

The army cryptographic branch played a worthy part in the victory of our army and our people, especially the cryptographic organizations in the South. The cryptographic cadre and personnel not only served combat command but also fought in self-defense, to protect the security of cryptographic technique, and to protect command organizations. Side by side with that, they also had to shift for themselves for messing, in ensuring survival, and in participating in tasks of other organizations. Cryptographic cadre and personnel were very honored and took pride in having done their part, blood and bone, in this greatest of victories. According to incomplete records, in the campaign forty-one comrades were valiantly sacrificed and thirty-nine wounded. Among them were many role models for the entire branch to study and copy: Cde Nguyen Van Giai, intelligence [tinh bao] cryptographic warrior in the Cu Chi "earth of steel," with a high sense of purpose protected secret Party materials to the end, keeping them from falling into enemy hands. Cde Nguyen Van Dau in Western Nam Bo, when he fell into an enemy encirclement, fought courageously and concealed the cryptographic materials before being killed. Corporal Nguyen Van Thang, cryptographer at Military Relay Station 35 of HQ of the 559th, served on the Ho Chi Minh Trail; as he was going to hand off cryptographic materials for the relay station, he tripped an enemy mine, badly wounding him, taking off both legs; his entire body wounded, knowing that he could not live, the comrade withstood intense pain to wrap up all of the codes, key, and cryptographic materials in his mosquito net, then set them afire before dying, protecting the secrecy of the materials.

Cde Van Tien Dzung, Chief of the General Staff, in congratulating the cryptographic branch on the occasion of Spring 1968, said: "... recently the cryptographic brothers and sisters strove to overcome every difficulty to do a good job of accomplishing the mission of ensuring secrecy and timeliness for contents of leadership and command, securing victory in the theaters. Representing the Central Military Committee and the High Command, I commend the comrades' efforts and accomplishments."

The Military Committee and Region HQ also highly valued the results of the task of service by the cryptographic organizations in the Southern theater.

Notes

1. The number of cryptographic cadre and personnel increased rapidly. In 1965, cryptographic of the Air Defense-Air Force Service increased by 167 percent. In 1966 the MR 4 Cryptographic increased by 44.94 percent, the Naval Service Cryptographic by 47.05 percent, GDRS Cryptographic by 129.41 percent, and the Engineer Branch Cryptographic by 141.11 percent compared to the previous year.
2. At the end of 1966 the printing plant had 146 people: 3 officers, 143 soldiers and workers.
3. The Navy's boat forces were regularly operating at sea, using radio as their number one system [of communication], thus there was insufficient cryptographic table of organization down to each individual boat.
4. The Air Force alone had seven types of opcode: the supplemental opcode, the tactical opcode, the training opcode, the pilots' opcode, the preflight opcode, the joint opcode, and the operations [hanh quan] opcode.

5. For the branches of radar (naval), communications, operations, etc.
6. Instructions No. 129-CT/TW, signed by Cde To Huu, Central Party Secretary, preserved in the Cryptographic Bureau.
7. Extract from Directive No. 129-CT/TW.
8. Extract from Instructions No. 48 of the Central Military Committee.
9. The 16th Regiment (Sector 5 entering) in contact with R, Sector 5, Western Area Front HQ, artillery regiment, guard regiment.
10. For example, R Forward ordered the 3rd Regiment: "E5 [5th Regiment] across the Be River is caught up in flooding. E3, help organize to get E5 over the river." When E3 crypto decrypted, because there were garbled secret designators, they could not understand the message content to correct it.
11. MR 7 increased to 33; Saigon-Gia Dinh Special Sector increased to 8 points. MR 8 increased to 52; Region 6 increased to 15. MR 9 increased to 30; Region 10 increased to more than 200.
12. In the total of 1,756 points for the entire cryptographic branch in Theater B.

Chapter Seven

Ensuring Service to Leadership, Guidance, and Command in Defeating the American Imperialists' "Vietnamization Strategy" and their Second War of Destruction in the North (1969-1972)

After the 1968 Tet general offensive and uprising of our military and people in the South, the "limited war" strategy of the American imperialists had failed completely. In order to continue to preserve America's neocolonialist system in the South - in order to cope with the whippings and powerful attacks by our army and our people - Nixon promulgated the strategy of "Vietnamizing the war." Aiming at carrying out this stratagem, the American imperialists accelerated "pacification" of the countryside; pushed the build-up of the Saigon puppet army to create a modern army to gradually replace the American military; and at the same time used coordinated methods with respect to military, economic, foreign policy, political matters, etc., drastically counterattacking and broadening the war throughout Indochina.

Facing the war schemes and operational tricks of America and her lackies, the struggle by our army and our people to repel the armies of aggression intensified, to the point that it was inexhaustibly tough and decisive.

In April 1969, the Central Party Executive Committee issued a resolution to mobilize the power of our entire military, our entire people, to expand the strategy of attack, to beat the "Vietnamization" scheme, to beat it so that "Americans out, puppets collapse" proceeded to secure a decisive victory.

In this situation, the PAVN cryptographic branch stood facing requirements and extremely weighty, complicated missions. Implementing the instructions of the Central Military Committee, the army cryptographic organization drew up timely plans and procedures to carry out the specialty tasks responsive to the requirements to serve leadership, guidance, and command in the new situation.

The army cryptographic organizations in the North concentrated their efforts to implement these missions:

- Organize to serve leadership, guidance, and command secrecy, accuracy, and timeliness in every set of circumstances, simultaneously continuing to accelerate heavily the work of changing over to employ techniques KTB5 and KTC. The mission was fixed as the number one central mission.
- Step up the task of enrolling students for development; give refreshers to the cadre and personnel.

- Zealously organize people to assist and provide technique for cryptographic in the South, Laos, and Cambodia.
- Increase the task of professional guidance, thoroughly grasping the situation, dealing with timeliness and accuracy in the developing situation, thereby responding to each mission requirement.

Vis-a-vis the cryptographic organizations of the Southern Liberation Army, the Southern Military Committee [Quan uy mien Nam] instructed:

“Mobilize to the highest level the power of all cryptographic cadre and personnel; strive to bring into play the achievements that have been accomplished; resolve to overcome unresolved errors, valiantly, and with dedication to the task and to fighting; build the organization, pure and solid; never cease to raise the level of cryptographic technique, the level of use of technique and of professional ability; strictly implement the cryptographic branch's table of organization and assignments; aim at serving the leadership, guidance, and command of the Military Committee, Region HQ [Bo chi huy Mien], of political commissars and commanders at all levels, through secrecy, accuracy, and timeliness.”

Implementing the above instructions, the Cryptographic Bureau of the Region's Military HQ [Bo Chi huy quan su Mien] organized to carry out five major task aspects:

- To increase the task of political education, ideological leadership, and administration of cadre and personnel, to create in the ranks of cadre and personnel a thorough grasp of the strategic determination of the Party – a steadfast class outlook, overcoming the mind set of a fear of hardship – laying down one's life, bringing into play the feelings of valiantry, the spirit of dedication to the task, in labor, study, and combat.
- Step up the task of technical and professional training, with the line, “make on-the-job refresher the center; get training in the real world task as the essential,” raising the capacity to execute the mission in every situation.
- Make an effort to overcome difficulties, seriously implementing the policy of changing over to the use of technique KTB 5. Increase the administration of technique, for security and secrecy.
- Build into routine a thorough grasp of professional guidance from top to bottom.
- Organize the task of encrypting and decrypting messages to serve leadership, command, and guidance, so that it is good in every circumstance.

From 1969 on, our army and our people stepped up the counteroffensive and attacked the enemy. Requirements for the army cryptographic branch to serve leadership, guidance, and command demanded a larger dimension. There were many days-long campaigns and combined-branch operations at a high level, among which were, as examples, campaigns such as the Route 9-Southern Laos campaign, the general strategic

counteroffensive campaign of 1972, the campaign to defeat the strategic attack by America B-52s on Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972, etc.

Also, from the end of 1969, our army had expanded greatly with respect to organization, the 559th Group adding the 470th Division to cooperate with the Highlands Front so as to greatly expand the transportation route down to Eastern Area Nam Bo. By mid-1970 there had been integrated, in addition, the 968th Front and the 565th Specialty Group (with the HQs of sectors 470, 491, 472, 473, and 571). By the end of 1969, the sapper troops in the South had also expanded all over the theaters. By 1970, the branches - artillery, armor, sappers, communications, engineers - had all stepped up a notch in expansion. In October 1970, Groupment [binh doan - quasi-corps] 70 was formed, comprising the 304th, 308th, and 320th Divisions and regiments, battalions, and branches, in order to meet the operational requirements for combined branches in large campaigns.

Faced with the operational requirements and the expansion of armed forces in the new period, the system of organization and alignment of the ranks of cryptographic cadre and personnel, and the cryptographic-technique liaison net system, took a big step up.

From the army cryptographic organizational standpoint, as of 1972 there were 4,755 units with cryptographic organizations in the North; in MR 5 there were 600 units with cryptographic organizations; and 1,962 in Nam Bo. Cryptographic organization in the Highlands and MR Tri-Thien had also expanded greatly.

Along with the expansion of the system of cryptographic organization, the system of cryptographic technique also expanded steadily in depth and breadth in the command organization system of the armed forces.

In the Cryptographic Bureau of Region HQ in 1969, the number of liaison points which the bureau had to cover was 76, rising to 128 in 1970, and 154 in 1972.

By September 1970, the cryptographic liaison system between Central and the Central Military Committee had organized liaison directly to MRs 6, 8, and 9.

In the Encrypting and Decrypting Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff, the number of points for which liaison had to be ensured in all three theaters was 157 points in 1969; 214 points by 1972; and 341 points in 1973 (that had liaison).

The system of cryptographic organization and the system of cryptographic liaison nets expanded greatly, requiring a corresponding quantity of cadre and personnel to meet the requirements for ensuring communication for the theaters. The army cryptographic branch had to strive to exert itself to the utmost to build and to develop the ranks of cadre and personnel to serve in the tasks of leadership, guidance and command of the Party and the army.

The average yearly number of army cryptographic cadre and personnel increased from 40 to 50 percent. MR4 increased by 280 percent; the Air Defense-Air Force Service by

258.97 percent; HQ of the 559th by 190 percent; HQ of the 959th by 227.58 percent; and the 316th Division by 537 percent. Figured to November 1972, the grand total of army cryptographic cadre and personnel had risen to 5,337 comrades.

The development of cryptographic cadre and personnel during these years became a large mission and an urgent one for the army cryptographic branch. Because they had to be arranged in spots where security and secrecy could be assured, classes for developing cryptographic personnel in the North encountered many difficulties in teaching, study, and organization to ensure living conditions. Side by side with education in political matters and ideology, and in the speciality professional techniques, there was special importance on training in physical conditioning, to get into shape for the march to distant theaters and to build endurance for the conditions in which the encryption-decryption task would be performed in places of hardship and violence later on. The curriculum content for teaching the specialty techniques was continually upgraded. The program of study reserved appropriate time for the student to practice technique and apply it in the field.

There were emergency classes in which the program and time had to be curtailed, but many students continued to achieve high scores in the subjects.

The development of army cryptographic personnel in the Southern theater also encountered difficulties from many aspects, from the selection of students to the task of ensuring living conditions for the school in situations of violent fighting. Most warriors going down from the North had to wait until the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate investigated and made a determination as to the implementation of developmental organization. In MR 9, they established a source of enrolling students by seeking younger siblings of cadre, from the masses, hard-core revolutionaries, to perform liaison or enter a technical materials transportation unit of the MR cryptographic; through the process of nurturing, educating, and training, they were put to the test, admitted to the [Party] group, the Party, then sent off for cryptographic training. With this method, the MR cryptographic organization had rather taken the initiative vis-a-vis sources of enrollment, meeting a third of the troop strength for development and a quality that was also guaranteed to be better.

The Southern Liberation Army Cryptographic School, although small in size and not yet having a regular routine for development, nevertheless exerted itself fully to continuous development, not reckoning "courses" and "classes," opening sessions at times with only fifteen to twenty or even ten people, many times having to hold two one-hour classes consecutively.

In MR 8 and MR 9, there were times in which the cryptographic classes had to be moved two or three times. Students were entirely on their own, having to be self-supporting, with respect to living conditions, paper and ink, etc. The comrades sought to overcome obstacles by means of having one class session under way while another went fishing to get fish to sell to buy rice to eat and things for study. There was a time when a heavy enemy strike devastated the class and the students had to sit in the shade of a tent-

fly under a paperbark tree to study. Cde Tam Ky slipped out alone to buy rice for the class, was ambushed by the enemy, fought, and died heroically.

From 1969 until 1972, the Army Cryptographic School graduated 2,389 students. From 1969 to 1971, the Southern Liberation Army Cryptographic School graduated over 250 people. MR 9's class graduated sixty-five people.

Counting 1965 through 1972, the army cryptographic branch graduated over 8,000 personnel, including more than 600 women.

The Military Cryptographic School in the North graduated more the 6,000 personnel; the cryptographic school classes in Nam Bo graduated 928 personnel.

The Sector 5 and Highlands training classes graduated nearly 1,000 personnel, etc.

Thanks to these numbers trained from 1965 to 1972, 3,583 army cryptographic cadre and personnel supported the battlefields of the South.

FINISHING THE CHANGEOVER TO TECHNIQUE KTB5 AND EXPANDING THE USE OF TECHNIQUE KTC

Concurrent with the task of training the ranks of cadre and personnel, the army cryptographic branch continued to press strongly to effect the changeover to the use of technique KTB5 and started to develop the use of technique KTC at the principal points.

After the December 1968 conference on training and the use of technique KTB5, the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff directed the army's cryptographic organizations and activities in the North and the Volunteer Army in Laos to expand the use of technique KTB5.

Early in 1969, after just two months, the cryptographic organization of MR Tri Thien had totally changed over to technique KTB5, right down to the lowest units, although the responsibility for serving command and combat was very tense.

In the Laotian theater, with the exception of some units behind enemy lines and caught up in combat, and which had not received the new type of technique, the Vietnamese Volunteer Army's cryptographic organization also essentially accomplished the changeover to the use of technique KTB5.

On 15 December 1969, the nationwide, army-wide cryptographic cadre conference summarized the situation of changeover to use of the new technique and clearly stated:

"After just a little more than a year (September 1968- November 1969) we essentially accomplished the changeover to the use of technique KTB5, replacing KTB4, with a raised standard of use,"¹ at the same time continuing to ensure every respect of leadership, control, and command in the fierce fighting of the new period, etc. "This achievement was very great, and the greatest of all was raising the level of cryptographic technique a step, with profound implications in the struggle to counter the American imperialists' gleaning

of information through cryptanalysis, opening up a pleasant prospect for us in realizing our course of developing technique."

As to the reason for success in the changeover to the use of technique KTB5, the conference analyzed this, and concluded: First of all, it was because of direct leadership from the Central Military [Party] Committee, and from the concerned chiefs - guidance and help in every aspect: The cryptographic branch had the direction to develop, and the policy of changing to, the use of the new technique precisely, with guidelines and suitable methods, applying the experiences of the time of changeover from technique KTA to technique KTB4. The Cryptographic Section of Central and the cryptographic directorates of the Army, Central Party, and Public Security had concrete plans of action, and creative methods of execution. Cadre of the branch were of one mind, striving to surmount difficult obstacles in research and production, entrusting responsibilities for training and the use of the technique to exemplary cadre. Many comrade bureau chiefs and section chiefs made the effort themselves to gain mastery of the new technique in order to directly train subordinate cadre and personnel.

Also at this conference the delegates brought up some mistakes in the changeover to the new technique. From the standpoint of ideology, we still had comrades who revealed a subjective attitude for technique KTB4 as offering the very highest level of security, negating the need to change over to the use of technique KTB5. There were comrades who doubted that the KTB5 technique was all that reliable, fast, and accurate. There were units that had only developed the use of technique KTB4 to accomplish their mission. Attitudes that recoiled from difficulty or mental stress were revealed. Concerning guidance, there was also subjective thinking, not yet anticipating fully the difficulties, thus still lacking in thoughtfulness and closeness in ideological leadership, in building with determination in training and use, still not paying strict attention to the degree to which units were weak or were still having excessive difficulties. As for research and quality production of the various types of dictionary codes and random key, those too were not high. Through theoretical analysis and results in actual use of KTB5, the conference concluded: "KTB5 not only has a higher level of security than KTB4, but has better error correction and accuracy assurance than KTB4. Thus KTB5 serves well in meeting each requirement for leadership, guidance, and command in every situation of an unexpected nature, in missions at any echelon, in any branch, any theater, with respect to strategy, campaigns, or combat."

In 1970, the Central Military Committee directed the MRs, arms and services, the various organizations and units, to pay attention to providing close guidance and creating every condition for the army cryptographic branch to implement training and use of the new technique favorably.

The changeover to KTB5 in the Southern theater encountered many difficulties because of combat service that caused large volumes of work and of urgency. Because support in the form of types of system and cryptographic key was inadequate, many units received permission to produce their own technical means, such as Cryptographic of Southern HQ [Bo tu lenh mien Nam], MR 5, MR 9, etc., but production also ran into snags,

principally from the standpoint of funds. The distribution of cryptographic materials in a split-up war theater situation also made coming and going difficult and dangerous. In MR 9, it could take one to two months [to get] from the unit back to the MR. With resolve to overcome difficulties and hardships, units in the South urgently implemented a program to use the new technique. By the beginning of 1971, army cryptographic units in the South had accomplished the changeover to the use of technique KTB5 in all units.

In March 1969, the Central Cryptographic Committee convened a discussion of methods of expanding cryptographic technique, looking mainly to changing over to the use of the KTC technique.

In essence, technique KTC is a type of cryptographic technique with a level of security and high degree of accuracy and speed, valuable as a good type of cryptographic technique of the randomized type of cryptography, but also with many complexities. It demands a tight organization plus time and effort, and must have a refined level of use. This is a major difficulty with implications for the entire process of steps - research, production, training, use.

People who did encrypting and decrypting by technique KTC5 had to give up on many strong points, had to stretch their brains more, had to stand their ground, had to endure more, compared with the other previous types of cryptographic systems.

In July 1969, the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff organized cryptographic cadre training to implement a plan for the training and use of technique KTC.

Cadre trained in the use of technique KTC returned to their units as core cadre for training the units in the new technique. Units in the South had their cadre and personnel interchange to consolidate training in the new technique under conditions of alternating study and carrying out combat duties.

From 15 September 1969 the cryptographic organizations at the level of MR and service in the North, MR Tri-Thien, MR 5, and HQ, Southern Area implemented experimental use of KTC3 and KTC5 with the Encryption-Decryption Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff.

The army cryptographic branch mobilized an emulation campaign, studying and training in the new technique in school and in the office, in the spirit of "Resolve to Defeat the American Aggressors."

Warmly responding to this campaign, cryptographic cadre and personnel army-wide, from rear areas to front lines, from mainland to distant sea islands, and even into the heart of the enemy, in concentrated spots and scattered and independent task teams, raised an atmosphere of eager bustle, training industriously in the new technique, showing creativity in study and training, many units and individuals achieving high productivity and quality of encrypting and decrypting, some comrades setting records.²

Army cryptographic cadre and personnel had to be continuously unruffled, had to know that they were in control in the task, and had to almost continually come into contact with extremely secret and important problems of the Party and the army, through encrypting and decrypting message contents, including no few messages containing news of victories that warmed the cockles of their hearts.

But none of the cryptographic cadre or personnel could repress their feelings, when suddenly, in the days toward the end of August 1969, they had to encrypt and decrypt the message from the Central Military Committee transmitting a communique from the Central Party Secretariat concerning the health of revered and beloved Uncle Ho. The entire text of the message sent at 2230 hours on 29 August is as follows:

From the Central Military Committee to the comrade secretaries of the Military Region committees, the division committees, independent regiment committees, and equivalent units: The Military Committee is passing to all comrades the communique of the Secretariat concerning the health of Uncle Ho. All comrades will at once organize announcements in the committees at the various echelons in strict accordance with regulations and with due regard to ensuring absolute secrecy.

VAN [Vo Nguyen Giap]

The message of the Secretariat (Top Secret message) [dien tuyet mat]: "Per resolution of the Politburo, the Secretariat begs to communicate concerning the situation of the health of President Ho as follows:

The entire Party - all of our people - know that our Uncle Ho was originally in very good health; Uncle regularly kept an eye on physical training and worked on an organized, planned basis. As a result, he was able to come through many hardships, imprisonment and exile, disease--even though up in years, Uncle continued to have the strength to shoulder every responsibility the Party and the people placed upon him. But over the past decade, Uncle's health had begun to decline. From 1965, there were many times in which Uncle suffered from dangerous attacks. Often we at Central organized the work with solicitude and consideration, especially relying on Uncle's strong efforts, but these attacks persisted. From the beginning of 1968, the Politburo reorganized methods of working, so that Uncle could take part in the discussion of the major undertakings of Party and State, sometimes getting involved in important activities, while at other times conserving Uncle's health. But from the beginning of the year until now, Uncle's health continued to decline. This August Uncle suffered a drawn-out attack (some of the bouts were critical), and has not been well right up until today.

At present, the Politburo is concerned with organizing Uncle's cure, and is confident that, as was the case each time, Uncle will prevail. But because the problem of Uncle's health is a problem of great importance to all of the people, and to all of the Party, the Politburo made a thorough report on the above situation to the Central Party Executive Committee and this status report is communicated within Party circles to the standing committees of the Sector committees, the city and provincial committees, the Party committees [Ban] and groups, the standing committees at the Party Committees [uy] directly subordinate to Central; and, in the army, to the standing committees of the division committees and echelons comparable to division, and to standing committees of regimental and independent regiment committees. It is desired that comrades organize

the communication [of Uncle's situation] exactly as determined by the Politburo, and keep confidence in their hearts over Central's nursing and treatment of Uncle. We love Uncle tenderly, so we must turn that sentiment into an all-out effort in fighting, in production, and in our tasks, an all-out effort for each person in their mission, each unit, each organization, as Uncle continues to expect of us as a matter of routine. Central thinks that, if new achievements in battle, productivity, and task assignments of all places be reported to Uncle at a time when he is weak and tired, then surely Uncle will be gratified.

Finally, it is desired that comrades keep this news absolutely secret, seeing it as a matter falling within the province of highest secrecy critical to the Party and the Nation.

On behalf of the Secretariat,
Le Van Luong

These messages brought tears to the eyes of cryptographic cadre and personnel over succeeding days: Uncle Ho had bid us farewell! A grievous loss beyond measure for the whole Party, for all of our people, for our entire army!

Cadre and personnel of the army cryptographic branch seriously implemented the appeal of the Politburo and the Central Military Committee to "Turn grief into strength," becoming day by day more industrious and innovative, quietly relaying messages of the Party, the army, the entire military in the months and the stages of "actions to repay Uncle," achieving worthy accomplishments consistent with the teachings and the heart of Uncle and the army and the unit.

ENSURING SERVICE TO LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND IN ATTACKING AND COUNTERATTACKING THE ENEMY'S "PACIFICATION" SCHEME

Moving into 1969, our army and our people continued to attack and counterattack the enemy on the fronts in the Southern theater, an example being the two-stage spring and summer actions.

The cryptographic organization of the region's military HQ [Bo chi huy] and the cryptographic organizations of the 5th, 7th, and 9th division, MR 7, etc., served command in the attacks on the enemy on the axes Tay Ninh, Binh Long, Bien Hoa-Long Khanh, etc., and served command in repulsing the enemy's mopping-up operation in the Dzau Tieng sector.

The cryptographic organization of MR5 and the cryptographic teams of the 2nd and 3rd divisions served command in attacking the enemy in many places, such as An Hoa, Tien Phuoc, Tu Nghia, etc.

The cryptographic organization of the Highland Front served command in the campaign attacking the enemy at Doc To.

The cryptographic organization of MR Tri-Thien and the cryptographic organization of the 324th Division served command in beating back the enemy's attack, securely protecting our strategic lines of transportation in that sector.

The cryptographic organizations of elite [tinh nhue] troops served command in striking the enemy in many glorious actions, causing the enemy much heavy loss, as in the raid on the Dong Zu base.

The cryptographic organizations of the liberation army, while serving command in counterattacking the enemy, protected the bases of Region HQ [Bo Tu lenh Mien], MR 5, MR 8, MR 9, etc.

In February 1970, the allied Laotian-Vietnamese army opened a campaign to crush the "Cu Kiet"* occupational operation of the Americans and their Laotian puppets in the Plaine des Jarres sector, the cryptographic warriors of the Vietnamese Voluntary Army right down as far as bases [co so], objectives, directions, commanding positions - all in the region of the enemy and the Plaine des Jarres command. The cryptographic organizations of the air defense, armor, artillery, sapper, engineer, air force, etc., units from Viet Nam crossed over to fight on a combined-branch basis, coordinated closely with the cryptographic organizations of the Laotian Volunteer Army to ensure that command was grasped thoroughly and completely. Cde Nguyen Van Binh, cryptographer of the Vietnamese Volunteer Army, bravely lost his life in this campaign.

In March 1970, the American imperialists organized and staged a coup d'etat in Cambodia, overthrowing Prince Sihanouk and bringing Lon Nol to power, at the same time bringing American troops and Saigon puppets into an attack of aggression on Cambodia, aimed at wiping out each and every revolutionary organization in the South, wiping out the Region's main force units, destroying our rear bases and cutting our strategic assistance transport lines, as they reverted to the "Vietnamization" strategy. Army cryptographic organizations sent along instructions from the Central Party concerning service to the leadership and command of the Central Office and MR 5 stepped up attacking the enemy and widening the liberated region along the border, helping the revolutionary movement of our friends.

In April 1970, the Cryptographic Bureau of Southern Region Military HQ (Bo chi huy quan su Mien), the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 9th divisions, and the Highland Front cryptographic organization served command in striking the enemy in eastern and northeastern Cambodia, the Highlands, and Lower Laos, crossing over and participating in glorious feats of arms that liberated six of our friends' provinces.

* Vietnamese rendering of Laotian "Ku Kiet," meaning "to regain, or restore, prestige." *The 316th Division*. Vol. II. Hanoi: PAVN Press, 1986, 121, 121n, and 132, although that history implies that the operation began in mid-1969. - Tr./Ed.]

In January 1971, the Americans and their puppets opened operation "Lam Son 719," striking the Route 9-Southern Laos sector with a large force: More than 30,000 main force puppet troops, with air forces and 10,000 American troops in support, aimed at severing our strategic line of transportation. Cryptographic organizations of the Front HQ and those of the 308th, 304th, 320th, 324th, and 2nd (MR 5) divisions, Group 559, HQ B3, the cryptographic teams of the battalions of sappers and of tanks, the regiments of artillery and of engineers, etc., ensured secrecy, timely deployment of forces, and a coordinated strike on the enemy. This was a campaign in which joint operations of branches was on a large scale and over many days, requiring the organization of guidance, use, and the organization of cryptographic nets with many complications, with many wide direct-contact nets, and skip-echelon nets, but the cryptographic organizations carried out the mission in good order.

In the Cambodian theater, after serving command in defeating the aggressive attack by the Americans and their Saigon puppets, the cryptographic organizations of the 1st, 7th, 9th and 5th divisions went on to serve command in striking the enemy, inflicting heavy losses on them, an example being the counterattack that hit the enemy opening his "Total Victory" operation in February 1971.

At the beginning of 1971, cryptographic of the Highland Front had served command in counter attacking the enemy when he opened his "Quang Trung 4" operation, striking the Kontum sector with the aim of destroying bases and severing our strategic lines of transportation, while cooperating with the "Lam Son 719" operation in the Route 9-Southern Laos sector.

In the period from 1969 to 1971, the cryptographic organizations of the Southern Liberation Army performed their mission in conditions of extreme difficulty and hardship. The enemy increased his violent attacks on our rear bases and CPs. Nearly all units in the region adjacent to the enemy (in Sector 8) were struck many times by enemy planes and artillery, and had to encrypt and decrypt in underground shelters and had to frequently move - units such as Kien Tuong, An Giang, and My Tho, and the 1st and 2nd regiments. There were times at the end of 1971 in which the MR 9 cryptographic organization was only a few hundred meters from the enemy, bombs exploding and artillery firing continuously, day and night. Besides completely accomplishing the specialty mission, there were units that had to devote 50 percent of their time to foraging. A number of places had to subsist on gruel, or eat jungle tubers instead of rice. The number of cryptographers captured, missing, or casualties during this time was rather large. During the two years, 1969 and 1970, in Nam Bo alone, seventy-eight comrades gave their lives and eighteen comrades were wounded.

Cryptographic cadre and personnel of the Southern Liberation Army withstood every hardship, sacrificing themselves, resolved to do a good job of accomplishing the mission of service to leadership, guidance, and command.

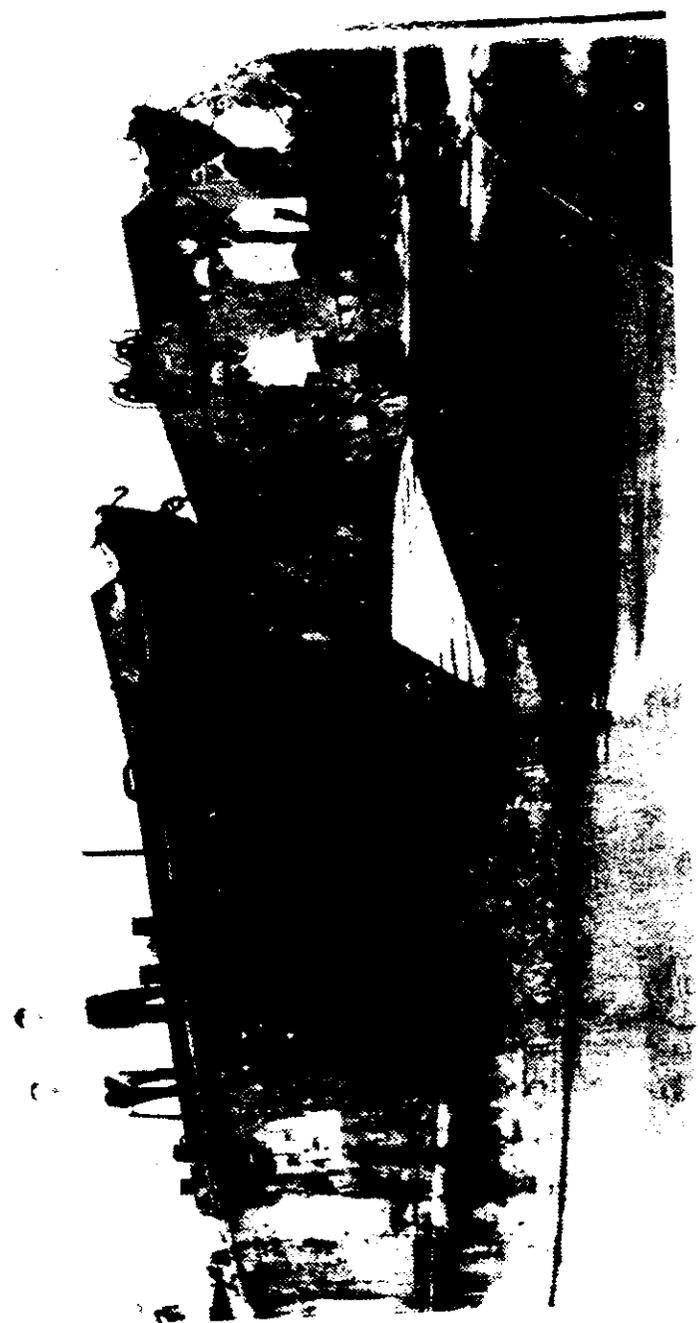
So as to have enough technical materials, the Region military cryptographic organization - besides transshipping and distributing nearly 300 types of codes and 1,300



Crypto receiving its mission at Group 365, Air Defense Service



Cipher machine use in the Air Force Service Crypto Bureau



Navy crypto prepares to embark for the islands

sets of cryptographic key-- zealously produced on their own, cryptographic key to supply to the fronts. "With the requirement for cryptographic material rather large, and assistance limited, the bureau technique cadre made an all-out effort and did a good job of implementing the branch resolution to produce and ensure sufficient material for an expanding net, with service requirements high. . . ." "In difficult circumstances, lacking gear, lacking money to ship and buy means or raw materials, the enemy pounding the bases, they had to move supplies tens of times, undergoing bombs a half dozen times, but the cryptographic cadre and personnel press-printed thousands of sets of key of better quality, organized to transship nearly 100 stages of cryptographic materials for nearly all units in the entire [Southern] Region, administered tons of cryptographic materials securely, their distribution registered, arranged precisely, strictly per standing operating procedures." "Some units had only a few cranky machines, with three to five personnel with poor attitudes, but who also backpacked a portion of cryptographic materials for their own units, reducing assistance from above, such as at T2."³

The volume of encrypted messages that the Region military cryptographic had to handle during this time period went up dramatically. The number of messages in the first six months of 1969 approximated that of the entire year of 1968.⁴

In 1970, according to incomplete statistics, the grand total of messages handled by the Southern military cryptographic set-up was 735,442 official messages. During this period, [the number of] encrypted messages sent by radio and received relatively error-free was remarkable.

With the emulation slogans "When work arrives, get an experienced hand to work immediately and get it out" [and] "Until the work is finished, the heart cannot be at rest," the comrades performing the encryption-decryption task on messages worked day and night with the highest attitude, to ensure timely transmittal of the contents of leadership and command for the units.

There was also the time in which the Region cryptographic organizations were switching over to use of the new techniques (KTB5, KTC), notwithstanding the difficulties and obstacles. The average error rate of Region military cryptographic in 1970 was 1,951 in 5,564; then, in 1970, they went to 1 in 9,501. Cde Bui Thanh Xuan of the Region Cryptographic Bureau took care of sixty official messages in one day; in the first six months of the year, he worked out 3,200 official messages with 100 percent accuracy.

While performing the mission of service to unit leadership and command, the cryptographic comrades set many examples of courage in combat and self-sacrifice of life to protect the secrets of the Party and the army. In February 1969, Cde Ngo Van Hop, cryptographer of the 559th Group - although during a time of enemy B52 bombing - fearlessly crossed through fire and shell to deliver a secret message to the command in timely fashion, and he courageously gave his life returning to his unit. In MR 9, during a phase of serving combat command in striking the enemy in the battle of Cha La, the underground shelter of Cde Ngoc was collapsed, and when his buddy extracted himself, the only thing - and the last thing - he said was to recommend that his buddy carry the

cryptographic materials back and hand them over to the MR Cryptographic Section. Cde Nguyen Van Sy, badly wounded and near death, still used his mosquito net to wrap his materials and set them on fire to avoid their falling into enemy hands, and he died in the flames that destroyed the cryptographic materials. In Subsector 23, when the enemy was mopping up the base of the Kien Tuong Provincial Unit, the secret underground cryptographic shelter was discovered by the enemy. Three comrades, Dziep The Tai, Nguyen Van Son, and Nguyen Van Chuong, suddenly threw up the cover of the shelter, opened fire on the enemy, killing six and breaking the enemy encirclement. Cdes Tai and Son were sacrificed, Cde Chuong was wounded, but the security of their materials was protected.

In one stage of transporting cryptographic materials to be handed over to the basic units [don vi co so], three comrades in the cryptographic material transportation unit (one comrade responsible for the technical materials and two comrade guards) of MR 9 encountered an enemy ambush - the comrades struck back at the enemy with determination and protected the security of the cryptographic materials, two comrades losing their lives in the course of fighting.

ENSURING LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND IN THE 1972 STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE

The sweeping victories of the three-nation Indochinese revolution in 1971 shattered the "Vietnamized War" strategy of the American imperialists. After heavy successive losses, the American military had to fall back onto the defensive over the entire Southern theater. They hoped, with strong military blows, combined with diplomacy, to be able to force us to accept conditions that would bring them victory at the conference table and create a strong position for Nixon in the end-of-year 1972 election. Judging that we could make a large attack, America and her puppets strengthened their defensive lines and expanded their probing operations, using their strategic and tactical air forces in continuous strikes against our transportation lines, aiming to block our preparations, while at the same time pushing heavily their pacification program, striking bases inside enemy-occupied regions.

Our army and our people entered the 1972 campaign with an air of excitement from "the new situation, the great opportunity that has appeared," as the Central Party Executive Committee assessed it.

Resolved to defeat the grand schemes of the enemy, our army and our people launched a strategic offensive throughout the South, aimed at wiping out enemy strength and destroying his strong defensive lines, changing the theater situation into victory for our side, stepping up the resistance against America, and saving the nation to the final victory.

From July 1971, according to instructions from the Central Military Committee and the Chief of the General Staff, based upon a thorough grasp of the strategic objective and the intent of the campaign-- the operational blueprint, the plan for expanding forces--the

Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff researched and prepared a plan for the campaign's cryptographic tasks, anticipated the quantities and qualities, arranged the preparation of cadre and personnel to build the cryptographic organizations, and built a network of cryptographic technique among the units participating in the operation. While focusing priorities on the preparations for launching the campaign, the Cryptographic Directorate continued to do a good job of performing the task of protecting the various theaters--the Highlands, MR 5, the Plaine des Jarres, Eastern Nam Bo, etc.

From August until December 1971, preparation proceeded, as a matter of urgency: by the beginning of 1972 the cryptographic organizations of the units participating in the campaign had basically completed the task of preparation.

In order to remedy the situation of lack of cadre and personnel, the Army Cryptographic School brought together a large number of students undergoing the prescribed curriculum and organized "lightning" classes to deal with basic problems with respect to technique and demonstration in order to augment the units in a timely way. At the same time, the Cryptographic Directorate also proposed that the General Staff second many cryptographic cadre and personnel from other units in the rear to increase the number in units participating in the campaign.

Instructions and directions having to do with the cryptographic profession in service to the campaign were promulgated, grasping the tiniest detail, thorough and complete. The task of guiding ideological and political education for the cadre and personnel participating in service to the campaign was also thoughtfully executed.

Around March 1972, the forces taking part in the campaign were posted at their groupment positions. The army cryptographic units ensured that the command task of preparation for the campaign was absolutely secret, so that the enemy would be totally surprised with regard to timing, main direction, and scale of our offensive. The cryptographic organizations of the 304th and 324th divisions and the branch regiments - although both ensuring contact and on the move in stages of long distances over months, under continuous and violent attack by enemy aircraft - still conveyed the command of the troops in timely and accurate fashion, so that they arrived at their groupment areas exactly at the determined time.

NGUYEN HUE: THE "EASTER OFFENSIVE"

At the end of March 1972, on the [Quang] Tri-[Thua] Thien front, our army carried out the general strategic offensive of 1972. This was a large-scale, combined-branch-operations campaign never before experienced in the struggle by our army and our people. Forces participating in the campaign approximated six main force infantry divisions and many regiments, battalions, and companies, branches, sappers, armor, artillery, engineers, etc., together with regional armed forces.

The task of organizing to ensure service to leadership and command by the cryptographic organizations in the Tri-Thien Campaign was also an all-out effort.

The forces of cryptographic cadre and personnel directly serving the campaign came up to 413 comrades, not counting the some 100 comrade cadre and personnel subordinate to the B4 Front. The Campaign Cryptographic Bureau, under Cde Nguyen Ngo, comprised ninety cryptographic cadre and personnel, arranged at the CPs of the campaign command. The cryptographic organization in the divisions was from twenty-two to thirty-two comrades. Each tank regiment had from eight to nine cryptographers, and the branch regiments had from four to seven cryptographers. The sapper battalions had two to three cryptographers.

The cryptonet system for the Tri-Thien campaign was extensive and complex. In the front alone, four CPs and a rear base were organized. At the primary CP, the CP in the direction of Route 1, the cryptographic organization had to ensure contact with all of the units participating in the campaign. At the CP in the northerly direction, the cryptographic organization had to ensure direct contact with units fighting in the coastal lowlands sector. At the CP to the east, the cryptographic organization had to ensure guidance for the sapper units, and the independent battalions, fighting in coordination with the entire front. In each division there were two to three CPs, while at the same time each unit had a rear base back up North. Side by side with the campaign cryptographic organizations, there were also cryptographic elements in the branch organizations - artillery, engineers, sappers, armor, air defense-air force, and military intelligence cryptographic - so the matter of linking up and sending and receiving messages was quite complicated. Campaign cryptographic organizations still had to ensure combined liaison with all of the theaters - B1, B2, B3, B4 - the MRs and the services and branches in theater A and theater C.

After proceeding with expanding the preparation, augmentation, and rectification of the cadre and personnel forces, and organizing and arranging a campaign-wide cryptonet, the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate convened a conference of cadre-in-charge at main force divisions back at the B5 CP in order to conduct a preliminary inspection of the entire task of preparation in every aspect, after which the cadre would directly inspect every unit participating in the campaign one last time. Through inspection, the Directorate mobilized the aid of the units in resolving remaining difficulties before entering the campaign, while, at the same time, confronting unit commanders with the importance of creating conditions to enable cryptographic to perform its mission completely. The Cryptographic Directorate also issued instructions and direction for the units to strive to organize study of the practical content for cadre and personnel, aiming at raising the quality of ensuring the mission ahead, to do a good job of meeting requirements for leadership, guidance, and command on the part of the party committees and commanders at the various echelons in the sphere of the campaign, to achieve the highest results.

All cryptographic organizations taking part in the campaign ensured service to leadership, guidance, and command of the units by fulfilling the task of preparing for the

campaign, taking part in executing the order to open fire and attack the enemy at exactly 1130 hours on 30 March 1972.

The first phase of the campaign, from 30 March 1972 to 1 May 1972, had 159 units with cryptographic organizations, with 487 points of contact among the units: three infantry divisions, two independent regiments and three independent battalions, five battalions of foot sappers and water sappers, artillery units the equivalent of two divisions (not counting divisional artillery regiments), air defense forces (AA, rockets) equivalent to two divisions (not counting the AA battalions accompanying the infantry regiments and the tens of companies of 12.7 and 14.5mm AA of the provincial units from within the North that were participating), two tank regiments, two engineer regiments and the 671st Division, battalions and companies of regional troops, etc. Units from regiment up to division had from two to three CPs and mobile radio stations, besides which there were four rear service nets [cum] of the front serving in various directions.

The second phase of the campaign, from 2 May 1972 to December 1972, saw the situation complicated and additional combat forces, so the number of units with cryptographic organizations increased to 202 and the number of points of contact increased to 614, with additional combat forces participating in phase two comprising three more infantry divisions, an independent regiment, an engineer regiment, the navy's K5, numerous regional battalions and companies from the B4 front, and a number of branch units.

Confronted by the overwhelmingly brave assault by our army, the enemy reacted in a frenzy, concentrating their firepower and aircraft, including B52 strategic aircraft, in fierce attacks continuing day and night. The cryptographic technique system [he thong] expanded and changed continuously. . . there were times such as, once, when personnel and means had to be arranged for from three to four mobile assault stations. There were situations in which urgent contact had to be set up to cover the 48th Regiment (320th Division) during times of temporary subordination to the 304th or 325th divisions, then returned to its line-up with the 320th Division, only to be temporarily resubordinated to a different division. Because of this, arrangements, adjustments, and passing on and receipt of the various types of cryptographic systems were very difficult.

With the line, "neat and light, mobile, continuously and through long days," but still ensuring precisely the principles for the use of technique, the campaign cryptographic organizations zealously surmounted difficulties to organize cryptonets to respond completely to each request for leadership, guidance, and command, on the part of the Main Military Committee, the High Command, the Party Committee and commander of the campaign, as well as those of units in the campaign. Taking the Tri-Thien Campaign, as an example, it marked a step in growth with respect to organization and direction of the cryptographic technique system in a campaign and in large-scale fighting.

The volume of secret messages also exploded with the unfolding development of the campaign, in which cryptography sometimes used technique KTB5 and at others used technique KTC. In primary CPs of the campaign the volume of messages going and

coming per day was 340 official messages at the lowest and 664 at the highest. On an average, each person encrypting or decrypting had to handle from 17 to 33 official messages. At division level, the low point was sixty official messages and the highest 100 – the high for a month was 3,008 official messages. At the level of a regiment (artillery) the low was 432 and the high 738 official messages. Nearly all messages during the campaign were of high precedence: Immediate and Priority messages made up 92.88 percent of the total. The Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate had to use sound-powered [tang am] telephones in order to transfer encrypted messages to the campaign CP cryptographic bureaus to ensure routing of the messages speedily and accurately.

The cryptographic organization of the 312th Division, just back from service in the Laotian theater, jumped right into the Tri-Thien Campaign. There were cryptographic comrades disabled while serving command, yet who still sought a means of protecting the security of technical materials. The forward cryptographic organization of the 203rd Brigade (armor) had two comrades, Kieu Xuan Co and Nguyen Van Vinh, who were caught by a B52 strike while encrypting and decrypting and had their underground shelter collapsed. Cde Vinh gave his life; Cde Coi, although disabled, continued to claw in the dirt and gathered together and turned over his materials before consenting to go to the hospital. Many comrades had high fevers but continued to make an effort to ensure the accomplishment of their work. The cryptographic comrades in units engaged in fighting in the district seat of Quang Tri encrypted and decrypted messages under continuous and violent enemy bombardment night and day, and still ensured that operational orders were handled accurately and promptly. Some cryptographic comrades on assignment to outstations encountered enemy ambushes and with their companions fought doggedly: when they got away they still guarded their cryptographic materials and got them safely to the units.

During the entire campaign, forty-four cryptographic comrades and personnel gave their lives for the mission.

Through more than ten months of combat service, Party committees and campaign HQ affirmed that the cryptographic organizations had done a fine job, ensuring that requirements for leadership, guidance, and command were met. Hundreds of organizations and individuals were awarded decorations and commendations.

Along with the cryptographic organizations in the Tri-Thien front, cryptographic organizations in MR 5, the Highlands Front, Eastern Nam Bo, and the Mekong River delta did a good job serving leadership and command in attacking the enemy in those theaters.

In Sector 5 we opened a general offensive campaign aimed at sapping enemy vitality and expanding the liberated region. Our armies and our people uniformly opened fire, attacking hundreds of enemy positions, bases, military subsectors, district seats, airfields, and storage facilities. The cryptographic forces of the MR comprised 500 comrades, ensuring liaison service to more than 800 points, with hundreds of types of technique deployed at three MR CPs – primary CP, northern wing CP, southern wing CP--the 2nd

and 3rd divisions, the regiments of artillery, tanks, and antiaircraft, and the regional armed forces. The MR cryptographic organizations performed their mission under conditions of violent bombing and shelling, lacking resources, but continuing to do a good job of serving command in battles such as extermination of the Chu Gan strongpoint, extermination of the De Duc subsector, liberation of the Hoai An and Dong Son district seats, and the hamlet of Tam Quan, exterminating the district seats of Hiep Duc and Hieu Duc, extermination of the cluster of strong points at Cam Doi, those at the Tien Phuoc military subsector, Ba De, the attack on the Mo Duc military sector, Duc Pho, etc.

On the Highlands Front, we opened a campaign to attack, invest, and isolate the enemy. Cryptographic forces of HQ, Highlands Front, the 10th and 320th divisions, regiments, battalions, branches - with more than 200 cadre and personnel - ensured command secrecy in the diversionary plan to draw enemy attention to the north of Dak To and the plan to deploy forces of the units to positions of regroupment. Overcoming difficulties in the tasked area of responsibility in the mountainous jungle region, Highlands Front cryptographic cadre and personnel did a good job of accomplishing their command mission in striking the enemy, totally wiping out hill 1015, hill 1049, attacking the Dak To-Tan Canh defense perimeter, inflicting heavy losses on the puppet 22nd Division, etc., taking part in the liberation of the northern sector of Kontum province.

In Eastern Nam Bo we launched the "Nguyen Hue" campaign, aimed at eliminating enemy vitality and breaking the lines defending Route 13 and Route 22. This was a drawn-out, combined-branch-operations campaign. The cryptographic organizations taking part in the campaign had to ensure contact for numerous CPs and assault [-unit radio] stations. The cryptographic organizations ensured command secrecy in diverting the enemy in the secondary direction of Route 22, creating surprise for the enemy when we attacked Loc Ninh on 5 April 1972. The Cryptographic Bureau of [Southern] Region HQ, the cryptographic organizations of the 203 5th, 7th, and 9th divisions, the 27th Regiment, and those of the branches swiftly expanded to provide timely service to command and to prepare in anticipation of assault requirements, in the process of serving in combat. The Cryptographic Bureau of Region HQ continuously guided the units in taking advantage of training and augmentation, to be able to surge in productivity and quality of service for the campaign.

At the end of May 1972, the Region cryptographic organization and those of Sector 8, the 5th Division, etc., directly served the Region Military Committee and HQ in leadership, guidance, and command in striking the enemy in the general offensive campaign for more than three months, in the sector south and north of Route 4 (My Tho), taking part in wiping out many of the enemy and liberating 35,000 people. Through service in the various campaigns, many cryptographic units and individuals received the appellations, "Outstanding Unit," "Outstanding Individual," responding warmly to the emulation drives to raise the quality and task productivity, put on by the Central Cryptographic Section. The Message Encrypting-Decrypting Section subordinate to the Cryptographic Bureau of HQ, [Southern] Region, received the Order of Liberation Feat of

Arms second class for its performance in serving leadership, guidance, and command in the campaign.

The Nam Bo delta is an area in which getting back and forth is very difficult, with many canals, irrigation ditches, and immense fields of water – it was also a theater of decisive contest between ourselves and the enemy. Although far from the guidance of upper echelon cryptographic organizations and under conditions in which life was difficult, having to be “self-starters and self-suppliers,” the cryptographic organizations of MR 8 and MR 9 raised the spirit of self-reliance, surmounting every difficulty to serve leadership and command in attacking the enemy, helping the masses to rise up and destroy oppressors and eliminate shackles, expanding the liberated region. In the process of serving leadership, guidance, and command, many exemplars of courage and sacrifice because of the mission appeared, one example of which was Cde Ba Rang, deputy of the MR cryptographic section. In March 1972, a boat belonging to cryptographic personnel carrying cryptographic materials was crossing the river when it was pounced upon and encircled by eight enemy high-speed boats. The comrades on the boat, dauntlessly and unruffled, guns in hand, prepared to pour bullets into the enemy. But because of having to protect the technical materials, the comrades could not open fire, but yelled out at the enemy to stand off and let our boat go. Faced by the overwhelmingly courageous spirit of our warriors, the enemy panicked and let our boat cross the river. There were also comrades on the road to their assignment who were pursued by a helicopter, and they kept calm, courageously shooting down the helicopter and protecting the security of their technical materials.

The general strategic offensive of our army and our people, with campaigns launched continuously and on large scale in the theaters of the South, Laos, and Cambodia in 1972, struck a deadly blow at the “Vietnamized War” strategy of the American imperialists. Combined with the glorious victory in the defeat of the B52 raids on the North, the Nixon clique had to sign the Paris Accords on Viet Nam on 27 January 1973, pledging to respect the independence, unified sovereignty, and territorial integrity of our nation, terminating American military involvement in Viet Nam.

In the general offensive of 1972 in the Southern theater, the army cryptographic branch performed the mission of ensuring command secrecy with many large-scale, combined-branch-operations campaigns, long in duration and coordinated in timing over the theaters. Through service to command in combat, army cryptography grew up outstandingly in every respect. The ranks of army cryptographic cadre and personnel were put to the test and firmly tempered in combat. The system of cryptographic technique had achieved an advanced level – had the capacity to ensure the requirements of the campaign in every circumstance. The level of guidance and the use of technique were also elevated greatly.

PARTICIPATING IN THE DEFEAT OF AMERICA'S SECOND DESTRUCTIVE WAR AGAINST THE NORTH

The heavy defeats of the Americans and their puppets in 1972 led to the threat of disintegration of the Saigon puppets' lackey army, so the Nixon clique had to mobilize *American military forces to return to participate in the war of aggression in Viet Nam*. In the South, they increased their air and naval forces participating directly in counterattacks by the puppet army. In the North, on 6 April, Nixon launched the second war of destruction by the air force on economic sectors and large municipalities, sowing mines to blockade our estuaries, ports, and coastal regions.

Confronted by the mad acts of war by the American imperialists, the Central Party Executive Committee decided to continue the strategic offensive in the South, defeat the subversive warfare of the American aggressors, firmly protect the North, and resolutely implement the strategic objectives that had been put forth.

Army cryptographic organizations in the North, from the General Staff's Cryptographic Directorate to the service and branch cryptographic organizations and the basic unit cryptographic organizations, all jumped into the new combat, ensuring service for the tasks of leadership, guidance, and command in beating back the enemy's air forces, serving command in sweeping and destroying mines, striking American warships, and serving leadership, guidance, and command in increasing the ensurance of transportation and aid to the major lines of the South.

By ingenuity and courageous hearts, surmounting every difficulty that tested them, starting with the American imperialists renewing the second destructive war by their air forces, by 27 October 1972 the army and people of the North had brought down 651 aircraft, capturing many pilots alive; had shot into and set afire eighty warships; deactivated and destroyed thousands of mines; beaten the enemy's blockade trickery; and preserved the arteries of transportation and aid for the theaters. On 22 October, Nixon had to announce the cessation of bombing below the 20th parallel.

But with stubborn spirit, through the month of December 1972, the American imperialists launched a strategic assault by B52s against Hanoi and Haiphong on a scale not previously witnessed.

In the stage of beating back the American imperialists' B52s attacking Hanoi and Haiphong, the army cryptographic organizations, especially those of the Air Defense-Air Force, always achieved timeliness for reports on the enemy situation reaching the General Staff, accurately transmitting combat readiness orders down to the units in order to help the command echelons strike back quickly when the B52s arrived to inflict their criminal acts.

In the battle to defeat the second war, the volume of secret and urgent-precedence messages skyrocketed. In the Air Defense-Air Force service, the message volume sent and received during this period was 114,109 secret messages incoming, mainly concentrated on the critical period of twelve days and nights at the end of 1972: Messages so many that they arrived at a level thought impossible to take care of, day and night. The cryptographers worked without knowing fatigue, in order to serve command of the fields of

combat. Vis-a-vis the types of secret command messages for strikes against enemy warships and airplanes, the time-factor requirement was extremely tight. There were messages that had to be reckoned in minutes, such as those announcing B52 aircraft activity, announcing enemy gunboats shelling the mainland, announcing targets, the time the enemy would strike, orders mobilizing combat forces, adjusting vehicular formations. . . moving the location of the battlefield, the location for troop stationing, ordering diversions to create conditions to surprise and wipe out enemy aircraft, etc.

During the time of striking back at the B52 aircraft, in order to routinely and continuously grasp the task of serving leadership and command by the Central Military Committee and of HQ, the Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff was expanded into two elements, one to perform the mission at the base sector, the other in Hanoi, to directly serve the Politburo and Central Military Committee. In circumstances in which serving the requirements of command were most urgent - the enemy making violent attacks - the bureau encrypted and decrypted General Staff messages, continuing to ensure that their mission was accomplished well.

On 30 December 1972, the American government had to declare a cessation of bombing from the 20th parallel on up. America's strategic attacks by B52s on Hanoi and Haiphong, and their scheme for hard negotiations on that basis had been ignominiously defeated.

During the twelve days and nights of striking back at the strategic raids by B52s implemented by America, our army and people shot down eighty-one aircraft including thirty-four B52s, and captured alive forty aggressor pilots. Army cryptographic cadre and personnel did their part to achieve the "Dien Bien Phu of the air" of our army and people.

Notes

1. The standard set for use of technique KTB5 met and surpassed the standard for use of technique KTB4. In the Encryption-Decryption Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff, the highest average productivity in encryption and decryption was 535 groups/hour, topping technique KTB4 by 15 percent. In the Navy, individuals achieved a high average of 746 groups/hour with 100 percent accuracy, equal to 99 percent of the productivity in encrypting and decrypting by means of technique KTB4. The average production of encrypting and decrypting KTB5 for the whole branch in 1970 was 411 groups/hour, surpassing that of KTB4 by 60 groups/hour.
2. Some units achieved an average output of 542 groups/hour; individual high output was 767 to 875 groups/hour with 99.5 percent accuracy; some comrades ensured encryption/decryption of 20,000 groups/month, some 40,000 message groups/month.
3. Extract from the task report of Region military cryptographic for 1969.
4. In 1968 the total number of messages encrypted and decrypted was 448,685 official messages; for the first six months of 1969, it was 431,039 official messages.

Chapter Eight

The Army Cryptographic Branch in the Strategic General Offensive to Liberate the South in the Spring of 1975

The ink had not even dried on the signing of the Paris Accord before it was subverted by the American imperialists and their puppet Saigon regime. In the days following the signing of the Paris Accord, the sounds of gunfire continued to explode over the Southern theater. With American aid, the puppet Saigon regime made every effort to build the puppet army, continued to carry on the war, and launched "flood the territory" operations to pacify and occupy our liberated regions.

Confronted by the schemes and operations of the enemy, the Central Military Committee instructed the armed forces in the South:

We must seize on the strategy of attack, defeating each of the enemy's pacification/occupation operations, winning the people and keeping the people, holding on to the liberated regions and revolutionary authority. At the same time, we must be ready for every contingency; if the enemy expands the war to provoke larger scale warfare, then we must be determined to exterminate them.¹

Thoroughly, profoundly, grasping Resolution 21 of the Central Party Executive Committee and the resolution of the Central Military Committee, based upon an accurate appreciation of the mission situation, the cryptographic cadre and personnel clearly determined the political responsibility, and, with revolutionary ardor reinforcing combat will, concentrated on doing their utmost to carry out the specialty missions.

By 1972, because of the complicated situation after the signing of the Paris Accords, the volume of messages which the cryptographic organizations had to take care of continued to be very large. According to incomplete statistics, in the military cryptographic system of the South, for the first six months of 1973, the number of messages sent and received must be reckoned at 632,336 official messages.

In MR 9, the enemy continued to mount operations up to division level, to occupy our liberated regions. Cryptographic organizations did a good job serving MR HQ commanding counterattacks and attacks on the enemy, to hold on to the liberated regions. In March 1973, four comrades from the MR Cryptographic Section continuously decrypted 295 Immediate [toi khan] messages in the KTC technique, containing the Central Military Committee resolution, while the MR committee met, waiting for the contents of this resolution. Afterward, eight comrades encrypted and decrypted continuously 1,460

Priority official messages in two consecutive days, in order to get them promptly to the command comrades.

At the beginning of 1973, a joint [lien hiep] military cryptographic organization was established to serve command leadership and warfare guidance with the enemy in the implementation of the Paris Accords. Four hundred thirty-two army cryptographic cadre and personnel were assembled and stationed in forty cryptographic organizations, comprising the Northern Military Delegation, the Southern Military Delegation B, seven regions, and 30 [control] teams. The liaison network for cryptographic technique was also organized, ensuring thorough grasp from the outset. When they came into contact with the enemy, cryptographic cadre and personnel in the groups and teams comported themselves with the bearing of victors. The comrades were very cool and vigilant in the face of each of the enemy's actions and provocative tricks. There were comrades whom the enemy tried to rob of their technical material pouches, but the comrades had such a determined attitude that the enemy had to back off.

In MR 5, during 1973, the enemy mopped up and occupied on a large scale. The MR cryptographic organization alternated between performing the mission of ensuring service to leadership and combat command in striking the enemy, and in ensuring service to the joint [lien hop] commissions and teams. Joint commissions of the Sector, Region 2, Region 3, the joint teams of nine provinces and cities were in liaison with HQ and the Four-Party Joint Military Commission at Tan Son Nhat. In order to overcome the lack of troop strength, the MR 5 Cryptographic Bureau realigned forces and urgently enrolled students for quick training in order to have personnel to augment the places that were lacking and [still] have forces in reserve. At the same time, the Cryptographic Bureau also organized cadre refresher classes to upgrade their technical level--the volume encrypted and decrypted and sent, using technique KTC - for a number of cryptographic personnel from division and provincial unit levels.

Day and night the Bureau of Encrypting and Decrypting of the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate served to ensure leadership and command from HQ to the theaters of war. The bureau also assigned ten cadre and personnel to go serve the Two-Party and Four-Party Joint Military Commissions and established an encryption-decryption section responsible for the liaison net system for guidance in the implementation of the Paris accord. This was a time in which the message volume the bureau had to handle increased manifold. The volume of messages to encrypt and decrypt on some days went up to 1,000 official messages. The total number of messages handled by the bureau in 1973 was 205,992 official messages comprising 12,264,222 groups.

In October 1973, I Corps [quan doan] was formed. Along with the formation of the corps, the cryptographic organization took shape, comprising the corps Cryptographic Bureau, the Cryptographic Sections of the 308th, 312th, 320th, and 367th divisions, the cryptographic organizations of the 45th, 202nd, and 299th brigades, the cryptographic teams at battalion level, etc. Comrade Nguyen Quoc Sung was appointed chief of the corps cryptographic bureau. The Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff guided and assisted the I Corps cryptographic organization to quickly settle its organization; urgently

get into implementation, as an orderly routine, of the tasks of serving to ensure command; training; and the other aspects of the professional task, in order to do a good job from the outset of implementing the mission of the cryptographic organization in the first corps of our army. Also in 1973 the system of cryptographic organization expanded into the MRs, services, and branches, i.e., establishing the Cryptographic Section of the 919th Air Force Transport Brigade, the Cryptographic Section of the 673rd Air Defense Division, etc.

Working while building, in every aspect, cryptographic organizations army-wide stepped up their study and raised productivity and quality in the use of technique KTC. By the end of 1973, the cryptographic organizations in MR Viet Bac, MR Northwest, MR Left Bank, MR IV, the Naval Service, a number of divisions belonging to the Air Defense-Air Force Service, and Armor HQ had stopped using KTB5 and changed over to technique KTC5. The cryptographic organizations of the 320B Division, 304th Division, and 320th Division began to expand the study and use of KTC. Cryptographic organizations in MR 5, the Highlands Front, and in Nam Bo also expanded the training and use of technique KTC down to basic units, with a sense of immediacy and zealously.

The Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff summarized and disseminated the concrete experiences concerning the tasks of organization, training, and use of KTC, especially the experience of training in the basic technical subjects of encrypting and decrypting, helping cryptographic organizations at various levels army-wide to achieve good results.

In the movement to study the use of KTC bubbling through the entire army, there were many units and individuals who achieved rather high productivity and volume. The Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate achieved an average productivity in encrypting and decrypting of 542 groups per hour, with a 99.90 percent accuracy, and many comrades achieved record highs, such as Cde [Miss] Pham Thi Muon, with 750 groups per hour, Cde [Miss] Pham Thi Vien, with 740 groups per hour, etc.

During this time, many cryptographic cadre and personnel from the Southern theater came to the North for treatment of disease, convalescence, and study. On such occasions, the Cryptographic Directorate organized refresher courses in techniques and professionalism. Cryptographic organizations of the MRs, services, and branches also proceeded to organize training in the various task aspects for cadre and personnel. The Cryptographic School stepped up the training of new personnel to understand the use of both types of technique (KTB5 and KTC) in order to augment the essential theaters, principally the Southern theater.

Carrying out the instructions from the Central Cryptographic Section, the army cryptographic branch implemented a summarization of the cryptographic task in eight years of serving the resistance against America. Vis-a-vis this task, the army cryptographic organization executed it step by step, constantly and continuously, throughout the period of opposing America and saving the nation. Thanks to doing a good job of recapitulation, the army cryptographic branch promptly drew experience, publicized

achievements and strong points, while, at the same time, quickly resolving shortcomings and promptly taking corrective action to get every aspect into the routine.

In 1969, after a recapitulation of the task, the MR Left Bank Cryptographic Bureau wrote two documents, "Raising Productivity and Quality of Encrypting and Decrypting to Serve Victorious Combat," and "The Independent Cryptographic Task."

Through service to the campaigns to strike the enemy and ensure lines of communication and transportation in MR 4 and the 1972 strategic general offensive campaign (for example, the task of cryptographic service in the Tri-Thien campaign and the task of serving command leadership of [Southern] Region HQ), through the periods and campaigns of defeating the American imperialists' strategic assaults by B52s on Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972, the bureaus of cryptography, the Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the General Staff Directorate of Cryptography, the [Southern] Region Cryptographic Bureau, cryptographic bureaus of the MRs, services and branches--all recapitulated and drew experience concerning the thorough grasp of mission, concerning the task of organizing technical networks [he tong], implementing encryption and decryption, and ensuring the flow of outgoing and incoming messages.

During the period of resisting America's war of destruction, the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff collected and sorted out situations, assessments, appreciations of accomplishments, good points and bad points in implementation of the missions of the various cryptographic organizations, and extracted major experiences of value to professional leadership for the whole branch. Based upon summarization of the documentation and of the experiences, the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate compiled and produced documents that put forth reasoning and technical professional practices to nourish and elevate the specialty level of cadre and personnel, e.g., "Organization and Implementation of the Cryptographic Task of the People's Army of Viet Nam in War Time," "Message Error Detection and Prediction," "Methods of Training in the Four Primary Technical Subjects and Raising the Productivity of Double Encryption," and "The Independent Cryptographic Task."

Summarizing the eight-year national salvation struggle against America (1965-1972), the accomplishments of the army cryptographic branch that stand out greatly are having organized and done a good job of executing the task of encrypting and decrypting messages, ensuring that 50,008,006 secret messages, sent and received, were secure, accurate, and timely, not allowing error to influence the tasks of leadership, direction, and command, especially having implemented in outstanding fashion the policy of changeover to new technique under circumstances in which the task was difficult, complicated, with endless hardship and fierce fighting. After eight years of being put to the test, the army cryptographic branch had built the ranks of cadre and personnel to 5,337 comrades of good political quality, steadfast and tempered, with high revolutionary ardor, with a sense of responsibility for the political mission of the branch, and with a sense of responsibility for organization and discipline -- a spirit of overcoming obstacles and withstanding hardships -- sacrifice of life -- diligently studying to raise the level of ability -- to accomplish the

mission--to be worthy of being members of the Lao Dong Party of Viet Nam. Some 450 comrades had given their lives for their country.

In March 1974, a conference was convened in Hanoi to recapitulate the cryptographic mission of eight years of service in the national salvation struggle against America (1965-1972) on the part of Viet Nam's cryptographic branch. Groups of cryptographic delegates from the networks of Party and government, army and public security, representatives of cryptographic organizations from the entire nation, and cryptographic teams on international duty came back to participate adequately. The delegation of the army cryptographic branch, led by the comrade chief of the directorate and comprising comrade representatives of the General Staff Directorate of Cryptography and representatives of the MRs, services, branches, and the unit organizations, arrived to participate in the conference.

The conference took place ebullient in the impetus of victory, with a sense of confidence and heightened unanimity. This was a conference of most important significance, for it marked the growing up of the Vietnamese cryptographic branch in the process of combat, building and expanding, in the task of ensuring leadership and command of the revolutionary war.

The conference was graced with the presence of Cde Le Duc Tho, member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Party and Cde Nguyen Don, member of the Central Party and Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who visited and spoke. Cde Le Duc Tho commended the accomplishments of the cryptographic branch: "We have come through eighteen years of resistance to America, saving the nation (1955-1972), and have achieved a great victory. Comrades still living as well as those who have given their lives - all have made a worthy contribution to this great victory of our race . . . Today I come to speak to you all in order to express the sentiments of the Central Party toward the cryptographic branch, toward you comrades, and also to commend you comrades who have made a worthy contribution yourselves toward the work of the Party, the work of our race in resisting America and saving the nation." After speaking clearly of the position, the role, and the concrete accomplishments of the cryptographic task, Cde Le Duc Tho continued with feeling: "Central is very pleased and very moved that you comrades have made great efforts, have given your lives. Nearly 500 cadre and personnel have fallen, a proportion that was high, for this was many, not few; this sacrifice was not less than that of soldiers on the field of battle; this sacrifice was rather large. Here, too, was a front with large casualties."²

The comrade thoughtfully suggested: "The victory road of revolution is indispensable - we shall absolutely liberate the South and unify the nation, but if we wish to achieve victory, we still must pass through steps on a hard and difficult road. The mission of you comrades is still very exacting - you still must plow a long way through the theaters of war, you must transmit the instructions and resolutions of the Party, and of the government, from organizations at the nerve center out to places on all three fronts - military, political, and foreign affairs. . . You comrades must study to raise the level of scientific professional technique, to raise the level - more modern, more creative. When

you conclude the conference, people in this front – people in that front, people in the North, people in the South, people in foreign nations, spread out everywhere in theaters and fronts to perform the mission, although saying not a word, are quite glorious.”

Cde Nguyen Don, on behalf of the Central Military Committee, congratulated the cryptographic branch for having performed its mission in an outstanding manner, through eighteen years of resistance to America and saving the nation. He analyzed deeply and concretely the achievements, good and bad points, and the reasons for these good and bad points from the organizational and technical aspects. He also clearly indicated to the cryptographic branch delegates the way for the branch to strive to advance. The delegates were moved and enthused beyond measure at the words of congratulation and counsel from the leadership comrades representing the Central Executive Committee, promising the Central Party Executive Committee and Central Military Committee that they would mobilize the cadre and personnel to do a good job of carrying out the comrades' instructions.

The conference recapitulating the cryptographic task in eight years of resistance to America and saving the nation came off beautifully. From the atmosphere of the conference was created a powerful, ebullient emulation movement in the task for the whole cryptographic branch in general and the army cryptographic branch in particular.

In May 1974, II Corps was formed, the cryptographic organization comprising the II Corps Cryptographic Bureau, the cryptographic sections of the 304th, 324th, 325th, and 673rd divisions, and the cryptographic organizations of the 219th, 203rd, and 164th brigades, with comrade Le Ngoc Luong chief of the Corps Cryptographic Bureau. Immediately upon the formation of the corps, the corps system of cryptography was able to ensure command service during the campaigns to liberate the district capital of Thuong Duc (Sector 5), the K18 campaign (Hue), and to serve command in preparing for battle and in the fighting against the enemy, to hold onto the Quang Tri liberated region.

In July 1974, IV Corps was formed in the Eastern Nam Bo base region. The cryptographic organization of the corps took shape, comprising the cryptographic sections of the 7th and 9th divisions and the cryptographic organizations of the regiments and branch units.

During this time, cryptographic organizations throughout the army did a good job of accomplishing the task of encrypting and decrypting messages, serving the work of thoroughly grasping leadership and precisely implementing Central Party Resolution 21 of the Central Party and resolutions of the Central Military Committee, guiding, shaping, and molding the theaters and regions in holding fast to the viewpoint and revolutionary ideology of attack, serving to guide the building and completion of the system of strategic and campaign lines and serving command in the transportation and supply of the theaters.

The cryptographic organization in Eastern Nam Bo served command in the liberation of Phuoc Long, the first province in Nam Bo to be liberated. During this time, the Central Cryptographic Section and the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff zealously instructed the implementation of enrollment and development of new personnel, research

into the production of various types of dictionary codes, cryptographic key, and command opcodes, according to the norm of the 1974-1975 two-year plan (which anticipated the development of 1,000 personnel, research and production of 1,500 types of dictionary codes, 3,000 sets of cryptographic key and 1,500 command opcodes). From directorate head to professional organizations, there was an increase in going to inspect and assist on the spot the cryptographic organizations throughout the army, from North to South and Laos.

THE ARMY CRYPTOGRAPHIC BRANCH IN THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE AND UPRISING OF SPRING 1975 AND THE HISTORIC HO CHI MINH CAMPAIGN

From 18 December 1974 to 8 January 1975, the Politburo of Central Party met. After examining and analyzing the unfolding situation from every aspect, the Politburo resolutely determined the following strategy:

All-out mobilization of the power of the entire Party, the entire military, the entire people, in both of the two areas in 1975-1976, stepping up the military and political struggle, combined with the diplomatic struggle, to cause rapid change and across-the-board force comparison in the Southern area theater advantageous to us, implementing as a matter of urgency and accomplishing each preparatory task, creating conditions ripe for general assault, general uprising, to eliminate the puppet army and cause it to disintegrate, to strike and bring down the puppet authorities from central to regional, placing authority back in the hands of the people, and liberating the Southern area. If the opportunity arose at the beginning or end of 1975, then immediately to liberate the South in 1975.

On 10 January 1975, executing orders from the General Staff, the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff organized a cryptographic team of seven comrades³ to serve Group A75 under Gen. Van Tien Dzong, chief of the General Staff, secretly going down to the Highlands in order to research, organize, and realize the Politburo's strategic decision.

The Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff made as its first priority the encrypting and decrypting of Group A75 messages in order to regularly serve communiques of the latest news, especially information concerning the unfolding enemy situation and the transportation situation to ensure the campaign, so that HQ could make an operations plan.

The army cryptographic branch thoroughly and profoundly grasped the important change in the revolutionary mission situation. Cryptographic organizations throughout the army enthusiastically, cheerfully, and with confidence proceeded to make preparation in every respect, so as to be ready to receive and execute the missions received from the Central Military Committee, HQ and commissars, and commanders at the various echelons.

The General Staff Cryptographic Directorate also – along with cryptographic organizations of the MRs, services, branches, etc. – researched and made concrete plans and implemented the task of supplementing, correcting, and aligning the cadre and personnel for the units, principally the main point units, with special urgency for the strategic mobile units and the key theaters.

The Army Cryptographic School picked student comrades who were coming along well and were clever, and organized them into individually assembled companies, and brought them up to speed technically and professionally in a short time, so as to have strategic reserve forces and be able to quickly assist the theaters. With an all-out effort, and after a short time, the school had prepared more than 300 comrades, ready to set out and perform the mission.

The cryptographic organizations of MR Viet Bac, MR Left Bank, MR Right Bank, etc., selected comrades of good technical ability and qualities so that, when the orders came, they could supplement and augment the forward units.

In lock step with the preparation and expansion of the organizational task, the Cryptographic Directorate issued instructions to expand the systems [he tong] and means of cryptographic technique, urgently getting off a large volume of the various types of technique and professional means and equipment for the theaters. With an outstanding all-out effort, by 1 March 1975, before our army had opened fire to raise the curtain on the Spring 1975 General Offensive, cryptographic forces had expanded all over the Southern area theater as follows:

On the Highlands Front, our army opened the assault campaign under the name, "The 275 Campaign," the number of cryptographic cadre and personnel participating being 456 comrades, ensuring liaison for 374 points with seventy types of technique, the responsibility of the cryptographic organizations being to serve leadership and command of the campaign CP, the divisions, the branch units, and the main force and regional units in the Highlands area.

On the Tri-Thien-Hue Front (Front B), afterwards called the 475 Front, the cryptographic cadre and personnel resources comprised 1,144 comrades, ensuring liaison for 1,241 points, with 195 types of technique in use, the responsibility of the Tri-Thien-Hue Front cryptographic being to serve leadership and command of the Forward HQ CPs, the primary CPs, the Forward CPs of MR Tri-Thien, MR V, II Corps, the 2nd, 3rd, 324th, 325th, and 304th divisions, the 52nd Brigade, and the branch units in the area, plus the regional units.

On the Southwest and South Saigon Front, the cryptographic cadre and personnel resources comprised 1,004 comrades along with 677 comrades of subordinate units, ensuring liaison for 1,678 points with 154 types of cryptographic technique in use. The responsibility of the cryptographic organizations of the Southwest and South Saigon Front was to serve leadership and command of Southern Area HQ; MRs 7, 8, 9; IV Corps; the branch units; the main force units in the area; and the regional units.

The cryptographic organizations of Air Defense-Air Force and Navy services and the Sapper, Armor, Engineer, and Artillery branches also developed with respect to organization and technique both widely and deeply into the Southern theaters in order to serve the duties of leadership and operational command of combined services. The Navy cryptographic network developed its campaign service duty to comprise 125 liaison points, internally, skip-echelon, direct and combined [or joint, operations]. The Air Defense cryptographic network developed at the peak time eighty-two stations, 202 points, including three forward CPs.

The cryptographic organizations in the entire army in the rear were all in the position of readiness with support people and professional technical means for the cryptographic organizations up front, in order to ensure accomplishment of the mission of the General Offensive Campaign of Spring 1975.

The total number of army cryptographic forces taking part directly in the service of the general strategic offensive and the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign was 4,167 cadre and personnel, ensuring as a system a liaison net that, at its largest, was 3,703 places, using 419 types of cryptographic technique. Cryptographic organizations of the campaign were equipped with an additional tens of tons of professional technical means. It can be said that this was an outstanding effort on the part of the army cryptographic branch, which had never before planned to organize to ensure command leadership and operational guidance that was adequately prepared and sufficient to cover every aspect of this spring of 1975.

On 10 March 1975, the Spring 1975 general offensive and uprising opened with the daring surprise strike on the town of Ban Me Thuot. The cryptographic organizations participated in totally ensuring secrecy as to the objective of the campaign and ensuring the command secrecy of the diversionary operation of Campaign HQ (e.g., the diversionary operation of the 968th Division) to draw enemy attention to the north of the Highlands and create surprise for them when our army opened fire and struck the town of Ban Me Thuot. Dummy messages - deception messages - were continuously sent into the air on a daily basis. Military information was speedily sent back to HQ. "Every tiny movement in the theater was closely followed by the operations watch - every forward step by the troops was quickly marked on the map. The fighting in the Highlands, with Ban Me Thuot at the center, was at this time the number one concern of the Politburo and Central Military Committee - and those in charge at the General Staff and the directorates."⁴

When we victoriously assaulted the town of Ban Me Thuot, the cryptographic organization quickly passed on the contents of messages from the Politburo, Central Military Committee, and High Command - messages for the Highlands Front, encouraging and commending the cadre and warriors, directly guiding the expansion of the campaign with the spirit of "creativity, daring, and urgency," to grasp the opportunity to secure an even greater victory. At the same time, the cryptographic organization also passed along the contents of electrical communiques for Sector 5, B2, and Tri-Thien concerning the guidelines of the upper echelons following the Ban Me Thuot victory. The Highlands Front cryptographic organization served to ensure combat command in shattering the

enemy counterattack aimed at retaking Ban Me Thuot, and served to ensure command in pursuit and interception of the enemy when they fled, abandoning the Highlands and took part in exterminating and dispersing the puppet II Corps, liberating the entirety of the Highlands.

On 18 March 1975, the Politburo of the Central Party Executive Committee met. Through analyzing and estimating the situation with respect to the victory of strategic significance for our side, the Politburo and Central Military Committee unanimously resolved to produce a plan for the liberation of the Southern area in 1975, determining that the main strategic direction of attack would be Saigon, prior to which would be the extermination of all enemy forces in their MR 1 and the liberation of Hue, Da Nang, and the provinces of Central Viet Nam.

Implementing instructions from the Politburo and Central Military Committee, the General Staff prepared at once a plan for a large-scale attack to wipe out the forces in the enemy's MR 1, and to liberate Hue and Da Nang.

The General Staff cryptographic organization swiftly and precisely sent operations orders from the High Command to II Corps, MR Tri-Thien, and MR 5. "Paying no mind whether day or night, communications and cryptographic personnel assigned to duty in Sector A received and decrypted messages in a spirit of highest urgency, requiring the greatest precision, in order to keep the operations watch comrades posted, whatever the hour. The fellows and girls of communications and cryptography were educated and imbued with the degree of importance of each individual, each element, in these days and months of urgency and consecutive victories." Cryptographic organizations of II Corps and MR Tri-Thien directly passed on the command orders of the General Staff [Bo] for II Corps and MR Tri-Thien to clearly receive opportunities, grasp deep-thrust targets, and isolate, surround, and interdict the enemy's lines of withdrawal.

On 25 March 1975, Hue City and Thua Thien province were liberated.

On 25 March 1975, the Quang Da Front Command [Bo chi huy] was established under Cde Le Trong Tanas commander, Cde Chu Huy Man as political commissar, with the front cryptographic organization comprising seventy-two cadre and personnel under Cde Tran Ha.

Cryptographic organizations from the Encryption-Decryption Bureau of the General Staff down to the front cryptographic organization, and those of II Corps and MR 5 speedily set up a cryptographic technique system to serve the leadership and command guidance of HQ.

Immediately upon receiving the message of instruction from the Politburo and Central Military Committee (dated 24 March 1975, sent to MR 5 and II Corps, concerning guidelines planned for the liberation of Da Nang), the Cryptographic Bureau of MR 5 received orders from the MR to quickly develop a liaison net for HQ with direct subordinates, HQ forward, [Southern] Region Military HQ, the MR primary CP, lateral

communication with the divisions of II Corps, internal liaison with the branch regiments, the primary CPs, Quang Da Forward, etc.

"Messages from the General Staff [Bo] to the Tri-Thien and Quang Da fronts were continuous, thick and furious, during these days, exuding requirements for all-out urgency, for swiftly pressing and surrounding and dispersing and wiping out the enemy in this second strategic pummeling."

The cryptographic organizations of MR 5 and II Corps promptly handled orders from the High Command and served HQ, II Corps and HQ MR 5 commanding a swift spreading out to execute the assault on Da Nang. On 29 March 1975, Da Nang--the second largest city in the South--was liberated. We eliminated and scattered a large force of the enemy army, and broke through the new strategic defensive system of the enemy.

The Hue-Da Nang victory was of great significance, along with the Highlands victory, in changing for good the balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy, creating favorable conditions for us to launch the campaign to liberate Saigon.

After Da Nang was liberated, at 1630 hours 29 March, the General Staff cryptographic organization encrypted a message from Cde Le Dzuan to the theater:

The situation is changing rapidly - the revolution in the South is entering the stage of spreading by leaps and bounds. I concur with you fellows that this is the time in which we need to act promptly in an all-out effort, determined and daring. In reality, it may be considered that the campaign to liberate Saigon began at this point Good health and great victory to you all.

On 31 March 1975, the Central Party Politburo convened under Cde Executive Secretary Le Dzuan. In this meeting the Politburo affirmed: the revolutionary struggle in the South not only had entered the stage of spreading by leaps and bounds, but also the strategic opportunity to carry out the general offensive and uprising was ripe. Thus the Politburo resolved:

"Grasping the strategic opportunity more than before, with ideological guidance - like lightning, daring, with the element of surprise, and certain victory - be determined to carry out the general offensive and uprising in the nearest timeframe, preferably April, without delay."

A week before this historic session, the Politburo appointed Cde Le Duc Tho, member of the Central Party Politburo, to go into the South, so that, along with comrades Pham Hung and Van Tien Dzung, guidance for the offensive and uprising could be provided. Cde Nguyen Van Thinh and Cde Tran Diep were the cadre and individual from the Bureau of Encrypting-Decrypting of the General Staff selected to go serve the transfer of Cde Le Duc Tho for this task.

In order to speedily concentrate forces to win victory in the final battle, the main force corps – III Corps,* II Corps, and I Corps – received orders for speedy movement down to the Saigon-Gia Dinh front.

On 7 April 1975, the General Staff cryptographic organization sent Immediate message #157 from General Vo Nguyen Giap to the units: HQ, Group 559; 559th Forward; the corps; and the services and branches on the march, the entire text being as follows:

“1. Like lightning, and even more so; recklessly, and even more so; taking advantage of every hour, every minute, rush to the front and liberate the South. Be resolved to fight and totally win.

“2. Transmit at once to the party members and soldiers.

VAN [Vo Nguyen Giap]**

In these days the army cryptographic organization from General Staff Cryptographic Directorate down to unit cryptographic organizations ensured good service to the leadership of the Politburo, the Central Military Committee, and the High Command [extended] to the theaters and regions.

At each step of the march of the wings of the army, their victories from the theaters came flooding back in messages. The atmosphere of work in the Bureau of Encrypting-Decrypting 224 in the Directorate of Cryptography of the General Staff during these days was recalled by one comrade cryptographer as follows:

The volume of work increased, fast and furious. We spread out our material to work at once. The pace of encryption and decryption increased without let-up: seven minutes, six minutes, five minutes, even four and a half minutes a message. Knocking off a minute was extremely valuable at this time.⁵

Many high-precedence messages went to the wings of the army, overseeing and urging on the axes to hurry up more, to speed the advance. In the wing to the east, when they received a message, cryptographic took it up to Cde Le Trong Tan, who joyfully embraced the comrade cryptographer, Vu Van Canh, and wrote on the message form “hoan ho co yeu thong tin rat kip thoi” [“hurrah for the cryptographers and comms – very timely!”].

* III Corps was formed 27 March 1975 in the Highlands, comprising the 10th, 316th, and 320A infantry divisions, 675th artillery regiment, 312th air defense, 198th sapper, 273rd tank, 545th engineer, and 29th communications regiments. Commander, Brig. Gen. Vu Lang; Sen. Col. Dang Vu Hiep, political commissar. *The History of the People's Army of Viet Nam* (Hanoi: Institute for Vietnamese Military History, 1990), Vol. II, Part 2, 247, 247n, 248. – Tr./Ed.

**Ibid., 258, identifies this historic message as #157-H-TK sent at 0930 hours, but adds that copies were sent also to the component divisions and to General Le Trong Tan. --Tr./Ed.]

On 8 April 1975, the Politburo decided to establish the Campaign CP for the liberation of Saigon-Gia Dinh, with Cde Van Tien Dzong as commander and Cde Pham Hung as political commissar, the B2 Cryptographic Bureau being shifted over to perform the mission of campaign cryptographic bureau.

On 14 April 1975, the Politburo and the Central Military Committee approved the plan for the liberation of Saigon-Gia Dinh. The cryptographic organization sent secret message #37 from the Politburo to the campaign CP. At 1900 hrs the same day, the campaign CP received it and among its contents was:

"We agree that the Saigon campaign be called the Ho Chi Minh Campaign."

In the days that followed, many secret messages of the greatest importance from the Politburo and the Main Military Committee were taken care of by the cryptographic organization, dispatching them to the theaters at top speed and with total accuracy. For the army cryptographic warriors, these were hours and minutes of the happiest flapping, honored to be handling the offensive orders of the Party - of the nation - in a period of historic importance for our race.

At 1400 hrs on 15 April 1975, at the Supreme Command Post, General Vo Nguyen Giap handed the mission to Cde Nguyen Dzuy Phe, Director of the Army Cryptographic Directorate. Cde Vo Nguyen Giap instructed: "In the recent days of special and urgent combat by our military and people on the Southern front, cryptographic cadre, soldiers, and personnel accomplished their mission in an outstanding way. The Central Military Committee commends all comrades. The combat that is under way and near at hand until total victory is urgent and decisive. The mission of ensuring the secrecy, accuracy, and timeliness of the content of orders, guidance, and commands from the Politburo, the Central Military Committee, and the High Command will be decisive vis-a-vis our determination to accomplish the liberation of the South. All comrade cadre and soldiers, Party members, group members, and personnel of the Cryptographic Directorate must be highly resolved to seek every means of ensuring this requirement."⁶

Implementing the instructions of the Comrade General, the chief of the Cryptographic Directorate encouraged the entire organization to a higher level of political responsibility, to strive upward in accomplishing the mission that had been entrusted.

In order to promptly handle important messages of the Politburo, the Central Military Committee, and the High Command going to the steering comrades in the theaters, a cryptographic team under Cde Vo Minh Chau, comprising Nguyen Xuan Phu, [Miss] Dang Thi Muon, [Miss] Vu Thi Trong, Nguyen Van Khoi, et al., was sent up to encrypt and decrypt messages right on the spot, in the work place of the Central Military Committee. In the duty team encrypting and decrypting at the work place of the Military Committee, there was very close coordination, quick reaction, and creativity with the radio team, so that messages could get out at once and the fastest encryption and decryption could be ensured. The Comrade General, through personal association and good cheer, encouraged the comrade cadre and personnel in the teams to be calm and self-confident, demonstrating speed and accuracy for the combat orders and communiques of the various theaters. In the

room where they worked, cryptographic cadre and personnel encrypted and decrypted extremely important and most urgent messages carrying the signatures of comrades BA (Le Dzuan), TRUONG CHINH, TO (Pham Van Dong), VAN (Vo Nguyen Giap), THANH (Hoang Van Thai) . . . and comrades SAU THO, TUAN, BAY CUONG⁷. . . messages written mainly by Cde Le Dzuan. Ordinarily General Vo Nguyen Giap personally handed messages to cryptographic: having any section of a message written by the comrade general, cryptographic encrypted that section and conveyed it at once to Communications--there were times when the comrade sat down in the room where cryptographic was at work in order to write or correct messages. Having an incoming message, once decrypted cryptographic sent it along to the leadership comrades present. With a very long message, but a requirement to communicate it most urgently, every minute, every hour counted (such as the message Cde Le Duc Tho sent back on 25 April 1975, a ten-page typewritten communique concerning the situation in theater B2: it amounted to a message of fifteen to twenty pages).

One day around the end of April, after hearing Cde Nguyen Dzuy Phe report on the situation of the Cryptographic Directorate's service to the campaign command and control, Cde Hoang Van Thai arrived to visit and encourage the young men and women cryptographic cadre and personnel on duty serving the campaign in the work place of the Central Military Committee. Cde Hoang Van Thai praised the accomplishments of the Cryptographic Directorate's independent-activity cryptographic teams serving the quadripartite military mission and the groups of Cdes Van Tien Dzung, Le Duc Tho, and Le Trong Tan, and of the duty cryptographic team at the work place of the Central Military Committee. He issued instructions and requested that service to steorage and command in the upcoming campaign be performed such that the Politburo and the Military Committee be able to promptly grasp each stage of development of the wings of the army, and of each point of attack into the last lair of the enemy.

In these historic days of the spring of 1975, on every part of the national soil, life was motivated by the highest magnanimity. All as one people bravely advanced to achieve the final victory. The military forces blitzed into the liberation of Saigon, cryptographic cadre and personnel (616 comrades just out of school and 192 comrades in the units) rushing along as comrades in arms to the front, liberating the entire South.

The cryptographic organization of I Corps alternately engaged in operations and in the ensurance of orders transmitted by HQ and Corps headquarters, commanding the mechanized blitzkrieg troops advancing secretly along a 1,700 km stretch into the Dong Xoai sector (eastern part of Nam Bo) and taking up a consolidated position promptly in accordance with instructions from HQ.

The cryptographic organization of II Corps, after accomplishing the mission of ensuring command in the operation to liberate Hue-Da Nang, also as a unit alternated in operations and ensuring the corps command of the troops "striking the enemy and moving on, opening the road and advancing" from Da Nang down to Bien Hoa, Ba Ria, etc., on the line of advance right up to the gates on the eastern side of Saigon.

The cryptographic organization of III Corps, after serving command in the operation to liberate the Highlands and the southern provinces of Sector 5, as a matter of urgency supplemented and readjusted cadre and personnel and the types of technique to serve the corps commanding assault troops, opening the route of advancement to regroupment positions controlling the jump-off point for the assault on Saigon from the northwest, in accord with the plan of the campaign CP.

The cryptographic organization of IV Corps, after serving the corps HQ commanding the liberation of the town of Xuan Loc, continued to serve the corps command appointing units to stick close to Saigon and prepare to serve the corps assault.

The cryptographic organization of Group 232⁸ swiftly developed an organizational system and a technical system, preparing to serve the command plan for the Saigon assault from the south and southwest.

The cryptographic organizations of the 5th, 3rd, and 9th divisions, and the cryptographic organizations of MR 8 and MR 9 served command and control of the mobile forces, isolating Saigon from the Mekong delta, wiping out subsector military posts of the enemy, liberating hamlets, etc., creating a springboard for attacking Saigon from the south and southwest.

The cryptographic organization of MR 5, after serving command and control in the operation to liberate Hue-Da Nang, continued to serve HQ commanding the units which, in turn, were wiping out the enemy's defensive system to the south of the military region, and to serve the mobile operational command without interruption, along a line of nearly 500 km from Quang Ngai to Nha Trang and Cam Ranh, etc., having occasions of quickly setting up liaison points - the MR Cryptographic Bureau had to swiftly transfer cryptographic key from the primary CP of the MR to the 3rd Division, some 300 km distant, to enable the 3rd Division to be in prompt touch with HQ.

While the various wings of the army were closing in on Saigon, MR 5 Cryptographic and cryptographic of the Navy units served command in liberating the Spratly Islands after an operation of three days and nights braving waves and wind.

The cryptographic liaison net system of the Navy in turn was arranged on the naval bases and ports in the South of our nation.

On 22 April 1975, the Encrypting-Decrypting Bureau of the Cryptographic Directorate of the General Staff handled a telegram from the Politburo, signed by Cde General Secretary Le Dzuan, and addressed to the campaign CP:

The military and political opportunity to open the assault on Saigon has ripened. We need to take advantage of each day--to promptly mobilize the attack on the enemy from every direction, without ceasing . . . you are all to issue instructions at once to the various directions to act promptly. . . .

At precisely 1700 hrs on 26 April 1975, our artillery opened up on the puppet Armor School, opening the curtain for our final assault on Saigon. Cryptographic of II Corps

handled the command order to wipe out some important positions, among them the Nuoc Trong base, in order to establish a springboard to facilitate the field of fire of the 130mm guns laying on Tan Son Nhat airfield.

The cryptographic organization of I Corps served the combat command of the corps in the northern and northeastern approaches.

The cryptographic organization of II Corps served the combat command of the corps in the southeastern approach.

The cryptographic organization of III Corps served the combat command of the corps in the northwestern approach.

The cryptographic organization of IV Corps served the combat command of the corps in the eastern approach.

The cryptographic organization of Group 232 served the combat command of the group on the western and southwestern approaches.

On 28 April 1975, while the cryptographic organizations of the five wings of the army were ensuring the service of combat command liberating Saigon, the cryptographic organization of the Air Force Forward CP and the cryptographic team of the hastily established station went along to serve the comrade commander of the Air Force ensuring command of the flight of A37s (aircraft taken from the enemy) in charge of Nguyen Thanh Trung, suddenly bombing Tan Son Nhat airfield.

At 0500 on the morning of 29 April 1975 the wings of our army simultaneously opened fire and assaulted the capital.

Cryptographic cadre and personnel speedily handled messages from the Politburo and the Central Military Committee mobilizing all cadre and soldiers with great fortitude to win total victory in the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign. In that connection, the General Staff cryptographic organization ensured continuous handling of directive messages from the Politburo, the Central Military Committee, and the High Command, sent to the campaign command post.

The cryptographic organization of I Corps served the corps command eliminating enemy bases, hitting and occupying the puppet General Staff [compound].

The cryptographic organization of III Corps served the corps command hitting and occupying Tan Son Nhut airfield, afterward serving command coordination with I Corps, hitting and occupying the puppet General Staff [compound] and advancing toward Independence Square.

The cryptographic organization of Group 232 served command hitting and occupying the Capital Special Sector HQ and the Main Police HQ, the Navy HQ, and the Nha Be gasoline depot.

The cryptographic organization of II Corps served command hitting the enemy and opening the route for advancing on and occupying Independence Square.

The cryptographic organizations of IV Corps and the 3rd Division (MR 5) served corps command hitting and occupying the CPs of MR 3, the Bien Hoa Military Sector, the Thu Duc Special Forces HQ, etc.

At 1130 hrs on 30 April 1975, the liberation banner was unfurled over a housetop at Independence Square, puppet president Dzuong Van Minh having to announce unconditional surrender. The cryptographic team of a II Corps penetration unit (consisting of Cdes Than and Vong) had the honor of being present in Independence Square at this historic hour and minute and received from higher echelons the responsibility of safeguarding the official seal of the puppet Saigon authorities.

The historic Ho Chi Minh campaign was totally victorious. Cde Nguyen Dzuy Phe, Director of the Army Cryptographic Directorate, carried up to the Politburo and the Central Military Committee the telegram announcing that our forces had raised the flag over Independence Square.

In the fifty-five days and nights of the general offensive campaign and the spring uprising of 1975, army cryptographic had ensured the encrypting and decrypting for transmittal of 1,192,525 telegrams, ensuring secrecy, accuracy and timeliness to satisfy the requirements of a blitz advance and the enormously large-scale operation of our army and our people. The military cryptographic of the South alone had handled the encrypting, decrypting, and transmittal of 810,387 official messages. From the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate to the cryptographic organizations of the various levels, there had been applied a method of creating highly valuable experiences, summarized through thirty years of building and fighting, principally in the operations of Khe Sanh and Route 9-Southern Laos, the general offensive and uprising in the spring of 1968, the general strategic offensive of 1972, etc., to prepare a plan and execute the cryptographic task in order to ensure service for the command and control task in this great, historic campaign.

In order to fulfill in an outstanding manner the mission of service to campaign command and control, one of the decisive factors was the totality of the cadre and personnel of the army cryptographic branch, thoroughly permeated with the important significance of the general offensive and uprising, resolved in the strategy and clear-sighted ideological direction of the Politburo and the Central Military Committee.

Notes

1. Resolution of the Central Military Committee Conference of June 1973.
2. Extract from speech by Cde Le Duc Tho at the Vietnamese cryptographic branch conference recapitulating the cryptographic task in eight years of opposing America and saving the nation (21 March 1974).
3. Namely, Cdes Cam, Uong, Bau, Sinh, Chat, Thuc, and Khoa.
4. *Five Decisive Months*. Hanoi: People's Army Press, 1984, 182.
5. Notes of Cde Nguyen Van Khoi, cadre of the Bureau of Encrypting-Decrypting.
6. Holograph by Cde Vo Nguyen Giap, preserved in the General Staff Cryptographic Directorate
7. Cryptonyms of comrades Le Duc Tho, Van Tien Dzung, Pham Hung..
8. Group 232 was established in March 1975. [According to the *History of the PAVN* cited earlier, Group 232 was a corps-equivalent formation comprising the 5th and 3rd infantry divisions, reinforced by the 9th Division from IV Corps, plus branch troops. Commander, Maj. Gen. Le Duc Anh; political commissar, Brig. Gen. Le Van Tuong. Op. cit., 268, 271, 274. - Tr./Ed.]

Conclusion

The army cryptographic branch appeared immediately after the birth of our nation. As Uncle Ho said, "Cryptography must be secret, swift, and accurate." The army cryptographic branch strove to endure, to be worthy of the esteem of the Party. "In many decades past we fought bandits - we understood, and knew positively, that those were most important times, that our most secret problems could not be revealed."¹ In forty-five years of continuous building and fighting, under the command leadership of the Central Military Committee, the Ministry of National Defense, the General Staff, and of the echelons in the army, and the guidance of the Central Cryptographic Section, with respect to professional technical guidance, the army cryptographic branch was tempered in revolutionary struggle, and, with each passing day, grew up, "having taken part very significantly in the protection of secrecy to strengthen us to gain the victory."² Having come through two wars - against the French and against the Americans - the history of the building and fighting and maturing of the army cryptographic branch was tempered and found satisfactory in every respect, receiving from the Ministry of National Defense of our nation the golden words: "LOYAL, DEDICATED, UNITED, DISCIPLINED, CREATIVE."

With their mission and function--namely, to protect the nation's cryptographic secrecy, to ensure the secrecy of the contents of command leadership transmitted via cryptographic techniques - from the very outset, in revolutionary struggle as today in the building and protection of the Socialist Vietnamese Nation, the cadre and personnel of the army cryptographic branch have always carried deep in their hearts FIDELITY - to the nation, to the people, to the Party - prepared to struggle and to sacrifice for the combat objective and for the protection of secret matters involving the Party and the army.

From a very few cadre at the outset, entrusted by the army with the mission of performing the cryptographic task, the PAVN cryptographic branch built the ranks of professional technical cadre and personnel of the army's specialty branch with the quantity and quality to respond to the requirements of the revolutionary mission. These are the cadre and warriors who have been tested in combat service, in assignments all over the theaters of war, growing day by day in the level of the specialty and in absolute trust in the leadership of the Party, determined to safeguard and resolved to implement the victory policy and ideological viewpoint of the Party. These are the warriors of the PAVN, who embody the glorious essence, "Faithful to the Party, faithful to the nation, respectful of the people," whatever the situation, but also determined to fight and to serve and to swiftly transmit each message of command leadership from the various echelons of the army.

Cryptographic cadre and personnel are always firm in politics, enduring and overcoming every difficulty and test, always cultivating and training in revolutionary qualities and virtues, bound to and united with the organization, not one minute away from the combat objective of protecting secrecy, in order to fight and win out over the

enemy in their silent battlefield. In the process of building and fighting, they produced countless examples of sacrifice of life and readiness to sacrifice life because of the mission – courageously fighting and wiping out the enemy, skillfully dealing with the concealment and destruction of cryptographic materials, or, when captured by the enemy, having to endure third degree treatment, yet refusing to talk and to disclose secret matters.

Dedication – that is the virtue prized highly in the tradition of those performing the cryptographic task. From new comrades entering the branch to comrades with decades in the branch, all of them hold high the [sense of] political responsibility, know to place value on the social class and the people [dan toc] above all else, before all else: cryptographic cadre and personnel gladly forsake personal tastes and wishes, voluntarily finding peace of mind in long-term service in the branch, well aware of being “unsung warriors” on the battlefield of keeping secrets; enduring hardships, overcoming difficulties, devoted and doing their best in research, creativity, and in building the branch in every respect. In routine times, as when going into battle; on mobile operations, as well as in emergency situations; days and nights of campaigning – work stacked up, requiring immediate attention – conditions in which materials were in short supply – illness, etc., army cryptographic cadre and personnel continued to be passionately absorbed in their work – forgetting to eat – forgetting to sleep, sticking to their studies, serving in combat, determined to ensure thereby that the arteries of command of the Party and of the army were fully in hand, secret and timely.

In the front lines as in the rear lines; in small, dispersed units as in large, concentrated units; in distant sea islands as on the mainland; in the enemy regions as in rear bases – wherever – insofar as the army cryptographic cadre and personnel, it was a silent battlefield, yet very urgent and not infrequently decisive. In order to have the right stuff to carry out the mission, army cryptographic cadre and personnel strove to study and train with respect to every aspect, with the slogan, “the amount of training produces skill; total absorption produces talent.”

Industriously persevering, taking pains to ponder and seek out and bring into play innovativeness, improving technique to enhance the productivity and quality of the task – these are the manifestations of the dedication quite readily seen in each cryptographic cadre and warrior.

In obedience to the teachings of Uncle Ho, when he visited a cryptographic cadre and personnel development class in the Viet Bac combat sector [chien khu] during the war of

resistance against the French, "The fellows doing cryptography must be secret and of one mind," the army cryptographic branch unceasingly turned its mind to building and consolidating unification. Unanimity with respect to ideological viewpoint and direction of the mission, as well as the guidelines and methods of the technical-professional task had changed into strength and unity of action from top down, so that, in whatever circumstances, the army cryptographic branch would realize victory in every mission.

In the branch – first and foremost at the basic level of cryptography, between cadre and personnel – not only deeply attached to one another with respect to ideals and revolutionary aims, but also deeply attached to one another in sentiment and collegiality – the cadre and personnel were like siblings, sharing the bitter and the sweet, sharing the good things in the daily specialist task, constantly creating favors for friends and keeping tough things for oneself. In the assignment or in ordinary life, the army cryptographic cadre and personnel constantly took care of the unified relationship to aid one another. This was the very beautiful style of the army cryptographic cadre and personnel.

Bringing into play the tradition of unity, the army cryptographic branch constantly stuck tightly to the leadership of the committees and commands at the various echelons, closely bound to the organizations in the command system at the various echelons, taking the initiative to build ties and close associations with friendly units, with the branches, and with allied organizations, so that together they could ensure the mission. Imbued with the international line of the Party and the teachings of Uncle Ho, that helping friends was helping oneself, with ardent love of country and pure international sentiment, our army cryptographers were fighting and giving their lives, shoulder-to-shoulder with their cryptographer friends in the Laotian army and Cambodian army: because of the revolutionary work of our friends, our army's cryptographic branch had helped in the building of the cryptographic branches of the Laotian and Cambodian armies, helping them to grow up and be self-sufficient in every respect.

Maintaining discipline is a feature of the army cryptographic branch that is fully satisfactory in every respect, an element in ensuring the trust of the ranks of cadre and personnel and of cryptographic technique, ensuring unity in thought and action, a strength of the whole branch. Perceiving clearly the characteristic nature of their task, the army cryptographers constantly settled on the importance of the problem of building standing operating procedures and implementing task discipline, in order to raise the sense of organization and discipline of the cryptographic cadre and personnel in every activity. The branch constantly educated and fostered in the cadre and personnel a sense of revolutionary vigilance and the spirit of discipline, paying particular attention to on-the-job workstyle and activities consistent with the nature of the mission of the cryptographic task: Voluntarily adhering strictly to the rules and regulations that had been set, not letting out secrets to anybody lacking the need-to-know; secretive and

cautious in speech and work, in relations and connections, and struggling without compromise against manifestations of undisciplined freedom and lack of truthfulness and straightforwardness. Simultaneously striving to build and make routine the professional guidance and unity of administration throughout the army cryptographic branch, thereby creating a unity of all with respect to ideological awareness in content, line, and task methodology.

Faced with the requirements of the revolutionary mission, faced with the schemes and plots of the enemy, on the battleline of cryptographic secrecy, the army cryptographic branch proceeded to regularize and, step by step, to modernize the basic technical material, and the education, training, and bringing into play of tradition in order to raise vigilance, and the maintenance of discipline took on important significance. This was also a means of guarding oneself the best in resisting the enemy and ensuring that the building of the cryptographic branch was clean, strong and solid.

Firmly grasping and applying the Party's line of independence and sovereignty, the army cryptographic branch brought into play to a high degree the spirit of self-reliance, becoming stronger through one's own efforts, laboring to create and build the Branch, expressing the revolutionary spirit of attack, bringing into play the sense of socialist patriotism, along with the intelligence and creative capacity of the cadre and personnel of the entire branch.

As a secret, technical, scientific branch, carrying the characteristic traits of every distinct nation, thus having clearly defined sound ideology and having creativity in organization and application, we raised the spirit of "dare to think, dare to act," seeking to create, coordinate and apply the intellectual factors with the technical, scientific achievements, along with the experiences of real-world action over a long and arduous time in war and in peace, so as to research and create principles, methods, and forms of cryptographic technique and the art of organization and use to serve the army at a level that never ceased to move forward, struggling to defeat every means of signals intelligence [thutin ma tham] on the part of the enemy, thereby expanding science and technique.

Taking legitimate pride in the history of building and fighting while growing up, and the glorious tradition of the army's cryptographic branch in the past forty-five years, the army cryptographic cadre and personnel/warriors swear to hold fast and strive to bring into play their fine traditions, never ceasing to strive to train in revolutionary quality and level of output in every aspect, taking part in bringing about the victory resolution of the

standing Committee of the Central Military Affairs Party Committee with respect to the mission of building the army cryptographic branch in the new phase, to serve outstandingly in the mission of building and guarding the socialist Vietnamese nation.

Notes

1. From a speech by Cde Le Dzuan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party at the 1978 Nationwide Conference of Cryptographic Cadre.
2. Ibid.