



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Windjammer



Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Leon J. Wetzel Post No. 9

2026

Winona, Minnesota

Winona Area Veterans Center



Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion

For God and Country,
we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- to maintain law and order;
- to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
- to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
- to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
- to make right the master of might;
- to promote peace and good will on earth;
- to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
- to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.



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to be a Legion Family member

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To Learn More, Contact:

AMERICAN LEGION POST 9

302 EAST SARNIA STREET

WINONA, MINNESOTA 55987

Eligibility Dates

World War I

April 6, 1917 – Nov. 11, 1918

World War II – Present

Dec. 7, 1941 – Present*

* if currently serving on active duty today, you are eligible.



THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST 9 WINONA
WINDJAMMER

**COMMANDER**

Rick Schell
24884 Hwy 14
Winona, MN 55987
507 312 0367

ADJUTANT

Sam Sasser
978 Gilmore Avenue
Winona, MN 55987
507 458-2519

1ST VICE**COMMANDER**

Amy Pelowski
229 Edgeview Drive
Rollingstone, MN 55969
507-703-1945

2ND VICE**COMMANDER**

Scott Fischer
101 Rivers Lane
Winona, Minnesota 55987
507-429-5067

FINANCE OFFICER

Eric Engrav
3777 West 6th Street
Winona, MN 55987
507-313-1638

CHAPLAIN

Maurice Waldee
244 Edgewood Drive
Rollingstone, MN 55969
507-689-4294

SGT AT ARMS

Dennis Decker
141 Valley Trail Drive
Winona, MN 55987
507 454 5239

HISTORIAN

Bob Ozmun
3860 West 8th Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 452 3606

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Dave Moore
53 Hamilton Steet
Winona, Minnesota 55987
507-429-5489

SERVICE OFFICER

Bill Ford
629 East Broadway
Winona, MN 55987
507-452-1916

MEMBERSHIP DIR.

Dar Troke
410 East Wabasha
Winona, MN 55987
507 429 5029



Rick Schell

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Windjammer
July/August 2026

Dear Legion Family,

Summer is here, and it's an exciting time as we begin celebrating our nation's **250th anniversary**. For two and a half centuries, the United States has stood as a beacon of freedom, opportunity, and hope because of the courage and sacrifice of those who answered the call to serve.

Many of our families have lived through generations of freedom, making it easy to forget just how precious it is. We all know that **freedom isn't free**. From the patriots who fought for our independence in 1776 to the generations of servicemen and women who have defended our nation ever since, every generation has had Americans willing to stand up for liberty. As members of the American Legion, we honor that legacy by remembering their sacrifices, supporting today's veterans, and ensuring the values they fought for continue to inspire future generations.

As a 12-year-old, I remember celebrating our nation's Bicentennial in 1976. It was a time filled with patriotism, community pride, and appreciation for our country's history. I pray that my grandchildren will have the opportunity to celebrate America's 300th anniversary and continue enjoying the freedoms we cherish today.

As we gather with family and friends this summer, let's take time to reflect on what makes this country so special and celebrate living in the greatest nation in the world. We'll also have a booth at the **Winona County Fair**, July 8–12. If you're interested in helping staff the booth, please stop by the Legion and sign up. We still have several openings to fill. It's a great opportunity to promote our American Legion Post, the Winona Area Veterans Clubs, and the work we do to support veterans and our community.

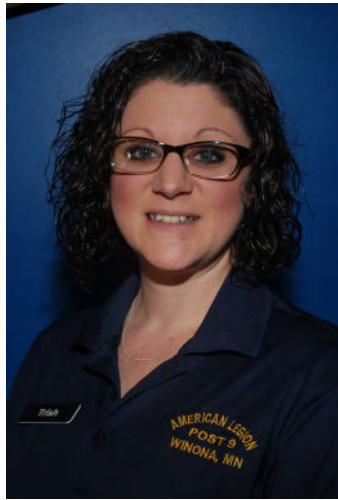
Have a safe and happy **Fourth of July**. Here's to celebrating 250 years of American freedom, honoring those who made it possible, and looking forward to the future.

God Bless America, and I'll see you at the club!

Rick Schell

Post Commander





BAR REPORT
From your Post 9 Facilities Manager

**AMERICAN LEGION POST 9
BAR REPORT**

July/August 2026

Trisha Franzwa **Hello summer and Happy 250th to America!!!!!!!!!!!!**

July and August are going to be busy around here with a lot of events booked!!! If you are interested in renting space, please see me as the calendar changes often.

There is not much to inform everyone on the bar side of things right now. I will be working on a few things and will notify everyone by next windjammer article. NO BINGO FOR THE MONTH OF JULY!!!!

August 9th is planned for our Legion picnic, make sure your dues are paid or pay the day of to enjoy a day full of activities and fun!!! Like last year, I will have a bloody mary bar set up. Purchase a ticket from the bar and then come to the table and make your own or have us make it for you and add your goodies!!! Hope everyone is doing well and can't wait to see you at the club!!!!

**Trisha Schneider
Facilities Manager
American Legion Post 9**





The American Legion Post 9
AUXILIARY NEWS



PRESIDENT

Diane Cada
223 Buchanan Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 454 7210

1st VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Whetstone
1804 Pleasant View Lane
Winona, MN 55987
507 454 2883

SECRETARY

Karen Ciszak
118 Jederrman Dr
Winona, MN 55987
507 454 4953

TREASURER

Pam Hartman
269 Benson Drive N
Lewiston, MN 55952
507 450-1387

CHAPLAIN

Kathy Barnholtz
922 E Sanborn Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 453 0943

HISTORIAN

Nancy Berger
868 38th Ave
Winona, MN 55987
507 454 3157

SGT AT ARMS

Gwen Jacobs
623 E 7th Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 452 6832

JR. PAST PRESIDENT

Shayna Dais
365 E 5th Street
Winona, MN 55987

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Pam Husman
8390 Cherry Lane
Winona, MN 55987
507 689 0768



Diane Cada
Auxiliary President

Auxiliary News and Events

July/August 2026

Dear Auxiliary Members,

I hope that you are enjoying this awesome weather as much as I am. Enjoy and make everyday count.

Not much to report as this is the break time for the volunteers (totally deserved) over summer.

PLEASE note that Auxiliary serves light lunch and desserts, the second (2nd) Wednesday of the month for bingo (NO BINGO IN JULY).

Your help would very much be appreciated , let us know if you would like to make a hotdish, sandwich, dessert, soup (come fall), we

Need your help, REMEMBER it's your Legion Club also!!

Please read your windjammer for events that are going on at the club, over summer, Sam and Trish put a lot of time to put it together.

Hug and Thanks to our Veterans for the freedom we have and enjoy on a daily basis.

Thank you to our Police, Fire dept., EMTS, etc.

Hugs

Stop and smell the flowers, enjoy,

Di



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST 9
S.A.L. NEWS**



**SQUADRON
COMMANDER**

Greg Lemmer
140 Jederman Drive
Winona, MN 55987
507 312 2222

ADJUTANT

LaVern Hauschildt
4095 9th Street
Goodview, MN 55987
507 452 1764

**1ST VICE
COMMANDER**

Bill Heitman
4735 West 7th Street
Goodview, MN 55987
507 429-2904

**2ND VICE
COMMANDER**

Jim Myers
676 Grand Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 458-5396

TREASURER

Josh Erickson
278 1/2 East Third Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 313 5861

SGT AT ARMS

Tim Englerth
765 West Burns Valley Rd.
Winona, MN 55987
507 313 1421

CHAPLAIN

Rich Frahm
903 West 7th Street
Winona, MN 55987
507 452 8929

Historian

Steve Buswell
2450 Goodview Road
Goodview, MN 55987
507 450-6536



**SAL News and Events
July/August 2026**

Hello Legion Family,

Greetings from your local SAL, hoping everyone is enjoying the kick off to a beautiful and special summer.

Greg Lemmer On behalf of your local SAL we wish you a Happy 4th of July and an impressive Happy 250th Anniversary to our beautiful United States of America. May you and your family enjoy this special time. Please remember there is a cost to our freedoms. Take time to honor those who have, or are serving to protect those freedoms.

Have you purchased your 250th USA anniversary shirt yet? These are shirts that have the 250th logo on the back and our Post 9 logo on the front. Shirts are being sold at cost and we are hoping you purchase and proudly wear yours.

Voting for SAL officers will be held July 13th at our monthly meeting. I know there are several good members out there who can fill these positions. Now is your chance to step up and be our new commander, bring new ideas and renewed energy to our group. Help us grow in supporting veterans and the legion family.

Be sure to review the calendar in your Windjammer and the board at the Legion for upcoming events.

Remember by patronizing your Legion you are also supporting the Veterans, the Legion, and the Legion Family members. Your Legion is something to be proud of.

Please take the time to thank a Veteran or active military member. They deserve our Thank You each and every day. Please remember you have your freedoms and right to vote because of them.

In closing I wish you all the best. God Bless our Troops past and present and God Bless America.

Respectfully Yours,

Greg Lemmer

SAL Squadron Commander

BURIAL DETAIL/COLOR GUARD REPORT

Color Guard Functions:

14 June 2026 Elk's Flag Day
16 June 2026 Lake Winona Manor Parade
21 June 2026 Steamboat Days Parade

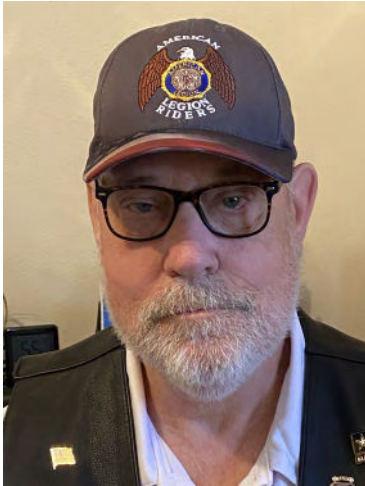


Funerals since 21 April 2026

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Thomas J. Slaggie | 12 May 2026 |
| Jon R. Bitu | 13 May 2026 |
| Gary F. Kotlarz | 22 May 2026 |
| Harold J. Vaughn | 29 May 2026 |
| John L. Richter | 30 May 2026 |
| Walter R. Birk | 4 June 2026 |
| Marguerite Bittner | 5 June 2026 |



American Legion Riders
Post 9 Winona
July/August 2026



Brian Degnan

July/August Legion Riders Newsletter

Welcome to summer, Riders. As I write this, today is the first day of summer, and the height of the riding season. I hope that all of you have a safe and enjoyable riding season. I don't have a lot to report on. We held elections with the following results. I retained the honor of being your Director, Ron Rader is the new Vice-Director, Greg Lemmer will continue the excellent job that he has done as Secretary, LaVern Hauschildt as Treasurer, Ed Richards as Road Captain, Chris Hansen as Sgt at Arms, Roger Spaulding as Chaplain, Mike Mohr as Membership Director, and Lynn Richards as Historian.

We will continue offer wings on Tuesday nights through the summer. 5:30 PM until 7PM. Please see the attached poster. We are also having our annual ride on August 29th. This is open to anyone, even those that don't ride a cycle. Shine up your classic car, or just drive the family car. Come out and enjoy a nice ride through the countryside. Lunch will be served by the SAL at the legion after the ride. Please see the attached poster. There is also a cash raffle that will be drawn after the ride. Tickets are \$5.00, and are available from any Riders member, or from the bartenders. Get yours before they're all sold out.

Anyone interested in becoming a Legion Rider, please email me at bdegan55971@gmail.com, or Mike Mohr at mmohr.55987@gmail.com. Have a great summer, take care, and come home safely.

Brian Degnan

ALR President



**PSST! HAVE YOU
HEARD?!**

The Winona County DAC's 3rd Annual

Chicken Q

Tuesday, July 21st

3:30pm-6:00pm

Hosted by Steak Shop Catering

Pick Up Dinners at: 301 East Mark Street in Winona

\$15 per
ticket



**IT'S FOR AN
IM-PECK-ABLY
GOOD CAUSE TOO!**

***Each Ticket Includes:**

1/2 grilled chicken,
American potato salad,
baked beans, and roll
with butter



**Winona
DAC**

Tickets available at Midtown, HyVee, Winona DAC, Steak Shop Catering, www.winonadac.org, or any of the Winona DAC Employees

Winona Chapter 9
American Legion Rider
WING NIGHT

2nd Tuesday of the month

At the Winona American Legion

302 East Sarnia St.

5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

**Wings and Fries with Celery and Dipping
Sauces**



***Spicy Buffalo *Buffalo *Honey BBQ**

***Garlic Parmesan**



Island City Ride for Vets

Saturday, August 29, 2026.

Winona American Legion Riders, Chapter #9

302 E Sarnia St., Winona, MN 55987

9 A.M. Registration - \$25 per rider & \$15 per passenger

10 A.M. Kickstands Up!

ALL STREET LEGAL VEHICLES ARE WELCOME!

Enjoy a hundred-mile ride through the countryside, (route yet to be determined) returning for Raffle Drawing!

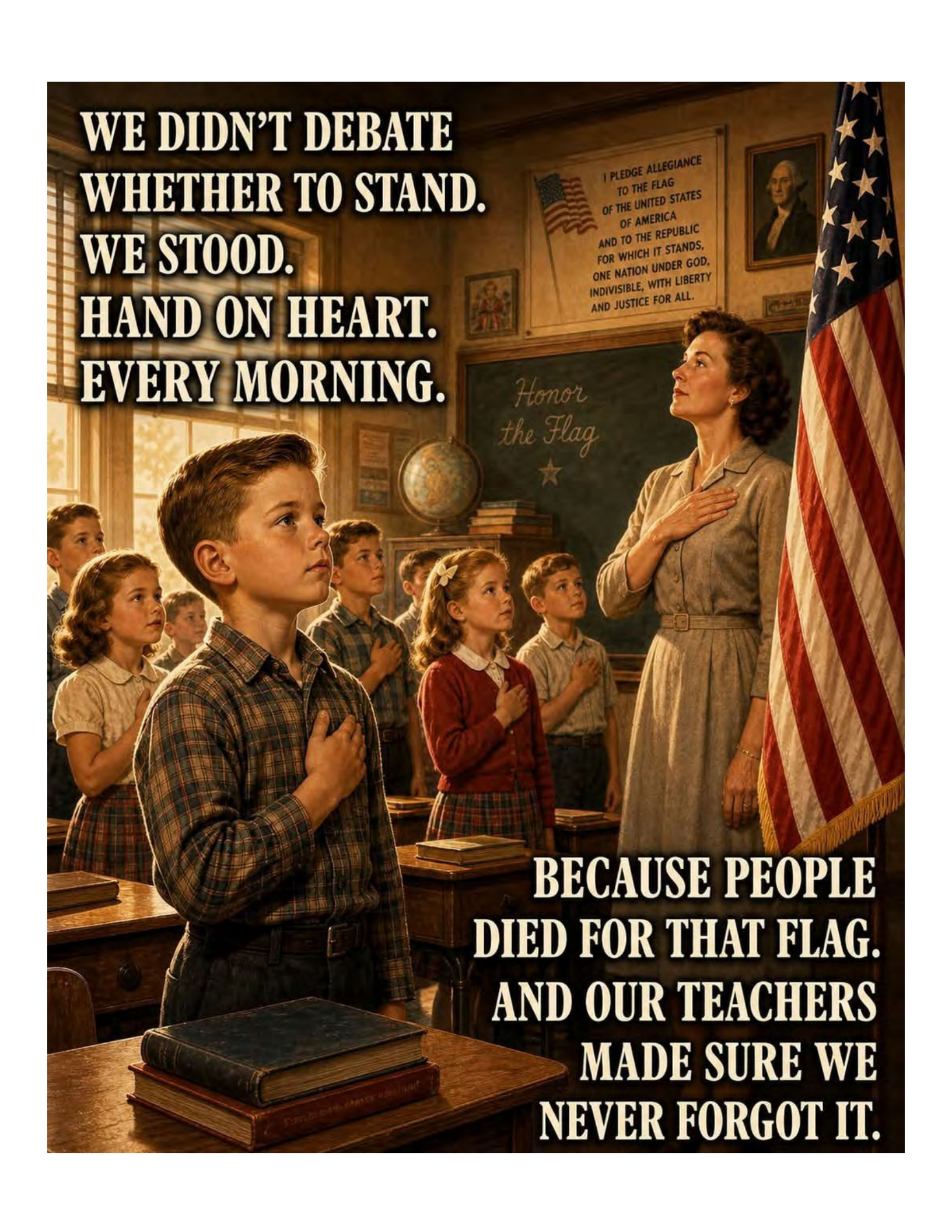
Cash Raffle tickets, \$5.00 each, may be purchased up to the time of the drawing, at 4:00 P.M. Prizes are: 1st - \$500, 2nd & 3rd - \$250, 4th & 5th - \$100.

500 tickets will be sold

All proceeds are donated to various veteran, children, and community causes throughout the year. We greatly appreciate your support. Email for questions: vern@1-cs.com or bdegnan55971@gmail.com or check our Facebook page, "Winona ALR."

Winona ALR
Challenge Coins
are available for
\$10 each!





**WE DIDN'T DEBATE
WHETHER TO STAND.
WE STOOD.
HAND ON HEART.
EVERY MORNING.**

**BECAUSE PEOPLE
DIED FOR THAT FLAG.
AND OUR TEACHERS
MADE SURE WE
NEVER FORGOT IT.**

American Legion Post 9 is proud to have three World War II veterans as members of our Post:

Darol “Lefty” Lee

Clarence Dow

Clarence St. Peter

When you see these men, thank them for their service to our country!!!

**Sam Sasser
Adjutant**



“Lefty” Lee accepting his plaque for Steamboat Days 2026. Lefty was named American Legion Post 9 Military Grande Marshall for the Steamboat Days 2026 Parade!!!! Next time you see Lefty, congratulate him for this honor!

Join the American Legion Post 9 Burial Detail.



**We are looking for new members to join us!
We provide Military Rites for Winona Area
Veterans. We take great pride in what we do.**

**Contact: Sam Sasser
Burial Detail Commander**



24 NOTES.

★ ONE FINAL PROMISE.

★ HONOR. RESPECT. REMEMBER. ★

FLAG ETIQUETTE AT PARADES

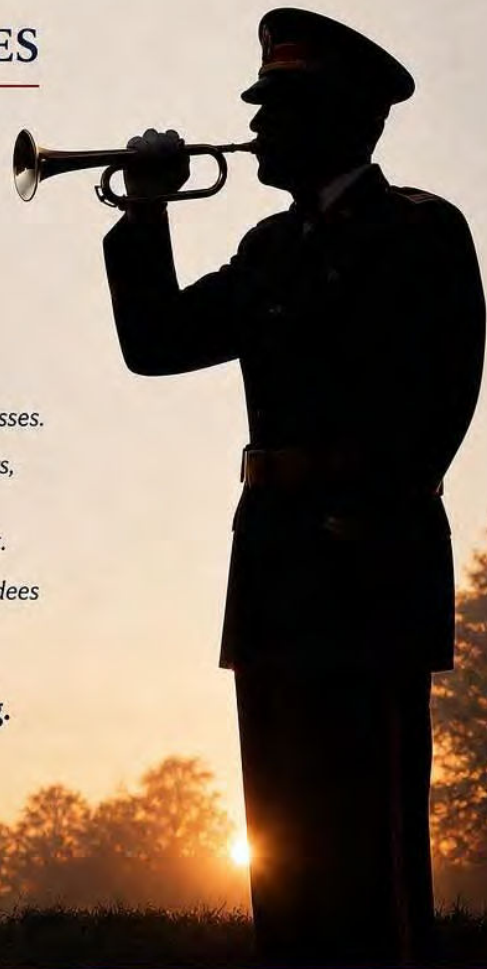
When an American Flag passes:

- Stand up.
- Remove your hat.
- Place your right hand over your heart.
- Veterans may render a hand salute.
- Stop any conversation you are having.

Note: It is not necessary to salute every American Flag that passes.

- *If it is carried by an honor guard or in a group with other flags, stand at attention; veterans may render a hand salute, and all others should place their right hand over their heart.*
- *Do not salute small hand-held flags carried by parade attendees and participants.*

**Teach your children to respect our nation's Flag.
If they are given a small Flag, please do not
throw it on the ground or in the street.**



THE 13 FOLDS OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

Each fold is a symbol of honor, gratitude, and sacrifice.

1 THE FIRST FOLD is a symbol of life.

2 THE SECOND FOLD is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

3 THE THIRD FOLD is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of their life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

4 THE FOURTH FOLD represents our weaker nature; for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in war for His divine guidance.

5 THE FIFTH FOLD is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but our country, right or wrong."

6 THE SIXTH FOLD is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

7 THE SEVENTH FOLD is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our Republic.

8 THE EIGHTH FOLD is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

9 THE NINTH FOLD is a tribute to womanhood for their faith, love, loyalty and devotion which has been so vital to the history of our country.

10 THE TENTH FOLD is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

11 THE ELEVENTH FOLD represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrew eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

12 THE TWELFTH FOLD represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christian eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

13 THE THIRTEENTH FOLD, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

★ WHEN THE FLAG IS PRESENTED TO A VETERAN OR A LOVED ONE,
IT IS MORE THAN A FLAG—IT IS A SACRED SYMBOL OF HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE. ★

May we never forget the price of freedom.

In A Changing
World, One
Thing Stays
The Same:

*The Military
Experience.*

It's the bond

*between veterans who
have served America, from
the fields of Europe to the
jungles of Asia to the
deserts of the Middle East
and everywhere in between.*

"We will not fail

*those with whom we've
served," was the promise
by generations of veterans.
Help us continue the legacy.*

Join

*today's American Legion -
bonded through service,
committed to the future.*

American Legion Post 9
302 East Sarnia Street
Winona, Minnesota 55987
Phone: 507-454-4281

Check us out!!!!!!



**The
American
Legion**



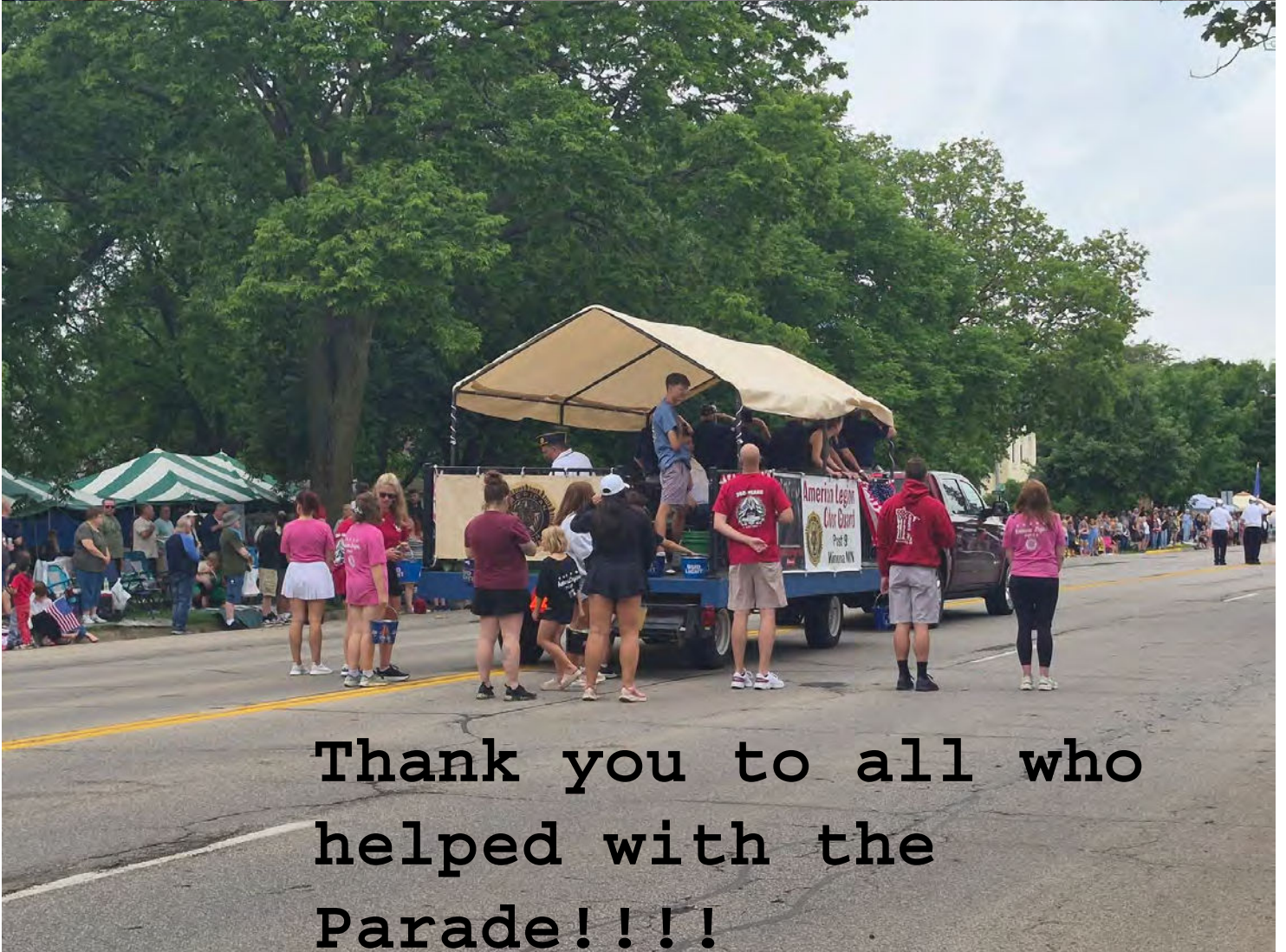
Steamboat Days
Parade
2026



Steamboat Days Parade 2026



Steamboat Days Parade 2026



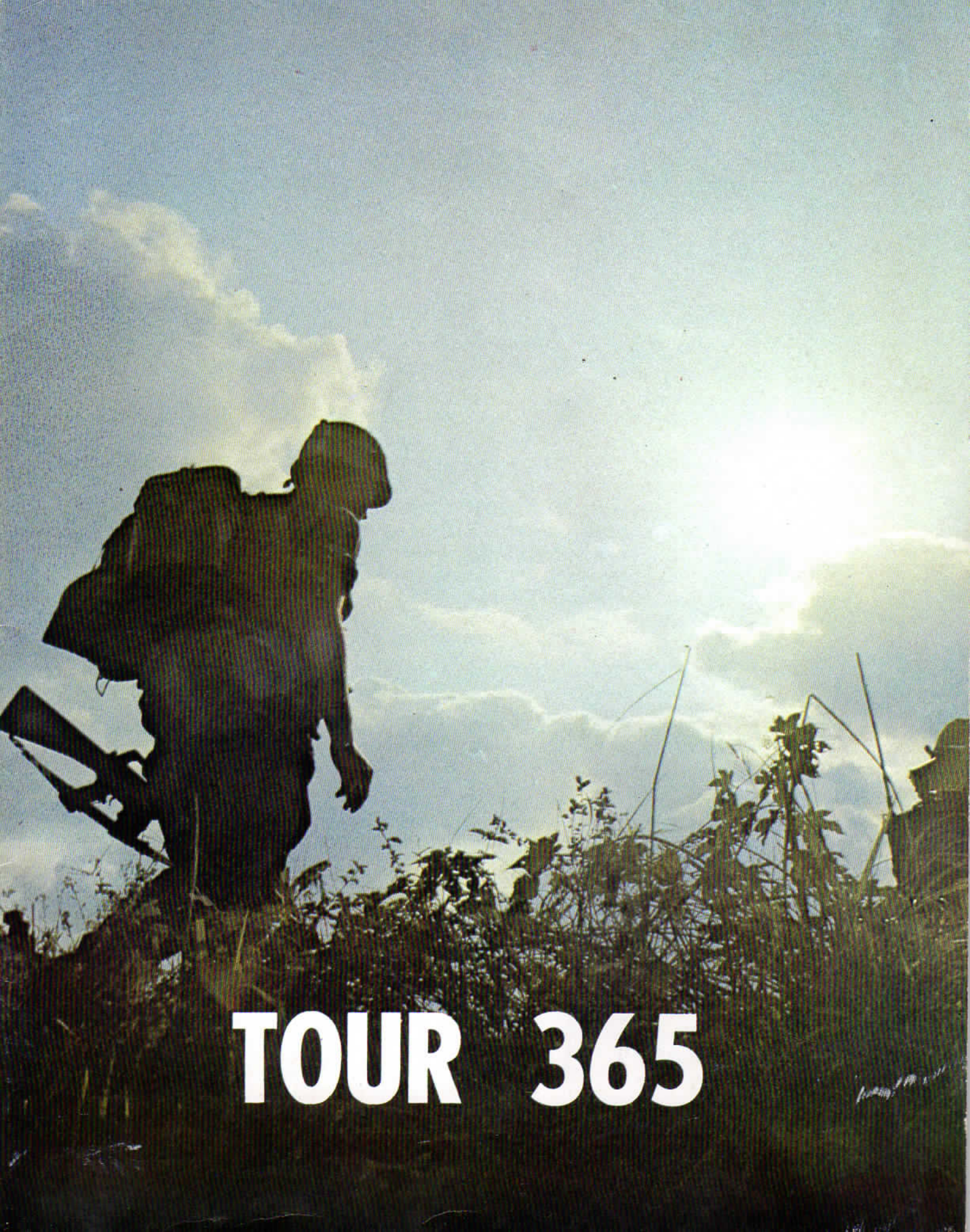
Thank you to all who
helped with the
Parade!!!!

The next 31 pages are pages from a book called Tour 365. This book details a history of the Vietnam War.

Due to space restrictions, I have copied the first 31 pages.

This is some very interesting reading in regards to the Vietnam War. I will present the last 30 or so pages in a future Windjammer.

**Sam Sasser
Adjutant**



TOUR 365


HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
Office of the Commander
APO San Francisco 96222


Your tour of duty with the United States Army, Vietnam, is ended. May your trip home and reunion with family and friends be the pleasant, happy occasion you have anticipated. You go home with my best wishes.

As veterans of this war, you can now look back with perspective on your experiences and know the trying and difficult tasks inherent in fighting to protect the freedom of peace-loving people against Communist invaders. You know of the local Viet Cong terrorists who kill and maim their own neighbors, and appreciate the terror and destruction they spread. Having served here, you understand better than many of our countrymen the meaning of aggression against South Vietnam.

You have fought beside soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and many other nations in a common struggle. You have been more than just a combat ally to the South Vietnamese soldier. Many of you have worked with his people in hamlet improvement and pacification programs and been looked upon as a teacher and builder, as well as a fighter.

People at home will want to hear your story of the war. Tell it. Whether you served in a combat or combat support role, part of your story is reflected in the pages of this magazine. I hope this publication will serve to assist you.

I extend my sincere appreciation for your help in accomplishing our task in Vietnam, and my thanks for a job well done. Good luck in the future.


CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
General, United States Army
Commanding

TOUR 365

Winter 1968

USARV Returnee Magazine



The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have consequences for us and for freedom.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower
1959

... the United States is determined to help Vietnam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist assassins, and build a better life through economic growth.

President John F. Kennedy
1961



The central issue of the conflict there is the aggression by North Vietnam against the brave and independent people of South Vietnam. If that aggression is stopped, the people and government of South Vietnam will be free to settle their own future—and get on with the great tasks of national development.



President Lyndon B. Johnson
1965

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Gen. Creighton W. Abrams.....Commanding General
Lt. Gen. Frank T. Mildren...Deputy Commanding General
Col. E. O. Post..... Information Officer

Maj. David L. Stanley...Command Information Officer
Sp5 Charles K. Tabacchi Illustrator
Sp4 Samuel E. Alexander Illustrator



Vietnam In Retrospect

To understand the war it is best to understand Vietnam's past. The Vietnamese people have been struggling for independence for nearly 2,000 years.

After centuries of Chinese domination, the invaders were driven from the Red River Delta in 938 A.D. at the battle of Bach Dang. Chinese attempts to retake the area were repelled. In 946, though by no means out of danger from the Chinese, an independent Vietnam became a reality. With the exception of a 20-year interlude of Chinese re-occupation in the early 15th Century, Vietnam remained independent for the next 900 years.

The Ly Dynasty, established in 1009, was the first great Vietnamese dynasty and, after an interval of confusion, ushered in a period of population growth, cultural development, territorial expansion, prosperity and stability. The Ly rulers gave the government the form it retained until the French conquest in the 19th Century.

The role of emperor was dominant. He was the father of the nation-family—the absolute temporal monarch in whom all power of state resided. And he was the religious head of the realm acting as intermediary between it and heaven. A civil bureaucracy, called the mandarinat, performed the functions of administering the country.

In mid-13th Century Kublai Khan tried to invade Dai-Viet, as Vietnam was then called. Three times his armies were

repelled, the last time in 1287 under General Tran Hung Dao.

The Vietnamese realized that their independence and survival depended on their relationship with China. Knowing their own weakness and making the appropriate gestures to the Chinese, the Vietnamese were allowed to enjoy the maximum degree of independence, but always as a tributary state to China.

THE EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

European influence reached Vietnam in 1535 when Portuguese Captain Antonio de Faria arrived in Da Nang Bay. For a century the Portuguese dominated commerce in Vietnam. Confronted by a strongly organized state power and a sophisticated officialdom, they were unable to impose their will on the Vietnamese, as they had the West Indians.

The first Catholic missionaries entered Vietnam during the 16th Century. After the decline in trade, they remained almost the only Europeans in the country. Confucian-oriented officials had their misgivings about the new religion. They suspected it as the forerunner of conquest, and feared its effect upon the traditional order which had been the foundation of the state for centuries.

Missionary activities spread, despite a loosely enforced ban. Christianity was embraced by a substantial portion of the Vietnamese population over the years.



The cathedral at Tay Ninh is the Holy See of the Cao Dai Church. Founded in 1926, Cao Daism is a blend of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, the major religions of Vietnam.



Rice Farming

THE FRENCH ARRIVE

Toward the middle of the 19th Century, pressure mounted in France for the government to take positive action to establish a position on Vietnam. This pressure resulted from envy of the power other European nations were establishing in Asia and a desire to protect missionaries who were, at times, being persecuted.

In 1858 the French captured the city of Da Nang and in July 1861 they took Saigon. By June the Vietnamese court at Hue ceded Saigon and the adjacent area to the French and agreed to pay an indemnity. In 1867 the western part of the southern delta was annexed, and the area known as Cochin China (the extreme southern portion of Vietnam) was under French control.

For the next 30 years the French expanded their control over all of Indochina, or what today is North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The basic political structure of French Indochina was completed by 1900. Each of Vietnam's three regions were treated separately although basic policy decisions were made in Paris.

The emperor and the mandarin remained in both central and north Vietnam; Cochin China was administered directly by the French. The old structure of government remained; however, all major decisions were made by French authorities.

French rule demoralized the emperors and mandarin, tending to turn them into self-seekers and yes men.

French colonialism also had profound economic effects on the region. Absentee ownership grew as large scale agricultural and rubber plantations appeared. Prosperous Vietnamese moved into the cities, and more and more of the land was tilled by peasants who did not own it. Large scale canal systems were dug in the Mekong Delta to exploit rice production. By the early 20th Century the French had managed to produce a rice surplus.

European ideas and culture permeated the country, especially among the mandarin classes. Western thought also stimulated another movement—growing Vietnamese nationalism.

THE RISE OF NATIONALISM

Early in the 20th Century nationalist movements began to develop, initially among urban intellectuals. Numerous anti-French secret societies developed, however most were loosely organized and had no well-defined political objectives.

Leadership of the clandestine nationalist movement in Vietnam was eventually taken over by the Indochinese Communist Party (Dong Duong Cong San Dang). Formed in Hong Kong in 1930, it united several existing independent Communist groups under the leadership of Nguyen Ai Quoc—later known as Ho Chi Minh.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION (1940-1945)

When France fell to Germany in June of 1940, the Vichy government acceded to the demands of the Japanese. All of French Indochina came under Japanese control however the French administration was permitted to remain intact with many lucrative agreements being made between wealthy French interests in Vietnam and the occupying forces.

Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh had become the leading national political figure in Vietnam. His party adopted a policy of collaboration with all non-Communist nationalists to broaden the social and political base of its activities. This united front organization was known as the Vietnam Independency League (Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh) or the Viet Minh.

One of the first actions of the Viet Minh was to form guerrilla bands under the direction of Vo Nguyen Giap, operating in Vietnamese territory against the Japanese and French. Although Ho Chi Minh was jailed in 1941, the activities of the Viet Minh continued. Working in nationalist guise, Ho effectively strengthened the organization of Communist cells throughout Vietnam.

In August, 1945, Emperor Bao Dai, fearing the French would return once Japan surrendered, abdicated his throne



The stern faces of victor and vanquished are shown in this photo, taken shortly after the fall of Dien Bien Phu.



The Geneva Conference opens in April, 1954. Negotiations on Indochina began May 8: the participants included Communist China, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, and North Vietnam.

and handed over power to Ho Chi Minh. French troops were once again in Vietnam in September.

The Viet Minh and French conducted negotiations for a year in an effort to assure some form of independence for Vietnam. By December 1946, the Viet Minh decided that the only way to achieve an independent Vietnam was through a "war of liberation."

For the next eight years the French fought the Viet Minh. On May 7, 1954 the French army was decisively defeated at Dien Bien Phu.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

The day after the battle of Dien Bien Phu the Geneva Conference turned its attention to the French-Indochina War. The conference had been called by the Big Four to discuss the Korean and Indochina problems.

The agreement reached for Vietnam fixed a provisional demarcation line roughly along the 17th parallel and provided for the total evacuation of French military forces, as well as the removal of Viet Minh forces from the South. Freedom of movement between the two sections was guaranteed for 300

days. An International Control Commission was formed to supervise the truce agreements, its members coming from Canada, India and Poland. Finally a provision was made for the holding of general elections throughout Vietnam in 1956.

The French proceeded to hand over the controls and administration to the non-Communist Vietnamese with their capital in Saigon. In Hanoi, Ho began the total communization of the nation north of the 17th parallel. He later turned his attention southward.

Despite the cease-fire agreement, a well-organized Viet Minh underground was deliberately left behind in the south. This underground network formed the nucleus of subsequent Communist insurgency, originated in Hanoi and directed against the Saigon government.

Vietnam was left divided—the South had a pro-Western government struggling to establish a non-Communist society. In the North Ho Chi Minh was busy organizing a Communist state which would be the base for the realization of his ultimate dream of a unified Communist Vietnam.



What Is A Soldier



He is an infantryman or MP
on patrol...

-an engineer constructing an artillery
firing site..



a helicopter crew member...



ier In USARV?



or he humps supplies from
depot to the field...



asks you, "Are you working?"...



keeps his tank rolling...



or patches you up
to keep you rolling.

1954-1961

Years of Trial — Year

The result of the Geneva Accords of 1954 was the creation of a North and South Vietnam. Although the United States was not an active participant in bringing about the end of the Indochina War, our government worked quietly behind the scenes.

At the same time groundwork for the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was being laid. In September the treaty was signed in Manila. South Vietnam was included in the treaty as a "protocol state" with the signatories accepting the obligation, if asked by the government of South Vietnam, to take action in response to armed attack against South Vietnam and to consult on appropriate measures if South Vietnam were subjected to subversive activities.

President Eisenhower instituted economic aid for the new country in late 1954 and thus began active American interest in South Vietnam.

To understand the events following we must look at the



President Ngo Dinh Diem



Ho Chi Minh

development of North Vietnam; the rise of the Viet Cong and their assistance from the North; and the increased economic and military aid to the South furnished by the United States.

Ho Chi Minh began an immediate consolidation of forces. Many Communists moved north of the 17th parallel—an estimated 90,000—while thousands of selected party members were ordered to remain behind. They were told to hide their weapons and wait for the call.

Hanoi presumed the South would fall by subversion and force would not be necessary. When the South became more and more prosperous, in spite of Communist penetration of South Vietnamese government agencies and attempts at agitation and propaganda, it came as a shock to the Communists.

Agitators and agents were being exposed by the people, causing morale to drop in the Communist ranks and many defections to occur. Compounding the problems of the North, per capita food output dropped by 10 percent, as the South's improved by 20 percent. Authorities in the North openly admitted that food production goals were not being reached.

Despite North Vietnam's vastly larger industrial complex,



s of Decision



the South's per capita gross national product was more than 50 percent higher—\$110 per person versus \$70 per person (1960 estimate). The North's failures coupled with the South's successes caused a major revision in overall strategy. Military forces would have to be employed to take over the South!

TERRORISM BEGINS

By 1958 the plan became obvious. Terrorist activity increased appreciably. The wealthy peasant, school teachers and administrative officials were favorite targets of attack. In 1959 the pace of terrorism accelerated, and recruiting for the Viet Cong was stepped up.

Communist propaganda tried to exploit the confusion by stating the South's government was falling apart and was unable to protect its people. The entire campaign was being directed from the North.

The National Liberation Front appeared on December 20, 1960, announcing its foundation and program. It called for the overthrow of the "disguised colonial regime of the United States imperialists and the dictatorial Diem administration."

Communist propaganda tried to establish that the acts of terror were from popular discontent with Ngo Dinh Diem and his palace regime. It insisted the Viet Cong obtained their weapons by capturing them from American and French sources.

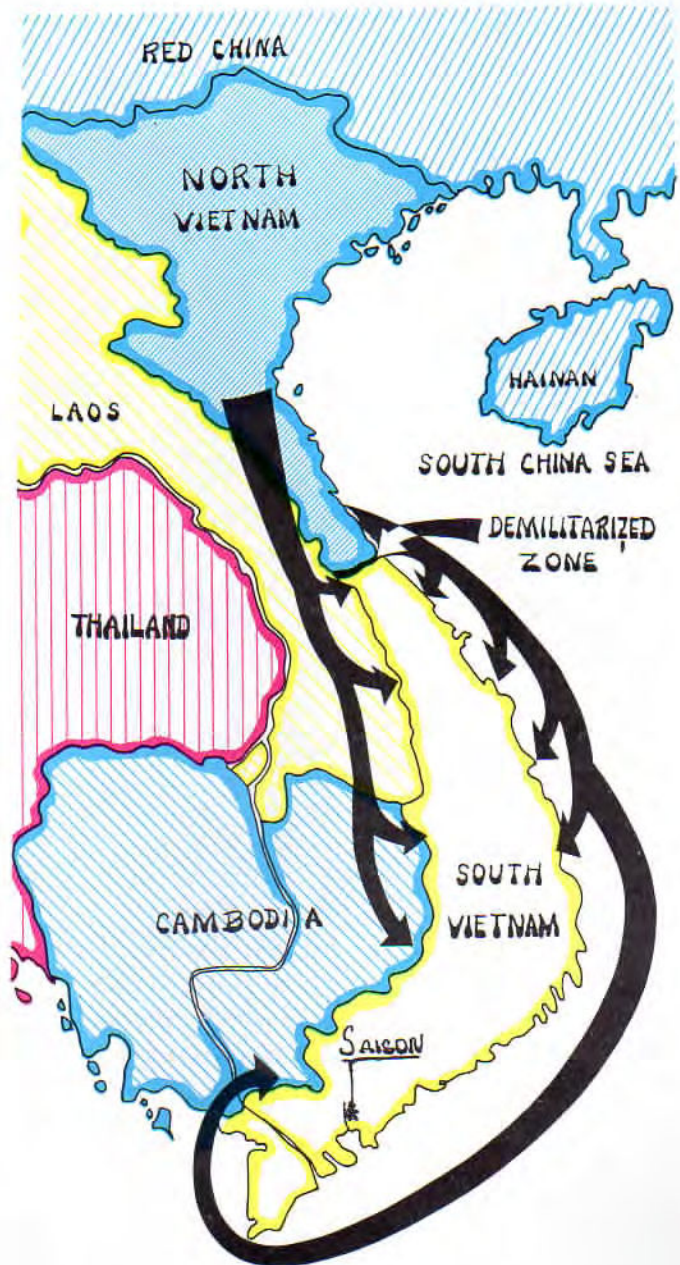
Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent discovery of North Vietnam's support of the southern Communist organization. Reliable sources estimate 40,000 trained military personnel infiltrated from North to South Vietnam through Laos in the five-year period from 1959 through 1964.

HO CHI MINH TRAIL

When an infiltrator arrives at the Laotian border, his North Vietnamese Army uniform is exchanged for a Lao "neutralist" uniform. He must give up all personal effects of an incriminating nature. A local guide takes him halfway to the first of a series of way stations along the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. There he is met by the next guide until the process has led the infiltrator onto South Vietnamese soil.

In South Vietnam he receives a black pajama-like uniform, two unmarked uniforms, rubber sandals, a sweater, a hammock, mosquito netting and waterproof sheeting. After being issued a three-to five-day supply of food and medicines, he is assigned to a unit for operations.

The other infiltration route was by sea. Agents departed from ports just north of the 17th parallel with false identity papers on innocent-looking fishing vessels. However, this route has become virtually closed with improved patrolling



by the South Vietnamese with U.S. Navy assistance.

The Geneva Accords called for a general election in 1955 to unite the two parts of Vietnam. In that year the South Vietnamese Government under Diem rejected the possibility of a free election. The North protested loudly, but without sincerity. After the Geneva Accords, a high North Vietnamese official, Pham Van Dong, was asked who he thought would win such an election. He replied, "You know as well as I do that there won't be any elections."

CLASSIC STRUGGLE

Hanoi was determined to conquer the South with classic guerrilla tactics. The plan called for the three-phased warfare outlined in Mao Tse-tung's early writings. One, the enemy is harassed and weakened by guerrilla-type attacks. Two, he is engaged in mobile warfare by units up to battalion size. And finally, in all-out warfare by regular forces, the ultimate victory is won.

Phase one of the battle occurred from 1954 to roughly 1960. During this period the United States had first assisted the Vietnamese government with economic aid and then added military advisors to assist the country's military and police forces.

Other countries of Europe and Asia and the Americans had economically helped the fledgling South. U.S. aid totalled about \$1.5 billion between 1954 and 1961.

In 1960 the guerrilla warfare intensified and by 1961 had reached the point of open warfare. By now the Viet Cong was reinforced by practically the entire 325th North Vietnamese Regular Army Division. Communist arms and equipment had standardized the supply system of the Viet Cong.

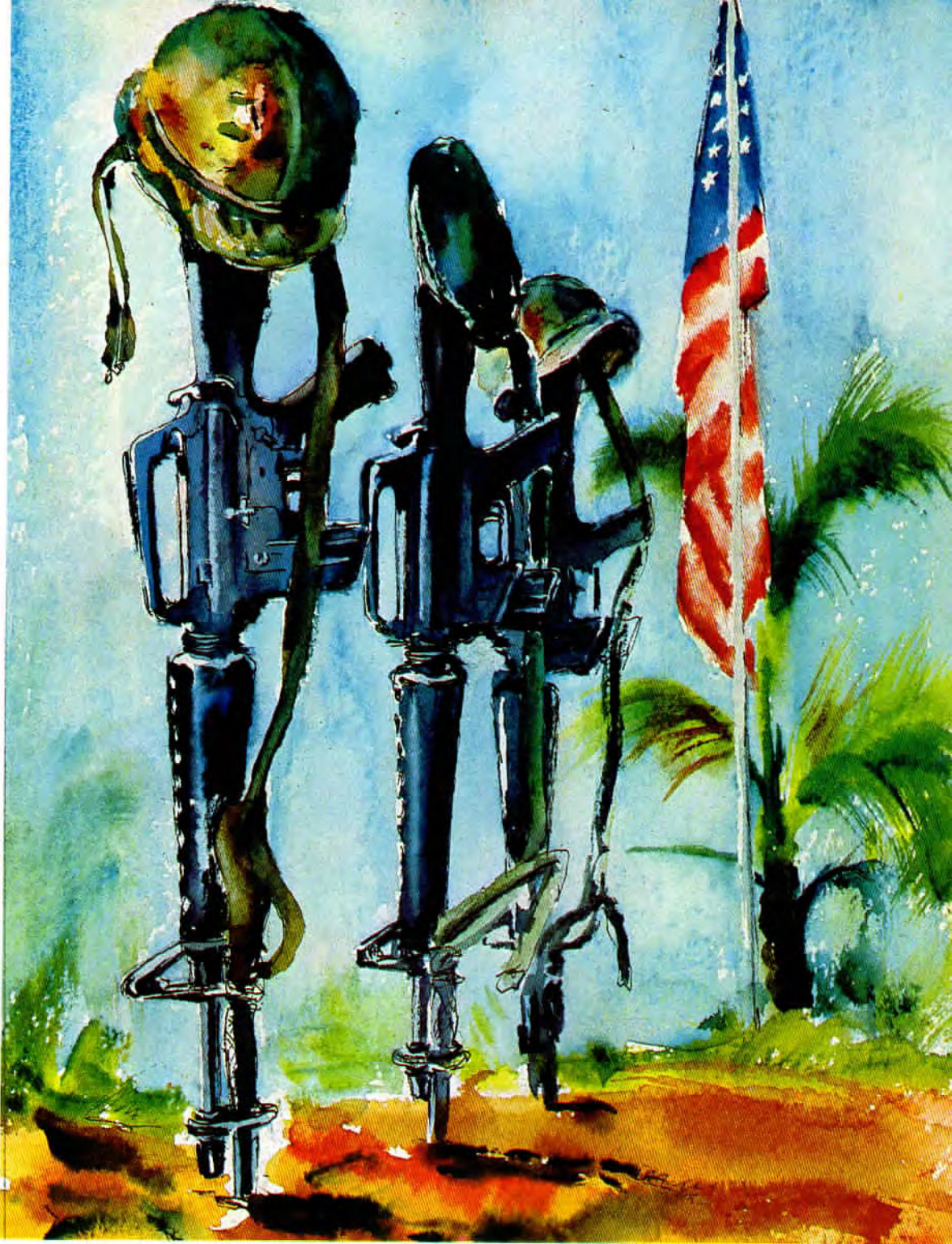
The American advisory forces had grown to approximately 700 men by 1961. It was apparent more assistance was needed to meet the expanded Communist military threat.

In that year President Kennedy made the decision to increase America's commitment to South Vietnam by increasing the number of advisors and by adding pilots and supporting personnel. The President felt he could not abandon South Vietnam without undesirable consequences throughout Asia and the world.

The decision had been made. South Vietnam would not be abandoned. The United States would assist in stopping the spread of aggression in Southeast Asia. In the next three years more decisions would be made. Decisions that would prove America, indeed, was not allowing a "red wave" to sweep over Asia.

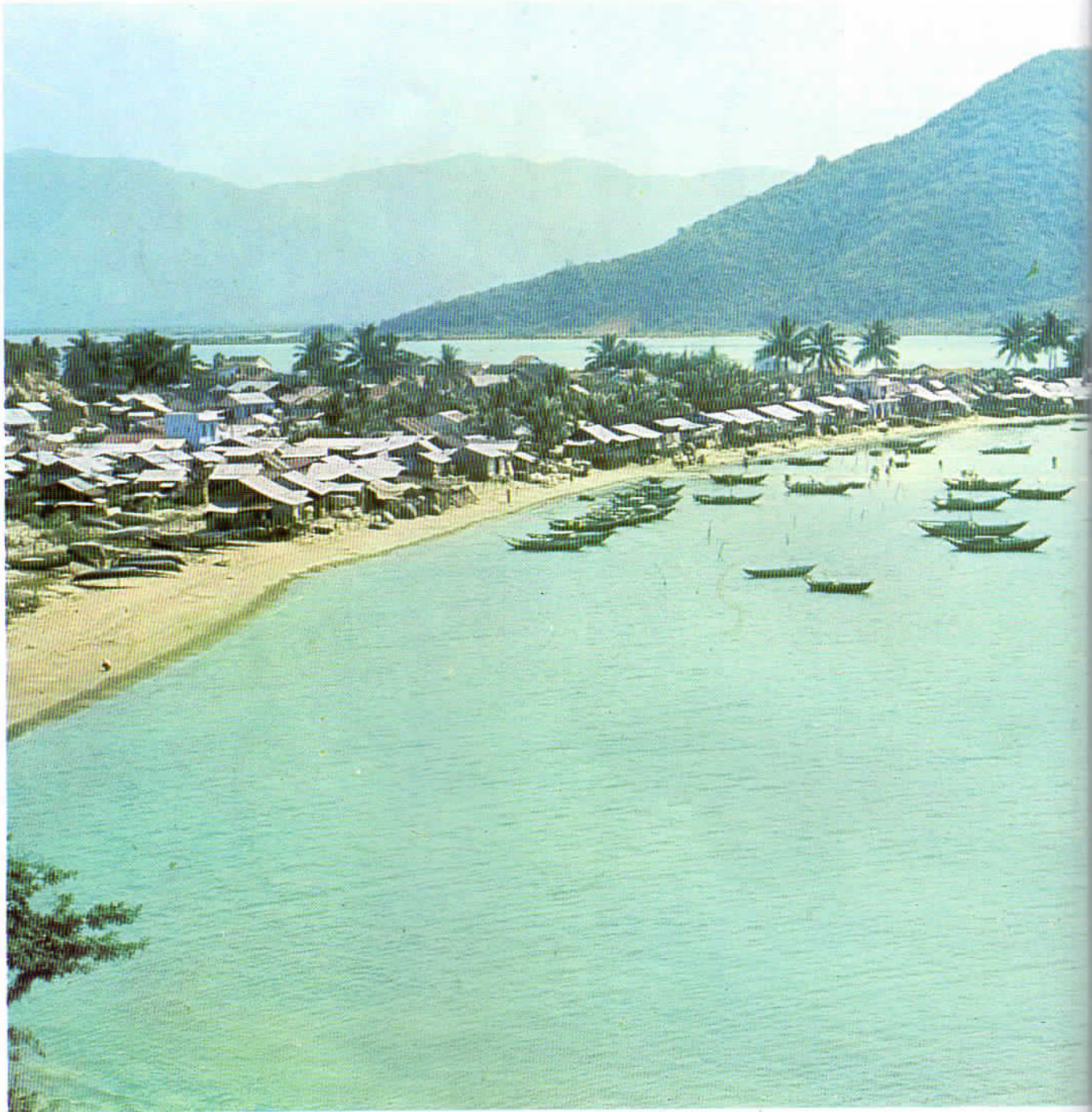


A defiant, hard core Viet Cong soldier glares at the camera as ARVN Rangers prepare to take him back for interrogation.

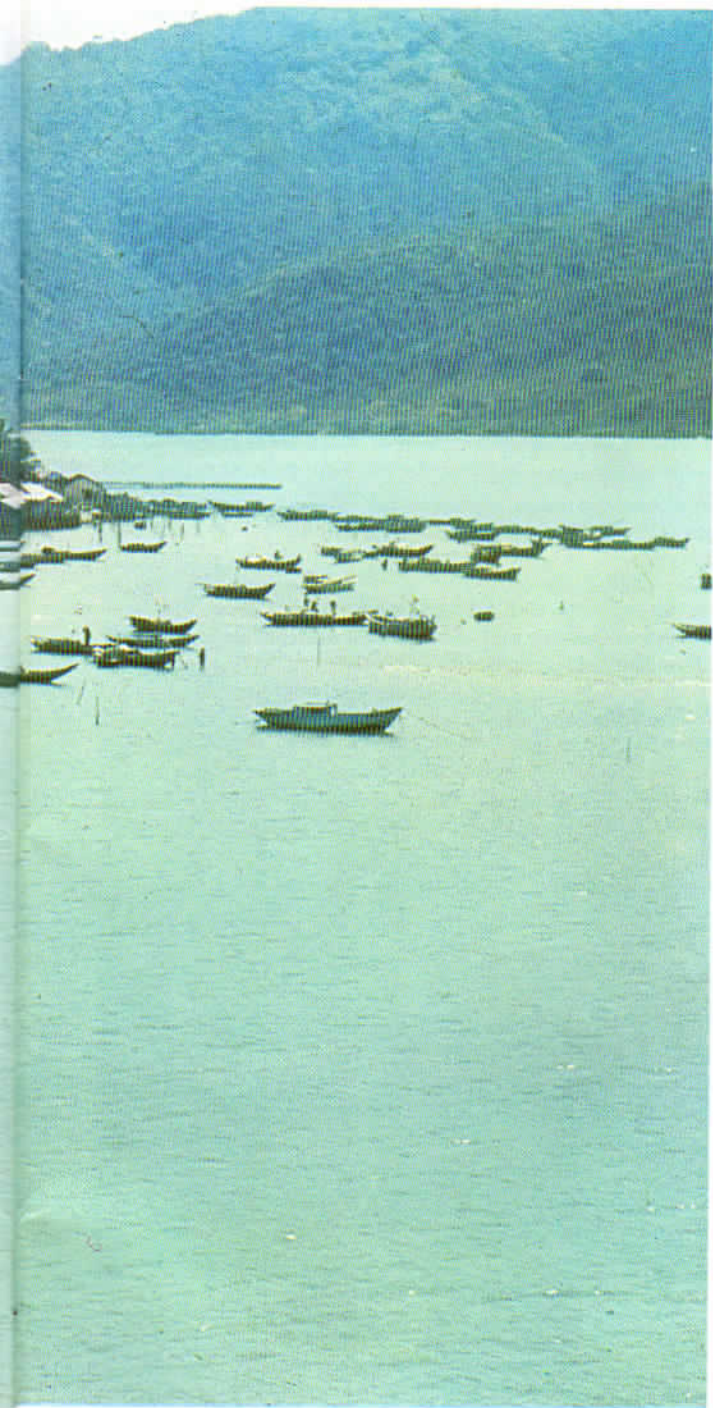


In Memorium

Three days before Christmas, 1961, the first American died by Viet Cong bullets. In memory of the soldiers of USARV who have given their lives here; they shall not be forgotten.



The beauty to be found in Vietnam is shown by this hamlet north of Nha Trang. At the right is the statue of Buddha which overlooks the city and harbor of Nha Trang. Top photo by SSgt. Robert Peterson; right photo by Sp5 Gordon Gahan.



1961-1964

The Darkest Era



The situation was becoming critical in South Vietnam. The Diem government asked for increased U.S. assistance in October, 1961. The American government responded immediately.

Advisors were increased. Supply personnel and helicopter units were also sent to assist the struggling nation. A small logistical team arrived in December, 1961, followed by two Army aviation companies. The entire group numbered less than 500 men.

The first aviation company, the 57th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter), to arrive was put into operation immediately. Ten days after arrival the unit's Shawnee helicopters were flying Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops into combat.

The 57th was quickly followed by the 8th Transportation Company. Both units were later redesignated; the 57th became the 120th Aviation Company and the 8th was renamed the 117th Aviation Company.

The remaining new troops were assigned directly as advisors to ARVN units or to the U.S. Army Support Group, Vietnam, the forerunner of the United States Army, Vietnam.

Each ARVN Corps had attached to it U.S. Army advisory teams. They brought their specialized knowledge in aviation, logistics, planning, ordnance, medical services, communications, artillery and use of paramilitary forces to assist in the battle.

Advisory teams and detachments were dispatched down to battalion level. The arrival of the first elements of the 5th Special Forces Group in 1962 saw special warfare detachments assigned to remote or primitive areas to teach Montagnards and similar groups how to defend themselves.

South Vietnam was in serious danger of being overrun by Communist forces in 1961. Approximately 65 percent of the country was completely or partially under Viet Cong control.

Warfare was leaving the terrorist stage and was now entering into the stage of small unit attacks on strategic hamlets



Vo Chi Cong

Born in 1921 in Quang Nam Province, Vo Chi Cong joined the Communist revolutionaries in his teens. He is one of the major founders of the National Liberation Front and probably a key figure in the People's Revolutionary Party—yet he is an unknown.



Tran Nam Trung

Like Party Chairman Vo, Tran is a militant revolutionary. Born in North Vietnam in 1913 and formerly an officer in the North Vietnamese Army, he is now secretary general of the People's Revolutionary Party, the party that claims to represent the South Vietnamese people.



Helicopters return from lifting ARVN soldiers into battle during the early months of 1963.

and lightly defended villages, although terror attacks were still common as a psychological weapon against the people.

The Communist party in South Vietnam, called the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), claimed nearly 100,000 members. The PRP overtly asserted it was "the vanguard of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the soul of the NLF."

Although denying any ties with Hanoi, Peking or Moscow, beyond the "fraternal ties of Communism," Radio Hanoi announced the PRP's formation on January 18, 1962.

Claims were being made that the NLF was the true government of South Vietnam. In the countryside, the PRP and its military arm, the Viet Cong, were extracting taxes from the peasants, forcibly impressing thousands into their services

and requiring families to provide food, clothing and shelter for them. Whole villages were sometimes required to build bunker and trench systems for guerrillas.

Delegates from the PRP were sent to 30 Asian and African nations, and semi-official diplomatic relations were established with eight Communist countries and three non-Communist governments. These delegates traveled on North Vietnamese passports and used Northern currency, although they claimed to represent the South Vietnamese people.

Despite American assistance, the terror attacks were causing an appalling number of casualties. During the period 1959 through 1964 about 20,000 South Vietnamese military had been killed, over 12,000 captured and 35,000 wounded.

On the civilian scene equally shocking devastation was taking place. During 1963 alone, 17,710 civilian casualties resulted from Communist terrorist activities. This figure breaks down as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Assassinated | |
| Civilian population | 1,558 |
| Local government officials | 415 |
| Civil servants | 100 |
| Injured | 8,375 |
| Kidnaped | 7,262 |

Between January 1, 1961, and August 10, 1964, 181 Americans gave their lives in combat alongside the Vietnamese. Over 900 were wounded during the same period.

The situation was gradually growing more serious. In November, 1963, the political scene was disrupted by the overthrow of the South Vietnamese government and the assassination of President Diem. Almost two years of political unrest and turmoil followed before the crisis was resolved.

The Viet Cong increased their attacks on the people. Refugees flowed into the cities in ever increasing numbers. Saigon's population increased spectacularly. With the refugees were Communist agents.

No longer were the North Vietnamese denying their support of the Viet Cong. It was evident the screen of "civil war" was being cast aside. The North anticipated victory and was striking out in all directions.

Emboldened by their success, the North Vietnamese



Savage VC terror attacks kill and maim innocent Vietnamese civilians. Here an Army sergeant helps a child seriously wounded in a Saigon attack.

"The Vietnam People's Army is a true child of the people. The people, in return, give it unsparing affection and support. Therein lies the inexhaustible source of its power."
—General Vo Nguyen Giap, Commanding General, Viet Minh Forces.

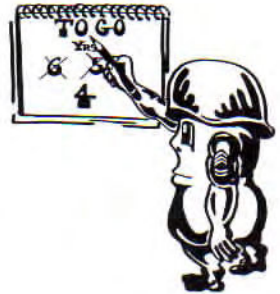
"Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for oneself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing." —Archibald MacLeish.

Every Communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." —Mao Tse-tung, Chairman, Chinese Communist Party.

"Those who voluntarily put power into the hands of a tyrant or an enemy, must not wonder if it be at last turned against themselves." —Aesop.



The USS Maddox was attacked off the coast of North Vietnam on August 2, 1964, thus leading to the Tonkin Resolution.



attacked the 7th Fleet in the Tonkin Gulf. On August 2 and 4, 1964, U.S. destroyers were attacked in international waters off the Vietnamese coast by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

The attack in the Tonkin Gulf proved to be a major blunder on the part of the North. America was quick to react to the attack. President Johnson asked for, and received from Congress, approval to use all available means to defeat the aggressor in South Vietnam.

The August 7th resolution reads:

The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Preparations were made in the United States for the buildup of U.S. forces in South Vietnam. It was apparent that to reverse the Communist threat, ground combat troops would have to be deployed to Vietnam.

Thus, with aggression met by resolve, the darkest era of South Vietnam's history drew to a close. America, joined by other SEATO countries, would respond to South Vietnam's call for assistance.



President Lyndon B. Johnson requested and received permission from Congress to use armed force in the protection of Southeast Asia. Photo by Sp4 Billy McBride.

For Service



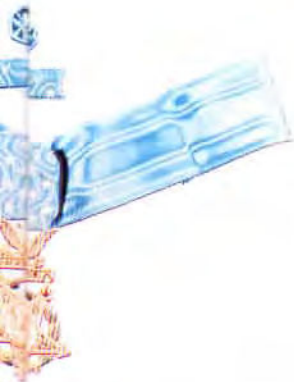
Legion of Merit



Distinguished Flying Cross



Soldiers Medal



Army of Honor



Joint Services Commendation Medal



Army Commendation Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



Vietnam Service Medal



Vietnam Campaign Medal



Unit Award



Meritorious Unit Commendation

For Valor,



Distinguished Service Cross



Distinguished Service Medal



Silver Star



Bronze Star



Air Medal



Medal of Honor



Purple Heart



Good Conduct Medal



National Defense Service Medal



Presidential Unit Citation



1965

The Buildup Begins

United States involvement in South Vietnam increased sharply during 1965. Other Free World Forces joined in the commitment of ground combat troops. Australia, New Zealand and Korea responded with the United States during the year in answer to the challenge of Communist aggression.

The complexion of the war developed from guerrilla warfare and terrorism to large unit actions on the part of the Viet Cong, reinforced by North Vietnamese regular army units. The South Vietnamese Army and the Communists were now engaging in battalion and larger force actions. Guerrilla actions occurred from time to time, and terror still played a prominent part in the Viet Cong strategy.

On February 7, the Viet Cong attacked a U.S. compound at Pleiku and Camp Holloway nearby. Later that same day U.S. aircraft struck the Dong Hoi military barracks just north of the 17th parallel in North Vietnam. Americans were now definitely a Communist target and America was bombing North Vietnam for the first time.

DEPENDENTS EVACUATED

With the war intensifying, President Johnson ordered immediate evacuation of all U.S. dependents in Vietnam. His concern for their safety was warranted, for two days later the VC blew up a hotel in Qui Nhon that housed American enlisted men. Twenty-three died in the attack and 21 were injured. Fourteen Vietnamese were also injured from the attack.

The Viet Cong also suffered a serious toll in February. A supply ship attempting to smuggle 80 tons of arms and ammunition was sunk at Vung Ro Bay.

By mid-March Air Force and Navy aircraft were striking regularly at Communist targets in North and South Vietnam. March also saw the first ground offensive unit from the United States arrive. It was the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines of the 3rd Marine Division.

Little significant ground action took place during the two months of March and April; however, terror attacks on the Americans continued. A car filled with explosives was driven next to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. When the explosives detonated a few moments later two Americans and 11 Vietnamese lost their lives while 143 others were injured.

While killing and maiming scores of civilians, the Communists were keeping a steady barrage of propaganda flowing into the international press decrying the American bombing of North Vietnam, claiming hundreds of civilians were becoming casualties from American raids.

173rd AIRBORNE ARRIVES

In May U.S. forces began to build up in earnest. The Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade was landed in-country and



The old U. S. Embassy in Saigon with many of its windows blown out after a car filled with explosives was detonated beside it. Thirteen died in the vicious enemy attack.



immediately went into tactical operations around Bien Hoa. They were followed by additional Marines and Seabees landing at Chu Lai in the I Corps Tactical Zone. (I CTZ).

The buildup continued in June with the arrival of Australia's first combat troops, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. U.S. combat engineers arrived in force to begin the construction of a deep-draft port and airfield at Cam Ranh Bay. The port was needed to ease the congestion of supply ships at Saigon port.

During this time the VC had been active. A week-long battle round Quang Ngai City resulted in about 500 ARVN casualties. A four-day battle at Dong Xoai, 55 miles north-east of Saigon, resulted in 650 friendly casualties. A bomb exploded in Tan Son Nhut civilian air terminal injuring 46 persons.

Another terrorist incident occurred at the My Canh floating restaurant in the Saigon River. Two claymore mines cost 44 persons their lives and injured 81 others.

A multi-battalion attack on Duc Hoa showed the Communists were settling into conventional warfare in an attempt for complete victory in 1965. They thought they could overcome the Free World and South Vietnamese Forces before the buildup could be accomplished.

BUILDUP CONTINUES

American troops continued to arrive. In July the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and elements of the 1st Logistical Command added to the strength of military forces in the southern portion of the country. Two Marine battalions bolstered forces in the northern provinces.

Communist forces were increasing on a large scale also. The North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) 101st Regiment was definitely identified as being in South Vietnam and the 18th and 95th NVA Regiments were also believed to be completely within South Vietnam's borders.

In the central section of the country, a tactical headquarters was placed at Nha Trang to control new units arriving in the II CTZ. Originally designated Task Force Alpha, the headquarters later became I Field Force Vietnam

(I FFV). The 1st Cavalry Division moved into An Khe while the 173rd Airborne Brigade protected the arrival with Operation Gibraltar in the immediate vicinity. The September operation resulted in 226 Viet Cong killed in three days.

A regimental force of VC attacked the Phu Co outpost near Qui Nhon and before the battle was complete, ARVN troops took a staggering toll of the attackers. Seven hundred Viet Cong died in the encounter.

KOREA CONTRIBUTES DIVISION

Another Free World Force entered Vietnam in October. The Republic of Korea sent its Capitol Division into South Vietnam to help aid a country invaded from the north by Communists as Korea was a decade and a half earlier. During the same period the remaining elements of the 1st Infantry Division arrived.

By November the 1st Cavalry was conducting tactical operations. The prelude to the largest-scale action of the war took place during the first 12 days of the month when the cavalry tangled with a large force west of Plei Me. At the same time the 173rd Airborne battled VC units in War Zone "D" 30 miles northwest of Saigon. The two engagements resulted in over 600 enemy dead and nearly 20 captured.

IA DRANG VALLEY

To the west of Plei Me Communist forces were moving into the Ia Drang Valley intent on colliding with the 1st Cavalry and winning a victory over their "green" troops. The enemy met the 3rd Brigade of the Division, and stood and fought, rather than melt into the jungle after initial contact. When the smoke of battle cleared 1,238 enemy soldiers had died while only one-fifth that number of Americans were killed. The "green" troops and the airmobile concept had proven themselves.

The Communists had suffered a stunning defeat against the Americans in the Ia Drang Valley, but they overran an ARVN unit at the Michelin Plantation in Binh Duong Province, inflicting heavy casualties on the South Vietnamese.



The American buildup in South Vietnam required large quantities of supplies and equipment. Saigon Port is lined with ships unloading. Photo by Sp5 Jim Thornberry.

The VC also countered with terror by detonating a truck laden with explosives at the Metropole Bachelor Enlisted Quarters in Saigon. Eight Americans were killed and 137 injured as a result of the attack.

Before the year closed, the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division deployed from Hawaii. This brought the total strength of U.S. and Free World Military Forces in Vietnam to 181,000 from a beginning figure of 24,000 men—an increase of over seven times. Meanwhile enemy forces had increased from 103,000 at the beginning of the year to an estimated 230,000.

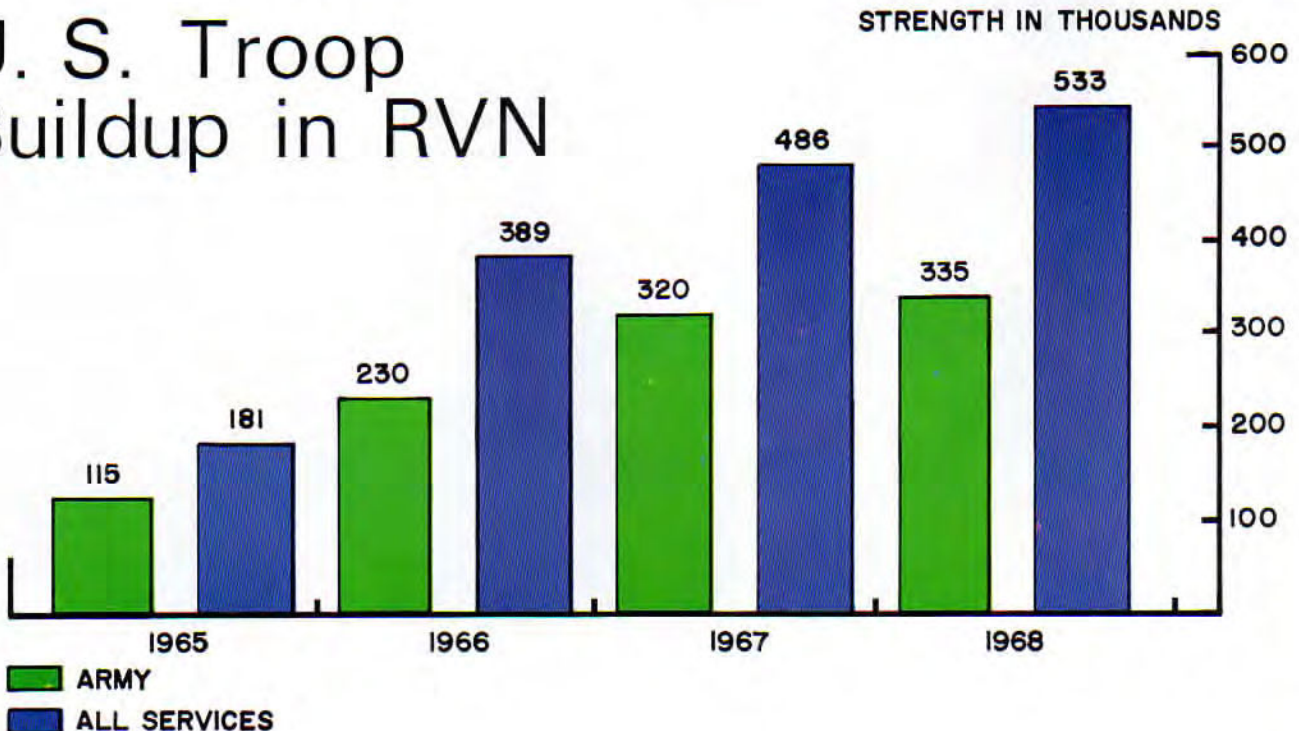
The year had seen U.S. troops penetrate into areas Communists had controlled for years. With the aid of saturation bombing by B-52 bombers, the 1965 monsoon offensive the VC had promised was little more than a small splash. Superior firepower, rapid artillery and air power response, coupled with the helicopter's mobility, were proving that the Communists' attempt to wrap up the war by 1966 was not going to materialize.

On the diplomatic scene Hanoi scorned America's peace overture of a 37-day pause in air strikes over North Vietnam. On the Saigon political front the governmental turmoil was eliminated by the emergence of a military National Leadership Council. The Air Force Commander, Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky became premier, bringing long-needed calm to the government.

1961—1965 CASUALTIES

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>ENEMY KILLED</i> | |
| 27,191 | |
| <i>HOI CHANH</i> | |
| 11,112 | |
| <i>VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS KILLED</i> | |
| 1,800 | |
| <i>ARVN CASUALTIES</i> | |
| Killed | Wounded |
| 1,124 | 23,118 |
| <i>FWMF CASUALTIES</i> | |
| Killed | Wounded |
| 31 | 139 |
| <i>U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES</i> | |
| Killed | Wounded |
| U.S.—1,369 | U.S.—6,114 |

U. S. Troop Buildup in RVN



PROVINCES AND CAPITALS

- 1 QUANG TRI, Quag Tri
- 2 THUA THIEN, Hue
- 3 QUANG MAM, Da Nang, Hoi An
- 4 QUANG TIN, Tam Ky
- 5 QUANG NGAI, Quang Ngai
- 6 KONTUM, Kontum
- 7 BINH DINH, Bong Son, Qui Nhon
- 8 PLEIKU, Pleiku
- 9 PHU BON, Hau Bon
- 10 PHU YEN, Song Cau, Tuy Hoa
- 11 DARLAC, Ban Me Thuot
- 12 KHANH HOA, Nha Trang
- 13 QUANG DUC, Gia Nghia
- 14 TUYEN DUC, Dalat
- 15 NINH THUAN, Phan Rang
- 16 PHUOC LONG, Phuoc Binh
- 17 LAM DONG, Bao Loc, Di Linh
- 18 BINH THUAN, Phan Thiet
- 19 BINH LONG, An Loc
- 20 PHUOC THANH, Phuoc Vinh
- 21 LONG KHANH, Xuan Loc
- 22 BINH THUY, Ham Tan
- 23 TAY NINH, Tay Ninh
- 24 BINH DUONG, Phu Cuong
- 25 BIEN HOA, Bien Hoa
- 26 PHUOC TUY, Ba Ria
- 27 HAU NGHIA, Khiem Cuong
- 28 CHAU DOC, Chau Doc
- 29 KIEN PHONG, Cao Lanh
- 30 KIEN TUONG, Moc Hoa

- 31 LONG AN, Tan An
- 32 KIEN GIANG, Ha Tien
- 33 AN GIANG, Long Xuyen
- 34 DINH TUONG, My Tho
- 35 VINH LONG, Vinh Long
- 36 KIEN HOA, Truc Giang
- 37 GO CONG,
- 38 PHONG DINH, Can Tho
- 39 VINH BINH, Phu Vinh
- 40 CHUONG THIEN, Vi Thanh
- 41 BA XUYEN, Khanh Hung
- 42 BAC LIEU, Bac Lieu
- 43 AN XUYEN, Quan Long
- 44 PHU QUOC, Duong Dong
- 45 GIA DINH, Saigon

CAPITAL ZONE

I CORPS

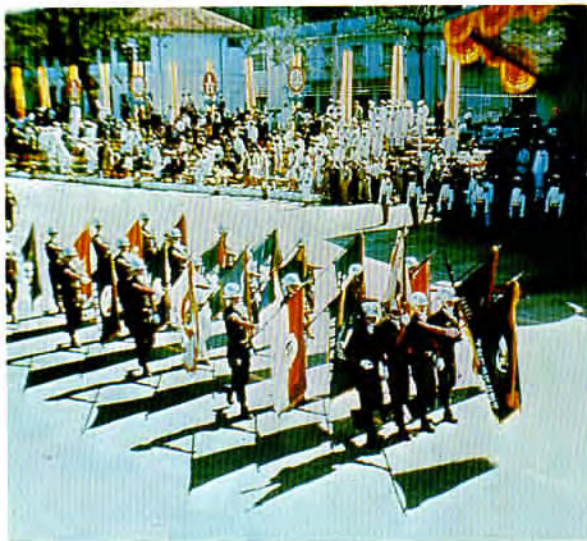
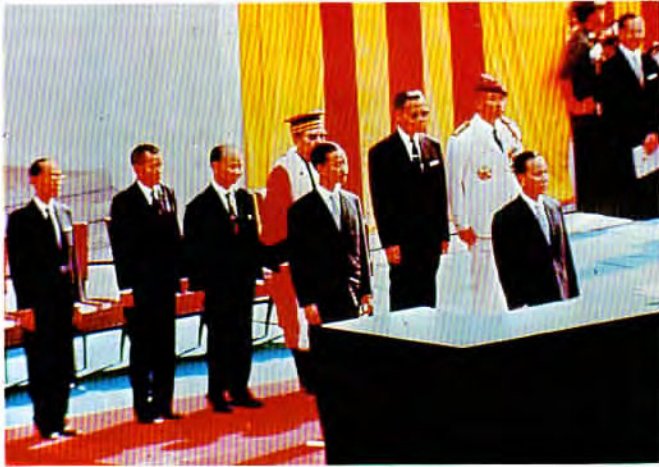
II CORPS

III CORPS

IV CORPS

LEGEND

- CORPS BOUNDARIES
- - - PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
- LOCATION, PROVINCE CAPITALS
- ⊙ NATIONAL CAPITAL



The Presidential inauguration included the oath-taking ceremonies of President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, and a parade celebrating both the inauguration and National Day.



1966

The Counteroffensive

The year 1966 was marked by military, political and diplomatic changes in South Vietnam. For the first time, Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) of America, Australia, Korea and South Vietnam were actively entering Viet Cong strongholds, breaking the enemy's strangle-hold on the people. Charlie was losing his rice, ammunition and weapons caches. The FWMAF were beginning the first phase of the counteroffensive.

Politically the year produced some of the worst setbacks of the new government's history. Armed forces were used on occasion to control riots. The turmoil was resolved by governmental reform and resulted in improved conditions for the Vietnamese people.

The diplomatic scene was one of harmony with several high-level meetings taking place during the year to smooth out strategy and policy for the war.

VC SANCTUARIES CRACKED

During January the 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment launched a seven-day sweep into an area near the Cambodian border in search of two VC battalions. The penetration of this one time sanctuary resulted in over 400 enemy deaths.

The 25th Infantry Division teamed up with the 173rd and Australians to uncover an enemy headquarters complex with extensive tunnel systems. In the operation large quantities

of weapons and ammunition were captured.

Korean troops began an operation in Binh Dinh Province that resulted in 250 enemy killed.

In the past VC tax collectors had bled off large percentages of the rice harvest. The 101st Airborne's 1st Brigade and Korean Marines were sent into Phu Yen Province to secure the rice harvest and prevent VC taxation of the 30,000-ton crop.

Prior to Tet's 84-hour truce, the Viet Cong were busy attacking targets ranging from the airfield at Da Nang, a Special Forces camp, and a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) outpost to exploding a claymore mine outside the main gate of Tan Son Nhut Air base. They detonated two charges at a U.S. Bachelor Enlisted Quarters in Dalat; the Vo Khia New Life Hamlet was attacked and USAID representative Douglas Ramsey was kidnaped in another action.

The truce was marred by over 100 violations by the Viet Cong.

Later in January the 1st Cavalry Division joined with Vietnamese and Korean units for a 42-day operation near Bong Son that resulted in nearly 2,400 enemy dead.

OPERATIONS HURT CHARLIE

Military action in the next two months took a heavy toll on the enemy's ranks and base camps. The 1st Infantry

A patrol winds its way through the fertile fields in the never-ending search for the enemy.



Phase I



Division's Operation Rolling Stone resulted in 150 VC killed. The 101st's Operation Harrison in Phu Yen Province; the 3rd Brigade, 25th Division's Operation Garfield in Darlac Province; and the combined force in the Song Be River operation all turned up enemy camps, weapons and ammunition.

At Bien Hoa, II Field Force Vietnam (II FFV) was activated to control U.S. forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone.

The VC later attacked the 1st Cavalry's base camp at An Khe, resulting in seven deaths on each side. The supply ship SS Paloma was sprayed with machinegun and 57 mm recoilless fire southeast of Nha Be. The ship, although heavily damaged, arrived at Saigon port under its own power.

CHIEU HOI PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL

A program designed to bring the Viet Cong back to the government, called the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) Program, met with spectacular success in March with a record-setting 2,336 Hoi Chanh (returnees) in the 31-day period.

With the increase of troops in the Saigon area, Headquarters Area Command (HAC) was activated to provide support functions for all services in the capital city. The 1st Signal Brigade was also activated in early April.

HAC's first chore was to increase security of Saigon's installations to protect against terrorist attack. The explosion of approximately 450 pounds of explosives at the Victoria BOQ, extensively damaging the first three floors and killing six and injuring 116, demonstrated the need for additional security precautions.

BUILDUP CONTINUES

The buildup of forces continued with the arrival of the USS Corpus Christi Bay at Cam Ranh Bay to provide a floating maintenance facility for Army helicopters, and the Royal Australian Task Force entered the country.

As mid-year approached, the threatened VC monsoon offensive was blunted by several operations. One found the 1st Infantry Division penetrating deep into War Zone C near Tay Ninh. No friendly troops had been in the area for five years. Large quantities of supplies were captured. In Pleiku Province along the Cambodian border, ARVN and 25th Division troops killed 546 of the enemy.

In III CTZ a sweep through Binh Long Province by the 1st Infantry Division and 5th ARVN Division cost the Viet Cong 855 men in a little over a month. In Kontum Province the 101st and ARVN units accounted for 531 more enemy



A Hoi Chanh asks his trapped comrades to surrender during a 101st Airborne Division cordon operation.

deaths. This action was near a city to become famous 18 months later—Dak To.

Terror attacks included a mine explosion at the Brinks Hotel in Saigon and attacks on Regional and Popular Force outposts and small CIDG units.

U.S. planes faced an increasing number of Russian-made surface-to-air (SAM) missiles over North Vietnam. Twenty-five SAMs were launched against American planes during one day without recording a hit. In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh announced a partial mobilization of the country.

Units continued to arrive to support the counteroffensive. In August elements of the 4th Infantry Division landed at Qui Nhon, and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the first of a 2,000-man Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG) arrived.

In September the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, a Spanish Medical Team and the German hospital ship Helgoland arrived, plus the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

ENEMY OFF BALANCE

Two U.S. operations, Attleboro and Irving, kept the enemy off balance. The 1st Cavalry accounted for 230 Viet Cong killed in Binh Dinh Province, while the 196th Light Infantry



The Counter-Offensive



Brigade and elements of the 1st, 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions and 173rd Airborne Brigade mauled the 9th VC Division, killing over 1,100 in Operation Attleboro. The force captured the largest rice cache of the war with a 1,121-ton find.

October action saw a combined force of the 1st Cavalry, Koreans and Vietnamese killing 681 Viet Cong in Operation Irving. To avoid the superior firepower of the Americans the enemy tried to break contact as quickly as possible. The enemy confined their raids to the northern provinces where their supply lines were shorter, and to scattered attacks on ARVN outposts.

Operation Paul Revere whittled another 1,000 from the enemy's ranks and cost them 300 weapons. Viet Cong losses were running high and the enemy brought in the North Vietnamese 5th Division to bolster their forces.

November was marked by increased VC raiding. The 4th Infantry Division, operating west of Plei Djereng, withstood

a mortar barrage of over 500 rounds; National Day celebrations in Saigon were interrupted by two dozen 57 mm recoilless rounds; the 196th's base camp near Tay Ninh was hit; and a portion of the Long Binh ammunition dump was blown up by satchel charges, resulting in 11,000 rounds of 105 mm ammunition destroyed.

The dump was struck again in December and Tan Son Nhut airbase sustained a raid in which guerrillas penetrated the perimeter. The airfield attack cost the enemy 31 dead and three Americans were killed.

The high ratio of enemy deaths to U.S. losses was exemplified by an ambush of a recon platoon of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Rapid reaction by artillery, air strikes and relief troops turned the ambush into a defeat for the Viet Cong. Only one American lost his life while the enemy sacrificed 94 men.

At the close of the year the first elements of the 9th Infantry Division arrived to bring U.S. troop strength to 361,000



The German hospital ship Helgoland provides floating medical and surgical facilities to care for sick and wounded Vietnamese. Photo by LTC Roy Wells.

DIPLOMATIC HARMONY

The year was marked by harmony on the diplomatic front. To set the stage for high-level discussions, Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited the country in January. This was followed the next month by Premier Ky, Chief of State Thieu, and President Johnson meeting in Honolulu for a two-day conference on political, social and economic aspects of the war. Vice President Humphrey visited South Vietnam later in February.

Another conference for the heads of state was held in Manila in October. Secretary of Defense McNamara visited Vietnam prior to the Philippine meeting.

Attending that conference were the chiefs of state of the United States, Australia, Korea, New Zealand, Thailand, South Vietnam and the Philippines.

POLITICAL FRONT IN FLAMES

On the political front Premier Ky headed off a military coup with the arrest of several junior officers from the armed forces. He also announced general elections would be held in 1967, and a constitutional referendum in October 1966.



A monk uses a loudspeaker to talk to a crowd during the Buddhist demonstrations throughout the country.

ENEMY KILLED

55,436

HOI CHANH

20,242

VIETNAMESE ABDUCTED

3,507

VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS KILLED

1,618

ARVN CASUALTIES

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Killed | Wounded |
|--------|---------|

| | |
|--------|--------|
| 11,953 | 20,975 |
|--------|--------|

FWMF CASUALTIES

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Killed | Wounded |
|--------|---------|

| | |
|-----|-------|
| 566 | 1,591 |
|-----|-------|

U. S. MILITARY CASUALTIES

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Killed | Wounded |
|--------|---------|

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| Army—3,073 | Army—18,363 |
|------------|-------------|

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| U. S.—5,008 | U. S.—30,093 |
|-------------|--------------|

The political calm was shattered in April, when the I Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, considered a potential political rival of Premier Ky, was relieved from his command. A demonstration by 2,000 persons in Da Nang was followed by Buddhist protests in Hue, Saigon and Hoi An.

A call for a general strike closed the port of Da Nang and 20,000 Buddhists rallied to demonstrate in the old imperial capital city of Hue. The unrest continued into early April, resulting in anti-government groups forming in the major cities of the Republic. Government troops moved into Da Nang in a show of force while turmoil and demonstrations continued in Hue, Dalat, and Nha Trang. By April 12, the situation appeared resolved as anti-government forces pledged to fight against Communism alongside the government.

The National Political Congress closed with the announcement that a constituent assembly would be elected in five months. An apparent calm settled over the country.

In late May the political waters were again muddied by Buddhist and anti-government forces rising in Da Nang and Hue. A Buddhist nun burned herself to death in protest against the government. This was the first of several acts of self-immolation. In Hue the U.S. consulate was sacked and burned.

Marine operations in the I Corps were delayed by Buddhists placing altars in the streets of Hue. Government troops and riot police finally cleared the streets and arrested some of the dissident leaders to bring an end to the protests.

Things settled down for the remainder of the year: however, the Saigon dock strike broke the seeming serenity. On the positive side the new South Vietnamese constitution's first three articles were approved.

... 1966 CASUALTIES

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AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 VETERAN'S RELIEF FUND

The American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund was formed back in August of 2016. The American Legion Post 9 was involved in a Gospel/Patriotic Concert that was presented at the Central Lutheran Church. This concert was presented in four consecutive days. The concert was the work of about 30-40 very dedicated individuals who practiced once every week for about a year. The concert was a great success and was so much fun just to listen to. The concert was no charge to those attending. At the end of each performance the American Legion Burial Detail asked for donations. We raised \$12900.00 in donations after those four performances. We were amazed at how appreciative the audience was. And the amount of donations we received. These funds were to be used to help veterans. Thus the formation of the American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund. All requests for donations are done through the Winona County Veterans Service office. Tom and Rolando, our Winona County Veterans Service Officers, first qualify the person as a Veteran. And Tom and Rolando then ascertain that the request is a valid request.

The fund has provided assistance for electric, water and gas bills, water heaters, heating and cooling equipment, rent, car repairs, property tax, phone bills, lodging, medical bills, mobility products, food cards, and even assistance with funerals.

Once the requests are approved by the County Veterans Service Officers, the checks are written and sent directly to the vendor. This fund is the most direct help to Veterans in the County.

This fund has gone a long way in providing assistance to Winona County Veterans in their time of need. These funds are available to all Winona County Veterans and Veterans do not have to be a member of the American Legion to receive assistance. Over the years we have provided about \$45,000.00 in assistance to 200 plus veterans. We are always asking for assistance in keeping this fund going. Donations to the fund can be made by writing your check to the American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund. I would like to add that the fund has no administration costs. 100% of funds donated go to help Winona County Veterans.

Your donation will be greatly appreciated by American Legion Post 9, and the Veterans we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of our Veterans Relief Fund.

Respectfully presented.

Sam Sasser

American Legion Post 9 Adjutant



July 2026



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| | | | 1 Rotary 11am NO Bingo | 2 Hiawatha Marines 7p SE Patriot 7pm | 3 | 4 Celebrate 250 Years!!! USA! USA! |
| 5 Party in bar 4pm | 6 ALR Meeting 5:30pm | 7 Noon Lions 6p Coast Guard Meeting 7pm | 8 Rotary 11am NO Bingo | 9 | 10 | 11 40th Class Reunion |
| 12 Celebration Of Life | 13 SAL Meeting 6:30pm | 14 Exec/Post Meeting 5pm WING NITE! 5:30PM | 15 Rotary 11am NO Bingo | 16 HCO Meeting 8am SE Patriots 7pm | 17 | 18 Card Show 9am Cotter Class of '71 Reunion Local Lodge 1030 Mtg 6:30pm |
| 19 Retirement Party in bar 1-5pm | 20 Kwik Trip Meeting 8am | 21 Noon Lions 6p | 22 Rotary 11am NO Bingo | 23 Kwik Trip Meeting 8am | 24 Party in bar | 25 WSHS Class of '76 Reunion 4-11pm |
| 26 | 27 Red Cross 12-6pm | 28 | 29 Rotary 11am NO Bingo | 30 SE Patriot Mtg 7pm | 31 | |



August 2026



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | | | | 1 Birthday Party In hall 12-4pm Class Reunion 5pm |
| 2 | 3 ALR Meeting 5:30pm | 4 Noon Lions 6pm Coast Guard Meeting 7pm | 5 Rotary 11a Bingo 7pm | 6 Hiawatha Marines 7pm | 7 Class of 1970 Reunion 5pm | 8 50th Anniversary Party |
| 9 Legion Picnic Fun, Food, Games Join Us!!! | 10 SAL Meeting 6:30pm | 11 Exec/Post Mtg 5pm WING NITE!!! 5:30PM | 12 Rotary 11a Bingo 7pm | 13 | 14 | 15 Class of '66 Reunion 4pm Local Lodge 1030 at 6:30 |
| 16 | 17 DAR Meeting 6:30pm | 18 Noon Lions 6p | 19 Rotary 11a Bingo 7pm | 20 | 21 Life Line Screening 8:30am | 22 Celebrating Aging Expo 9am |
| 23 Bridal Shower 1pm | 24 | 25 Red Cross 12-6pm | 26 Rotary 11a Bingo 7pm | 27 | 28 | 29 ALR Island City Ride!!!! |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |



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