay Ninh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>82 mm Mortar</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>25.3.1963</td>
<td>Quang Ngai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MP-82 Rocket</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>24.4.1963</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>27 mm Rocket launcher</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>10.6.1963</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mosin Nagant Carbin with automatic bayonet (OKC)</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>13.6.1963</td>
<td>Kien Phong</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SKS 7.52 mm Carbin</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>10.9.1963</td>
<td>An Xuyen</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>75 mm Recoilless rifle</td>
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<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>7.92 mm Heavy machinegun (8 Maxin)</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>7.92 mm Carbin</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<td>Dinh Tuong</td>
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<td>12 mm Heavy machinegun</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>24.11.1963</td>
<td>Duc Hoa</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Transformed Mat 49</td>
<td>North Vietnam</td>
<td>25.11.1963</td>
<td>Quang Tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>90 mm Bazooka</td>
<td>Com. China</td>
<td>22.12.1963</td>
<td>Dinh Tuong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>90 mm Rocket launcher</td>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>16.2.1965</td>
<td>Vung Ro</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>53 type Carbin</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.92 mm Sub-machinegun</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>12.1964</td>
<td>Chuong Thien</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>7.92 mm Mauer</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>16.2.1965</td>
<td>Vung Ro</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>12.7 mm anti-aircraft heavy machinegun, 54 type</td>
<td>Com. China</td>
<td>15.12.1965</td>
<td>Quang Ngai</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>RP46 Automatic Rifle</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>15.12.1965</td>
<td>Quang Ngai</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>RPD Machinegun</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>RPG-2 anti-tank gun, Russian type, and Communist Chinese type known as 8.40</td>
<td>Com. China</td>
<td>-id-</td>
<td>-id-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The German 8.40 is a strong anti-tank vehicle. It is a summer-type vehicle. The side mentioned one such weapon used more than 2,000 times. It is 150 mm long and is capable of throwing a 2,750 kg bomb.

The German 8.40 machinegun, automatic
From the beginning of 1966 to the end of 1967, other kinds of Communist weapons were introduced into South Vietnam but the enemy infantry forces were mainly equipped with weapons as listed above, plus some obsolete ones. Only VC guerilla and regional units still used weapons captured from government forces.

During the Communist general offensive of 1968, it could be noticed that the enemy had discarded all kinds of weapons considered as obsolete and only those with a strong fire power were being used, particularly in the attacks against cities and townships. These were:

- RPG-2 anti-tank guns made in Communist China and known as B.40 and B.41;
- AK.47 and 50 sub-machineguns manufactured in Communist China.

Both are light and easy to handle, with a strong destructive power. Their characteristics are as follows:

The RPG-2 anti-tank gun was first manufactured by the German Nazis during World War II. It was perfectioned by Communist China into the B.40 rocket gun, and the more modern B.41. This arm was introduced into South Vietnam for the first time in late 1965 when it was captured by government troops in the Don Pho Trang battle in Quang Ngai. The first B.40 rocket fired in the 1968 general offensive was at the Khe Sanh outpost on 20 January 1968. It made headlines in local newspapers which claimed that a new enemy weapon was able to fire through sand bags. During the Communist offensive against cities and townships, a number of government tanks, bunkers and buildings were destroyed by B.40 rockets.

The RPG-2, is very light and easy to carry, and has a strong destructive power. With it one man can destroy an armored vehicle. During World War II, each Soviet platoon was equipped with one such weapon. When it was first manufactured, it could not be used more than once. It was perfect by the Communist Chinese who made it capable of repeated firing. The RPG-2 gun weighs 2.750 kilograms while its rocket's weight is 1.840 kilogram. Its range is 150 meters, and the harder the target, the more destructive its power.

The AK sub-machinegun was also first manufactured by Germany during World War II. It is an automatic and semi-automatic individual weapon used by Soviet and other Communist
forces. The AK50 was introduced into South Vietnam by the end of 1962 when it was captured by government forces in Phuoc Chau, Quang Tin. Its sharp bayonet can cut barbed wire and dig small holes. The more modern AK 47 was manufactured to replace the AK 50 as well as the semi-automatic SKS carbine. The AK 47 weighs 4,800 kilograms including its ammunition, and has a range of 400 meters while the AK 50 weighs 5,450 kilograms with a range of only 200 meters. Each soldier can carry up to 400 rounds with each magazine containing 30 to 35 rounds. Both types of AK were used by the Viet Cong in the general offensive. The AK firepower is considered equal to the American M.16.

Like the Soviet forces in World War II, each Viet Cong assault platoon involved in the general offensive was equipped with one or two B.40 or B.41 while platoon members were individually armed with AK guns for either sporadic or uninterrupted firing.

The modernization of VC weaponry should have been begun years ago since before it could be carried out it required long periods of time for soliciting modern arms supplies from Communist countries, transporting them into South Vietnam through North Vietnam, and for training personnel in handling them.

In addition to infantry weapons, heavy artillery guns, particularly the 122 mm rocket, were also used by the enemy in their offensive against the cities.

Some Communist Chinese 107 mm rockets were also fired into the capital city in May 1968. This rocket weighs 26 kilograms and is less efficient than the 122 mm. The 107 mm rocket had been supplied to North Vietnam by Communist China since September 1967, but it did not appear on the battlefield in the South until 9 months later.

The modernization of enemy weaponry from a primitive level into one superior to our own fire power in view of a decisive battle was one of the many surprises of the Vietnam war (1)

Why the delay in modernizing the ARVN forces?

High-ranking US military authorities in Vietnam blamed the White House and the civilian authorities at the Pentagon for the slow process. They put forward the following arguments:

- From 1961, Washington had believed that the RVN forces were not willing to fight and supplies of new weapons would
in the end go to the enemy and constitute a waste of money;

Washington had planned no surplus of arms when the war is over only upon seeing the determination for combat of the RVN forces in the course of the Communist Tet offensive did Washington realize that RVN troops were real soldiers.

It was not until 11 April 1968 that US Defense Secretary Clark Clifford announce the beginning of the modernization of RVN troops to match the enemy's modern equipment which included light weapons, rockets, heavy machineguns and mortars (2)

E. - TRAINING IN CITY STREET FIGHTING

Communist documents captured during and after the Tet offensive indicated that enemy troops had been trained for both the method and technique of city street fighting. The enemy training documents had been prepared long before the general offensive, while others were prepared during the offensive in view of subsequent waves of attacks.

The documents placed heavy emphasis on military theory, but only a few dealt with actual experiences gathered in the course of the offensive itself. Tactics cited in the documents concerned artillery units only. There was no mention of other branches such as artillery and rocket.

The documents, however, were more suitable for guerilla warfare than for conventional warfare. They deserve attention as the experiences gathered may lead the Viet Cong to preparing a major military handbook that suits the peculiarities of the Vietnam war.

In bringing the war into the cities, the Communists entered what they called the "total war" phase, characterized by a

(1) During the Communist Tet Mau Than general offensive, only more than a half of our 10 infantry divisions and marine, airborne and ranger units - the main units of our armed forces - were equipped with the M-16 which they received only a few days before Tet. This was a surprise to the Viet Cong who had expected a less strong fire power on our part. But our units met with some difficulties as they had not been very familiar with the new weapon.

(2) Cf. US. News and World Report, 8 July 1968.