



Marine Corps Historical Collection

Coordinators welcome visitors to the "New Horizon Refugee Center." Mrs. Gerald Ford, flanked by BGen Paul G. Graham, military coordinator, and Nicholas G. Thorne, senior civil coordinator, greets Mr. Joseph Battaglia of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

A bus from Camp Pendleton loads newly arrived Vietnamese refugees at the air passenger terminal at Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, California. Operation New Arrival would eventually process more than 50,000 refugees before its conclusion in November 1975.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 8809675



evacuee program. To fund this task, Congress had enacted the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act which authorized the expenditure of \$455 million, to which President Ford had added \$98 million more. Beneath this State Department and Congressional umbrella existed the dual chain of command.

General Graham served as the military coordinator while retaining his title of installation commander, and Nicholas G. Thorne (a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve) served as the civil coordinator. All matters of controversy had to be resolved by joint agreement. Fortunately, due to the personalities involved, this convoluted arrangement never became a problem. It could have very easily become a major stumbling block save for Graham's and Thorne's efforts to work together.

An example of the potential for command conflict occurred the day after the first load of refugees arrived. Although relatively insignificant, it pointed up the need to maintain liaison and unity of command. Pendleton officials said in their description of the event that the first aircraft arrived in the middle of the night (0200) with no prior notice and that no processing occurred until the next morning, while El Toro officers reported that the "First aircraft arrived Marine Corps Air Station El Toro approximately 1000 (local), processing smooth, no significant problems."⁶⁰ Why the two commands disagreed over this minor point cannot be explained, but it does illustrate the ease with which confusion and disagreements can occur. Add to that mixture the ingredient of multiple commanders, and the results could be confounding. In this particular operation, one more commander joined the chain of command when headquarters directed the commanding general of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing to provide air support. In response, Major General William R. Quinn ordered Marine Aircraft Group 16 to "... provide helicopter support for Operation New Arrival to consist of one VIP configured CH-46 and one UH-1E on strip alert at MCAF Camp Pendleton from 0800-1700 daily, Monday through Friday, under the operational control of Marine Aircraft Group 16 Detachment." Fortunately, the addition of another commander did not alter the command structure or the spirit of cooperation.⁶¹

Despite the fairly complex chain of command and multiple commands involved, the Marines quickly and handily constructed seven camps in the Cristianitos-Camp Talega area and one camp in the San Onofre

area. This exceeded the requirements contained in the original order which stated, "Construct five tent camps in the Camp Talega-Cristianitos Areas with the capability of billeting and feeding approximately 18,000 refugees; billet and feed approximately 4,000 more refugees in quonset huts in Camp Talega and San Onofre."⁶² Ultimately, General Graham's Marines would erect more than 1,000 tents and process more than 50,000 refugees. The most difficult period would be the first week when the refugee population increased from 800 to 18,000 in five days. He explained some of the challenges: "A lot of people don't understand when you say you put up 1,100 tents. It has no impact on them. It's only when you tell them that a tent weighs 360 pounds and that it takes about ten men to unpackage it and to get all of the poles and all of the guide wires, and manhandle this thing and erect it; and it takes thirty, thirty-five minutes for a good crew to erect one tent."⁶³

The sizeable cost involved in erecting and overseeing a city within a city also indicated the effort expended. The total operational cost of \$15.5 million included necessities: refuse collection and disposal, \$84,456; water, \$28,497; sewage disposal, \$58,761; and electricity, \$62,146. In and of themselves, these statistics do not reveal the most significant factor, that the entire west coast Marine Corps organization participated in this operation. The carpenter shop alone, "used 216,000 board feet of lumber, 4,500 sheets of plywood and 2,850 pounds of nails."⁶⁴

On 29 April, General Cushman stated that the Marine Corps' involvement and purpose in this operation was twofold: to establish a port of entry at MCAS El Toro and to create a refugee center at Camp Pendleton. The Marine Corps accomplished both goals within the first week of the operation. General Graham was instrumental in achieving the second goal by overseeing and coordinating the building and sustaining of the camps. Still, all refugee matters had to be coordinated with the Senior Civil Coordinator, Mr. Thorne, whose responsibilities included processing the evacuees and managing all of the participating civilian agencies. Both men set up their own internal organization which for General Graham eventually consisted of 77 officers and 1,205 Marines. Graham placed Colonel John F. Roche III in charge of this organization, entitled New Arrivals Military Coordination Center.

Within this structure, General Graham created an operations section which oversaw the movement of the refugee from El Toro to his new, albeit, temporary home. Additionally, it contained a security section



Department of Defense Photos (USMC) A357525 and A357508
Vietnamese children learn American ways fast. Both of the children, above and below, are assisted by members of Operation New Arrival at Camp Pendleton.



which provided for the safety of all occupants and camp workers, and various other support elements such as refugee affairs, communications, logistics, and medical.⁶⁵

Once organized, this staffing structure functioned smoothly and efficiently. After Colonel George A. Merrill and Colonel Robert W. Calvert and the 1st and 7th Engineer Battalions, assisted by the 1st Shore Party Battalion, completed the camp construction on 4 May, it simply became a matter of improving and refining the product. Colonel Roche, the officer-in-charge, wrote: "The Herculean task of completing a camp of 18,000 people was accomplished in less than six days. The accommodations though Spartan at first, were continually expanded and improved, providing not only the necessities of life but also many comforts and amenities for the refugee population."⁶⁶

The day after the completion of the last camp (on 5 May), the former Vice President of South Vietnam, Nguyen Cao Ky, arrived.* Four days later, the camp population peaked at 18,608,** and then the sense of urgency that had gripped the Marines since their last-minute notification, began to subside. It gradually turned into a daily routine of insuring that the refugees had everything they needed including a locally produced Vietnamese newspaper. The daily routine was somewhat altered on 30 June when the senior military coordinator retired from the Marine Corps, but General Graham quickly returned to his former position. On 2 July, the Marine Corps recalled him to active duty.⁶⁷

The refugee center continued in operation well beyond the arrival of the last refugee in mid-July 1975. Between mid-May and the end of July, Mr. Thorne and his civilian organization found new homes and sponsors for 29,135 evacuees, in effect, freedom and a new

*Colonel Woodham related the events surrounding Vice President Ky's arrival and how Camp Pendleton had received detailed guidance from the State Department and Headquarters Marine Corps on how to behave. Despite specific instructions to all concerned to the contrary, Ky was still waited upon as though royalty and served his meal the first day of his arrival. Woodham said, "A Marine captain had made an independent moral decision that 'no vice-president' of an allied nation would have to stand in line for his food. He was immediately relieved and returned to his base." Unfortunately Colonel Woodham gained knowledge of this by watching the evening news. Upon calling the camp, Colonel Coffman, its commander, replied that the story was false. Shortly thereafter a return call from the camp revealed that the evening news report was indeed correct. Woodham Comments.

**Actually, the camp complex reached its maximum occupancy on 13 July at 20,048, but this came after an increase in the size of the original facilities. NewArr AAR.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A357523

Former South Vietnamese Vice President Ky enjoys the attention of the media. His presence and the nation's interest created a media challenge for BGen Graham and his staff.

beginning. Yet despite these relocations, Camp Pendleton still housed more than 18,000 Vietnamese and Cambodians*. By October, less than three months later, all but a few hundred refugees had been placed. In the final report, Colonel Roche stated, "On 31 October, the last eleven Thai Dam refugees departed and the Camp Pendleton portion of Operation 'New Arrivals' was completed — mission accomplished."⁶⁸

By September, the New Arrival Task Force had become so organized that Colonel Roche issued a phase-down plan. In part, it said that phasedown would begin about 15 September and be conducted in increments. The plan projected 1 November as the closeout date for all refugee operations.⁶⁹ The camp officially closed on 15 November.

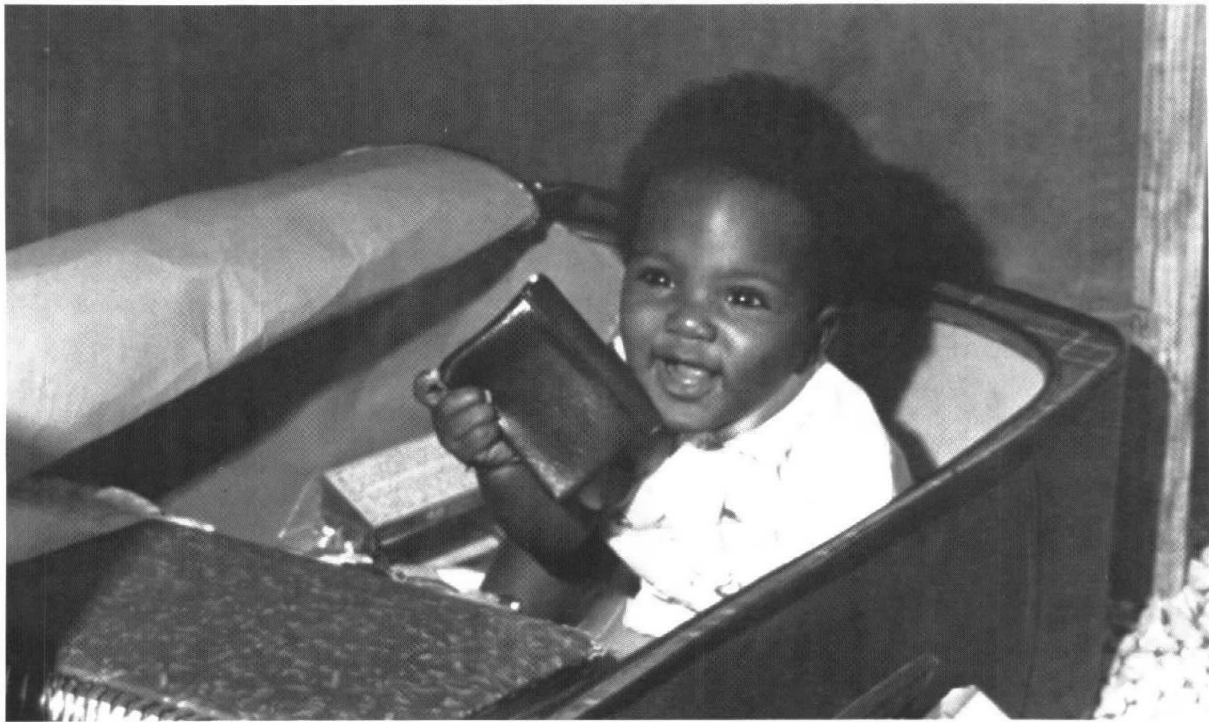
Certainly more than satisfied with the accomplishments of his Marines, General Graham noted in his summary of lessons learned that the paucity of available information on refugee operations and the dual chain of command caused him numerous problems

*Included in this total were a few hundred Cambodians evacuated during Operation Eagle Pull.

throughout the operation.** To eliminate this in the future, he encouraged the publication of a manual on

**General Graham in recent comments on this operation singled out two officers who contributed significantly to the success of this operation and he felt deserved recognition. He related that: "Colonel George A. Merrill was directly responsible for organizing and obtaining the logistical support for the refugee camps. For the first few critical weeks of the operation, he was instrumental in establishing the tent camps as well as the billeting, messing, and sanitation facilities and the myriad associated details. Without his efforts to ensure that these necessities were in place and functioning in an exceptionally short period of time, Operation New Arrival could have encountered major difficulties and the inevitable backlash of criticism from the national and world news media.

"Lieutenant Colonel Arthur P. Brill, Jr., found himself in the unique position of having to deal with the media. He was the Base Public Affairs Officer and a few days after the arrival of the refugees, it became obvious that the public affairs aspect of the operation would have a major impact on the image of the Marine Corps and the Administration. Well over 100 reporters from the major wire services, the press, television and radio, both national and international, descended on Camp Pendleton, clamoring for information on the refugees. It was equally obvious that I did not have the time to deal with them. I therefore assigned Lieutenant Colonel Brill to the camp on a full-time basis. His handling of the media was superb and it resulted in outstanding and positive news coverage throughout the operation." Graham Comments.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 8607521

One of thousands of satisfied customers, this Amerasian child is packed and ready to go. The Marines helped to introduce more than 50,000 refugees into American society.

this type of operation: "In any future operations of a like nature, . . . there must be a clearly defined chain of command with full authority and responsibility vested in a single individual."*⁷⁰

Ultimately, it came down to command and control and the results proved that nothing can supplant good organization and enthusiasm, especially when dealing with unfamiliar situations. General Graham underscored the knowledge and experience the Marine Corps had gained as a result of Operation New Arrival

*To date, no such manual has been published.

(whose name had been changed three times before this final choice) when he said, "We've refined that process a thousand-fold since then and we're not doing what we were doing in the early stages."⁷¹ The Marine Corps learned a lot about refugee operations over the course of six months and in the process, helped to move nearly 50,000 South Vietnamese and Cambodians into the mainstream of American society.**

**The U.S. Marine Corps, constituting one-sixth of the nation's Naval Service members, in 1975 processed over one-third of the Indochina refugees in less than seven months.

PART VI
AFTER 'VIETNAM'

CHAPTER 13

Recovery of the SS *Mayaguez*

*The Mayaguez Crisis—The Initial Decisions—Assault Preparations—The First Assault Wave
The Linkup—The Second Wave—The Retrograde—The Aftermath*

While General Graham and his staff discussed expanding the refugee facility at Camp Pendleton, on 12 May 1975, the SS *Mayaguez* steamed off the coast of Cambodia, its crew not suspecting that they would become the center of world attention for the next five days. Nor did they realize that the approaching Cambodian gunboats intended to halt, board, and seize their ship.

The ship's captain, called a master, Charles T. Miller, recorded in the *Mayaguez's* log book what happened: "On May 12, 1975 at approximately 1410 hours the vessel was challenged by Cambodian gunboat P128. At 1420 hours reduced to maneuvering speed and gunboat fires antiaircraft machine guns across starboard bow. . . . 1435 [hours] vessel boarded by 7 armed men carrying AK 47s, shoulder held rocket launchers, and grenade launchers."¹

The Mayaguez Crisis

When informed of the Cambodian action, President Ford decided on a quick response. He notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff of his desire to react to this piracy in the swiftest manner possible. Ron Nessen, the President's press secretary, said failure to release the crew and their vessel "would have the most serious consequences."² Symbolically, the seizure occurred exactly one month after the Marines of III MAF evacuated the last Americans from Cambodia. America seemed determined to avoid another "*Pueblo* crisis," even if it meant a military response.* Senator John Sparkman, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, declared "We ought to go after it. . . . We should get that ship back . . . anyway that we can."³

Ultimately, the President elected to attempt to get the ship back by using his military option. Although a joint service operation and rescue, it would be the Marines of III MAF who would attempt to rescue the *Mayaguez's* crew and the *Mayaguez*, by employing two simultaneous and coordinated raids. The complexity and awkwardness of the command relationships in this joint military venture became further clouded by the lack of intelligence on the crew's whereabouts. For

most of the crisis, no one in the joint chain of command knew with any certainty where the Cambodians had taken the crew and the absence of this information seriously affected all of the participants' decisions, and at times even obscured their objectives. It was, at a minimum, a very difficult situation, made worse at times by the confusing and complicated operational chain of command.⁴

At 1400 on 12 May, the *Mayaguez* and its crew were in international waters near the coast of the new Khmer Rouge "republic" (renamed Kampuchea by the victorious Communists). Despite the fact that the *Mayaguez* was well beyond Cambodia's territorial waters, within an hour it had been fired upon, boarded, and seized. Enroute from Hong Kong to Sattahip, Thailand, the *Mayaguez* and its crew ended their day not at the pier in Sattahip but at anchor near a Cambodian island called Poulo Wai, held against their will by armed Cambodians.⁵

The American Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, quickly relayed this fact to Washington and to the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon: "At 0830Z (1530 local), 12 May 1975, the Delta Exploration Company in Jakarta received a distress message from the SS *Mayaguez*, a US containership."⁶ Within hours (some have argued too many hours), the United States began surveillance of the merchant ship using P-3 reconnaissance flights out of the Royal Thai Air Base at Utapao. This coverage continued for the duration of the incident, a result of the Joint Chiefs' decision to maintain contact with the ship's crew. However, from the moment of seizure until implementation of the JCS order nearly five hours elapsed. Most of the delay can be attributed to the time required to assess the situation and decide on an initial course of action. This took nearly three hours.

Immediately after reaching the decision, the JCS ordered via phone that air reconnaissance flights begin. The surveillance aircraft tracked the ship's movement during the next 12 hours, from the point of seizure near Poulo Wai Island to Koh Tang—Tang is Cambodian for island—where the ship's crew, as directed by the Cambodians, dropped anchor in 100 feet of water at about noon on Tuesday, 13 May. This

*The *Pueblo* was a U.S. Navy intelligence ship captured by the North Koreans in 1968.

anchorage, only a mile from Koh Tang, would become the focus of a good deal of diplomacy and military planning. Eventually, it would be the site of one of two raids conducted to rescue the crew. The other location would be the island off the ship's bow, the unknown and unfamiliar Koh Tang.*

The Initial Decisions

The Cambodian seizure of the *Mayaguez*, occurring just two weeks after the evacuation of Saigon, caught the U.S. by surprise. Distressed by this act of aggression, President Ford faced a difficult situation: how to negotiate with a country the United States did not recognize and one whose most recent military victory had forced America to close its Embassy and flee. Under these circumstances, it seemed to many that force would be the only means by which to effect a rescue of the crew. As a result, Washington placed U.S. forces in the Western Pacific on alert while the President attempted to secure the crew's release through diplomatic means.

The forces that had participated in Operation Frequent Wind two weeks earlier and the forces placed on alert for the recovery of the *Mayaguez* were one and the same. Despite the fact that his ships had scattered to various ports in the Pacific, Vice Admiral George P. Steele, the Seventh Fleet commander, knew that a military response to the *Mayaguez* contingency would involve the Seventh Fleet and its naval forces. Upon receiving orders from Admiral Noel A. M. Gayler, CinCPac, via his immediate superior, Admiral Maurice F. Weisner, CincPacFlt, to prepare to participate in the rescue of the container ship *Mayaguez*, Steele immediately notified his commanders to undertake whatever action necessary to ready their forces for a military response to the crisis. To expedite their preparations, Admiral Steele directed them to proceed immediately to the Gulf of Thailand, to the vicinity of Koh Tang, off the Cambodian coast. On 13 May, he ordered the ships nearest the crisis scene, the guided missile destroyer *Henry B. Wilson* (DDG 7), the escort destroyer *Harold E. Holt* (DE 1074), the stores ship *Vega* (AF 59), and the carrier *Coral Sea* (CVA 43) to proceed immediately to the waters off Kompong Som, Cambodia's main port.⁷

Admiral Gayler designated the Commander of United States Support Activities Group/Seventh Air Force, Lieutenant General John J. Burns, Jr., USAF, as the on-scene operational commander and the cen-

tral coordinating authority. Marines returning to Okinawa and Japan with their respective amphibious ready groups, also received guidance from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Passed via CinCPac, the orders directed them to reverse course and proceed to the Gulf of Thailand. Captain Edward J. "Jim" Ritchie, a "Lady Ace" CH-46 pilot returning to Futema, remembered that moment very vividly: "I was on the flight deck preflighting my helicopter for a flight when all of a sudden the ship made a hard port turn and reversed course. The turn was so sudden and severe that I had to grab hold of the helicopter to keep from falling. I later learned the reason for the quick change was the *Mayaguez*."⁸ Within 24 hours, other ships and Marines in the Pacific received the word to get underway or deploy. One of these ships, *Midway* (CVA 41), was ordered to increase speed to 25 knots and anticipate action in the vicinity of Cambodia. Additionally, CinCPac directed the *Hancock* and its escorts to leave Subic Bay for the Gulf of Thailand.⁹

While the Seventh Fleet commander communicated his intentions to his subordinates, General Burns directed his staff to plan for the immediate rescue of the *Mayaguez*'s 40-man crew.* He chose U.S. Air Force Colonel Loyd J. Anders, deputy commander for operations of the 56th Special Operations Wing, to head the operational task force, and instructed him to deploy to Utapao Air Base from Nakhon Phanom. In all likelihood the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Pacific Air Force (PacAF) Headquarters chose Utapao, located on the southeastern coast of Thailand, because of its proximity to Koh Tang. General David C. Jones, in his capacity as acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ordered all of the Seventh Air Force's heavy helicopters to fly to Utapao. They included nine HH-53s (two others were kept on ground alert in Korat and three more were unflyable due to maintenance problems) and 10 CH-53s (four others were unavailable because they needed repairs). The "Jolly Greens" (HH-53s, nicknamed "Super Jolly" or "Jolly Green Giant") designated for redeployment to Utapao belonged to the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (40th ARRS) while the CH-53s, carrying the same

*Admiral Steele recalled the consequences of the decision to react quickly: "The sad part of the *Mayaguez* evolution is that we had sufficient force coming up with the Seventh Fleet, after it had been turned around from the evacuation of Vietnam stand down, to seize Southern Cambodia. I begged for another day or two, rather than commit forces piecemeal as we did The idea that we could use U.S. Air Force air police and Air Force helicopters as an assault force appears to me as ridiculous today as it did then." Steele Comments.

*Despite the surveillance flights, the operation's commanders never could pinpoint the crew's whereabouts.

nicknames and using the radio call sign "Knife," were owned by the 21st Special Operations Squadron (21st SOS).¹⁰

These helicopters departed Korat and Nakhon Phanom the evening of 13 May for Utapao. Seventh Air Force Headquarters ordered the 21st SOS CH-53s to transport the Nakhon Phanom base security police. General Burns intended to deploy these men as an early answer to the need for ground security should Admiral Gayler order him to immediately effect the rescue of the crew.

In General Burns' initial operations order issued a little after midnight on 14 May 1975, he directed the use of 125 Air Force Security Police as helicopter landing zone security stating, "The Airborne Mission Commander will establish contact with 7AF/TACC on the HF command net and control the mission as directed by ComUSSAG/7AF."¹¹ Three hours later, after Admiral Gayler's chief of staff, Lieutenant General William G. Moore, Jr., USAF, talked to General Burns on the phone, Admiral Gayler amended General Burns' operating order by changing "USAF Security Police" to read "USMC GSF personnel," and adding "Command and control will be maintained by CinCPac who will be acting under direction from JCS (NMCC)."¹²

During the initial hours of this crisis, because of the Marine Corps' continued involvement in post-evacuation and refugee-related operations, the combination of Air Force ground and air assets in Thailand represented the only option available to implement immediately an NMCC order to recover the SS *Mayaguez* and its crew. The first of the helicopters designated for this possible mission departed Korat at 1943 followed by a second flight which departed Nakhon Phanom at 2000. A half-hour later, Knife 01 and his wingmen in three CH-53s also launched from Nakhon Phanom. Shortly after takeoff, 40 miles west of the field, Knife 01-3 disappeared from departure control's radar screen. The 21st SOS helicopter had crashed, killing all on board. Its passengers, 18 air police and crew of five became the first casualties of the *Mayaguez* rescue operation.¹³

The two helicopters that Colonel Anders had stationed at Korat Air Base as search and air rescue at-

*The Airborne Mission Commander or AMC's role included the responsibility of serving as the airborne on-scene coordinator. He would perform that function while aloft in an EC-130 known as an airborne battlefield command and control center or ABCCC.

**National Military Command Center (NMCC), located in the Pentagon, was responsible for coordinating and controlling military responses to international crises such as the illegal seizure of an American vessel on the high seas.

tempted to assist at the crash scene, but once the pilots determined that no assistance was possible, they proceeded directly to Utapao and joined the others. With their arrival, the initial assault force consisted of 11 helicopters: six HH-53s and five CH-53s. The HH-53 or "Jolly Green" (call sign designator "JG") possessed an inflight refueling capability and the CH-53C or "Knife" (call sign designator "K"), the Air Force version of the Marine Corps' "Sea Stallion," carried external fuel tanks which extended its range capabilities. Considering the distance from Utapao to Koh Tang, range (based on weight and fuel consumption) would be a critical factor in deciding what forces to employ and where and by what means to deploy them.

By the time these helicopters arrived in Utapao, the President and his staff had decided to proceed with the military option with final authorization and the order to execute to be delivered from President Ford via JCS. Later that evening, sometime between 2355 on 13 May and 0255 the next day, General Burns phoned CinCPac's chief of staff, Lieutenant General William G. Moore, Jr., to discuss his options. In seeking a decision, he offered his recommendation: "I believe that the Marines are the preferred troops for this mission and if the two hours later time which they can make is acceptable, I recommend their use with a planned insertion time of 0050Z."¹⁴

Concurring with this recommendation, Admiral Gayler decided to use the Marines. He had already alerted Major General Carl W. Hoffman to expect orders on short notice which would call for his air contingency battalion landing team and its support elements to assist General Burns and USSAG forces in recovering the *Mayaguez*. General Hoffman had chosen Colonel John M. Johnson, the III MAF G-3, to command the task group, 79.9.¹⁵ It contained two separate elements known as task units. The infantry battalion, BLT 2/9, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Randall W. Austin, bore the task unit designator 79.9.1, while the second element carried the designation 79.9.2. Major Raymond E. Porter, the battalion's executive officer, commanded this smaller force, comprised of Company D(-)(reinforced) of 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. With BLT 2/9 on Okinawa and Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines in the MAU camp in Subic, getting the task group to the scene

¹⁴Colonel John F. Roche III, the 31st MAU commander, mentioned that at the time of Colonel Johnson's selection to lead the rescue mission, Colonel Johnson was "unassigned awaiting change of station." Roche Comments.

of the action quickly became General Hoffman's top priority.¹⁵

When the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines received word that it had been chosen to deploy to Thailand, it was still in the training cycle. In fact at that precise moment, it was in the midst of a training exercise on northern Okinawa in the Central Training Area. Less than five hours later, by 0200 14 May, the battalion had arrived back at its Camp Schwab base, and along with its support elements had prepared to mount out, still uncertain of its destination. Just 15 minutes prior to its arrival at Camp Schwab, the battalion landing team's artillery elements had left for Kadena Airbase. In the ensuing three hours, all of the units attached to BLT 2/9 made their way to Kadena, with the last one arriving at 0545. The command element launched first at 0530, followed by the main body at 0615. They flew to Utapao on Air Force C-141s.¹⁶

While the preparations on Okinawa began to take shape, the Marines of Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines completed the packing of their gear and at 0030 started to board an Air Force C-141 at the Naval Air Station Cubi Point. Led by Major Porter and their company commander, Captain Walter J. Wood, the Marines of Company D landed at Utapao at 0445, just as the first elements of BLT 2/9 started arriving at the Kadena passenger terminal. Accompanying the Marines from Subic on the flight to Thailand were 12 volunteers, six sailors from the *Duluth* and six civilians from the *Greenville Victory*, a Military Sealift Command ship, who had agreed to use their technical expertise to sail the *Mayaguez*.¹⁷

Upon their arrival in Utapao, Major Porter and the officers of Company D met with members of General Burns' staff. At this meeting, the staff informed them that their company of Marines would board the *Mayaguez* from Air Force helicopters. In addition, Major Porter and Company D learned that from this point on, they should consider themselves in a 30-minute standby status. Less than six hours later, at 1200, they boarded helicopters but remained on the ramp, waiting for word to launch. Two hours later, still sitting in the helicopters, they received orders to disembark. Major Porter later learned that General Burns had cancelled the mission for that day.* The US-

*According to one account, President Ford did not issue the order to begin the operation until early morning on 15 May, 0345 Cambodian time: "At 4:45 [p.m., Eastern Daylight Savings Time, 14 May] . . . the President issued the orders for one Marine assault force to seize and hold Koh Tang, and for another Marine force . . . to board the *Mayaguez*." Roy Rowan, *The Four Days of Mayaguez* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975), p. 176.

SAG commander believed that insufficient time remained to complete the recovery before sunset and he had no desire to attempt it at night. Thus, the Marines continued in a standby status until 0200 the next day when the USSAG staff finally completed its plan for the recapture of the *Mayaguez*.¹⁸

Boarding the *Mayaguez* from Air Force helicopters would be no easy feat, and because of the variables involved, additional preparations would have to be made.** First, and foremost, Major Porter's command element had to deal with incompatibility factors. The *Mayaguez's* cargo consisted of containers which covered all of the main deck. Because of the weight of the HH/CH-53s and the distribution and stress characteristics of the aluminum containers, planners deemed a landing on the *Mayaguez* unsafe. Consequently, the Marines would have to jump or rappel from the helicopters onto the cargo, and then using some type of ramp or bridge, move from container to container until they could lower themselves onto the ship's deck. From there they would move quickly to secure the critical areas of the ship.

For almost 24 hours, this concept did not change. Admiral Weisner's initial orders to Admiral Steele at 1014 on 14 May did not foresee using Steele's ship, the *Holt*, as a boarding platform for the Marines. He reached this conclusion based on the assumption that the *Holt* would not arrive in the area until sometime after sunrise on 15 May. Later, on the evening of 14 May, when General Burns and his staff learned of the favorable change in the *Holt's* ETA, they decided to use it to board the *Mayaguez*. In the intervening period, Major Porter and his Marines continued to prepare for the boarding of the *Mayaguez* from Air Force helicopters.¹⁹

At 0730, the time the Task Group 79.9 commander, Colonel Johnson, arrived at Utapao—about three hours after Major Porter—Marines had their then-assigned task well in hand. At this point, Colonel Johnson learned that his mission to recover the *Mayaguez* would probably be expanded. It would include the requirement to "seize, occupy, and defend Koh Tang," and rescue and recover any crewmembers found there.²⁰

While Colonel Johnson and his forces moved south to Thailand, the Navy repositioned its ships and recon-

**Admiral Steele revealed in his comments: "I suggested that the *Mayaguez* be covered with tear gas in order to subdue whoever was on board, even the crew could have been there, or some of them, and we did not want to endanger them." Steele Comments.



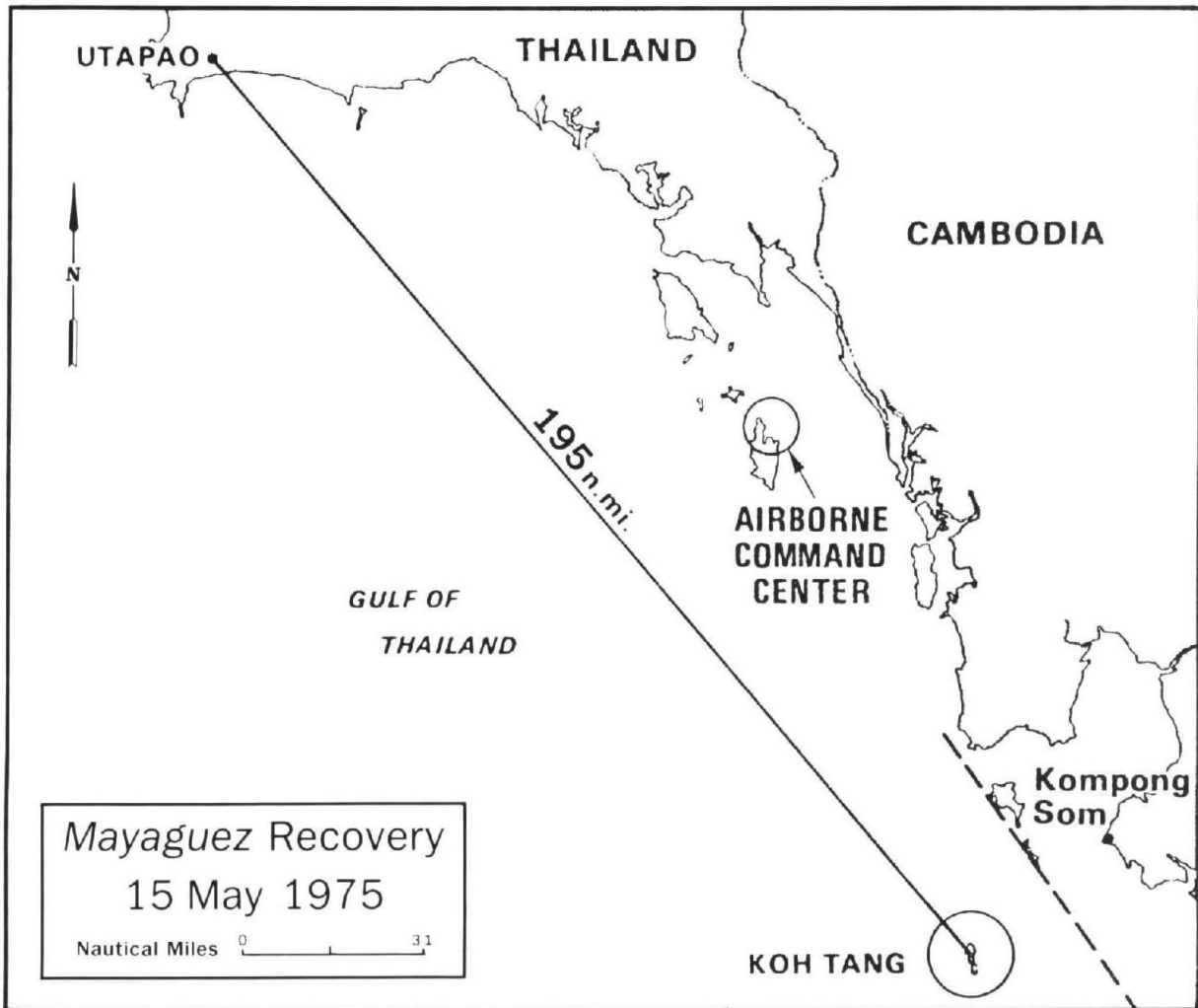
Marine Corps Historical Collection

Members of Company F, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines assemble into heliteams at the joint operations airfield at Utapao, Thailand, on 14 May for insertion onto Koh Tang. They would have to wait 14 hours before the first real assault wave took off in eight Air Force helicopters bound for the small Cambodian island, 195 miles southeast of Utapao.

noitered the area with patrol planes from Task Force 72. At the same time, the Air Force launched its tactical aircraft. The fighter and attack planes had orders to prevent, if possible without endangering the crew, the Cambodians from moving the *Mayaguez* and/or its crew to the mainland, specifically, the port of Kompong Som. Shortly thereafter, less than two hours after Colonel Johnson's arrival, an Air Force F-4 pilot spotted a fishing vessel carrying what appeared to be Caucasians. At approximately 0900 on 14 May, the pilot attempted to stop the vessel as it sped toward the Cambodian coastline. He fired shots over its bow, but avoided any close shots for fear of hitting the passengers. His efforts met with no success as the boat ignored the warning shots and continued on its course toward Kompong Som. During this unusual and uncertain activity on the morning of 14 May, General Burns and his staff continued their planning sessions in an attempt to arrive at the best course of action to rescue the ship and its crew without any further loss of life. They worked with current, but oftentimes incomplete information.²¹

Assault Preparations

After Colonel Johnson and his command group arrived, the option to use Marines in the assault force to secure the island gained momentum. Obviously, once on Koh Tang, the Marines could provide ground security for the Air Force evacuation helicopters. Yet by the time Lieutenant Colonel Austin and his staff landed at 0945, the final decision to use Marines still had not been made. As Austin's individual Marine elements continued to land, Colonel Johnson briefed the battalion commander on the tactical situation and then waited for further word. At 1300, one hour before Austin's final elements reached Utapao on board a C-141, General Burns' staff passed the word to Colonel Johnson that the mission would definitely include rescue of the ship's crew. Staff members provided little additional information and no details on the crew's exact location. Colonel Johnson assigned Lieutenant Colonel Austin and BLT 2/9 responsibility for seizing Koh Tang and recovering the *Mayaguez's* crew. The task was simple to assign, but with a dearth of intelligence, extremely difficult to execute. According



Map adapted from Urey W. Patrick, "The Mayaguez Operation, Final Report" (Washington: Center for Naval Analyses, 1977)

to the report of a later Congressional investigation, "Despite the availability of various assets and the apparent uncertainty concerning the location of the *Mayaguez* crew, little attempt appears to have been made to use photography or other means to verify reports or obtain additional information."²²

*Admiral Steele commented on the actions he took and those actions he requested which were denied: "As soon as the *Mayaguez* seizure had taken place and we were informed of military action to be taken to recover her, I turned [around] the *Coral Sea* task group which was enroute to the Coral Sea battle observance in Australia—they were about to enter Lombok Strait at the time. Shortly thereafter, we requested permission to fly reconnaissance flights in the area, and later, specifically over the island of Koh Tang. Despite repeated requests to do this, it was denied until so late that the reconnaissance flight's photographic results could not be processed in advance of the actual assault on the island. I think that this is another example of a disastrous attempt to micromanage, from distant headquarters with inadequately trained staff, large operations in which communications play so great a part." Steele Comments.

Austin's first decision dealt with this scarcity of intelligence and his need for additional information about the island and its terrain. This became a formidable task in itself as every possible source was sought and used, from Cambodian refugees in Thailand, to a former Cambodian naval officer, to an oil company employee familiar with the Cambodian coastal waters, all with little success. On top of this, no one possessed a tactical map of the island.²³

In an attempt to fill the void, an Army U-21 took Lieutenant Colonel Austin, his S-3, and two other officers to Koh Tang, 195 miles from Utapao, for an airborne inspection of the island, but the Air Force restricted the flight's altitude to 6,000 feet. The Air Force imposed the restriction in order to avoid drawing undue attention to the flight or worse yet, enemy fire. This severe limitation became even more critical when it was discovered that the only photographic equipment available was a Marine's pocket camera.

During the overflight of Koh Tang, Lieutenant Colonel Austin saw open areas on opposite sides of the northern end of the island that could be used as landing zones. Here where the island significantly narrowed, the two potential sites, consisting of relatively flat terrain cut from the jungle, offered access by air and possible access by sea. Due to the island's extensive foliage, Lieutenant Colonel Austin had no other choice. He had to land his assault forces here, even though he knew almost nothing about the enemy.²⁴

Meanwhile at Utapao, Colonel Johnson was experiencing similar frustrations in his attempts to gather intelligence. Much to his dismay, he was spending most of his time driving to USSAG/Seventh Air Force's forward headquarters on the other side of the base to either answer secure voice phone calls or questions from General Burn's staff. Neither the calls nor the questions contributed anything to his planning and intelligence-gathering efforts. Unfortunately, these interruptions continued into the early evening, long after Lieutenant Colonel Austin returned from his reconnaissance flight at 1500. Only the final planning conference at 1900 seemed to halt the interruptions, but nothing reduced the frustration caused by the physical separation of General Burns' staff's headquarters and Colonel Johnson's command post.²⁵

Colonel Johnson, Colonel Anders, Lieutenant Colonel Austin, and Major Porter attended the 1900 planning session with General Burns' staff. At this meeting, they discussed and decided upon a final course of action. The plan entailed the use of eight helicopters inserting approximately 180 BLT 2/9 Marines onto Koh Tang's eastern and western zones with the first helicopter landing at 0542 on 15 May. Simultaneously, 57 Marines of Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines and 11 volunteers (The Air Force amended the original composition of six sailors and six Military Sealift Command [MSC] personnel to two corpsmen, two Air Force explosive ordnance demolition specialists, one Army intelligence officer, and six MSC seamen) would board three helicopters and fly to the *Holt*. Company D's orders reflected the most recent change to the original plan for boarding the *Mayaguez*. Having learned that the destroyer escort *Holt* would arrive in the area in time, General Burns decided that the helicopters would not insert the Marines onto the container ship, but instead deliver them to the *Holt* which then would be used as a platform from which to board the *Mayaguez*. At a midnight meeting which Major Porter attended, General Burns' Utapao staff made some last-minute adjustments to the *Holt* rescue plan and then declared it complete.

This is the best reconnaissance picture of Koh Tong the commander of the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines could obtain. At right is the wing of the U-21 from which a glimpse of the island was captured as LtCol Randall W. Austin and his staff rode at 6,000-foot altitude.

Photo courtesy of Maj Charles D. Melson



With that done, Major Porter returned to the hangar, briefed Company D, and then led his *Mayaguez* insertion force to the waiting helicopters.²⁶

The operational plan called for General Burns to exercise control of all aspects of the assault, including the Marines under Colonel Johnson's charge. Having decided to remain in Nakhon Phanom, General Burns' ability to maintain command and control of the planned activity in the Gulf of Thailand would depend almost exclusively on the actions of the airborne mission commander (AMC). That unnamed Air Force officer (no records reveal his name) would discharge his tactical duties from an airborne battlefield command and control center (ABCCC) located in a specially equipped EC-130. Normally, Colonel Johnson, the task group commander, would have been the on-scene commander, but due to the scarcity of helicopters, he opted to wait until the second wave for insertion. By waiting, he effectively relinquished control of his Marines to Lieutenant Colonel Austin and the airborne mission commander. Until he could land on Koh Tang, this command and control status would remain unchanged. Although concerned about this awkward arrangement and his absence from the first assault wave, Colonel Johnson expected, during what he thought would be a relatively short wait at Uta-pao, to be able to advise General Burns in Nakhon Phanom and through him influence the tactical situation on Koh Tang.²⁷ Unintentionally, General Burns increased Colonel Johnson's anxieties about the command structure when he stated that, "The Airborne Mission Commander in ABCCC will coordinate the strike activities and receive directions from ComUSSAG."²⁸

"Receive directions" would soon become the operative words thanks in large part to the range and sophistication of the communications network which was used. General Burns and even the Joint Chiefs of Staff would be able to talk to the battlefield via the ABCCC. Unbelievably, Colonel Johnson, just 200 hundred miles away, could not. Eventually, oversaturation of the network's frequencies by various higher headquarters seeking insignificant or irrelevant information rendered this technologically sophisticated system of communication and control ineffective, further complicating Colonel Johnson's unenviable situation.

Yet with plans complete and ready for implementation, including the news that Navy tactical aircraft from the *Coral Sea* could provide additional on-scene close air support, the Marines concerned themselves with more important matters, the impending mission.

At 0230, already assembled, they boarded their assigned helicopters. All 11 helicopters took off from Uta-pao at 0415. Three HH-53s, using call signs "JG 11, 12, and 13," carried the boarding party for the *Mayaguez* while five CH-53s and three HH-53s flew the assault force to Koh Tang. The three helicopters carrying Major Porter's team dropped it onto the *Holt* between 0550 and 0625.²⁹

The Air Force chose the HH-53 for this mission because of its functional characteristics, especially its refueling capability. An Air Force after action report pointed up the important differences: "The HH-53 is air refuelable, has 450 gallon foam-filled tip tanks, a tail mini-gun with armor plating, and two waist mini-guns. The CH-53 is not air refuelable, but has 650-gallon non-foam-filled tip tanks and two mini-guns, although no tail gun."³⁰ Thus the HH-53, with its refueling capability, could remain in the battle area indefinitely as long as it had access to a HC-130. In this operation, it would have access to fuel from a Lockheed Hercules using the call sign "King."

The First Assault Wave

To accomplish the transfer of the assault elements led by Captain Walter J. Wood to the *Holt*, the Air Force HH-53s, because of the size of the ship's helipad, placed only their front wheels on the ship's pad and hovered. Captain Wood described the process:

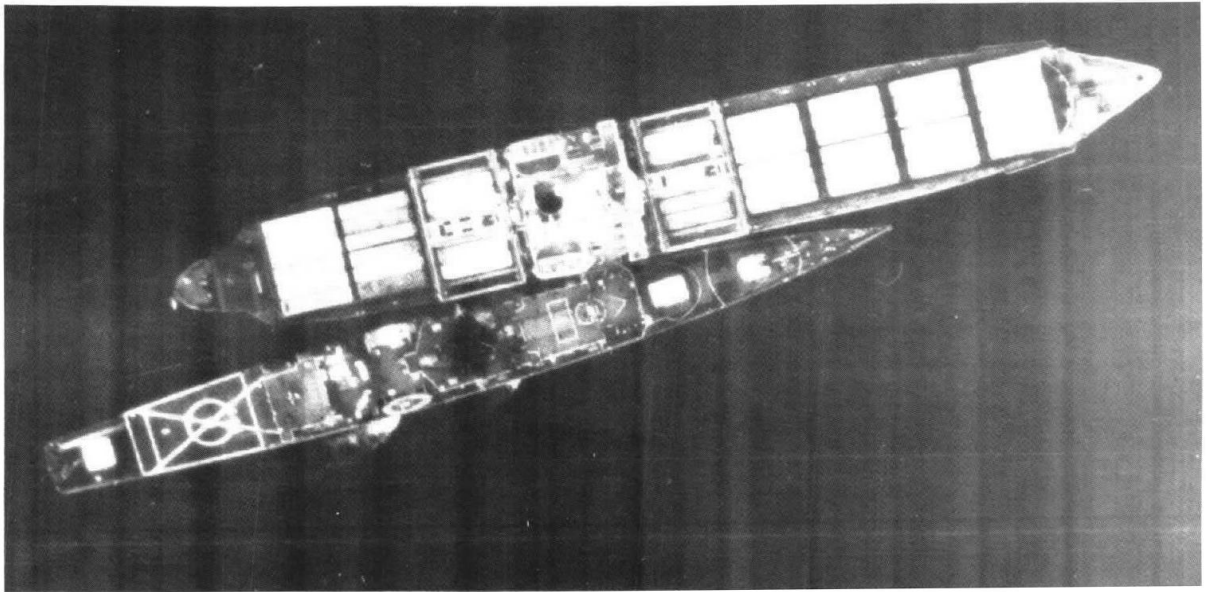
The helicopters could only set down their nose wheels and basically hover. As they set down in this fashion, we all exited the helicopters through the starboard doorway. This entire process took approximately 15-20 minutes for three helicopters to disembark the boarding party.³¹

At the beginning of the operation, the *Holt* stood 12 miles northwest of the island. Once the helicopter pilots had safely debarked the boarding party, the *Holt* started moving very slowly in the direction of the *Mayaguez*. Everyone waited and watched as the Air Force saturated the captive ship with chemical agents.^{**} Upon observing the last A-7 complete its bombing run, the *Holt* pulled alongside the *Mayaguez* and Major Porter's assault force prepared to board the ship.

Captain Wood described what happened next: "Once the boarding party was on board the *Holt*, I

^{*}As noted earlier in the text in comments from Lieutenant Colonel Edward A. Grimm, USSAG had attempted unsuccessfully in 1974 to obtain permission to foam the CH-53's tip tanks. Grimm Comments.

^{**}According to Admiral Steele, "The suggestion that the captive ship be saturated with 'chemical agents' was a Seventh Fleet idea." Steele Comments.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 711631

USS Harold E. Holt maneuvers alongside SS Mayaguez to permit a boarding party from Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines to seize the container ship. The Company D commander, Capt Walter J. Wood, and a squad leader, Cpl C. R. Coker, found themselves alone on the Mayaguez as backwash from the Holt pushed the two ships apart.

met with Captain Petersen and the Executive Officer.” In their discussion, they determined that the deck above *Holt’s* main deck would match with the *Mayaguez’s* main deck. Yet as the destroyer escort drew closer to the container ship, Captain Wood could see that both of the main decks were on the same level and so he quickly moved his boarding party down to the *Holt’s* main deck. Just as they arrived there, the *Holt* slid alongside the container ship and the Company D commander told Corporal C. R. Coker, the leader of the squad designated to seize the bridge, to jump, and Captain Wood followed in trail. As they boarded, the squad leader took off for the bridge while Captain Wood proceeded aft to secure the squad’s rear. As he turned around to determine the squad’s progress, he beheld a most unusual sight, an empty ship save for one Marine corporal. Captain Wood remembered that every occasion: “As I proceeded aft, I turned to my rear to view the progress of Coker’s squad and the remainder of the boarding party who were supposed to secure the lines between *Holt* and *Mayaguez*. But much to my surprise I discovered that Coker and I were the only Marines on board the *Mayaguez*.”³²

Apparently the backwash created by the *Holt* coming alongside the *Mayaguez* had pushed the two ships apart just as the two Marines landed on the deck of

the captive ship. Almost immediately sailors on the *Holt* threw lines to them and after considerable effort the two men lashed the ships together and the remaining members of the boarding party joined them. Company D in the ancient naval tradition, had boarded a vessel “known” to be held by armed defenders. The captain and the corporal had been on board for five minutes; the squad leader’s watch read 0725 and not a shot had been fired.³³

Once on board, using only hand signals (their gas masks precluded verbal communication), the Company D Marines moved deliberately but quickly to preassigned areas of the ship.* Securing the engine room before the Cambodians could disable the ship headed their list of priorities. This important task fell to Sergeant William J. Owens’ squad which had to make its way through darkened passageways and ladders just to get to the gas-filled engine room. What

*Captain Wood recently explained how his Marines modified this procedure to accommodate the circumstances: “The boarding party was not limited to hand signals. When the line was thrown from *Holt* to *Mayaguez* and Coker and I were fumbling with it, using methods every Marine is taught during NBC training, I could communicate and ask for instructions from *Holt’s* ship personnel as to how and where to secure the line. I simply lifted up my mask, shouted the question, replaced my mask, cleared it and breathed normally. For the first one to two hours above deck, this became standard practice on board the *Mayaguez*.” Wood Comments.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A706262

Members of Company D, commanded by Capt Walter J. Wood, board Mayaguez. Gas masks were worn because the ship was bombed with tear-gas cannisters by the Air Force.

Marines await instructions after securing the Mayaguez, which had no one on board, at 0822. The two civilians, at center, from the Greenville Victory, had volunteered to operate the ship and were flown to Utapao on an Air Force C-141 on the morning of 14 May.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 1162857



surprised Owen's squad, and the other squads as well, was not what they found in the engine room, but what they did not find. The ship was deserted! Having searched for booby traps and found none, the Marines declared the *Mayaguez* secure at 0822 on 15 May 1975.³⁴

As the first helicopter started its descent to the *Holt*, a flight of eight Air Force helicopters in four sections approached Koh Tang.* The Air Force's after action report stated, "K 21 and K 22 were to insert their Marines on the western beach, while K 23 and 31 were to be the first into the eastern beach. The third wave, K 32 and JG 41, and the fourth wave, JG 42 and JG 43, were to follow up with insertions on the eastern beach."³⁵

As the island came into full view at 0615, the pilots, based on the intelligence briefing they had received, still expected little or no opposition.** Initially, it appeared that they were right because as Knife 21 flew into the western zone with K 22 in trail, they received no enemy fire. Then as K 21 unloaded 21 Marines of Company G's 1st Platoon, including its commander, Second Lieutenant James McDaniel, "The enemy opened up on both helicopters with small arms, rockets, and mortars."³⁶

With Knife 21 still in the zone, Knife 22 attempted to provide suppressive fire. Suffering the loss of an

*Admiral Steele suggested in his comments that tactical employment of the Air Force helicopters may have been a factor in this operation: "My recollection is a bit dimmed by time, but I believe that the U.S. Air Force helicopters came in high over the island as was their normal practice, whereas Marine helicopters were trained to come in very low, and thus avoid enemy fire. I believe that this contributed to the disaster to the USAF helos that occurred." Steele Comments.

**According to First Lieutenant Terry L. Tonkin, the Marine forward air controller on this mission, the Air Force intelligence briefers told them to expect "18-20 Cambodian irregulars with families," yet a 12 May Defense Intelligence Report estimated 200 Khmer Communists with 82mm mortars, 75mm recoilless rifles, 30-caliber machine guns, and a B40 Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) launcher. According to Tonkin the Air Force had this report in its possession six hours before the assault began. He has always wondered why the Marines never received that briefing. Tonkin Comments. Lieutenant Colonel George E. "Jody" Strickland served at FMFPac Headquarters in Hawaii after his 1973-74 tour at the DAO in Saigon. He shared insight that he gained about what he called the "Washington/Nakhon Phanom high-tech command and control debacle." He said, "It is now clear that General Burns' staff did possess intelligence that was not provided to our Marines. Once again it appears that the proper 'clearances' were factors in denying our Marines intel. The 'Green Door' intel in General Burns' hands was never provided!" He cited as his source: FMFPac/PacAF Intel Conference. Strickland Comments.

engine from the intense enemy fire, K 21 had no choice but to attempt a single engine takeoff. Successful in this effort despite additional damage to the transmission, K 21 barely cleared the treeline and eventually ditched in the ocean about a mile offshore. One of the helicopters from the third wave (K 32) rescued the crew, save for one member (Staff Sergeant Elwood Rumbaugh), who was lost at sea. After the aircraft commander of K 22 terminated his efforts to assist his wingman, and gave way to K 32, he returned to the western landing zone where he again encountered heavy fire, this time as early as 150 yards from the shoreline.³⁷

During this approach, K 22 suffered severe damage including the loss of an engine and a ruptured fuel tank. Forced to abort its run because of the damage and subsequent fuel loss, Knife 22, carrying the assault company commander (Captain James H. Davis) made an emergency landing on the Thai coast, 125 miles northwest of Koh Tang and 85 miles east of Utapao. The SAR helos picked up the crew and passengers and transported them to Utapao.

Those aircraft entering the eastern zone received a no less hostile reception from the well-fortified Cambodian defenders. The first two helicopters into the eastern zone, Knife 23 and 31, encountered heavy enemy fire.***

While Knife 23 attempted to land on the eastern beach, his wingman, Knife 31, followed in trail. Both helicopters received intense fire, including automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades (RPG). Suddenly, Knife 31's port fuel tank exploded, followed immediately by a second explosion, the result of an RPG. The round blew off a substantial portion of the cockpit, killing the copilot. K 31 crashed in the ocean about 55 meters from the island's eastern shoreline. In addition to the copilot, casualties included 10 Marines and two corpsmen killed. Five of the 10 Marine casualties initially survived the crash, but three subsequently died when they attempted to rush ashore. Enemy fire coming from the treeline, just inland of the shore, cut them down before they could reach the beach. Another Marine drowned attempting to swim to the open sea, while a fifth Marine, wounded, apparently died later near the downed helicopter. Thus only a few minutes after the first Marine had set foot

***According to Marine Corps records, K 23 and K 31 were the first helicopters to attempt landings on Koh Tang. They began their approaches to the eastern zone at 0600, well before K 21, which landed at 0630 in the western zone. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.



Marine Corps Historical Collection

Downed CH-53s are visible in the eastern LZ at Koh Tang. At left is Knife 23, which carried 2dLt Michael A. Cicere and members of his platoon, who established defensive positions in the rocky ground to the left of the helicopter. At right is Knife 31, which was hit by an RPG round fired from the tree line at middle right. The destroyed Cambodian Swift boat, upper right, attests to the accuracy of Air Force A-7 bombing runs.

on Koh Tang, no less than nine Marines, two corpsmen, and an airman were dead.³⁸

The survivors, afloat amongst the debris and flaming wreckage, opted to swim seaward and await rescue. These 10 Marines and three airmen lost most of their weapons and equipment in the crash. Two of them demonstrated exceptional initiative, resourcefulness, and courage. During the difficult swim, which lasted three and one-half hours, Private First Class Timothy W. Trebil, a fire team leader, continually encouraged and assisted others, especially the weaker swimmers. At the same time, First Lieutenant Terry L. Tonkin (the assault team's forward air controller), using an Air Force survival radio he had recovered from the crash, directed Air Force attack aircraft on bombing runs of enemy positions on the eastern half of the island. His contributions lasted until the *Wilson* plucked him and 12 other tired survivors from the sea almost four hours after they had escaped from the wreckage of Knife 31. The rescue by the *Wilson* gained added significance when the survivors discovered that the ship had happened upon them by chance. The *Wilson* had been proceeding to Koh Tang to provide naval gunfire support when a lookout spotted something floating in the water.³⁹

Meanwhile, the first chopper into the eastern zone (K 23), suffered such extensive damage that it crash-landed at the water's edge. Without a moment's hesitation, the heliteam exited the aircraft and immediately set up a defensive perimeter. These Marines would be the first and last into this zone as the AMC decided to halt any further insertions. Thus, Second Lieutenant Michael A. Cicere and 20 Marines of his 3d Platoon, Company G, along with five aircrewmembers, instantly became isolated, cut off from the rest of the assault forces. Wisely, the Air Force copilot, before exiting the wrecked CH-53, grabbed the emergency UHF radio. Once ashore, he used it to establish contact with the strike aircraft. With the crew and passengers of Knife 23 in a nearly untenable position, support of them suddenly became a priority. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, USSAG directed one of the *Holt* mission helicopters to effect a recovery. Jolly Green 13 made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue them at approximately 0815. Sitting on the beach for less than a minute, the HH-53 took automatic weapons fire from the treeline for the entire time. As they waited for the embattled Marines to move from their defensive perimeter to the helicopter, the pilots of JG 13 could see that only a matter of moments and



Marine Corps Historical Collection

An Air Force HH-53, JG 41, bears evidence of the resistance at Koh Tang. JG 41 made four attempts to enter the western zone and finally, on its fifth attempt, successfully unloaded 2dLt Richard H. Zales' 2d Platoon, Company G. By the end of the retrograde three of the original 14 helicopters were operational.

50 meters of beach stood between them and disaster. With recovery at this time an impossibility, Jolly Green 13 decided to abort its rescue attempt.

The four remaining helicopters in the first wave had only slightly better luck. One of these (JG 41), carrying Second Lieutenant Richard H. Zales' 2d Platoon, Company G, finally made it into the western zone at 0930 on its fifth attempt. Earlier, two other helicopters, Knife 32 and Jolly Green 42, had inserted their heliteams into that zone.*

The fourth helicopter in the first assault wave, JG 43, gave up trying to get into the site and unloaded its Marines far short of the zone. To make matters worse, this helicopter carried Lieutenant Colonel Austin, his staff, and the mortar section. Thus upon disembarking from the helicopter, they not only found themselves 1,000 to 1,200 meters southwest of the zone, but also separated from the main body.

The main body, now commanded by the Company G executive officer, First Lieutenant James D. Keith, the next senior officer present, had to expand its

*The number of Marines in the western zone at any set time cannot be pinpointed because official accounts vary. The description of Knife 32's insertion serves as an example of why this confusion exists. Air Force records state that Knife 32 unloaded 13 Marines, a 14th Marine was wounded and remained on board, and an Army language specialist refused to disembark. Marine Corps records reflect that 15 Marines disembarked. 2/9 Koh Tang Report, "Assault on Koh Tang," and CNA *Mayaguez* Report.

perimeter. While attempting to enlarge it under heavy enemy fire Lieutenant Keith also had to make contact with Austin and his 29 Marines. Besides Austin's group and Keith's 60 Marines, Second Lieutenant Cicere counted 20 Marines in the eastern zone, including one who had sustained wounds. The first wave of the assault force had numbered 180 when it left Utapao. It now stood at 109, plus five Air Force crewmembers, divided among three positions. Not until Second Lieutenant Zales and his 21 Marines landed (at 0930) would the total Marine Corps strength change, and then it would only increase to 131. These were less than ideal conditions from which to mount a raid, especially when facing a well fortified and entrenched enemy.⁴⁰

Thus the assault forces found themselves divided into three groups, separated from their supporting elements, and without the planned buildup of fighting strength. Complicating this perilous situation was the fact that the command group was isolated, separated from the main body by hundreds of meters of rugged jungle.

Except for a man-made opening connecting the eastern half of the island's middle to the western section, heavy foliage covered every inch of the terrain. From a position south and west of this cut, the enemy directed multiple fire at the Marines in the western zone. To gain relief from this shelling, First Lieutenant Keith ordered one of his platoon commanders, Second Lieutenant McDaniel, to destroy the position. The absence of other officers in the zone made this mission even more critical; Keith could not afford to lose anyone, especially a platoon commander.

McDaniel led a reinforced squad against the Cambodians whose exact location was impossible to pinpoint because of the thick underbrush. While McDaniel and his squad attempted to identify the source of harassing automatic weapons fire, another group of Cambodians hit their flank from close range with grenades and small arms. As in the case of the initial attack, the source of this fire could not be pinpointed either because the ground level visibility extended no more than 15 feet. Surprised by the attack against the flank, McDaniel and five of his Marines sustained wounds, including Lance Corporal Ashton N. Looney of Albany, New York, who later died. In the ensuing moments, McDaniel and his patrol responded with an intense volume of fire directed at the enemy's concealed location. It forced the Cambodians to cease firing and retreat.⁴¹

Having witnessed the firefight and fearing an en-

circlement of the now vulnerable squad, Lieutenant Keith decided it was time to pull them back. His decision came none too soon for almost within seconds of McDaniel's squad regaining cover within the zone's defenses, the Cambodians attacked the southern perimeter and McDaniel's Marines. The Marines of BLT 2/9 again repelled the Communists' thrust. Throughout the firefight, these Marines, who had never seen combat and who had had their training on Okinawa cut short by this mission, consistently performed with courage and self-control.* They repeatedly turned aside the enemy's attempts to overrun them. Most held a rank no higher than lance corporal.

Shortly after this incident, at approximately 0925, Lieutenant Keith finally established contact with the tactical air coordinator (airborne) (TAC[A]), flying in a holding pattern near the island, and asked for close air support. Using the battalion radio frequency, Keith discussed the possibilities. In the midst of this communication, Lieutenant Zales and his 21 Marines arrived. Keith immediately stopped talking to the airborne coordinator and told Lieutenant Zales to deploy his men on the besieged southern flank of the perimeter. Zales, ignoring the enemy fire, charged forward to his newly assigned piece of Koh Tang. Once Zales was in place, Keith resumed his conversation with the TAC(A) and personally orchestrated the Air Force strafing runs whose cannon fire kept the Cambodians at bay. Yet even with this close air support and Zales' added firepower, the Communists retained a tenacious grip on the zone. The Cambodians were so closely engaged with the Marines on the southern perimeter that the Air Force pilots did not dare drop

*When chosen for this mission 2d Battalion, 9th Marines was in its predeployment training cycle, serving only as a backup to the air contingency battalion, BLT 1/9. The decision to send a battalion still in its combat training cycle was based in part on administrative matters. A majority of the Marines in BLT 1/9 had nearly reached the end of their year's tour on Okinawa and could not be extended except in case of an extreme emergency. Having sought such authorization and been denied, III MAF sent instead the Marines of 2d Battalion, 9th Marines.⁴² Two of them, members of McDaniel's platoon, his radio operator, Lance Corporal Charles A. Giselbreth, and Private First Class Jerome N. Wemitt, helped hold the southern perimeter despite incurring serious wounds. Staff Sergeant Serefino Bernal, Jr., also demonstrated exceptional bravery while additionally providing much needed experience and seasoned leadership. During this critical period, Bernal (McDaniel's platoon sergeant), saw a Marine in trouble and without concern for his own life raced across open terrain, picked up the wounded Marine, and carried him to safety. After completing this deed, Staff Sergeant Bernal led a small group of Marines from their secure positions through enemy fire to a location where they provided cover for the withdrawing Marines of McDaniel's patrol.⁴³

their bombs for fear of hitting friendly lines. Literally, only meters separated the Marines from the Communists. Hand grenades vice bombs became the order of the day, but neither side could break the deadlock. For the Marines, additional forces offered the only solution to the stalemate. The buildup had to continue.⁴⁴

This meant that the second wave had to be inserted and without delay. In the interim, neither Austin's group nor Cicere's could even consider moving from their defensive position without external support. As Lieutenant Colonel Austin said, "Our group of Marines was in serious straits because between us, we only had four rifles."⁴⁵

The operational plan had anticipated the need for a rapid buildup of forces on the island and had specified that all of the available Air Force helicopters would be used for this express purpose, in theory an excellent idea, but in this instance difficult to implement because only a few of the transport helicopters were still operating. Of the eight helicopters in the first wave at Koh Tang, only one escaped undamaged. One had crashed at sea (Knife 21), two had crash landed on or near Koh Tang's eastern shore (Knife 23 and Knife 31), and another on Thailand's eastern shore (Knife 22). Three more (Knife 32, Jolly Green 41, and Jolly Green 42) had received such extensive damage that they were unflyable. The three helicopters used in the *Holt* insertion encountered no hostile fire and suffered no damage. However, one of the three, Jolly Green 13, subsequently suffered severe battle damage while attempting, after refueling with an HC-130, to rescue the crew and passengers of Knife 23, stranded on the eastern beach. After this aborted rescue attempt, JG 13 made an emergency landing at Rayong, Thailand, where it remained for the duration of the operation. Thus of the 11 helicopters initially used, only three remained operationally flyable (all HH-53s). These three (JG 11, 12, and 43) would be joined by two CH-53s used as SAR helicopters during the first insertion (Knife 51 and 52). Together, the five helicopters would have to move as many assault forces to Koh Tang as quickly as possible. Considering the fact that a round trip flight required more than four hours to complete, additional helicopters had to be found to ensure a sufficient buildup of forces.

But there were no more available. The Air Force arrived at a gloomy count: five grounded for mechanical reasons, a destroyed CH-53 which had crashed two days earlier 40 miles west of Nakhon Phanom while



Department of Defense Photo (USN) 1162851

Capt Walter J. Wood, left, and his Company D Marines provide security for the Mayaguez as it sits at anchor a mile offshore from Koh Tang. At 1700, the security force was transferred to the USS Wilson as the Mayaguez bid farewell to its unexpected 72-hour ordeal.

enroute to Utapao, five CH-53s and three HH-53s lost in the first assault wave, and five helicopters operationally ready to fly. Thus only JG 11, JG 12, JG 43, K 51, and K 52 prepared for the impending mission, the insertion of the second assault wave.⁴⁶

The second wave took off at staggered times between 0900 and 1000. It carried elements of Captain Mykle E. Stahl's Company E and Captain James H. Davis' Company G. For Captain Davis, this would be his second attempt at landing on Koh Tang. The five helicopters in the second wave carried a total of 127 Marines. While enroute, the pilots received word from the ABCCC that the crew of the *Mayaguez* had been picked up by the *Wilson* and that the flight was to return to base. With the successful rescue of the ship's crew, there was no need to insert a second assault wave.

At approximately the same time the last elements of the assault wave left Utapao, the crew of the *Mayaguez* sighted the *Wilson* and began waving white flags. An airborne P-3 Orion reported to the destroyer that the approaching boat appeared to carry a number of Caucasians. Within minutes, at approximately 1015, a Thai fishing vessel pulled alongside the *Wilson* and unloaded its 40 passengers. Apparently, earlier

air strikes which had sunk a number of Cambodian gunboats and sprayed the captors with tear gas had changed their minds about the best use of the hostages and instead of taking their captives to Kompong Som the morning of 15 May, they decided to release them along with some Thai fishermen they had been holding captive for five months. Within a few hours of Captain Charles T. Miller and his shipmates' arrival, the *Wilson* returned a somewhat harried but otherwise healthy crew to the *Sea Lanes* container ship. By 1700 the *Mayaguez*, manned by its own crewmembers and steaming under its own power, had no further need of assistance from the Department of Defense and transferred its security force, 15 members of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, to the *Wilson*. These Marines had remained on the *Mayaguez* to act as a security force after the conclusion of the early morning raid, but with the *Mayaguez* enroute to a new destination, Singapore, the ship's master, Captain Miller, felt reasonably certain he would no longer need their services.

The sudden change in plans caused by the crew's rescue translated into actions which altered the flight path of the second assault wave and almost cancelled



Marine Corps Historical Collection

SS Mayaguez is towed away from Koh Tang by the USS Harold E. Holt (DE 1074). The Mayaguez crew was rescued shortly after this, at 1015, by the USS Wilson. The rescue caused JCS to cancel the operation and the insertion of the second assault wave until LtCol Austin insisted that additional forces were needed in order to secure his position.

its insertion at Koh Tang. These changes resulted from orders passed to General Burns via the ABCCC from the highest authority. A Joint Chiefs of Staff message at 1155 confirmed the earlier communication which, in effect, recalled the flight.* It said, "Immediately cease all offensive operations against Khmer Republic related to seizure of *Mayaguez*."⁴⁷

At approximately the same time Washington was deciding to cease all offensive activity, Lieutenant Colonel Austin was becoming concerned about the delay in the promised buildup of forces on Koh Tang. He contacted the ABCCC to inquire as to the whereabouts of his second assault wave. Upon learning it had been cancelled, he insisted that he still needed them to help secure the island and protect his position. Finally, Austin convinced the ABCCC and General Burns that the operation should not be terminated and that the second wave had to be landed on Koh Tang.** Upon receiving approval for insertion of additional Marines, the airborne mission com-

mander ordered the five helicopters to reverse course and proceed as originally directed. Even though the ground security force commander eventually overcame this command and control problem, the damage had been done; the reinforcements' arrival would be delayed even longer than first feared.

The Linkup

To keep a bad situation from getting even worse, Lieutenant Colonel Austin had to link up with his main body, but without incurring additional casualties. To accomplish this, Lieutenant Keith and Lieutenant Colonel Austin worked up a plan over the radio. Correctly assuming that the Cambodians had no access to their frequency, Austin and Keith discussed their scheme of maneuver. Keith would attack through his perimeter using Zales' platoon to drive a wedge between the Cambodian forces, thereby enabling him to penetrate far enough to make contact with Austin.

Certainly there were risks involved in this plan, primarily the chance of a Cambodian counterattack, but something had to be done before Austin's group was overrun. In order to preclude an enemy counterattack and keep them off balance, Austin and Keith devised a method of using supporting fire from tactical aircraft and 81mm mortars. Not only would this prepare the area, it would also keep enemy heads down and delay any offensive they might have in mind. This maneuver appeared far less difficult than it actually was because the 81mm mortars were not with Lieutenant Keith. Instead, Lieutenant Colonel Austin's isolated group contained the mortar section. Bringing

*Admiral Steele recounted his thoughts on this arrangement: "This complicated, jury-rigged command arrangement and detailed management from the Joint Chiefs of Staff level endangered and nearly destroyed the forces on the island." Steele Comments.

**According to Captain Mykle E. Stahl, who was riding in the lead helicopter, the incident occurred differently. He related that when he noticed the helicopters change course, he went up to the cockpit and inquired as to what was happening. Upon learning they had reversed course, he insisted that his Marines had to land on Koh Tang. He said that after this conversation, the pilots resumed their original heading to the island. Lieutenant Colonel Mykle E. Stahl, unrecorded interview, 8Jun87.

the Air Force aircraft in on top of Austin's position would be relatively easy compared to controlling and directing the mortar section's rounds, because only a few meters separated the enemy's lines from Keith's. This job would rest solely with the 81mm mortar platoon leader, Second Lieutenant Joseph J. McMenamín, and with Lieutenant Colonel Austin.⁴⁸

McMenamin, himself, would act as the forward observer. Leaving his mortars, he crawled to a small hill and took up a position where he could observe his rounds hitting. To prevent an errant round from striking Marines in Keith's perimeter, McMenamín fired his marking round seaward, thereby safely gauging his range and deflection. After calling in the adjustment, he ordered the next spotting round fired, but this time at the enemy. It hit dead center! The Marines were ready to begin their linkup offensive.⁴⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Austin began the linkup preparations none too soon. The Cambodians were preparing to mount another attack against the southern perimeter. To repel this assault, Austin and Keith employed their fire support plan. It worked superbly, stopping the Cambodians in place. The plans' success

and apparent simplicity only served to mask its problems and underlying complexity. Coordination of the air strikes required Keith to have communications with both the attack aircraft and the forward air controller (FAC). Unfortunately, the FAC, First Lieutenant Tonkin, and his UHF radios had been on Knife 31 which had been shot down shortly after 0600 that morning while attempting to land in the eastern zone. Without a FAC, and more importantly his radios, First Lieutenant Keith and the battalion's air liaison officer, Captain Barry Cassidy, had to improvise. To devise a workable communications system, they used the battalion's tactical frequency and their Very High Frequency radios to talk to the airborne mission commander (AMC) who in turn relayed the information to the aircraft flying close air support (A-7s and F-4s). Eventually, the AMC told the pilots to tune directly to the battalion's frequency. In this manner, one of the tactical aircraft pilots would become the TAC(A) as long as he had enough fuel to remain on station. With this always a consideration, these aircraft constantly arrived and departed after only a relatively short time because of their high rate of fuel consumption. Each time, the replacement had first to assess the sit-

BLT 2/9 command group, with LtCol Austin, debarks from Jolly Green 43 on the west coast of Koh Tang, south of the perimeter of Company G. It had to fight its way north through Khmer Rouge-controlled jungle to link up with the main body in the western zone.

Marine Corps Historical Collection



uation and then to familiarize himself with the tactical disposition of forces before he could safely direct an air strike. The Air Force improvised these tactical aircraft as "on-scene" and "search and rescue (SAR) on-scene" commanders. They used this method of control for more than nine hours. The on-scene commander's responsibilities changed continuously, 14 times with 10 different aircraft. Four turnovers alone occurred from about 0600 to 0700, the first and most critical hour of the assault phase.⁵⁰

This extremely slow and frustrating process adversely affected Cassidy and Keith's plan. It forced Captain Cassidy and Lieutenant Keith to use a rather unorthodox method of calling in air strikes. Each time the TAC(A) changed, Lieutenant Keith, as a safety precaution, would verbally redraw the map of his position over the radio. Respecting the obvious opportunity for error inherent in such a procedure, he then had to use a trial-and-error method to set the parameters for each new series of air strikes. This always included the use of dummy runs before the pilots were cleared in "hot." It should be noted that Captain Cassidy was with the isolated command group and not with Lieutenant Keith and the main body. Although separated and unable to conduct face-to-face communications, Keith at the southern end of his lines, and Cassidy at the northern extreme of the command group's position, could simultaneously view the pilots' dummy runs. In this manner they could spot the runs and when both of them agreed that the Air Force A-7 had properly split their positions, they cleared the air strike for a "hot" run. Their successful efforts eventually resulted in the pilots laying down a strip of supporting fire which when combined with McMenamin's mortars forced the enemy to stay low and allowed the 2d Platoon to attack.⁵¹

Second Lieutenant Zales; Second Lieutenant Daniel J. Hoffman, the weapons platoon commander; and First Sergeant Lawrence L. Funk led the advance of the 2d Platoon, Company G in its attempt to break through to Austin. With the assault proceeding well, Lieutenant Zales did not suspect nor realize that a Cambodian squad had moved to outflank his platoon. The Communists intended to attack his exposed left (eastern) flank. Seeing this event unfolding from the vantage point he had used to spot mortar rounds, Second Lieutenant McMenamin decided to intercede in an effort to thwart the Cambodians. McMenamin and two lance corporals, Larry J. Branson and Robert L. Shelton, jumped up and charged across the open terrain which separated them from the enemy. Their sud-

den appearance so surprised the Communists that they turned and fled into the jungle. McMenamin's disruption of the enemy's counterattack allowed the 2d Platoon to continue its linkup operation. Zale's maneuver ended successfully with the two forces joining at 1245.⁵²

The Second Wave

Even though this action, and the majority of the activity took place on the southern perimeter, the Marines guarding the northern sector saw considerable fighting as well. Staff Sergeant Fofu T. Tuitele and Staff Sergeant Francis L. Burnett led these Marines, a combination of men from Company G's 2d and 3d Platoons. Knowing that enemy automatic weapons fire could severely limit their maneuverability, they decided to attack two bunkers held by the Cambodians. The success of their effort enabled them to gain a position from which they could neutralize with fire another Cambodian strongpoint. Despite all this activity and maneuvering, the enemy still held the upper hand and the tactical advantage.⁵³

Fortunately, by this time the second wave had reversed course and was again enroute to Koh Tang. Although a decision had been made to reinforce the Marines already on the island, Colonel Johnson, the Marine task group commander (still in Utapao), did not participate in the process. Neither did he have any insight into what decisions had been made. CinCPac, in charge of the overall operation, relayed his decisions on matters such as these to his superiors, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to the "on-scene" operational commander, General Burns. (Actually, General Burns was in Nakhon Phanom, hundreds of miles from the scene of action.)* For some reason, Colonel Johnson never received word from General Burns' staff that the decision had been made to devote all future efforts to disengaging and recovering the combat forces on Koh Tang. In describing this event in his first situation report to JCS, Admiral Gayler said, "JCS directed immediate cessation of all offensive operations. Accordingly further strikes were diverted to support the extraction of the GSF from Koh Tang island . . . Extraction of the 182 men that were put ashore is now the objective."⁵⁴

Colonel Johnson thus found himself in the back-

*Admiral Steele severely criticized General Burns for his decision to remain in Nakhon Phanom: "It is quite clear that the 'on scene operational commander,' General Burns, was not 'on scene.' The man who should have been on scene unfortunately was still in Utapao without information. CinCPac was making tactical decisions. I think this was *Alice in Wonderland* at its worst." Steele Comments.

waters of the operation. His only link to Lieutenant Colonel Austin went via Nakhon Phanom (US-SAG/Seventh Air Force) to the airborne C-130 directing operational traffic (ABCCC), and finally from the ABCCC to BLT 2/9. Likewise, replies went in reverse order via this convoluted means. Compounding this awkward method of communicating was the massive amount of radio traffic generated by other participants and senior commanders wanting to know what was happening. General Burns' deputy chief for operations, Colonel Robert R. Reed, succinctly described in his end-of-tour report the source of the extraneous radio traffic which adversely impacted on the mission and, in particular, on Colonel Johnson:

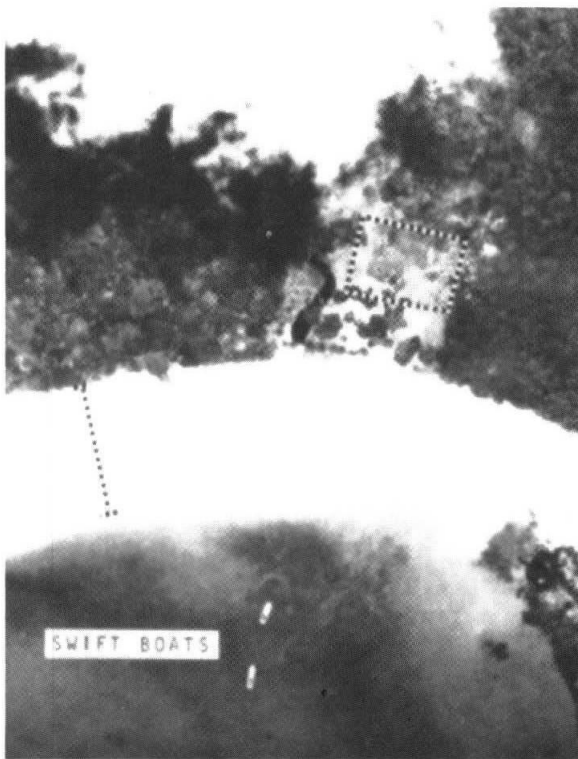
The constant requests for detailed information to be furnished higher headquarters was a definite hindrance to both the *Mayaguez* and TV/FW (Talon Vise/Frequent Wind) operation. A secure conference line was opened for this purpose and remained open for the duration of each operation. This not only required extra personnel to man the circuits, but also unnecessarily divided the attention of the 7AF battle staff. . . . The *Mayaguez* and TV/FW were of national importance and had the highest level of interest; however even this is little justification for the headquarters to require tail numbers and call signs of each aircraft.⁵⁵

Thus Colonel Johnson, hampered by these communications problems, would have minimum input to the critical choices made at this juncture. Despite the adverse and grave reports he received from the returning wounded, he had no choice but to face the fact that General Burns at his headquarters in Nakhon Phanom had tactical control of the assault mission through his airborne command center. Unless Colonel Johnson could get to Koh Tang, and with all of the available helicopters airborne this was highly unlikely, he would exert little influence over the remainder of the operation. The rest of the key decisions would be left to the Air Force and the Navy, but they would still have to be made based on the needs and demands of the battlefield commander, Lieutenant Colonel Austin. The second operational plan issued by General Burns' headquarters dated 14 May addressed just such an exception. Although predicated on the assumption that the designated ground security force commander, Colonel Johnson, would be on Koh Tang with his battalion commander (Lieutenant Colonel Austin) and he was not, General Burns' directive still applied: "Nothing in these authorities shall be construed as precluding a commander from using all means at his disposal to exercise the inherent right and responsibility to conduct operations for self-defense of his forces."⁵⁶

Without question then, the ground commander's request for additional forces fell within the limits set forth. Whether anyone made a conscious decision not to employ covering fire to protect the requested reinforcements and the five helicopters delivering them to Koh Tang cannot be determined. What is known, however, is that none was provided, and for the second time in the same day, unescorted helicopters entered the western and even the eastern zone.

The difference between no suppressive air cover and some form of close air support could be the difference between success and failure, and ultimately, the difference between life and death. A vivid demonstration of this difference occurred just before the eighth helicopter (JG 41) in the first assault wave made "one more attempt" to land its Marines. An AC-130 gunship, equipped with 20mm and 40mm guns and a 105mm gun, received instructions to support JG 41's approach. In doing so he provided the first real suppressive fire at Koh Tang. The Air Force's official account of the assault recorded that, "An AC-130 gunship, call sign, Spectre 61, was then directed to attempt to pinpoint friendly and enemy positions while JG 41 held off the island."⁵⁷ The importance of this suppressive fire was underscored by the fact that this helicopter, Jolly Green 41, already had made four unsuccessful attempts to enter the zone, and not until its fifth effort with considerable covering fire from "Spectre 61" did it actually land in the zone. Even then, because the HH-53 lacked close-in, slow-moving air cover to detect and then suppress the enemy's fire (in this case Cambodian mortars), it achieved limited success. JG 41 could unload only 22 of its 27 combat Marines. According to the Air Force's operational report, "Spectre 61 went to Koh Tang island. Info was passed to Bingo Shoes 03 [BLT 2/9 command post] by Spectre. Spectre was then cleared by Crickett (AMC) and Bingo Shoes 03 to expend on position."⁵⁸ Due to the supporting fire of the AC-130, JG 41 delivered much-needed Marines to a depleted ground security force.

More importantly, by the airborne units coordinating their support with the friendly forces on the ground, they were able to deliver much more effective and infinitely safer suppressive fire. The effectiveness of this support would vary throughout the course of the day and eventually deteriorate by evening. Suppressive fires applied during the night extraction phase conditions would achieve far less results. Yet by this time, all involved recognized the importance of at least their application, emphasized by the fact that the Air Force thought them important enough to include in



Marine Corps Historical Collection

At center is the area designated the eastern landing zone on Koh Tang. The hatched rectangle, also at center, is where it was believed that the Mayaguez crew had been taken. One of the CH-53s in the second assault wave, Knife 52, attempted unsuccessfully to land in the zone, incurring such severe damage that it was forced to make an emergency landing in Thailand.

their later situation reports: "Spectre gunship is working in support of GSF which is attempting to secure an area to be used as an HLZ on Koh Tang island."⁵⁹

Unfortunately for the second wave of helicopters, the "Spectre" gunship departed Koh Tang shortly after JG 41, around 1000. As the second wave approached Koh Tang, the importance of providing covering fire with either close air support helicopters or other slow-moving aircraft became readily apparent. With the AC-130 gunship no longer in the area, the Cambodians confronted the arriving Americans with a barrage of antiaircraft fire. The single ship entering the eastern zone (Knife 52) was so badly damaged that it had to make an emergency landing on the coast of Thailand.*

Despite the resumed enemy fire, the other four helicopters (K 51, JG 11, JG 12, and JG 43) made it safely into the western zone and disembarked 100 Ma-

*Why K 52 attempted to land in the eastern zone is not explained by the Air Force's operational report.

rines, bringing the total on the island to 222 (during the operation the Air Force inserted 231 Marines and evacuated nine). This number fell far short of the planned buildup. Knife 52's failure to unload its 27 Marines from the second wave illustrated why Lieutenant Colonel Austin never received his full fighting force.⁶⁰

From this point little would change save for the consolidating of positions. The important question now became whether to reinforce or extract the Marines on Koh Tang. One change which had occurred which would have a significant impact on the Marines on the ground by providing them better air support, involved the tactical air coordinator. By 1600 OV-10s had assumed the role of TAC(A), replacing the "fast movers." According to the Center for Naval Analysis report on the Koh Tang assault: "There was no dedicated airborne forward air controller (FAC) at Koh Tang until an OV-10 aircraft [Nail 68], arrived on the scene about 1600, some 10 hours after the assault had begun."⁶¹ For those on the ground the arrival of the Nail aircraft meant less radio chatter, more support, and as darkness rolled in, someone to spot the flashes of the enemy's weapons. These flashes, when once marked by the OV-10s, became aiming points for the AC-130 gunship on station. This change in controllers marked a turning point in the quality of airborne firepower available to the Marines on Koh Tang, because for the first time that day they had an airborne observer exclusively dedicated to providing accurate and timely close air support. The presence of the OV-10 also meant that an attack aircraft no longer had to fill the role of tactical air coordinator airborne and could instead return to its primary role of dropping bombs. The attack force welcomed this addition to its airborne arsenal. On-call strike capability would be a critical consideration in evaluating when to begin the evacuation.⁶²

The Retrograde

Lieutenant Colonel Austin made it clear to everyone that once the decision was made to evacuate and the extraction of his forces had actually begun, it had to be completed quickly and without interruption. With one platoon still isolated on the eastern shore and no way for the rest of the Marines to link up with it, General Burns had to decide whether it was feasi-

**According to one of the 40th ARRS pilots in Utapao, Major John F. Guilmartin, Jr., "The pilot of Nail 68, Major Robert W. Undorf, allegedly was responsible for imposing order on an air battle which until his intervention had been less than coordinated and orderly." Guilmartin Comments.

ble to leave an isolated unit overnight and try to reinforce and resupply it. The USSAG commander knew that if he attempted to extract the platoon on the eastern beach, he had no choice but to evacuate all of them at one time. General Burns believed that he could resupply the western zone, and with this logistical support, the Marines could sustain themselves through the night. Even without an immediate resupply, the main body of 202 Marines could sustain a night attack, but Lieutenant Cicere's small force in the eastern zone, if not reinforced, could not. With this possibility facing him, General Burns ordered the second-wave helicopters (two HH-53s had remained in the area to perform SAR duties) to withdraw Second Lieutenant Cicere and his 20 Marines from Koh Tang. At approximately 1415, these "Jolly Greens" (JG 11 and JG 43) attempted to enter the eastern zone and, as all but one of their predecessors, failed. One of the two helicopters (Jolly Green 43) suffered extensive damage. Jolly Green 11 and King 24, the HC-130 used to refuel the HH-53s, escorted JG 43 to the *Coral Sea* (CVA 43), where it made an emergency landing at 1436. The *Coral Sea* repaired the HH-53 in record time and had it back in service by 1700. This maintenance miracle meant a 25-percent increase in the number of available helicopters, because by this time only four others remained operational. Even that many helicopters existed only because the newly repaired JG 44 had just arrived from Nakhon Phanom where it had been out of service since the beginning of the *Mayaguez* mission.* In addition to JG 44, JG 11, JG 12, and a CH-53, Knife 51, stood ready for further duty while Jolly Green 43 underwent repair. The importance of the rapid turnaround of JG 43 and the unexpected return to service of JG 44 significantly increased when the Air Force undertook yet another effort to rescue the Marines and airmen pinned down on Koh Tang's eastern beach.⁶³

Even though JG 11 and 43 had failed to penetrate the eastern zone, General Burns still believed that rescue by air was possible. He knew, however, that it could

*Major Guilmartin, who had flown the last flyable, rescue Super Jolly (who for the mission used the call sign JG 44) to Utapao late in the afternoon of 15 May, explained his understanding of how the Navy repaired JG 43's damaged fuel line, hit by a 50-caliber round: "The flight mechanic, Technical Sergeant Billy D. Willingham, assisted the Navy maintenance personnel who effected the repair by cutting out damaged line (one and one-quarter inch aluminum standpipe) with a hacksaw and put in its place a section of hose held together with radiator hose clamps. Certainly, not by the book, but despite concerns about fuel contamination by the pilots, it worked." Guilmartin Comments.

not be accomplished without additional support. As a consequence, the Navy and Air Force decided to coordinate their efforts and together to attempt recovery of Lieutenant Cicere's platoon. In addition to the harassing fire from the Cambodians on the ground, the Marines were receiving fire from Cambodian gunboats just offshore. So while the *Coral Sea's* maintenance crew was completing its repairs on JG 43, the forces on the scene were preparing to undertake a joint withdrawal from the eastern zone. Despite the importance of the events about to occur on Koh Tang's eastern shore, no information was ever communicated by the AMC to the ground force commander, Lieutenant Colonel Austin. Between 1730 and 1800, the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps combined to perform a successful and casualty-free extraction of the Marines and airmen from the eastern zone. While the *Wilson's* gig, call sign "Black Velvet," provided close-in ship-to-shore suppressive fire using four mounted M-60 machine guns and immediate rescue capability, the OV-10 FAC, call sign "Nail 68," the air commander, called in F-4s and A-7s to neutralize enemy positions and cover Lieutenant Cicere's withdrawal. Even though the OV-10 and all aircraft in the vicinity, including Jolly Green 12 and Knife 51, strafed the Cambodians, Jolly Green 11 (the rescue bird) still took heavy fire. Due to the damage it incurred, Jolly Green 11 did not fly again.⁶⁴

The Marines contributed to their own rescue by returning disciplined and effective ground fire which kept the helicopters' time in the zone to a minimum. Lieutenant Colonel Austin's operational summary reported that "The Marines made an orderly withdrawal, stopping to fire weapons every few feet. They were pursued by enemy forces who had obtained handgrenade range on several occasions."⁶⁵ In forcing the Communists to respect their position even though they were withdrawing, the Marines made possible a successful recovery, evidenced by the fact that JG 11 landed on the *Coral Sea* with 25 passengers, 20 Marines and 5 air crewmen, only a few of whom had wounds, none incurred during the extraction.** Second Lieutenant Michael A. Cicere, commander of the 3d Platoon, Company G, related his recollection of this

**In reference to injuries, Second Lieutenant Cicere recalled: "There were two personnel with us that were wounded: one a Marine (PFC Nichols, I believe) shot in the foot; the second, an Air Force crewman who was wounded in the arm and leg exiting the hulk of Knife 23 and dashing toward the tree line. He left the aircraft well after the Marines and the other Air Force personnel had disembarked the stricken helicopter after it was shot down." Cicere Comments.



Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marines board one of the five remaining Air Force helicopters for extraction from the fighting in the eastern zone of Koh Tang. The extraction was completed between 1730 and 1800 when 2dLt Michael A. Cicere and his 20 Marines were recovered by Jolly Green 11.

event: "The helicopter did not actually sit on the ground because the hulk of Knife 23 was sitting on the beach. Instead, the pilot skillfully hovered the helicopter several feet off the ground just north of the original beach LZ. It made the extraction difficult because the helicopter would see-saw up and down. Only a few Marines at a time could board the helicopter's rear ramp in this fashion as they timed their jumps to coincide with the downward motion of the aircraft."⁶⁶

Besides being the first extraction from Koh Tang, it also represented the first successful entry into the eastern zone in nearly 12 hours. But it also had its costs. During the recovery, in addition to JG 11's flight-ending hit, the Air Force lost a second helicopter, JG 12, struck while checking for a wounded Marine. Earlier flights had reported seeing a Marine holding onto part of the wreckage of Knife 31. Jolly Green 12 tried to no avail to locate him, even lowering its rescue device, called a jungle penetrator, a plumb-bob-like affair on the end of the rescue hoist cable, to the wreckage. With no success and drawing lead like a shooting gallery target, Jolly Green 12 diverted to the *Coral Sea* with major battle damage and a wounded

flight mechanic. This casualty left only three helicopters (JG 43, JG 44, and Knife 51) to evacuate more than 200 Marines still on Koh Tang!⁶⁷

Once the evacuation of the eastern zone had been completed, the Air Force began the recovery of the Marines in the western zone. To remove the assault forces from the western beach "required six helicopter loads and two hours to complete."⁶⁸

Again as in the recovery from the eastern zone, the decision to remove all of the Marines from Koh Tang before day's end was never shared with Lieutenant Colonel Austin. Neither he nor his immediate superior, Colonel Johnson, was ever informed of General Burns' decision. Lieutenant Colonel Austin was still waiting for word on the proposed time of evacuation when he heard helicopters approaching the zone. Since it was past sunset, the ground force commander suspected a resupply, but quickly learned that the helicopters had orders to extract them. The Pacific Air Force Command history reported that the official decision to evacuate occurred at 1717 on 15 May 1975.⁶⁹ The Marines at Koh Tang recalled what happened after they spotted the first helicopter, "Shortly, thereafter, several additional helos appeared on the horizon

and it was obvious a helo extraction of the main force was on.”⁷⁰

Despite having no prior warning, the Marines were ready to depart. They had already prepared for the moment by gathering their wounded into one area and devising a staggered withdrawal plan. This allowed them to reduce the zone without compromising its overall security. The phased withdrawal would permit Lieutenant Colonel Austin to shrink the zone after each lift and fortify the new perimeter before the next flight arrived. Unfortunately, in the darkness and the confusion caused by the deafening noise of the helicopter rotor blades mixing with the ugly chatter of enemy gunfire, all did not go as planned, but this fact would not be known until many hours after the last flight had landed. Lieutenant Colonel Austin recalled how the final two hours on Koh Tang began: “When the first helicopter approached the zone which was being marked by Marines with flashlights since by this time it was completely dark, it was met by a heavy volume of fire.”⁷¹

During the next two hours, the gunners of the incoming HH-53s fired at the suspected Cambodian positions while the AC-130 used its 20mm and 40mm weapons against the flashes of the enemy’s guns. At the same time, the Air Force F-4s and A-7s, directed by Nail 68 and Nail 69, two OV-10 FACs, conducted strafing runs in an effort to interdict the Communists and keep them from shooting at the recovery helicopters. The Spectre gunship reported, “We expended 200

rounds of 20mm HEI, 158 rounds of 40mm MEISH, and 87 rounds of 105mm HE at the target.”⁷²

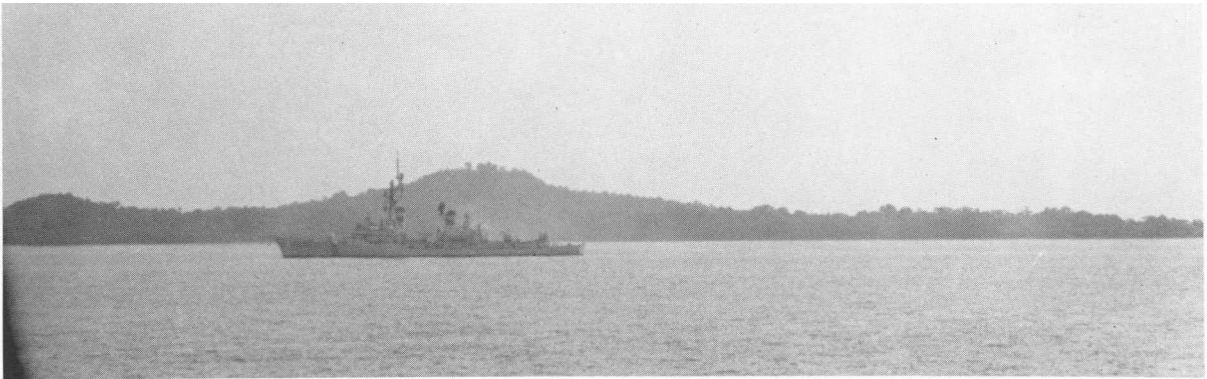
With the Cambodians’ attention diverted by this firepower, each helicopter would hover at the beach’s edge with its nose pointed in the direction of safe haven, the sea, and load as many Marines as possible. The recovery helo would then take its load of Marines to one of the Navy ships standing off the coast of Koh Tang. Most of the Marines eventually disembarked on the *Coral Sea*, but 34 ended up on the *Holt*.

The third ship in the area, the destroyer *Wilson*, already had on board 10 Marines from BLT 2/9 (the Knife 31 survivors) and 15 from 1st Battalion, 4th Marines (*Mayaguez* security crew). With these 25 Marines on board, the *Wilson* stood by offshore as its gig assisted in the recovery of the 20 Marines and five airmen isolated on the eastern beach. After the *Wilson*’s well-armed small boat, “Black Velvet,” completed this support mission, it moved around the northern tip of the island to a position near the western shore. From its new location, “Black Velvet” laid down a band of suppressive fire in the area of Staff Sergeants Tuitele and Burnett’s position, the western zone Marines’ northern perimeter. Besides this assistance, earlier in the evening, the *Wilson* sank at least one and possibly two Cambodian gunboats which had been harassing the Marines and their air cover. In total, in support of the two extraction efforts, the *Wilson* fired 157 5-inch rounds and provided an alternative to helicopter extraction, evacuation by boat.⁷³ To the 10 Marines

A shell fired from the USS Henry B. Wilson (DDG 7) explodes over a Koh Tang beach. The Wilson and its gig, “Black Velvet,” and the USS Holt provided gunfire support to the Marines as they evacuated the western zone between 1830 and 2010 on 15 May.

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Department of Defense (Air Force) 507-541

USS Henry B. Wilson (DDG 7), seen off the coast of Koh Tang, rescued 13 survivors of Knife 31 and supported the retrograde from the island by expending 157 5-inch rounds.

of BLT 2/9, the many contributions the *Wilson* made during the operation, which duly gained the ship noteworthy recognition, paled when placed alongside their rescue: "Crew and troops of single downed helo on northeast beach recovered by boat to USS *Wilson*."⁷⁴ The Seventh Fleet's commander, Admiral Steele, aptly summarized the *Wilson*'s "other" contributions: "The *Henry B. Wilson* delivered naval gunfire on hostile positions ashore on Tang Island to assist Marines landed there. She even armed her gig and used it successfully to suppress and direct fire, aiding extraction of the Marines from the island."⁷⁵

As the *Wilson*'s gig moved to a position from which it could support the western zone, Knife 51 accompanied by Jolly Green 43 and 44 appeared. When Knife 51 landed at 1830 and loaded 41 Marines, the extraction of the western zone officially began. As K 51 headed to the *Coral Sea*, JG 43 landed and loaded 54 Marines. While JG 43 recovered on board the *Coral Sea*, JG 44 executed a quick turn-around by depositing its 34 Marines on the *Holt*, the nearest ship to Koh Tang. JG 44's shortened round-trip enabled it to extract the next-to-last load, 40 Marines, leaving 32 still on the island.⁷⁶

The group of 32 Marines remaining on Koh Tang

*Admiral Steele shared his thoughts about the dearth of overall gunfire support. He commented: "Imagine the distress of the Seventh Fleet Commander, with an enormous force within 24 to 36 hours from the combat zone, to find that the *Henry Wilson*'s gig was being used to suppress and direct fire, and aid extraction of the Marines from Koh Tang." Steele Comments.

**This number does not include the fatally wounded Lance Corporal Looney. As his body was still in the western zone, the total number that remained was 33, which when added to the number already extracted accounted for the 202 Marines still on Koh Tang at 1800, 15 May.

included Captain Davis and Gunnery Sergeant Lester A. McNemar. These two Marines had known for hours that once the retrograde began, their most serious challenge would be a Cambodian counterattack. Somehow they had to ensure that the Cambodians did not overrun their final defensive position. Even before Captain Davis and Gunnery Sergeant McNemar shrunk the perimeter for the last time, they received a taste of the peril they would face. Prior to Jolly Green 44's arrival, at which time it picked up the next-to-last load, the 72 Marines then in the zone experienced some harrowing moments.

In its official description of those critical minutes, the Air Force recorded: "Radio contact with the friendly was lost, and no helicopters were immediately available to make pickups. Finally at approximately 1225Z (1925L), communication with the ground commander was reestablished, and he reported that he might be overrun in fifteen minutes. Two minutes later, he reemphasized the urgency of immediate evacuation."⁷⁷ In fact, it was reported that at this point Captain Davis said to the helicopter pilots, "Go for broke."⁷⁸ At this critical juncture, through luck and the good headwork of JG 44's pilot, things improved: "Within five minutes . . . JG 44 had returned from the USS *Holt* and had landed in the LZ, assisted by a strobe light set up by the Marines." Jolly Green 44's independent decision to go to the *Holt* had literally saved the day for the Marines remaining on the island.⁷⁹

Even though the immediate crisis had passed, the Cambodians now posed an even greater threat to Captain Davis and his small contingent of Marines: "Twenty-nine Marines were still under fire on the western beach and there were no helicopters immedi-



Department of Defense (Air Force) 111051
Knife 22 sits in a field on the eastern coast of Thailand as a Marine prepares to disable it permanently. Company G Commander Capt James H. Davis, who had been riding in this helicopter, returned to Koh Tang in the second assault wave and remained on the island until Knife 51 extracted the last 29 Marines.

ately available to make the pickup.”*⁸⁰ Finally Knife 51 landed and began loading. Having loaded everyone save for themselves, Captain Davis, Gunnery Sergeant McNemar, and a Pararescueman or “PJ” on K 51, Technical Sergeant Wayne Fisk, combed the beach one last time for stragglers.** Finding none, they leaped onto the hovering HH-53 as it lifted off Koh Tang for the final time. It was 2010.⁸¹ The much-awaited situation report stated, “Marines helo-lifted from Koh Tang island as of 151300Z [2000].”⁸² The Navy’s intelligence command in the Pacific reported to Admiral Gayler that “All U.S. personnel have been extracted from the island. Final extraction was by CH/HH-53 helicopter.”⁸³ This intelligence report would later prove to be incorrect.

The Aftermath

The entire evacuation of the Marines in the western zone lasted less than two hours, all of it logged as night flight time by the pilots. Possibly because of the dark-

*The variance between 29 and 32 (or 33) is explained in the next section.

**Major Guilmartin shared his knowledge of this “PJ.” He related, “TSgt Wayne Fisk was a veteran of the Son Tay raid and normally would not have been on a CH-53, but present in Utapao the morning the first helicopters took off, he subsequently talked the aircraft commander, First Lieutenant Richard Brims, into accepting him as a crew member on Knife 51’s second flight to Koh Tang.” Guilmartin Comments.

ness and despite the efforts of Davis, McNemar, and such Marines as Sergeant Carl C. Andersen, platoon guide, 3d Platoon, Company E, and Lance Corporal John S. Standfast, squad leader, 3d Squad, 3d Platoon, Company E, mistakes still occurred. Standfast and his squad covered Company G’s withdrawal during the reduction of the perimeter, and he then singlehandedly directed the pullback of his own squad. In the all important job of making sure none of the Marines were left behind in each zone reduction, Standfast received assistance from his platoon guide, Sergeant Andersen. Before withdrawing to the safety of the new perimeter, the two Marines would move forward to the old perimeter to ensure that no member of the company inadvertently had been left behind, each time checking every foxhole.⁸⁴

Hours later, with the assault forces dispersed among three Navy ships, the Company E commander, Captain Mykle K. Stahl, discovered that three of his Marines were missing. The Marines checked all of the Navy ships, but could not locate Lance Corporal Joseph N. Hargrove, Private First Class Gary C. Hall, and Private Danny G. Marshall, members of the same machine gun team. Captain Stahl stated later, “As the evacuation terminated and it was determined that Hargrove, Hall, and Marshall were missing I inspected all the equipment to determine if any of the serialized

The western zone on Koh Tang is seen from the tail of one of the Air Force helicopters used to insert and recover Marines. During the confusion of the retrograde three Marines were left on the island: LCpl Joseph N. Hargrove, PFC Gary C. Hall, and Pvt Danny G. Marshall. In addition, the body of LCpl Ashton N. Looney was inadvertently left on this beach.

Department of Defense Photo (Air Force) 111056

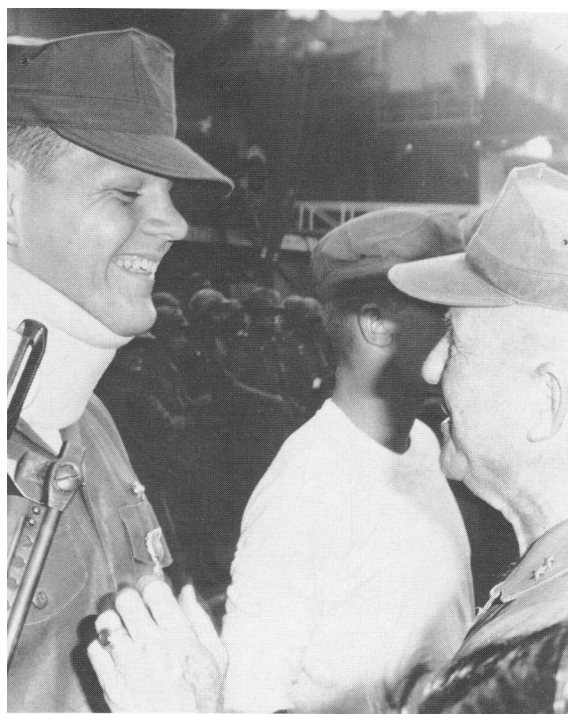


weapons or other equipment belonging to any of the three were on board.”⁸⁵ They were not. Subsequent to this, Lieutenant Colonel Austin learned that the body of Lance Corporal Ashton N. Looney, killed earlier in the day, had somehow also been left behind on Koh Tang. To further add to the confusion over accountability, the *Coral Sea* reported to Admiral Steele that the final helicopter, Knife 51, had offloaded 25 Marines. The Air Force reported 29.⁸⁶

The Marines missing from Stahl’s company were never recovered nor was their disappearance ever explained, other than noting the difficulty and confusion of conducting joint-service, night-retrograde operations under fire. A few of the factors that could have contributed to the machine gun team’s disappearance are: enemy fire during the withdrawal; friendly ground fire during the reduction of the perimeter; friendly fire from the helicopter’s miniguns, the AC-130, and the close air support aircraft; and battlefield disorientation. In all probability, these Marines suffered death at the hands of the enemy.

The final time they were seen was just after the next-to-last reestablishment of the perimeter defense. A post-action investigation revealed, “That upon determining Hall, Hargrove, and Marshall were ineffective as a machine gun team, Sergeant Andersen ordered them to move back to a new position which was located to the left of the position occupied by Captain James H. Davis . . . Sergeant Andersen was the last member of the Marine force to see Hall, Hargrove, and Marshall and that the time was about 2000.”⁸⁷ Throughout the retrograde action, extensive enemy fire, friendly ground fire and suppressive air fire were delivered. The Air Force pilots at Koh Tang during the final extraction observed that “From 1245Z-1300Z (1945-2000 local) random bursts of 50 Cal [were] fired in the direction of both aircraft. When Spectre 11 began suppressive fire to cover the ingress of the final helicopters the fire ceased.”⁸⁸

While BLT 2/9 attempted to determine if its Marines had been killed, and if not, their whereabouts, a message from the *Wilson* further confused the issue. Sent less than 24 hours after the operation ended, it said, “. . . possible PW camp on Koh Tang Island.”⁸⁹ The Marine Corps’ investigation into the disappearance of these Marines concluded in its final opinion, “That Hall, Hargrove, and Marshall could have been fatally wounded subsequent to the last time they were seen by Sergeant Andersen at about 2000 and the time when the final helicopter lifted off, since



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A705991
1stLt Terry L. Tonkin, a forward air controller with BLT 2/9, receives a Purple Heart medal from MajGen Kenneth J. Houghton at Subic Bay. Lt Tonkin was a passenger in Knife 31, which was shot down approaching the eastern landing zone on Koh Tang. Lt Tonkin used a survival radio to call in A-7s as he swam to sea, where he and 12 others were picked up by the Wilson.

there was firing by both enemy forces and the Marines awaiting extraction from Koh Tang.”⁹⁰

The casualties involved in recovering the *Mayaguez* crew totalled: 11 Marines killed, 41 wounded, 3 missing (later declared dead); 2 Navy corpsmen killed and 2 wounded; and 2 airmen killed and 6 wounded.* This did not include the 18 passengers and five crew members of the CH-53 which crashed enroute to Utapao on 13 May.⁹¹

The BLT 2/9 Marines still at Utapao, some returned casualties, and the rest of the men who had waited in vain for insertion, immediately flew back to Okinawa on a C-141. The reason for their sudden departure was a formal protest lodged by the Thai Government

*In documenting the losses for an Air War College Faculty Paper, Doctor James E. Winkates included the Nakhon Phanom helicopter crash: “U.S. forces sustained 18 killed in action, fifty wounded, and twenty-three other personnel killed in a related helicopter crash.” Dr. James E. Winkates, “Hostage Rescue in a Hostile Environment: Lessons Learned from Son Tay, *Mayaguez*, and Entebbe Missions,” Air War College Faculty Paper (Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1978), p. 4.

about the military methods the U.S. used in retaking the *Mayaguez*. Thailand refused to allow any further use of its bases for this purpose. Prime Minister Khukrit informed the American Charge D'Affaires, ". . . should the U.S. resort to military retaliation in regard to this matter . . . , the Thai government wants it to be a matter between America and Cambodia only. The Thai government does not want to be involved in it in any way whatsoever. And it does not and will not give permission for the United States to use any base in Thailand."⁹² Due to the delay in receiving the formal protest, its timing did not interfere with the assault on Koh Tang. As a result of the Thai demands, the BLT 2/9 Marines at Utapao arrived on Okinawa well before the rest of their combat-tested battalion.

Meanwhile, the Marines who had participated in the *Mayaguez* operation went to Subic on Navy ships where the Marines of 1st Battalion, 4th Marines disembarked and rejoined their unit. From there, the Marines of BLT 2/9 returned to Okinawa by way of Kadena Airbase and an Air Force C-141. Once at Camp Schwab, the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines resumed its interrupted training which ironically included a test to see if it was ready for combat! General Hoffman deactivated Task Group 79.9 the day the battalion headquarters returned, 21 May 1975.⁹³

In terms of the Navy's participation, Vice Admiral Steele said, "The May 1975 rescue of the container ship *Mayaguez* and the crew assisted by the USS *Harold E. Holt* (DE-1074) and the USS *Henry B. Wilson* (DDG-7) shows the readiness and flexibility of the ships."⁹⁴ Certainly, readiness and flexibility was also reflected in the Marine Corps' contribution to this operation. Immediately upon conclusion of the operation, General George S. Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued the following statement: "The success of the unique operation to recover the SS *Mayaguez* and her crew by the combined efforts of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps represents an outstanding display of the versatility, dedication, and professional competence of all the participants."⁹⁵

Despite these plaudits, the *Mayaguez* operation, from inception to completion, from planning to execution, contained flaws and failings. Planning, command and control, communications, and adherence to doctrine all suffered in some respect. The short-fuse nature of the contingency held the planners hostage to the clock. From the outset, planners never had adequate time to develop fully a conceptual plan, a problem which was then compounded by a lack of

reliable intelligence. At this juncture, senior officers created command relationships among Services that placed an excessive reliance on long distance communications. Thus the entire operation became highly vulnerable to equipment failures and miscommunication. Admiral Steele offered his opinion of the rescue operation. He argued, "I insist that the short-fused nature of the contingency did not hold the planners hostage for time. I believe that our political leadership, starting with President Ford and Secretary [of State] Henry Kissinger, demanded from the military a speed of performance that it could not provide, and forces were committed piecemeal and pell mell, from different services with different doctrines, and [who are] unused to working with each other. There were too many cooks by far in this broth. Had the Seventh Fleet and its Marines been instructed to recover the *Mayaguez* and her crew, as simple as that, there probably would have been no loss of life, and the *Mayaguez* and her crew would have been recovered successfully, one or two days later."⁹⁶

After the initial landings met with unexpected resistance and the inserted forces were unable to move, potential problems became real problems. Soon, they multiplied as three Services spontaneously attempted to apply dissimilar solutions to problems which required uniform and coordinated ones. Urey Patrick, an analyst for the Center for Naval Analyses, remarked on the lack of coordinated effort: "Of the 8 helicopters damaged or lost in the first wave, 6 were damaged or lost before there was any air or naval gunfire support."⁹⁷ Despite this, the Air Force still sent helicopters into the zone without sufficient covering fire and the Navy failed to provide gunfire support until 1600, nearly 10 hours after the first Marine landed on Koh Tang. One of the worst examples of failure to communicate and coordinate was the indiscriminate delivery of ordnance without the ground force commander's consent or knowledge. The arrival of an unrequested and unwanted 15,000-pound bomb on the afternoon of 15 May highlighted the depth to which command responsibility had sunk. The battalion's after action report under the sub-title "Problem Areas and Lessons Learned" almost understated the seriousness of the event: "Not all ordnance delivery was cleared with the CO BLT 2/9. The most glaring example was the use of a 15,000-pound bomb dropped in mid-afternoon with absolutely no prior notice to or clearance from 2/9."⁹⁸

Eventually, all three Services combined to effect a

successful withdrawal from the island, having earlier recovered the *Mayaguez* and its crew. The high cost of this mission in terms of men and equipment does not obscure the fact that it accomplished its purpose—to rescue the ship and its crew. Yet, it did so in an inefficient and even deadly manner, demonstrating the need for prior preparation for short-fuse responses to worldwide contingencies. The *Mayaguez* rescue operation highlighted the fact that to conduct a successful joint operation, units must first train jointly. In honor of those who paid the highest price for this knowledge, Koh Tang must be remembered.

Koh Tang will never be forgotten by those who participated, nor those other military forces in the Pacific who, because of the perceived need to respond quickly, could not get to the Gulf of Thailand in time. One of the many military units not in the Gulf but relatively close by and anxious to assist in the recovery of the *Mayaguez* was the seaborne force used in Operation Frequent Wind, the 9th MAB. The commander of that over-the-horizon assault force, Brigadier General Richard E. Carey, recently provided his thoughts on

the *Mayaguez* mission. He wrote: “The *Mayaguez* Rescue was the most classic example of assured failure with Joint Operations to that time. Unfortunately, the lesson was not learned and the same mistakes were repeated in the Iranian Hostage Rescue operation (1980). Modern communications are wonderful but they also are deadly. The capability to talk over thousands of miles from the very highest levels to the front-line foxholes takes many of the important decisions out of the hands of the responsible commander, the man on the scene. In the final analysis, in the case of the *Mayaguez*, the lack of accurate intelligence resulted in faulty decisions. Decisions were driven by the desire to do something and to do it as quickly as possible. The National Image was at stake. Unfortunately, the frontline Marine was the recipient of the results of poor decision-making. Again, coordination was conducted by an isolated commander (USSAG) without the proper input from the field commander. To undertake a mission of this type from 195 miles away and with inadequate resources is naive and foolhardy. The results only reinforce my statements.”⁹⁹

CHAPTER 14

Epilogue

“He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot will be victorious.” When Sun Tzu wrote those words more than two thousand years ago he succinctly presented a principle of warfare that still applies today and aptly describes the U.S. Marine Corps’ experience in Vietnam. From the beginning, in 1954, with the assignment of the first Marine advisor, Lieutenant Colonel Victor J. Croizat, to the departure of the last Marine Corps officer to assist and advise the Vietnamese Marine Corps, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Lukeman, the quality of the Corps’ experience in Vietnam depended upon where and when it was allowed to fight.

The Marine Corps presence in Vietnam gradually escalated between 1954 and 1965. Its first sizeable increase occurred in April 1962 when the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing deployed a headquarters element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 362 (HMM-362), and a sub-unit of Marine Air Base Squadron 16 (MABS-16) to Soc Trang. Within three years of their arrival, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade landed at Red Beach 2, northwest of Da Nang. At 0903, 8 March 1965, 11 Marine amphibian tractors unloaded the first elements of BLT 3/9. The 9th MEB soon became the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), eventually consisting of two reinforced divisions and a reinforced Marine aircraft wing.

By late summer 1965, the United States had established the command structure, which save for a few minor exceptions, would govern and control Marine Corps operations for the remainder of the war. III MAF came under the operational control of the commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (ComUSMACV). For logistical and administrative matters, the Marines remained under the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (CGFMFPac). Under this arrangement, III MAF prosecuted the war until its departure in 1971.

The sizeable Marine Corps force in the Republic of Vietnam attained its highest strength in 1968 when it numbered nearly 86,000 Marines ashore, or more than one-fourth of the Corps’ total strength. In that year, III MAF withstood the test of the North Vietnamese Army’s best efforts at Hue City and Khe Sanh. By the

end of the year, the Marines had assumed the offensive.

In 1969 the Marine command undertook its most ambitious operation, Dewey Canyon. The 9th Marines conducted a series of assaults against the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in the Da Krong Valley and enemy Base Area 611, netting 1,600 enemy killed and more than 1,400 weapons captured.

By the end of 1969, the Marine Corps had begun to withdraw units as part of President Richard M. Nixon’s plan of “Vietnamization,” but continued the pacification efforts that Marines had emphasized since soon after their arrival at Da Nang. Dedicated to ridding the rural areas of Viet Cong, part of the effort included Marine Corps civic action and the imaginative combined action program which placed reinforced squads of Marines with South Vietnamese local militia units in the countryside. At the end of May 1971, the U.S. Marine Corps operational presence in South Vietnam ended.

For most Marines, it meant the last time Vietnam would be part of their active vocabulary. But for the Marines of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade on board ships in the Western Pacific, and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, at Iwakuni, Japan, and on Okinawa, the call to arms rang twice more, both times on an Easter weekend. The first was in 1972 when the NVA launched the “Easter Offensive,” forcing the United States to deploy Marine Corps aircraft squadrons quickly from Iwakuni and Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. The second and last time occurred in April 1975, when the NVA’s “Spring Offensive” resulted in victory for the North.

During the months between the withdrawal of the last operational units and these two offensives, the Marine Corps advised and assisted the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC). U.S. Marine advisors wore the Vietnamese Marine uniform and provided on-scene operational advice and assistance. After the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, the Marine advisors were replaced by a single billet in the new Defense Attache Office with the title, Chief, VNMC Logistic Support Branch, Navy Division, DAO.

Three Marines would serve in this capacity before the final chapter of the Vietnamese Marine Corps came to a close. It met its end with two of its brigades, 147 and 468, deployed northeast of Saigon in blocking positions, while its headquarters element and an under-sized battalion remained at Vung Tau. Only the officers and men of the headquarters unit escaped capture as they and their dependents evacuated by air in the last days of the republic. On 30 April 1975, after President Duong Van Minh surrendered to the Communists and ordered his soldiers to lay down their arms, the Vietnamese Marines marched from their positions near Long Binh to their base camp at Song Thon. After arriving there the battalion commanders and their men changed into civilian clothes and began to exit the base. As this was occurring, the invading NVA entered Song Than and rounded up the officers, taking them prisoner. The capture of these officers ended the proud history of the VNMC and for them it began a new life in North Vietnamese re-education camps, some of the same camps occupied

earlier in the war by many of the 47 U.S. Marine Corps prisoners of war.

The war was costly to the U.S. Marine Corps. From 1965 through 1975, an estimated 730,000 men and women served in the Marine Corps; approximately 500,000 of that number served in Vietnam. The Marines sustained casualties of more than 13,000 killed in action and 88,630 wounded, nearly a third of all American casualties in the war.

Would a strategy of pacification as Marine commanders advocated early on, rather than a strategy of attrition as followed by ComUSMACV, have made for a different outcome? Was a direct amphibious assault against North Vietnam possible without leading to a larger conflagration? Could the United States have occupied Laos and Cambodia and cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail without bringing in China? Was there a way for civilian and military policymakers to have better explained the war to the American people? Should we have gone into Vietnam in the first place? These are the unresolved questions about America's longest war.



Notes

PART I The United States Presence in the Western Pacific

CHAPTER 1 THE WAR GOES ON

Unless otherwise noted the material in this chapter is derived from: 9th MAB ComdC, May75; "Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam, Agreements and Protocols: Signed January 27, 1973," *United States Treaties and other International Agreements*, Vol 24, Part 1 (Washington: U.S. Department of State, 1973), pp. 4-64, hereafter "Ending the War"; General Van Tien Dung, *Our Great Spring Victory*, John Spragens, Jr., trans. (London: Monthly Review Press, 1977), hereafter *Spring Victory*; General Tran Van Tra, *Vietnam: History of the Bulwark B2 Theatre—Concluding the Thirty Years War*, vol. 5, *Southeast Asia Report*, No. 1247, 2Feb83, trans. by Joint Publications Research Service for Foreign Broadcast Information Service, hereafter *B2 Theatre*; U.S. House Subcommittee on Appropriations, *Oversight of Fiscal Year 1975 Military Assistance in Vietnam*, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., 1974, hereafter *House Report Vietnam*; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Staff Report, Vietnam: May 1974*, 93rd Cong., 2d Sess., 1974, hereafter *Senate Report Vietnam*; Defense Attache Office, Saigon, "Defense Attache Saigon: RVNAF Final Assessment Jan thru Apr FY 75," dtd 15Jun75, prepared by Col William E. LeGro, USA, hereafter "Final Assessment"; LtCol George E. Strickland intvw, 6May76, Tape 6171, (Oral HistColl, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Strickland intvw; Senior Marine Advisor, VNMC/Marine Advisory Unit Historical Summary dtd 22Mar73, hereafter VNMC/MAU HistSum. All U.S. Army documents unless otherwise indicated are held at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., hereafter CMH. All U.S. Navy documents unless otherwise indicated are held at the Operational Archives Branch, Navy Historical Division, Washington, D.C., hereafter OAB, NHD. All other documents and interviews unless otherwise noted are held at Marine Corps Historical Center (MCHC), Washington, D.C. Messages and After Action Reports are held in the Vietnam File (1973-75) at the MCHC, hereafter Vietnam File, 1973-75. Unless otherwise cited all comments on the draft manuscript are held in the Comment File, 1973-75, also at the MCHC, hereafter Comment File.

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26. *Ibid.*; "Final Assessment."
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31. *Senate Report Vietnam*, pp. 21-25; *Spring Victory*, pp. 17-18.
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50. *House Report Vietnam*, p. 117; "Final Assessment."
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A Division of Marines

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CHAPTER 2 THE UNITED STATES PRESENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Unless otherwise noted the material in this chapter is derived from: 1st MAW ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun72, 1Jul-31Dec72, 1Jan-30Jun73, 1Jul-31Dec73, and 1Jul-31Dec74, hereafter 1st MAW ComdC, month and year; MAG-15 ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun72, 1Jul-31Dec72, 1Jan-30Jun73, and 1Jul-31Dec73, hereafter MAG-15 ComdC, month and year; MAG-12 ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun72, 1Jan-30Jun73, 1Jul-31Dec73, and 1Jul-31Dec74, hereafter MAG-12 ComdC, month and year; 1st MAW Task Force Delta After Action Report, May72-Sept73, entitled "The Rose Garden Story," hereafter Task Force Delta Report; VMA-311 ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun72, 1Jul-31Dec72, 1Jan-30Jun73, and 1Jul-31Dec74, hereafter VMA-311 ComdC, month and year; VMA-211 ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun72 and

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23. 1st MAW ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun73; MAG-15 ComdCs, 1Jan-30Jun73 and 1Jul-31Dec73; Task Force Delta Report; MAG-12 ComdC 1Jul-31Dec73.
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40. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

In preparing this chapter the following command chronologies were used: III MAF ComdCs for 1Jan-30Jun73, 1Jul-31Dec73, and 1Jul-31Dec74, hereafter III MAF ComdC, month and year; 31st MAU ComdCs 1Jan-31Dec73, 1Jan-31Dec74, and 1Jan-31May75, hereafter 31st MAU ComdC, month and year; 9th MAB ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec72, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; and 1st Battalion, 9th Marines ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74, hereafter 1/9 ComdC. Also used in this chapter were Col John F. Roche III, Comments on draft ms, 22Sept88 (Comment File), hereafter Roche Comments; and VAdm George P. Steele, USN, Comments on draft ms, 30Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Steele Comments.

1. USMACThai/JUSMAGThai ComdHist 1973, 30Aug74, Bangkok, Thailand (OAB, NHD), hereafter USMACThai Hist.
2. Facts on File, *Facts on File Yearbook 1971*, 11-17 Nov 1971, pp. 897-898.
3. USMACThai Hist.
4. Ibid.
5. Gen Timothy F. O'Keefe, USAF intvw, 14-15Jun82 (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C.), p. 82.
6. Gen Timothy F. O'Keefe, USAF biography, dtd 1Nov73 (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C.), p. 30.

The Plan for Cambodia

7. CinCPac msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 13Apr73, hereafter CinCPac msg.
8. Ibid.
9. Baker intvw.
10. Maj James B. Hicks intvw, 18Sept75, Tape No. 6146 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Hicks intvw.
11. CinCPac msg.
12. CGIIIMAF msg to CO, 31st MAU, dtd 15Apr73.
13. CGIIIMAF msg to CG, 3d MarDiv, dtd 20Apr73.

14. Hicks intvw.
15. MajGen Edward J. Bronars, Comments on draft chapter, 17Jan76 (Comment File).
16. Baker intvw.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Hicks intvw.
20. Baker intvw.
21. Hicks intvw.
22. Grimm intvw.
23. III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun73.
24. Baker intvw.
25. Ibid.
26. Hicks intvw.
27. III MAF ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec73; Maj James B. Hicks' Trip Report, Part IV (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
28. Grimm intvw.
29. Baker intvw.
30. Hicks intvw.
31. 31st MAU ComdC, Aug73.
32. Ibid.
33. 31st MAU ComdC, Sep73.
34. 31st MAU ComdC, Jun74.
35. Grimm intvw.
36. Ibid.

Vietnam

37. 9th MAB ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74.
38. III MAF ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74; Steele Comments.
39. III MAF ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74.
40. Steele Comments.
41. Ibid.
42. III MAF ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74.
43. LtCol James L. Cunningham intvw, 17Sep76, Tape 6189 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Cunningham intvw.
44. Ibid.
45. 3d MarDiv ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74.
46. Cunningham intvw.
47. 1/9 ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec74.
48. Ibid.
49. Cunningham intvw.

CHAPTER 4 THE FLEET MARINES ARE READIED

In preparing this chapter the following command chronologies were used: III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun73, hereafter III MAF ComdC, Jan-Jun73; III MAF ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec73, hereafter III MAF ComdC, Jul-Dec73; 31st MAU ComdCs, Jul73-Jun74, hereafter 31st MAU ComdC, month and year; 4th Marines ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec973, hereafter 4th Mar ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec73; and 9th Marines ComdCs, 1Jul-31Dec73, 1Jul-31Dec74, and 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 9th Mar ComdC, month and year. The cited messages are held in the Vietnam message binder (1973-75) in the archives at MCHC. Also used in this chapter were LtGen Stephen G. Olmstead, Comments on draft ms, 4Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Olmstead Comments; MajGen Richard E. Carey, Comments on draft ms, 11May89 (Comment File), hereafter Carey Comments; Col Alexander S. Ruggiero, Comments on draft ms, 20Sept88 (Comment File), hereafter Ruggiero Comments; Col Peter M. Angle, Comments on draft ms, 4Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Angle Comments;

Col Floyd A. Karker, Comments on draft ms, 21Sept88 (Comment File), hereafter Karker Comments; and LtCol Curtis G. Lawson, Comments on draft ms, 21Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Lawson Comments.

The Air Contingency BLTs

1. CincPac msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 13Apr73.
2. CGIIIMAF msg to CG, 3d MarDiv, dtd 15Apr73.
3. CO, CTG 79.4 msg to TG 79.4, dtd 17Apr73.
4. CGIIIMAF msg to CO, 31st MAU, dtd 20Apr73.
5. III MAF ComdC, Jan-Jun73.
6. Maj Henry C. Stackpole memo to CO, 9th Mar, Subj: Eagle Pull, dtd 29Sept73, p. 1 (Eagle Pull File).
7. 9th Mar ComdCs, Jul-Dec73 and Jul-Dec74.

The Eagle Pull Command Element

8. III MAF ComdC, Jul-Dec73.
9. Olmstead Comments; Angle Comments.
10. Lawson Comments.
11. Biographical sketch of LtGen John J. Burns, USAF (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C.).

The 31st MAU

12. Karker Comments.
13. 31st MAU ComdC, Jul73.
14. Ibid.
15. 31st MAU ComdC, Aug73.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 6.
18. 31st MAU ComdC, Sep73.
19. 31st MAU ComdC, Oct73.
20. 31st MAU ComdC, Nov73.
21. 31st MAU ComdC, Dec73.
22. 31st MAU ComdC, Jan74.
23. 31st MAU ComdC, Feb74.
24. 31st MAU ComdC, Apr74.
25. 31st MAU ComdC, Jun74.
26. Capt Richard L. Jaehne intvw, 1Mar77, Tape 6192 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC).

The Other Contingency

27. 9th Mar ComdCs, Jul-Dec74 and Jan-Jul75.
28. Ibid.
29. Maj David A. Quinlan intvw, 16Mar76, Tape 6158 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Quinlan intvw; Carey Comments.
30. Carey Comments.

PART II South Vietnam

CHAPTER 5 THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WINTER-SPRING OFFENSIVE, 1974-75: THE MORTAL BLOW

Unless otherwise noted the material in this chapter is derived from *Spring Victory*; "Final Assessment"; Col William E. Le Gro, USA, *Vietnam From Cease-Fire to Capitulation* (Washington: U.S.

Army Center of Military History, 1981), hereafter *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*; Gen Cao Van Vien, *The Final Collapse* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1983), hereafter *Final Collapse*; Clark Dougan, David Fulghum, and editors, *The Fall of the South* (Boston: Boston Publishing Co., 1985), hereafter *Fall of the South*; David Butler, *The Fall of Saigon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), hereafter *Fall of Saigon*; Arnold R. Isaacs, *Without Honor* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983), hereafter *Without Honor*; and Col Harry G. Summers, Jr., *Vietnam Almanac* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1985), hereafter *Vietnam Almanac*. Also used were LtCol Tran Ngoc Toan, Comments on draft ms, 16Mar90 (Comment File), hereafter Toan Comments; LtCol Edward A. Grimm, Comments on draft ms, 28Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Grimm Comments.

The Collapse of the Central Highlands

1. *Spring Victory*, pp. 31-34; *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, pp. 132-136.
2. *Final Collapse*, pp. 58-68.
3. Edward J. Marolda, Comments on draft ms, 6Jan89 (Comment File).
4. *Spring Victory*, pp. 23-26.
5. "Final Assessment," p. 5-1.
6. *Fall of the South*, pp. 46-49.
7. "Final Assessment," p. 1-10; *Fall of the South*, pp. 48-52.
8. *Spring Victory*, p. 44.
9. *Fall of the South*, p. 49; *Final Collapse*, pp. 69-70; *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, pp. 147-149.
10. *Fall of the South*, pp. 49-50; *Final Collapse*, 70-72; *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, 149-151.
11. *Fall of the South*, pp. 50-52; *Final Collapse*, 72-75; *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, 151-152; *Spring Victory*, pp. 83-85.
12. *Fall of the South*, p. 54.
13. Ibid., pp. 54-63.
14. *Spring Victory*, p. 94.
15. *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, p. 154.
16. *Without Honor*, p. 356.

Defeat in Military Region 1

17. "Final Assessment," p. 2-2.
18. *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, pp. 156-157; *Fall of the South*, pp. 66-68; Toan Comments.
19. *Final Collapse*, p. 99; *Vietnam Almanac*, p. 79.
20. *Spring Victory*, p. 132.
21. "Final Assessment," p. 5-2.
22. *Spring Victory*, p. 132.
23. "Final Assessment," p. 1-9.

A Wasted Division

24. Ibid., p. 8-1.
25. Ibid.
26. Lukeman intvw.
27. Toan Comments.
28. "Final Assessment," p. 5-1.
29. "Final Assessment," pp. 8-1, 8-2.

CHAPTER 6 THE EVACUATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S NORTHERN PROVINCES

In preparing this chapter the following command chronologies were used: III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter III MAF

ComdC; 3d Marine Division ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 3d MarDiv ComdC; 9th MAB ComdC, 25Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; 31st MAU ComdC, 1Jan-18Apr75, hereafter 31st MAU ComdC; 1st Battalion, 4th Marines ComdC, 1Jan-18Apr75, hereafter 1/4 ComdC; and HMM-165 ComdC, 1Jan-30Apr75, hereafter HMM-165 ComdC. Also used were: Steele Comments; Col Carl A. Shaver, Comments on draft ms, 20Apr89 (Comment File), hereafter Shaver Comments; Capt Charles J. Bushey, Comments on draft ms, 2Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Bushey Comments; and LtCol Walter J. Wood, Comments on draft ms, 3Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Wood Comments.

The Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group

1. III MAF ComdC.
2. 31st MAU ComdC.
3. 1/4 ComdC.
4. Quinlan intvw.
5. Ibid.
6. III MAF ComdC.
7. CO, CTF 76 msg to CO, Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group, dtd 30Mar75.

Initial Operations in Vietnamese Waters

8. 1/4 ComdC.
9. LtCol Charles E. Hester intvw, 10May75, Tape 6095 (Oral Hist-Coll), hereafter Hester intvw; CWO2 Allen F. Kent intvw, 10May75, Tape 6060 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Kent intvw.
10. Ibid.
11. 3d MarDiv ComdC.
12. 1/4 ComdC.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.

Military Sealift Command Operations

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. LtCol Gerald L. Berry, Comments on draft ms, dtd 3Oct88 (Comment File).
18. PacAF Office of History, "The Fall and Evacuation of South Vietnam," 30Apr78, pp. 63-67 (copy of pp. 63-67 in Vietnam File, 1973-75).
19. HMM-165 ComdC.
20. Bushey Comments.
21. Hester intvw.
22. Bushey Comments.

Meeting the Needs

23. 1/4 ComdC.
24. Ibid.
25. Hester intvw.

PART III

Operation Eagle Pull

CHAPTER 7

THE EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

In preparing this chapter the following command chronologies were used: 31st MAU ComdC, 1Jan-18Apr75, hereafter 31st MAU ComdC; III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter III MAF ComdC; III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, containing Trip Report of Col Sydney T. Batchelder, hereafter Batchelder Trip Report; HMH-463

ComdC, 1Jan-30Apr75, hereafter HMH-463 ComdC; and 11th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-5Apr75, hereafter 11th MAB ComdC. Additional sources for this section were derived from U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy, *Supplemental Assistance to Cambodia*, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: GPO, 1975), hereafter Senate Subcmt Rpt Cambodia; U.S. House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, *Budget Amendment for Military Assistance to Cambodia, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1975*, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, GPO, 1975), hereafter House Subcmt Rpt Cambodia; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Operations in Cambodia: April, 1973*, 93d Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: GPO, 1973), hereafter Senate For Rel Cmt Rpt; and *Without Honor*. Also used were: Carey Comments; Steele Comments; Grimm Comments; Roche Comments; LtCol William R. Melton, Comments on draft ms, 14Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Melton Comments; and LtCol John F. Guilmartin, Jr., USAF (Ret), Comments on draft ms, 27Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Guilmartin Comments. Messages and after action reports are located in the Eagle Pull-Frequent Wind File.

The Khmer Rouge

1. Senate Subcmt Rpt Cambodia, p. 17.
2. Grimm intvw.
3. House Subcmt Rpt Cambodia.
4. House Subcmt Rpt Cambodia, pp. 48-49; Grimm intvw.
5. House Subcmt Rpt Cambodia, p. 10; Senate Subcmt Rpt Cambodia, p. 13; Grimm intvw.
6. Grimm intvw.
7. Ibid.
8. Senate For Rel Cmt Rpt.

The Khmer Communists' Last Dry Season Offensive

9. Ibid.
10. U.S. House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1975*, Hearings, Part 3, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: GPO, 1975), pp. 9-12.
11. H. D. S. Greenway, "Convoy Brings Gas, Ammo to Phnom Penh," 28Jan75, p. 8, and "Mines in Mekong Tip Balance to Insurgents," 7Feb75, p. 18, *The Washington Post*.
12. Senate Subcmt Rpt, p. 31.
13. U.S. House Special Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, *The Vietnam-Cambodia Emergency 1975, Part IV, Cambodian Evacuation: Testimony of Ambassador John Gunther Dean*, 94th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: GPO, 1976), p. 6634, hereafter Dean Testimony.
14. Ibid.

The Marines Move into Position

15. 31st MAU ComdC.
16. III MAF ComdC.
17. 31st MAU ComdC.
18. Batchelder Trip Report.
19. 31st MAU ComdC; Roche Comments.
20. Steele Comments.
21. Batchelder Trip Report.
22. HMH-463 ComdC.

23. 11th MAB ComdC.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Batchelder Trip Report.
27. 9th MAB AAR, 30Jun75, "Operation Frequent Wind."
28. 31st MAU ComdC.
29. HMH-463 ComdC.

Final Preparations Ashore

30. LtCol Curtis G. Lawson intvw, 26May75, Tape 6041 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Lawson intvw.
31. Batchelder Trip Report.
32. *Without Honor*.
33. Maj George L. Cates, unrecorded conversation with Maj David A. Quinlan, 1Jul76.
34. Lawson intvw.

Final Preparations at Sea

35. Col John F. Roche III intvw, 31May75, Tape 6130 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Roche intvw.
36. LtCol George P. Slade intvw, 4Jun75, Tape 6131 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Slade intvw.
37. Roche Comments.
38. Slade intvw.
39. 31st MAU ComdC.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.

The Execution of Eagle Pull

42. Batchelder Trip Report.
43. 31st MAU ComdC.
44. Dean Testimony.
45. Roche intvw.
46. Maj William R. Melton intvw, 30Jun86, Tape 122 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC); Melton Comments.
47. Batchelder Trip Report.
48. 31st MAU ComdC.

PART IV Ending an Alliance

CHAPTER 8 THE OTHER CONTINGENCY

In preparing this chapter the following materials were used: III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter III MAF ComdC; 31st MAU ComdC, 1Jan-30Apr75, hereafter 31st MAU ComdC; 9th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; 4th Marines ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 4th Marines ComdC; 1st Bn, 4th Marines Post-Exercise Report, Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group (CTG 79.9) dtd 30Apr75, hereafter 1/4 Post-Ex Rpt; VMGR-152 ComdC 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter VMGR-152 ComdC; AESF ComdC, 17Apr-31May75, hereafter AESF ComdC; and Marine Corps Command Center Items of Significant Interest, hereafter MCCC ISA with date and enclosure. Also used were materials from Stephen Hosmer, Konrad Kellen, and Brian Jenkins, *The Fall of South Vietnam: Statements by Vietnamese Military and Civilian Leaders* (New York: Crane, Russak and Co., 1980), hereafter *Fall of South Vietnam: Statements*; LtCol Charles A. Barstow ltr to Gen Wallace M. Greene, Jr., dtd 18Dec73 (Vietnam File, 1973-75), here-

after Barstow ltr; *Fall of Saigon*; and *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*. Also Steele Comments and MSgt Michael A. McCormick, Comments on draft ms, 9Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter McCormick Comments.

1. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith, trans. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 77, hereafter *Art of War*.
2. *Fall of Saigon*, pp. 117-151.
3. Barstow ltr.
4. *Fall of South Vietnam: Statements*, p. 210.
5. Ibid., p. 211.

Marine Security Guard Detachment, Da Nang

6. Co C, MSG Bn ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75.
7. SSgt Walter W. Sparks intvw, 7May75, Tape 6267 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Sparks intvw.
8. Ibid.
9. MCCC ISA, 3Mar75, with Encl 1: MCCC Talon Vise Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
10. CG, Seventh Air Force msg to JCS, dtd 27Mar75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
11. MCCC ISA, 3Mar75, with Encl 1: MCCC Talon Vise Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
12. Sparks Intvw.
13. Ibid.
14. MCCC ISA, 3Mar75, with Encl 1: MCCC Talon Vise Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
15. Sparks Intvw.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Steele Comments.
24. MCCC ISA, 30Mar75, with Encl 1: MCCC Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
25. 4th Marines ComdC.

Military Region 2: Nha Trang

26. *Fall of South Vietnam: Statements*, p. 199.
27. Ibid., p. 201.
28. MCCC ISA, 1Apr75, with Encl 1: MCCC Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
29. Sgt Michael A. McCormick intvw, 16Jun86, Tape 120A (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter McCormick intvw.
30. Ibid.

III MAF and the NVA Onslaught

31. MCCC ISA, 3Apr75, with Encl 1: MCCC Message Summary (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
32. Ibid.
33. ComPacInt message to CinCPac, dtd 3 Apr75, hereafter ComPacInt 3Apr75 msg.
34. ComSeventhFlt message to subordinate units, dtd 3Apr75.
35. ComPacInt 3Apr75 msg.
36. *Cease-Fire to Capitulation*, pp. 173-174.

9th MAB and Task Force 76

37. 9th MAB ComdC.
38. III MAF ComdC.

The Brigade

39. LtGen Richard E. Carey official biography (RefSec, MCHC).
40. III MAF ComdC.
41. 9th MAB ComdC.
42. Ibid.
43. III MAF ComdC.
44. Quinlan intvw.
45. 9th MAB ComdC.
46. VMGR-152 ComdC.
47. 9th MAB ComdC.
48. LtCol James L. Cunningham intvw, n.d., Tape 6189 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Cunningham intvw.
49. 9th MAB ComdC.

CHAPTER 9 PLANNING THE EVACUATION

In preparing this chapter the following command chronologies were used: 9th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; 9th MAB BLSG ComdC, 19Apr-12May75, hereafter 9th MAB BLSG ComdC; RLT 4 ComdC, 27Mar-30Apr75, hereafter RLT 4 ComdC; and AESF ComdC, 17Apr-31May75, hereafter AESF ComdC. Also used were: LtGen Richard E. Carey, Comments on draft ms, 11May89 (Comment File), hereafter Carey Comments; Col Richard K. Young, Comments on draft ms, 27Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Young Comments; Col Anthony A. Wood, Comments on draft ms, 23Feb90 (Comment File), hereafter Wood Comments; and LtCol John F. Guilmartin, Comments on draft ms, 27Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Guilmartin Comments.

Brigade Planning and Liaison

1. 9th MAB, OPlans, "Frequent Wind" messages, 1975; and "Operation Frequent Wind, 1975, Postoperational Summary," dtd 5Aug75 (Frequent Wind File), hereafter Frequent Wind File.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. 9th MAB ComdC.
6. Ibid.
7. Frequent Wind File.
8. Carey Comments.

The Restructured 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade

9. *Spring Victory*, p. 154.
10. 9th MAB ComdC.
11. Col Wylie W. Taylor intvw, 5Jun75, Tape 6163 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Taylor intvw.
12. Young Comments.
13. Taylor intvw; Cunningham intvw.
14. Taylor intvw.
15. AESF ComdC.
16. 9th MAB ComdC.
17. Ibid.
18. RLT 4 ComdC.

The Concept

19. 9th MAB ComdC.

20. Ibid.
21. Quinlan intvw.

Additional Forces, Plans, and Liaison

22. *Search and Rescue*, pp. 142-143; Guilmartin Comments.
23. *Search and Rescue*.
24. 9th MAB ComdC.
25. Ibid.
26. 9th MAB BLSG ComdC.
27. Frequent Wind File.

DAO Planning: The SPG and Project Alamo

28. Col Anthony A. Wood intvw, 13Oct89, Tape 8910 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Wood intvw.
29. LtCol William E. McKinstry intvw, 6Apr76, Tape 6170 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter McKinstry intvw; Lukeman intvw.
30. Wood intvw.
31. CG, USSAG msg to JCS, dtd 4Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
32. Wood intvw.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Wood Comments.
40. Wood intvw; Wood Comments.

CHAPTER 10 THE FINAL DAYS

In preparing this chapter the following materials were used: III MAF ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter III MAF ComdC; 31st MAU ComdC, 1Jan-30Apr75, hereafter 31st Mau ComdC; 9th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; 4th Marines ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 4th Mar ComdC; 1/4 Post-Ex Rpt; AESF ComdC, 17Apr-31May75, hereafter AESF ComdC; and Co C, MSG Bn ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75. Also used were: *Art of War; Fall of South Vietnam: Statements; Fall of Saigon; Fall of the South; Spring Victory*; Carey Comments; MajGen Homer D. Smith, Jr., USA (Ret), Comments on draft ms, 30Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Smith Comments; BGen James E. Livingston, Comments on draft ms, 20Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Livingston Comments; Col Wylie W. Taylor, Comments on draft ms, 22Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Taylor Comments; Col David A. Quinlan, Comments on draft ms, 13Feb89 (Comment File), hereafter Quinlan Comments; and Maj Charles J. Bushey, Comments on draft ms, 20Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Bushey Comments.

The AESF

1. Maj David A. Quinlan intvw, 30Dec75, Tape 111A (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
2. 9th MAB ComdC; Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
3. Quinlan Comments.
4. 4th Mar ComdC; 1/4 Post-Ex Rpt; AESF ComdC; Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
5. Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
6. LtCol Cyril V. Moyher, unrecorded conversation with author, 31Dec86.
7. AESF ComdC and Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
8. Ibid.

9. AESF ComdC.
10. Ibid.
11. Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
12. Ibid.
13. Bushey Comments.
14. AESF ComdC.

Xuan Loc Remembered

15. *Spring Victory*, p. 167.
16. *Fall of the South*, pp. 129-160.
17. *Spring Victory*, pp. 219-220; *Fall of the South*, pp. 157-158.
18. 9th MAB ComdC; Smith Comments; *Fall of South Vietnam: Statements*, pp. 245-247.
19. Smith Comments.
20. 9th MAB ComdC; Smith Comments; *Fall of Saigon*, pp. 390-392.
21. *Art of War*, p. 78.

Saigon and the Final Preparation Pieces

22. 9th MAB ComdC; Livingston Comments.
23. 9th MAB ComdC; McKinstry intvw.
24. 9th MAB ComdC; McKinstry intvw; Carey Comments; Taylor Comments.
25. 9th MAB ComdC; McKinstry intvw; Taylor Comments; Wood intvw.
26. Frequent Wind File.
27. Frequent Wind File; Wood intvw.
28. 9th MAB ComdC.

Consulate Marines

29. Co C, MSG Bn ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75; *Fall of Saigon*, pp. 329-331, 360.
30. Co C, MSG Bn ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75.
31. SSgt Boyette S. Hasty intvw, 23 May75, Tape 6344 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Hasty intvw.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. AESF ComdC.
37. Hasty intvw.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.

PART V Operation Frequent Wind and a New Beginning

CHAPTER 11 THE EVACUATION

In preparing this chapter the following materials were used: 9th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; RLT 4 ComdC, 27Mar-30Apr75, hereafter RLT 4 ComdC; BLT 2/4 ComdC, 19Apr-30Apr75, hereafter BLT 2/4 ComdC; BLT 1/9 ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter BLT 1/9 ComdC; ProvMAG-39 ComdC, 19Apr-12May75, hereafter ProvMAG-39 ComdC; and 3d Battalion, 9th Marines ComdC 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter BLT 3/9

ComdC. Also used were: MajGen John R. D. Cleland, Jr., USA, "Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff: NEMVAC Survey Report," May 1975, hereafter Cleland Report; Frequent Wind File; Maj A. J. C. Lavalley, ed., *Last Flight From Saigon* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1985), hereafter *Last Flight*; and Ray L. Bowers, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: Tactical Airlift* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1983), hereafter *Tactical Airlift*. Also, Gen Louis H. Wilson, Comments on draft ms, 26Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Wilson Comments; MajGen Norman W. Gourley, Comments on draft ms, 1Mar89 (Comment File), hereafter Gourley Comments; Col Edwin F. Pelosky, Comments on draft ms, 21Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Pelosky Comments; Carey Comments; Livingston Comments; Smith Comments; Taylor Comments; Wood Comments; Young Comments; and Guilmartin Comments.

1. Livingston Comments; McKinstry intvw.
2. Livingston Comments.
3. Wood intvw.

9th MAB

4. CinCPac msg to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 20Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
5. CG 9th MAB msg to CO, CTF 76, dtd 29Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
6. CO, CTG 76 msg to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 24Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
7. Young Comments.
8. Carey Comments; *Last Flight*, pp. 76-82; *Tactical Airlift*, p. 643.
9. Capt John B. Heffernan intvw, 22Jul86, Tape 112A (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Heffernan intvw.
10. CG 9th MAB msg to CO, RLT 4, dtd 28Apr75 (Frequent Wind File); Livingston Comments; Taylor Comments.
11. CinCPac msg to CG, USSAG/Seventh Air Force, dtd 29Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).

The DAO Compound

12. Frequent Wind AAR msg to CG, USSAG/Seventh Air Force and ComSeventhFlt, dtd 2May75 (Frequent Wind File), hereafter 9th MAB AAR.
13. Capt William R. Melton intvw, 28Jun86, Tape 115A (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Melton intvw.
14. Capt Kurt A. Schrader, written comments on Operations Eagle Pull and Frequent Wind, dtd 9May88 (Frequent Wind File).
15. Heffernan intvw.
16. RLT 4 Oplan 3-75; RLT 4 ComdC (Frequent Wind File).
17. LtCol James L. Bolton intvw, 18Jun75, Tape 113A (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Bolton intvw.
18. CO, CTG 76 msg to ComSeventhFlt, CG Seventh Air Force, and all participating forces, dtd 29Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
19. GySgt Russell R. Thurmond intvw, 5Apr85, Tape 114A (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
20. 9th MAB ComdC.
21. CO, CTG 76 msg to ComSeventhFlt, CG Seventh Air Force, and participating forces, dtd 29Apr75, hereafter Frequent Wind Helo Time Schedule.
22. BLT 2/4 ComdC.
23. Melton intvw.
24. CTF 76 Special Situation Reports, Serial Numbers 1-72, to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 29Apr75 (Frequent Wind File), hereafter Spec SitReps.
25. Ibid.

26. 9th MAB ComdC.
27. USSAG/Seventh Air Force OPlan 5060V with revision 5, msg to all participating forces (Frequent Wind File), hereafter Frequent Wind OPlan.
28. Frequent Wind Helo Time Schedule; Col John J. Roosma, Jr. intvw, 17Oct89, Tape 8909 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
29. Frequent Wind Helo Time Schedule.
30. Capt Edward J. Ritchie intvw, 16Jun86, Tape 116A (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Ritchie intvw.
31. 9th MAB AAR.
32. RLT 4 ComdC.
33. Smith Comments.
34. 9th MAB ComdC; Spec Sit Reps.
35. 9th MAB AAR; Melton intvw.
36. Melton intvw.
37. 9th MAB ComdC; RLT 4 ComdC; BLT 1/9 ComdC.
38. 9th MAB AAR.
39. Recorded tapes of radio transmissions of 9th MAB helicopters and ABCCC, 29Apr75 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
40. Guilmartin Comments.
41. Spec Sit Reps.
42. BLT 3/9 ComdC.
43. Bloomer Comments.

The Embassy

44. Spec Sit Reps.
45. BLT 1/9 ComdC; RLT 4 ComdC.
46. 9th MAB ComdC; RLT 4 ComdC; BLT 1/9 ComdC.
47. 9th MAB AAR; BLT 1/9 ComdC.
48. JCS msg to CinCPac, dtd 24Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
49. 9th MAB AAR.
50. Bolton intvw.
51. 9th MAB AAR; RLT 4 ComdC.
52. BLT 1/9 ComdC.
53. 9th MAB ComdC.
54. Ritchie intvw.
55. Carey Comments.
56. Wilson Comments.
57. Bolton intvw.
58. 9th MAB ComdC.
59. BLT 1/9 ComdC; LtCol Jon M. Walter intvw, 30Jun87, Tape 151A (OralHistColl, MCHC), hereafter Walter intvw.
60. Berry Comments; LtCol James H. Kean intvw, 23Oct88, Tape 8810 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Kean intvw.
61. Walter intvw.
62. Kean intvw.
63. CG, 9th MAB msg to CinCPac, dtd 4May75 (Frequent Wind File); 9th MAB ComdC.
64. 9th MAB AAR; MSG Bn ComdC.
65. LtCol John W. Bowman, Jr., intvw, 30Jun87, Tape 150A (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
66. ProvMAG-39 ComdC; Spec Sit Reps.
67. Heffernan intvw.

CHAPTER 12 REFUGEE OPERATIONS

In preparing this chapter, the following materials were used: 9th MAB ComdC, 26Mar-30Apr75, hereafter 9th MAB ComdC; 4th Marines ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 4th Mar ComdC; AESF ComdC, 17Apr-31May75, hereafter AESF ComdC; and ProvMAG-39

ComdC, 19Apr-30Apr75, hereafter ProvMAG-39 ComdC. Also used were Marine Barracks Guam AAR, dtd 10Nov75, hereafter MB Guam AAR; Operation New Arrival AAR, hereafter NewArr AAR; Operation New Arrival Phasedown Plan 1-75, dtd 15Sep75, hereafter OpNewArr PhPl; and Cleland Report. Also, VADM George P. Steele, USN, Comments on draft ms, 30Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Steele Comments; BGen Paul G. Graham, Comments on draft ms, 30Oct88 (Comment File), hereafter Graham Comments; BGen James A. Herbert, USA, Comments on draft ms, 6Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Herbert Comments; Col Tullis J. Woodham, Comments on draft ms, 15Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Woodham Comments; Col Nicholas M. Trapnell, Jr., Comments on draft ms, 12Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Trapnell Comments; Capt James D. Tregurtha, USN, Comments on draft ms, 8Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Tregurtha Comments; and Capt Michael T. Mallick, Comments on draft ms, 29Sep88 (Comment File), hereafter Mallick Comments.

1. OpNewArr PhPl.

A Link to Freedom: The Exodus and a New Beginning

2. USSAG/Seventh Air Force AAR, dtd 6Jun75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75), hereafter USSAG AAR; 9th MAB ComdC.
3. CinCPac message to all participating units, dtd 30Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
4. AESF ComdC.
5. USSAG AAR.

Way Stations

6. U.S. Embassy Manila msg to Secretary of State, dtd 22Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
7. CinCPacFlt msg to CinCPac, dtd 22Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
8. JCS msg to CinCPac, dtd 27Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
9. CinCPacRep Saigon msg to CinCPac, dtd 23 Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
10. Steele Comments.

Preparations: 1st Battalion, 4th Marines and the Task Force

11. 4th Mar ComdC.
12. Thomas Bartlett, "Frequent Wind," *Leatherneck Magazine*, Nov75, p. 32.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 31.
15. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
16. CinCPac msg to MAC and subordinate units, dtd 27Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
17. CO, USS *Blue Ridge* msg to JCS and CinCPac, dtd 28Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
18. CinCPac msg to JCS, CinCPacFlt, and Secretary of State, dtd 28Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
19. Frequent Wind Situation Report 018, issued 29Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).

Evacuation and Passage: Frequent Wind and the AESF's Final Chapter

20. 1stLt Joseph J. Rogish, Jr., intvw, 7Jul75, Tape 6139 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Rogish intvw.
21. Ibid.
22. Cleland Report.
23. 9th MAB ComdC; AESF ComdC.
24. Capt Cyril V. Moyher ltr to CG 3d MarDiv, dtd 4Jun75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75), hereafter Moyher ltr.

25. Tregurtha Comments.
26. Moyher ltr.
27. Ibid.
28. AESF ComdC.
29. CWO-2 J. C. Owens intvw, 16Jan87 (Memorandum for the Record, Vietnam File, 1973-75).
30. Mallick Comments.
31. Moyher ltr.
32. AESF ComdC.
33. 9th MAB ComdC; AESF ComdC.

A Vietnamese City in Guam

34. CinCPac msg to CinCPacRep Guam, dtd 23Apr75 (Frequent Wind File).
35. MB Guam AAR.
36. Ibid.
37. Marine Barracks Guam msg to CMC, dtd 28Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75), hereafter MB Guam msg.
38. CinCPac msg to Marine Barracks Guam, dtd 23Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
39. MB Guam msg.
40. MB Guam AAR.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Herbert Comments.
45. MB Guam AAR.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.

The Final Link: Camp Pendleton

50. BGen Paul G. Graham intvw, 30 Sept75, Tape 6154 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC), hereafter Graham intvw.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. CMC msg to CG Camp Pendleton, dtd 29Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
58. JCS msg to CMC, dtd 30Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
59. Camp Pendleton New Arrival Operation Order 1-75, dtd 28Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75), hereafter NewArr OpO 1-75.
60. CG MCAS El Toro msg to CMC, dtd 30Apr75 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
61. CG 3d MAW msg to CG I MAF and CO MAG-16 (Vietnam File, 1973-75).
62. NewArr OpO 1-75.
63. Graham intvw.
64. NewArr AAR.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. OpNewArr PhPl.
70. NewArr AAR.
71. Graham intvw.

PART VI After 'Vietnam'

CHAPTER 13 RECOVERY OF THE SS *MAYAGUEZ*

In preparing this chapter the following sources were used: BLT 2/9 Koh Tang/*Mayaguez* Historical Report dtd 9Dec75, hereafter 2/9 Koh Tang Report; BLT 1/4 After Action Report on the Recovery of the *Mayaguez*, dtd 12Nov75, hereafter 1/4 AAR; DC/S Plans and Operations HQ PacAF, "Assault on Koh Tang," dtd 23Jun75 (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C.), hereafter "Assault on Koh Tang"; 1st Battalion, 9th Marines ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun75, hereafter 1/9 ComdC; Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A; and Col J. M. Johnson, LtCol R. W. Austin, and Maj D. A. Quinlan, "Individual Heroism Overcame Awkward Command Relationships, Confusion, and Bad Information Off the Cambodian Coast," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Oct77, pp. 24-34, hereafter "Individual Heroism." Additionally, copies of numerous messages were obtained from the Air Force Historical Research Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and are held in the *Mayaguez* message file, hereafter MMF. Another important source was U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Seizure of the Mayaguez*, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., 1975, Pts I-IV, hereafter *Hearings on Seizure*. Also used were: Steele Comments; Carey Comments; Roche Comments; Strickland Comments; Grimm Comments; Guilmartin Comments; Wood Comments; 1stLt Terry L. Tonkin, Comments on draft ms, 13Mar89 (Comment File), hereafter Tonkin Comments; 2dLt Michael A. Cicere, Comments on draft ms, 9Nov88 (Comment File), hereafter Cicere Comments.

1. Capt C. T. Miller, "Seizure of the S.S. *Mayaguez* by Khmer Rouge Gunboat P128, Statement of Facts," 1975 (MMF), hereafter *Mayaguez* Master's statement.

The *Mayaguez* Crisis

2. Frances Levine, "Ship Seized," HQMC Public Affairs Division press release, dtd 12May75 (MMF).
3. Ibid.
4. "Individual Heroism."
5. *Hearings on Seizure*, pt I, pp. 3-5 and pt IV, p. 63; *History of Pacific Air Forces*, 1Jul74-31Dec75, (Air Force Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama), hereafter PacAF History (74-75).
6. Urey W. Patrick, "The *Mayaguez* Operation," (Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia), hereafter CNA *Mayaguez* Report.

The Initial Decisions

7. VAdm George P. Steele, USN (Ret), "The U.S. Seventh Fleet," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, Jan76 (U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland), p. 27, hereafter "U.S. Seventh Fleet"; *Hearings on Seizure*, pt I, pp. 3-6.
8. Ritchie intvw, Tape 121A.
9. *Hearings on Seizure*, pt I, pp. 3-6 and pt IV, pp. 87-88.
10. CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force msg to *Mayaguez* participants, dtd 13May75 (MMF), hereafter *Mayaguez* Surveillance Operation msg; Earl H. Tilford, Jr., *The United States Air Force Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia* (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C.), pp. 146-154.

11. *Mayaguez* Surveillance Operation msg.
12. CinCPac msg to CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force, dtd 13May75 (MMF); *Mayaguez* Surveillance Operation msg.
13. Seventh Air Force SS *Mayaguez* SitRep 011 msg to CinCPac, dtd 13May75 (MMF); PacAF History (74-75).
14. CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force msg to CinCPac C/S, dtd 13May75 (MMF).
15. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; 1/4 AAR.
16. Ibid.
17. 1/4 AAR; Seventh Air Force SS *Mayaguez* SitRep 020 msg to CinCPac, dtd 14May75 (MMF).
18. Ibid.
19. 1/4 AAR; *Mayaguez* Surveillance Operation msg; CinCPacFlt msg to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 14May75 (MMF).
20. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
21. Seventh Air Force SS *Mayaguez* SitRep 029 msg to CinCPac, dtd 14May75 (MMF).

Assault Preparations

22. *Hearings on Seizure*, Part IV, p. 76.
23. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; LtCol Randall W. Austin intvw dtd 15Dec84, Tape 112A (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Austin intvw.
24. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
25. Austin intvw; 2/9 Koh Tang Report; Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
26. 1/4 *Mayaguez* Report.
27. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force msg to units participating in recovery of *Mayaguez*, dtd 14May75 (MMF) hereafter USSAG *Mayaguez* Ops msg.
28. USSAG *Mayaguez* Ops msg.
29. 1/4 AAR.
30. "Assault on Koh Tang."

The First Assault Wave

31. Wood Comments.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. 1/4 AAR.
35. "Assault on Koh Tang."
36. Ibid.
37. Utapao Command Post msg to PacAF, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
38. "Assault on Koh Tang."
39. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; "Assault on Koh Tang"; CNA *Mayaguez* Report.
40. Ibid.
41. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; Austin intvw.
42. 1/9 ComdC; Quinlan intvw, Tape 111A.
43. "Individual Heroism."
44. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; "Assault on Koh Tang."
45. Austin intvw.
46. "Assault on Koh Tang."
47. JCS msg to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).

The Linkup

48. "Individual Heroism."
49. Ibid.
50. CNA *Mayaguez* Report.
51. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
52. Ibid.

The Second Wave

53. "Individual Heroism."
54. CinCPac SitRep 001 msg to JCS and CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
55. Col Robert R. Reed, End of Tour Report (Air Force Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama).
56. USSAG *Mayaguez* Ops msg.
57. "Assault on Koh Tang."
58. CO, 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB msg to CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
59. Seventh Air Force SitRep 040 to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
60. "Assault on Koh Tang."
61. CNA *Mayaguez* Report.
62. Ibid.

The Retrograde

63. "Assault on Koh Tang"; CO, 388 TFW Korat RTAFB msg to CG, Seventh Air Force, dtd 15May75; Seventh Air Force SS *Mayaguez* SitRep 047 msg to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
64. "Assault on Koh Tang"; CNA *Mayaguez* Report; Seventh Air Force SS *Mayaguez* SitRep 046 msg to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
65. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
66. Cicere Comments.
67. "Assault on Koh Tang"; Guilmartin Comments.
68. CNA *Mayaguez* Report.
69. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; "Individual Heroism"; PacAF History (74-75).
70. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
71. Ibid.
72. CO, 388 TFW Korat RTAFB msg to CG Seventh Air Force, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
73. CNA *Mayaguez* Report; "Assault on Koh Tang"; *Mayaguez* Master's statement.
74. CinCPac Final SitRep msg to JCS, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
75. "U.S. Seventh Fleet," p. 27.
76. "Assault on Koh Tang"
77. Ibid.
78. Maj A. J. C. Lavelle, ed., *The Vietnamese Air Force, 1951-1975, An Analysis of its Role in Combat and Fourteen Hours at Koh Tang* (Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C., 1985), hereafter *Fourteen Hours*.
79. "Assault on Koh Tang."
80. *Fourteen Hours*.
81. Maj Peter C. Brown Letter of Investigation to CG 3d MarDiv, n.d. (MMF), hereafter "*Mayaguez* Investigation"; "Assault on Koh Tang"; *Fourteen Hours*.
82. Pacific Intelligence Command msg to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
83. Seventh Air Force SitRep 049 msg to CinCPac, dtd 15May75 (MMF).

The Aftermath

84. "*Mayaguez* Investigation"; "Individual Heroism."
85. "*Mayaguez* Investigation."
86. CO, CTF 77 msg to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 15May75 (MMF); "Assault on Koh Tang."
87. "*Mayaguez* Investigation."

88. CO, 388 TFW Korat RTAFB msg to CG, Seventh Air Force, dtd 15May75 (MMF).
89. CG USSAG/Seventh Air Force inquiry msg to CO, USS *Henry B. Wilson*, dtd 17May75 (MMF).
90. "Mayaguez Investigation."
91. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; CNA *Mayaguez* Report; "Assault on Koh Tang."
92. U.S. Embassy, Bangkok msg to Secretary of State, dtd 14May75 (MMF).
93. 2/9 Koh Tang Report; Maj William L. Smith intvw, dtd 15Dec84, Tape 141A (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
94. "U.S. Seventh Fleet," p. 27.
95. JCS msg to *Mayaguez* Rescue Operation participants, dtd 16May75, extracted from "Assault on Koh Tang," footnote 38.
96. Steele Comments.
97. CNA *Mayaguez* Report.
98. 2/9 Koh Tang Report.
99. Carey Comments.

Appendix A

Command and Staff List, Southeast Asia 1973-1975

III MAF Headquarters, 1Apr73-30Jun75		
CG MajGen Michael P. Ryan	1Apr73-30Dec73	AWC BGen Robert W. Taylor
MajGen Herman Poggemeyer, Jr.	31Dec73-30Dec74	BGen Manning T. Jannell
MajGen Carl W. Hoffman	31Dec74-31May75	BGen Richard E. Carey
MajGen Kenneth J. Houghton	1Jun75-30Jun75	
C/S Col Paul B. Haigwood	1Apr73-9May73	C/S Col James W. Smith
Col Jimmie W. Duncan	10May73-24Jun73	Col William P. Brown
Col John W. Clayborne	25Jun73-26Aug73	Col Kenny C. Palmer
Col Frank W. Harris III	27Aug73-19Jul74	Col Erin D. Smith
Col James G. Dionisopoulos	20Jul74-1Jun75	Col Herbert V. Lundin
Col John M. Johnson, Jr.	2Jun75-30Jun75	Col Norman B. McCrary
G-1 LtCol Jean P. White	1Apr73-18Sep73	G-1 Col Clifford D. Corn
LtCol Joe B. Noble	19Sep73-11Sep74	Col Owen L. Owens
Maj Robert M. Reed	12Sep74-17Sep74	LtCol David S. Twining
LtCol Thomas L. Sullivan	18Sep74-30Jun75	Col George L. Bruser
G-2 LtCol Maurice Hunter	1Apr73-21Jul73	G-2 LtCol John P. Reichert
LtCol Fred L. Edwards, Jr.	22Jul73-27Jul73	Maj Frank G. Castillo
Col Joseph A. Nelson	28Jul73-7Aug73	LtCol Morris G. Robbins
LtCol Fred L. Edwards, Jr.	8Aug73-18Nov73	Col Charles M. Wallace, Jr.
LtCol Daniel Z. Boyd	19Nov73-14Jul74	Maj James R. Bryan
Col Emil W. Herich	15Jul74-22Aug74	LtCol John K. Hyatt, Jr.
Maj James A. Marks	23Aug74-26Jun75	
LtCol Robert D. Rosecrans	27Jun75-30Jun75	G-3 Col John W. Parchen
G-3 Col Jimmie W. Duncan	1Apr73-9May73	Col William R. Beeler
Col John W. Clayborne	10May73-24Jun73	Col Robert H. Schultz
LtCol Jack A. Byrd	25Jun73-26Jul73	Col Eugene R. Howard, Jr.
Col Lavern W. Larson	27Jul73-17Aug73	
Col Robert N. Burhans	18Aug73-4Aug74	G-4 Col Lonnie P. Baites
Col John M. Johnson, Jr.	5Aug74-20Apr75	LtCol Gregory A. Corliss
Col John F. Roche III	21Apr75-1Jun75	Col Francis H. Thurston
LtCol Billy F. Stewart	2Jun75-30Jun75	Col Erin D. Smith
G-4 Col Louis A. Bonin	1Apr73-21May73	Col Richard L. Critz
LtCol Richard L. Etter	22May73-19Jun73	
LtCol Jimmie R. Phillips	20Jun73-13Jul73	3d Marine Division (Rein), 1Jul73-30Jun75
Col Anthony A. Monti	14Jul73-16Jun74	CG MajGen Michael P. Ryan
LtCol Charles W. Schreiner, Jr.	17Jun74-6Aug74	MajGen Fred E. Haynes, Jr.
LtCol John I. Hopkins	7Aug74-15Aug74	MajGen Kenneth J. Houghton
Col Hans G. Edebohls	16Aug74-26Jan75	
Col Emil W. Herich	27Jan75-30Jun75	ADC BGen Paul G. Graham
		BGen Donald H. Brooks
		BGen Harold L. Coffman
		BGen Edward J. Megarr
		C/S Col William J. Masterpool
		Col David M. Twomey
		Col William Plaskett, Jr.
		G-1 Col Gordon M. B. Livingston
		Col Richard W. Goodale
		Col Wylie W. Taylor, Jr.
		LtCol Arthur A. Bergman

G-2 Col Val R. McClure	1Jul73-25Aug73	9th Marine Amphibious Brigade Subordinate Commands 19Apr-11May75
LtCol James S. Wilson	26Aug73-22Sep73	
LtCol Darrell C. Danielson	23Sep73-28Jul74	
Maj Rafael A. Becerra, Jr.	29Jul74-13Aug74	Regimental Landing Team 4 (RLT 4)
LtCol Charles E. Hester	14Aug74-2Jan75	CO Col Alfred M. Gray, Jr.
Maj Rafael A. Becerra, Jr.	3Jan75-5Mar75	BLT 1/9 LtCol Royce L. Bond
Col Howard M. Koppenhaver	6Mar75-20Jun75	BLT 2/4 LtCol George P. Slade
Col Morgan W. West	21Jun75-30Jun75	BLT 3/9 LtCol Robert E. Loeh
G-3 Col Heman J. Redfield III	1Jul73-25Jul73	Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
LtCol Conwill R. Casey	26Jul73-4Aug73	CO Col Frank G. McLenon
Col Alexander S. Ruggiero	5Aug73-1May74	HMH-462 LtCol James L. Bolton
Col Edward F. Fitzgerald	2May74-18Jul74	HMH-463 LtCol Herbert M. Fix
Col Douglas T. Kane	19Jul74-13Aug74	HMM-165 LtCol James P. Kizer
LtCol Thomas T. Glidden	14Aug74-1Sep74	HML-367 LtCol James R. Gentry
Col Robert E. Hunter, Jr.	2Sep74-30Jun75	
G-4 Col George A. Merrill	1Jul73-22Jun74	Brigade Logistic Support Group
LtCol Albert Whalley	23Jun74-29Jul74	CO Col Hans G. Edebohls
Col Herbert G. Fischer	30Jul74-30Jun75	LSU 1/9 Maj Donald O. Coughlin
		LSU 2/4 Maj James A. Gallagher, Jr.
		LSU 3/9 Maj Fred L. Jones
9th Marine Amphibious Brigade Headquarters Staff 1-30Apr75		Communications Company (-) (Rein)
CG BGen Richard E. Carey	1-30Apr75	CO Maj Robert L. Turley
DepCmdr Col Wylie W. Taylor	18Apr-30Apr75	Amphibious Evacuation Security Force (AESF)
C/S Col Dan C. Alexander	1Apr-30Apr75	CO Maj David A. Quinlan
G-1 1stLt Robert B. Blose, Jr.	1Apr-11Apr75	Amphibious Evacuation Security Force (AESF) 17Apr-31May75
LtCol Edgar A. House	12Apr-30Apr75	
G-2 Maj Charlton H. Blanks	1Apr-30Apr75	Locations: 18Apr75, Subic Bay, Philippines; 19-20Apr75, Enroute South Vietnam Coast; 20Apr-2May75, South Vietnam Coastal Waters; 2-4May75, Enroute Subic Bay; 4-14May75, Detachments to Guam; 4-27May75, Subic Bay.
G-3 Maj Richard K. Young	1Apr-11Apr75	
LtCol Robert D. White	12Apr-30Apr75	
G-4 Maj John F. Shea	1Apr-30Apr75	CO Maj David A. Quinlan
		ExO/OpsO Capt Charles J. Bushey
		Control Group ExO 1stLt John W. Kinsel
		LogO 1stLt Johnnie Johnson
		PersO 1stLt Joseph J. Streitz
9th Marine Amphibious Brigade Subordinate Commands 7-10Apr75		
31st Marine Amphibious Unit		Detachments
CO Col John F. Roche III		
BLT 2/4 LtCol George P. Slade		
LSU 2/4 Maj James A. Gallagher, Jr.	Echo Det (12th Mar)	Capt Richard L. Reuter
HMH-462 LtCol James L. Bolton	USNS <i>Sgt Truman Kimbro</i>	19Apr-13May75
33d Marine Amphibious Unit		
CO Col Alfred M. Gray, Jr.	Foxtrot Det (12th Mar)	Capt John R. Page
BLT 1/9 LtCol Royce L. Bond	USNS <i>Greenville Victory</i>	19Apr-23May75
LSU 1/9 Maj Donald O. Coughlin	Hotel Det (3d Engr)	Capt William H. Hackett, Jr.
HMM-165 LtCol James P. Kizer	USS <i>Dubuque</i>	18Apr-4May75
HMH-463 LtCol Herbert M. Fix		
35th Marine Amphibious Unit		
CO Col Hans G. Edebohls	India Det (7th Comm)	Capt Cyril V. Moyher
BLT 3/9 LtCol Robert E. Loeh	SS <i>Pioneer Commander</i>	24Apr-7May75
LSU 3/9 Maj Fred L. Jones	Kilo Det*	1stLt Joseph J. Streitz
	SS <i>Greenport</i>	6May-12May75
Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group		
BLT 1/4 LtCol Charles E. Hester	Mike Det*	1stLt Carl W. Fredricksen
	SS <i>American Racer</i>	5-9May75

COMMAND AND STAFF LIST

November Det (3d Serv) SS <i>American Challenger</i>	Capt Michael T. Mallick 25Apr-7May75	Victor Det (9th Mar) SS <i>Pioneer Contender</i>	Capt David A. Garcia 22Apr-7May75
Papa Det (4th Mar) SS <i>Greenport</i>	Capt Richard M. Jessie, Jr. 22Apr-6May75	USS <i>Barbour County</i> Det* USS <i>Barbour County</i>	1stLt David A. Kratochvil 27Apr-14May75
Quebec Det* USS <i>Dubuque</i>	1stLt Robert C. Koscheski 22Apr-13May75		
Romeo Det* USS <i>Dubuque</i>	1stLt Johnnie Johnson 22Apr-13May75		
Sierra Det (HqBn) USNS <i>Sgt Andrew Miller</i>	Capt Edward R. Palmquist, Jr. 22Apr-13May75		
Tango Det (HqBn) SS <i>Green Forest</i>	Capt Robert D. Amos, Jr. 24Apr-12May75		
Uniform Det (3d Tk Bn) SS <i>Green Wave</i>	Capt Steven A. Shepherd 24Apr-12May75		
		Det MP Co, 3dMarDiv**	17Apr-31May75
		1stLt Joseph J. Streitz	
		Det 17th ITT**	17Apr-31May75
		CWO-2 Allen F. Kent	
		Det 3d CIT**	17Apr-31May75
		Capt Charles J. Bushey	
		<i>*Units formed through reorganization 22Apr75</i>	
		<i>**Attached Units</i>	

Appendix B

Command Staff, BLT 2/4

29-30 April 1975

Battalion Landing Team 2d Battalion, 4th Marines		Btry H, 3d Bn, 12th Marines*	
		Capt David M. Haantz	29-30Apr75
CO LtCol George P. Slade	29-30Apr75	2d Plt, Co A, 1st Amtrac B*	
S-1 2dLt Christopher J. Ford	29-30Apr75	1stLt James L. Wise	29-30Apr75
S-2 2dLt Douglas E. Pickelsimer	29-30Apr75	2d Plt, Co C, 3d Engr Bn*	
S-3 Maj Robert R. Green	29-30Apr75	2dLt Lagrant D. Velde	29-30Apr75
S-4 Capt Joseph A. Betta	29-30Apr75	2d Plt, Co B, 3d Recon Bn*	
CommO Capt Edward C. Gerstner	29-30Apr75	1stLt Michael F. Clough	29-30Apr75
H&S Co Capt Michael G. Roth	29-30Apr75	2d Plt, Co A, 3d Tank Bn*	
E Co Capt Matthew E. Broderick	29-30Apr75	2dLt James C. Lotito	29-30Apr75
F Co Capt Thomas A. Keene	29-30Apr75		
G Co Capt William R. Melton	29-30Apr75		
H Co Capt Steven R. Bland	29-30Apr75		

*Attached Units

Appendix C

U.S. Marine Officers Serving in Billets in South Vietnam and USSAG, Thailand 1973-1975

Billets in Vietnam (other than Marine Security Guard Battalion)

Chief, Plans and Liaison Branch, Operations and Plans Division, DAO
Col William B. Fleming Mar-Apr73
Col Nicholas M. Trapnell, Jr. Apr73-Apr74
Col Paul L. Siegmund Apr74- Feb75
Col Eugene R. Howard, Jr. Jan75-Apr75

Chief, VNMC Logistics Support Branch, Navy Division, DAO
LtCol Walter D. Fillmore Mar-Jun73
LtCol George E. Strickland Jun73-Jun74
LtCol Anthony Lukeman Jun74-Apr75

Operations Staff Officer, Readiness Section, Operations and Training Branch, Operations and Plans Division, DAO
Maj Richard F. Johnson Mar73-Apr73
Maj Joseph F. Nardo Apr73-Jul73
LtCol Charles A. Barstow Jul73-Jul74
LtCol William E. McKinstry Jul74-Apr75

Liaison Officer, Four Power Joint Military Commission, RVN
Maj Larry D. Richards Mar73-May74
Maj Jaime Sabater, Jr. May74-Apr75

Operations Officer (Forward, RVN), Joint Casualty Resolution Center
Capt James M. Strickland Aug73-Aug74
Capt Anthony A. Wood Aug74-Apr75

Billets in USSAG, Thailand (Nakhon Phanom)

Chief of Operations and Plans Division
Col George T. Balzer Mar73-Jun73
Col Edward J. Bronars* Jun73-Jun74

Director, Surface Operations
Col James P. Connolly II Jun74-May75

Plans Action Officer
Maj John J. Carty Mar73-May73
Maj Horace W. Baker May73-Apr74
Maj Edward A. Grimm Apr74-Apr75

Inspector, USSAG/Seventh Air Force
Col Melvin J. Steinberg Jun74-May75

Operations Officer, Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Nakhon Phanom and Utapao (the Center moved to Samae San, just outside Utapao, in late 1974)
LtCol Charles Ward Jun74-Jun75

*With Colonel Bronars' departure, USSAG discontinued the practice of making the senior Marine Corps officer the Chief, Operations and Plans Division, regardless of the seniority of the other members of the joint staff. Colonel Bronars' replacement, Colonel Connolly, was assigned to the Combat Operations Center.

Appendix D

Company C, Marine Security Guard Battalion January-April 1975

CO Maj James H. Kean
ExO Capt Robert C. Lewis
PersCh SSgt William J. Miller

1Jan75-30Apr75
1Jan75-30Apr75
1Jan75-30Apr75

Sgt Ronald E. Duffy
Sgt James M. Felber

Cpl Gary N. Lindholm
LCpl Dean M. Kinzie

MSG Detachment Saigon, RVN Personnel Roster 1Jan75-30Apr75

MSgt Juan J. Valdez
GySgt Vasco D. Martin
SSgt Colin D. Broussard
SSgt James J. Daisey
SSgt Clemon S. Segura, Jr.
SSgt Michael K. Sullivan

Sgt Phillip A. Babel
Sgt Terry J. Bennington
Sgt Martin J. Davenport
Sgt Robert L. Frain
Sgt Kenneth Geagley, Jr.
Sgt Duane R. Gevers
Sgt Paul J. Gozgit
Sgt Gregory E. Hargis
Sgt Steven E. Johnson
Sgt David M. Leet
Sgt Kevin M. Maloney
Sgt Dwight G. McDonald
Sgt Gary L. Mellinger
Sgt Helstead G. Murray III
Sgt William C. Newell
Sgt Donald R. Nicholas
Sgt Richard G. Paddock
Sgt Douglas D. Potratz
Sgt David Rose
Sgt Steven T. Schuller
Sgt Andre Stringer

Cpl Joseph F. Arata

Cpl Stephen Q. Bauer
Cpl Manuel A. Bispo
Cpl John L. Ghilain
Cpl Ronald A. Mayfield
Cpl Charles McMahon, Jr.
Cpl Robert E. Mondo
Cpl Joe B. Myes, Jr.
Cpl David E. Norman
Cpl Francis J. Richard
Cpl Carlos Silva
Cpl Randy C. Smith

LCpl Larry E. Beachy
LCpl Eric D. Boyd
LCpl Thomas E. Cole
LCpl Timothy B. Creighton
LCpl Kenneth E. Crouse
LCpl Thomas K. Dickson
LCpl Douglas G. Drummond
LCpl Clyde E. English, Jr.
LCpl William K. Fulton
LCpl Otis L. Holmes
LCpl Darwin D. Judge
LCpl Dennis R. Serbus
LCpl Patrick F. Short
LCpl John C. Stewart
LCpl S. K. Stratton
LCpl Walter M. Sweeny
LCpl Jerome Thomas
LCpl James V. Vaincourt
LCpl David B. Wilkie

MSG Detachment Bien Hoa RVN Personnel Roster 1Jan75-27Apr75

GySgt Robert W. Schlager

Cpl Carlos R. Arraigna

MSG Detachment Can Tho RVN Personnel Roster 1Jan75-30Apr75

SSgt Boyette S. Hasty
Sgt John W. Kirchner
Sgt John S. Moore

Sgt Terry D. Pate
Cpl Lee J. Johnson
Cpl Lawrence B. Killens

MSG Detachment Da Nang RVN Personnel Roster 1Jan75-30Mar75

SSgt Walter W. Sparks
Sgt Lazaro Arriola
Sgt Venoy L. Rogers

Sgt William S. Spruce III
Cpl Ronald W. Anderson
Cpl Leonard A. Forseth

MSG Detachment Nha Trang RVN Personnel Roster 1Jan75-23Apr75

SSgt Roger F. Painter
Sgt Michael A. McCormick
Cpl Robert L. Anderson

Cpl Levorn L. Brown
Cpl John G. Moya
Cpl Jimmie D. Sneed

MSG Phnom Penh Cambodia Personnel Roster 1Jan75-12Apr75

GySgt Clarence D. McClenahan
SSgt Gilbert J. Feest*
Sgt Kenneth E. Armstrong
Sgt Robert L. Clark**
Sgt Russell H. Cutler
Sgt Marty L. Gray
Sgt James W. Shurtleff***
Sgt Ralph V. Simpson, Jr.
Sgt Gary Stanton

Sgt Maxie C. Wix**
Cpl James D. Cox
Cpl Allan W. Mitchell
Cpl David L. Ragland
Cpl Victor Sajka****
LCpl Allen J. Becker
LCpl Ronald C. C. Dumosch
LCpl Phillip D. Forsyth
LCpl Michael G. Miciotto

**Augmented from the Taipei Detachment*

***Augmented from the Seoul Detachment*

****Augmented from the Bangkok Detachment*

*****Augmented from the Hong Kong Detachment*

Appendix E

Mayaguez Rescue Force (BLTs 2/9 and 1/4) 12-15 May 1975

Ground Security Force, CTG 79.9

CO	Col John M. Johnson, Jr.
Airlift Contingency, BLT 2/9, CTU 79.9.1	LtCol Randall W. Austin
S-3	Maj John B. Hendricks
AirO	Capt Barry L. Cassidy
Btry I, 3d Bn, 12th Mar (-)	1stLt Michael S. Eustis
FAC	1stLt Terry L. Tonkin
FAC	1stLt John J. Martinoli, Jr.
NGS Spotter Designee	2dLt Harry T. Williams

Assault Wave I, Co G

CO	Capt James H. Davis
ExO	1stLt James D. Keith
Plt Cmdr	2dLt James McDaniel
Plt Cmdr	2dLt Richard H. Zales
Plt Cmdr	2dLt Michael A. Cicere
Plt Cmdr	2dLt Daniel J. Hoffman

Assault Wave II, Co E

CO	Capt Mykle E. Stahl
Plt Cmdr	2dLt James W. Davis, Jr.
Plt Cmdr	2dLt Robert E. King
Plt Cmdr	2dLt William L. Smith

81mm Mortar Plt (-)	2dLt Joseph J. McMenamin
EOD	Capt Raymond J. McManus

Mayaguez Boarding Party

Command Group Det	
H&S Co, BLT 1/4, CTU 79.9.2	Maj Raymond E. Porter
Co D (-) (Rein), BLT 1/4	Capt Walter J. Wood

Marines Killed at Koh Tang, Cambodia

LCpl Gregory Copenhaver
LCpl Andres Garcia
LCpl Ashton N. Loney

PFC Daniel A. Benedett
PFC Lynn Blessing
PFC Walter Boyd
PFC Gary L. Hall
PFC Joseph N. Hargrove
PFC James J. Jacques
PFC James R. Maxwell
PFC Richard W. Rivenburgh
PFC Antonio R. Sandoval
PFC Kelton R. Turner

Pvt Danny G. Marshall

Navy Corpsmen Killed at Koh Tang, Cambodia

HM2 Bernard Gause, Jr.
HN Ronald J. Manning

Appendix F

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

- A-1—Douglas Skyraider, a single-engine, propeller-driven attack aircraft.
- A-4—Douglas Skyhawk, a single-seat, jet attack aircraft in service on board carriers of the U.S. Navy and with land-based Marine attack squadrons.
- A-6—Grumman Intruder, a twin-seat, twin-jet attack aircraft specifically designed to deliver weapons on targets completely obscured by weather or darkness.
- A-7—Vought Corsair, a single-seat, jet attack aircraft.
- A-37—Cessna Dragonfly, a dual-seat, twin-jet light attack aircraft.
- AAA—Antiaircraft Artillery.
- ABCCC—Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center, a U.S. Air Force aircraft equipped with communications, data link, and display equipment; it may be employed as an airborne command post or a communications and intelligence relay facility.
- AC-47—Douglas Spooky, a twin-engine, propeller-driven gunship armed with four 7.62mm mini-guns and illumination.
- AC-119—Fairchild Shadow and Stinger, a twin-engine, propeller-driven gunship armed with four 7.62mm mini-guns and illumination.
- AC-130—Lockheed Spectre, a four-engine, turboprop gunship armed with 20mm and 40mm guns, illumination, and infrared capability.
- ACCS—Airborne Command and Control Squadron.
- ACBLT—Air Contingency Battalion Landing Team.
- ADC—Assistant Division Commander.
- AdminO—Administrative Officer.
- AESF—Amphibious Evacuation Security Force.
- AH-1J—Bell Sea Cobra, twin-engine, single rotor helicopter specifically designed for helicopter escort and gunship support with 20mm cannon, rockets, and illumination.
- Air America—U.S. Government-sponsored proprietary air transport company.
- AirO—Air officer.
- AK-47—Kalashnikov-designed, gas-operated, air-cooled, magazine-fed, 7.62mm automatic rifle, with an effective range of 400 meters. Standard rifle of the North Vietnamese Army.
- ALMAR—A Commandant of the Marine Corps bulletin directed to All Marines.
- AIO—Air Liaison Officer, a naval aviator/flight officer attached to a ground unit who is the primary advisor to the ground commander on air operation matters.
- AMC—Airborne Mission Commander.
- ANGLICO—Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, a unit composed of Marine and Navy personnel specially qualified for control of naval gunfire and close air support. ANGLICO personnel normally provide this service while attached to U.S. and allied units.
- AO—Air Observer, an individual whose primary mission is to observe from light aircraft in order to adjust supporting arms fire and to obtain information.
- AO—Area of Operations.
- AOA—Amphibious Objective Area, a defined geographical area within which is located the area or areas to be captured by an amphibious task force.
- AOE—Fast Combat Support Ship.
- APC—Armored Personnel Carrier.
- APD—Airborne Personnel Detector.
- Arc Light—Codename for B-52 bombing missions in South Vietnam.
- ARG—Amphibious Ready Group.
- ARRS—Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.
- Arty—Artillery.
- ARVN—Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).
- ASP—Ammunition Supply Point.
- ASRT—Air Support Radar Team, a subordinate operational component of a tactical air control system which provides ground-controlled precision flight path guidance and weapons release for attack aircraft.
- B-3—North Vietnamese military command established in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam to control military operations in Kontum, Dar Lac, and Pleiku Provinces.
- B-40—Communist rocket-propelled grenade launcher.
- B-52—Boeing Stratofortress, U.S. Air Force eight-engine, swept-wing, jet heavy bomber.
- BA—Base Area.
- Barrel Roll—Codename for air operations over Laos.
- BDC—Base Defense Commander.
- BGen—Brigadier General.
- BLT—Battalion Landing Team.
- Bn—Battalion.
- Brig—Brigade.
- C-5—Lockheed Galaxy, four-engine jet transport aircraft.
- C-7—De Havilland Caribou, twin-engine, propeller-driven transport aircraft.
- C-117—Douglas Skytrain, a twin-engine, propeller-driven transport aircraft. The C-117 was an improved version of the C-47, the military version of the DC-3.
- C-123—Fairchild Provider, twin-engine, propeller-driven transport aircraft.
- C-130—Lockheed Hercules, a four-engine, turboprop transport aircraft.
- C-141—Lockheed Starlifter, a four-engine jet transport aircraft.
- Capt—Captain.
- CAS—Close Air Support.
- CBU—Cluster Bomb Unit.
- CCC—Combined Campaign Plan.
- Cdr—Commander.
- CEC—Construction Engineer Corps.
- CG—Commanding General.
- CH-46—Boeing Vertol Sea Knight, a twin-engine, tandem-rotor transport helicopter, designed to carry a four-man crew and 17 combat-loaded troops.

- CH-47—Boeing Vertol Chinook, a twin-engine, tandem-rotor transport helicopter, designed to carry a four-man crew and 33 combat-loaded troops.
- CH-53—Sikorsky Sea Stallion, a twin-engine, single-rotor, heavy transport helicopter with an average payload of 12,800 pounds. Carries crew of three and 38 combat-loaded troops.
- CIA—Central Intelligence Agency.
- CID—Criminal Investigation Division.
- CinCPac—Commander in Chief, Pacific.
- CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.
- CIT—Counter Intelligence Team.
- Class I, II, III, et al.—Categories of military supplies, e.g., Class I, rations; Class II, petroleum-oil-lubricants; Class V, ammunition.
- Claymore—M18A1 U.S. directional antipersonnel mine.
- CMC—Commandant of the Marine Corps.
- CMH—Center of Military History, U. S. Army.
- CNO—Chief of Naval Operations.
- CO—Commanding Officer.
- COC—Combat Operations Center.
- Col—Colonel.
- ComdC—Command Chronology.
- ComdHist—Command History.
- Comm—Communications.
- CommO—Communications officer.
- ComNavForPac—Commander, Naval Forces, Pacific.
- ComNavForV—Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam.
- ComUSMACV—Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.
- ComUSMACThai—Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Thailand.
- COSVN—Central Office of South Vietnam, the nominal Communist military and political headquarters in South Vietnam.
- CP—Command Post.
- CPX—Command Post Exercise.
- CRC—Control and Reporting Center, an element of the U.S. Air Force tactical air control system, subordinate to the Tactical Air Control Center, which conducts radar and warning operations.
- CRIMP—Consolidated Republic of Vietnam Improvement and Modernization Plan.
- CSC—Communications Service Company.
- CV, CVA—Multipurpose Aircraft Carrier.
- DAO—Defense Attache Office.
- DASC—Direct Air Support Center, a subordinate operational component of the air control system designed for control of close air support and other direct air support operations.
- DC-8—McDonnell Douglas Jet Trader, a four-engine jet cargo and passenger transport aircraft.
- D-Day—Day scheduled for the beginning of an operation.
- DD—Destroyer.
- DDG—Guided Missile Destroyer.
- DE—Escort Destroyer.
- DIA—Defense Intelligence Agency.
- Div—Division.
- DMZ—Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam.
- DOD—Department of Defense.
- DRV—Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).
- Dtd—Dated.
- Duster—Nickname for the U.S. M42 tracked vehicle which mounts dual 40mm automatic weapons.
- EA-6—Grumman Prowler, the electronic warfare version of the A-6A Intruder.
- EB-66—Douglas, a twin-engine jet, electronic warfare version of the B-66 Destroyer.
- EC-130—Lockheed, a four-engine, turbo-prop, electronic warfare and communications version of the C-130 Hercules.
- ECC—Evacuation Control Center.
- ECM—Electronic Countermeasures, a major subdivision of electronic warfare involving actions against enemy electronic equipment or to exploit the use of electromagnetic radiations from such equipment.
- ECCM—Electronic Counter Countermeasures, the procedures and equipment used to protect communications and electronic equipment from interference or exploitation by an enemy.
- ELINT—Electronic Intelligence, the intelligence information gained by monitoring radiations from enemy electronic equipment.
- Engr—Engineer.
- EOD—Explosive Ordnance Disposal.
- EPC—Evacuation Processing Center.
- ETA, ETD—Estimated Time of Arrival and Estimated Time of Departure.
- ExO—Executive Officer.
- F-4—McDonnell Phantom II, a twin-engine, two-seat, long-range, all-weather jet interceptor and attack bomber.
- F-5—Northrop Freedom Fighter, a twin-engine, single-seat, jet fighter aircraft.
- FAC—Forward Air Controller.
- FAC(A)—Forward Air Controller (Airborne).
- FANK—*Force Armee Nationale Khmer*, the Cambodian Army.
- FDC—Fire Direction Center.
- FMFPac—Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.
- FO—Forward Observer.
- FRC—Federal Records Center.
- Front 4*—Communist headquarters subordinate to *MR-5* responsible for Quang Nam Province.
- FSB—Fire Support Base.
- FSCC—Fire Support Coordination Center, a single location involved in the coordination of all forms of fire support.
- FSR—Force Service Regiment.
- FWMF—Free World Military Force.
- FY—Fiscal Year, for example "FY-74."
- G-1, -2, et al.—Military staff positions on a general staff, e.g., G-1 refers to the staff member responsible for personnel; G-2, intelligence; G-3, operations; G-4, logistics; and G-5, civil affairs.
- Gen—General.
- Grenade Launcher—U.S. M79 or M203 single-shot, breech-loaded, shoulder weapon which fires 40mm projectiles and weighs approximately 6.5 pounds when loaded; it has a sustained rate of aimed fire of five to seven rounds per minute and an effective range of 375 meters.
- GSF—Ground Security Force.
- Gun, 175mm—U.S. M107 self-propelled gun which weighs 62,000 pounds and fires a 147-pound projectile to a maximum range of 32,800 meters. Maximum rate of fire is one round every two minutes.
- GVN—Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

- H&I—Harassing and Interdiction fires.
- H&MS—Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron.
- H&S Co—Headquarters and Service Company.
- HC(A)—Helicopter Commander (Airborne).
- HDC—Helicopter Direction Center.
- HE—High Explosive.
- HEALT—Helicopter Employment and Landing Table.
- HH-3—Sikorsky Sea King, a single-rotor helicopter used for combat search and rescue.
- HH-53—Sikorsky Sea Stallion, twin-engine, single-rotor assault helicopter in U.S. Navy and Air Force search and rescue configurations.
- H-Hour—Specific time an operation begins.
- HLZ—Helicopter Landing Zone.
- HMH—Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron.
- HMM—Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron, also the basis of composite squadrons with deployed forces.
- Howitzer, 8-inch—U.S. M55 self-propelled, heavy artillery piece with a maximum range of 16,900 meters and a rate of fire of one round every two minutes.
- Howitzer, 105mm—U.S. M101A1 towed, general purpose light artillery piece with a maximum range of 11,000 meters and maximum rate of fire of four rounds per minute.
- Howitzer, 155mm—U.S. M114A towed and M109 self-propelled medium artillery with a maximum range of 15,080 meters and a maximum rate of fire of three rounds per minute. The newer and heavier self-propelled M109 is largely road-bound, while the lighter, towed M114A can be moved either by truck or by helicopter.
- HST—Helicopter Support Team.
- Huey—Bell Iroquois UH-1 series of helicopters.
- HQMC—Headquarters Marine Corps.
- ICCS—International Commission of Control and Supervision, established by the Paris Peace Accords of 1973 to supervise the implementation of the accords. Composed of representatives from Canada, Hungary, Poland, Indonesia, and Iran.
- I MAF—I Marine Amphibious Force.
- Intel—Intelligence.
- Intvw—Interview.
- IOD—Integrated Observation Device.
- ITT—Interrogation/Translator Team.
- J-1, -2, et al.—Designation for members of a joint staff which includes members of several Services. J-1 refers to the staff member responsible for personnel; J-2, intelligence; J-3, operations; and J-4, logistics.
- JCRC—Joint Casualty Resolution Center.
- JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff (U.S.).
- JGS—Joint General Staff (South Vietnamese).
- JMC—Joint Military Commission. The four-power JMC representing the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government established by the 1973 Paris Peace Accords.
- Jolly Green—Radio call sign for USAF HH-53 helicopters of 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (40th ARRS).
- JUSPAO—Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office.
- KC-130—Lockheed, in-flight refueling tanker configuration of the C-130 Hercules.
- Khmer Rouge—Cambodian Communists.
- KIA—Killed in Action.
- Knife—Radio call sign for USAF CH-53 helicopters of 21st Special Operations Squadron (21st SOS).
- LAAW—U.S. M72 light antitank assault weapon, also known as light antitank weapon (LAW).
- LCC—Amphibious Command Ship.
- LCM—Landing Craft, Mechanized, designed to land tanks, trucks, and trailers directly onto the beach. Also known as a “Mike boat.”
- LCPL—Landing Craft, Personnel, Large.
- LCU—Landing Craft, Utility.
- LCVP—Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel, a small craft with a bow ramp used to transport assault troops and light vehicles to the beach. Also known as a “Papa boat.”
- LGB—Laser Guided Bombs, commonly known as “smart bombs.”
- L-Hour—The specific time helicopters land in a helicopter landing zone (USMC); launch hour, when an aircraft leaves the ground (USAF).
- Linebacker—Codename for the air and surface interdiction operations against North Vietnam in 1972.
- LKA—Amphibious Cargo Ship.
- LOC—Lines of Communication.
- LogO—Logistics officer.
- LORAN—Long Range Navigation, a system of radio stations at known positions used for air and sea guidance.
- LPD—Amphibious Transport Dock, a ship designed to transport and land troops, equipment, and supplies by means of embarked landing craft, amphibious vehicles, and helicopters. It has both a submersible well deck and a helicopter landing deck.
- LPH—Amphibious Assault Ship, a ship designed or modified to transport and land troops, equipment, and supplies by means of embarked helicopters.
- LSA—Logistic Support Area.
- LSD—Landing Ship Dock, a landing ship designed to combat load, transport, and launch amphibious crafts or vehicles together with crews and embarked personnel, and to provide limited docking and repair services to small ships and crafts. It lacks the helicopter landing deck of the LPD.
- LST—Tank Landing Ship, a landing ship designed to transport heavy vehicles and to land them on a beach.
- LSU—Logistics Support Unit.
- Lt—Lieutenant.
- LtCol—Lieutenant Colonel.
- LTDS—Laser Target Designation System.
- LtGen—Lieutenant General.
- Ltr—Letter.
- LVTC—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Command, an amphibian vehicle fitted with radios for use as a command and control facility.
- LVTE—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Engineer, a lightly armored amphibian vehicle designed for minefield and obstacle clearance.
- IVTP—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Personnel, an amphibian vehicle used to land and/or transport personnel.
- LZ—Landing Zone.
- MAB—Marine Amphibious Brigade.
- MABLEx—MAB Landing Exercise.
- MABS—Marine Air Base Squadron.
- MAC—Military Airlift Command.
- Machine Gun, .50-Caliber—U.S. M2 belt-fed, recoil-operated, air-

- cooled automatic weapon, which weighs approximately 80 pounds without mount or ammunition; it has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,450 meters.
- Machine Gun, 7.62mm—U.S. M60 belt-fed, gas-operated, air-cooled automatic weapon, which weighs approximately 20 pounds without mount or ammunition; it has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,000 meters.
- MACS—Marine Air Control Squadron, provides and operates ground facilities for the detection and interception of hostile aircraft and for the navigational direction of friendly aircraft in the conduct of support operations.
- MACV—Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.
- MAF—Marine Amphibious Force.
- MAG—Marine Aircraft Group.
- Main Force—Refers to organized Viet Cong battalions and regiments as opposed to local guerrilla groups.
- Maj—Major.
- MajGen—Major General.
- MarDiv—Marine Division.
- Marines—Designates an infantry regiment, e.g., 3d Marines.
- MASS—Marine Air Support Squadron, provides and operates facilities for the control of aircraft operating in direct support of ground forces.
- MAU—Marine Amphibious Unit, not to be confused with the Marine Advisory Unit of the Naval Advisory Group which administered the advisory effort to the South Vietnamese Marine Corps.
- MarAdvU—Marine Advisory Unit.
- MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing.
- MCAF—Marine Corps Air Facility.
- MCAS—Marine Corps Air Station.
- MCCC—Marine Corps Command Center.
- MCO—Marine Corps Order.
- MCOAG—Marine Corps Operations Analysis Group, an organization of the Center for Naval Analyses in Washington, D.C.
- MCSA—Marine Corps Supply Agency.
- Medevac—Medical Evacuation.
- MEDTC—Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia.
- MIA—Missing in Action.
- MiG—Mikoyan-Gurevich designed Soviet aircraft.
- MO—Mount Out, loaded and ready classes of supplies for contingency use by amphibious forces.
- MOA—Mount Out Augmentation.
- MODLOC—Modified Location, radius around a specified point from which naval ships may transit while waiting employment.
- Mortar, 4.2 inch—U.S. M30 rifled, muzzle-loaded, drop-fired weapon consisting of tube, base-plate and standard; weapon weighs 330 pounds and has a maximum range of 4,020 meters. Rate of fire is 20 rounds per minute. Also known as the "Four-Deuce."
- Mortar, 60mm—U.S. M19 smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded weapon which weighs 45.2 pounds when assembled; it has a maximum rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and sustained rate of fire of 18 rounds per minute; the effective range is 2,000 meters.
- Mortar, 81mm—U.S. M29 smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded weapon which weighs approximately 115 pounds when assembled; it has a sustained rate of fire of two rounds per minute and an effective range of 2,300-3,650 meters, depending upon ammunition used.
- Mortar, 82mm—Communist smooth-bore, single-shot, high angle of fire weapon which weighs approximately 123 pounds; it has a maximum rate of fire of 25 rounds per minute and a maximum range of 3,040 meters.
- Mortar, 120mm—Communist smooth bore, drop- or trigger-fired mortar which weighs approximately 600 pounds; it has a maximum rate of fire of 15 rounds per minute and a maximum range of 5,700 meters.
- MR—Military Region. South Vietnamese army corps tactical zones were redesignated military regions in 1970, e.g., I Corps Tactical Zone became Military Region 1 (MR-1).
- MR-5—Communist political and military sector in South Vietnam, including all of Military Region 1. NVA units in MR-5 did not report to COSVN.
- Ms—Manuscript.
- MSC—Military Sealift Command.
- MSG—Marine Security Guard.
- Msg—Message.
- NAG—Naval Advisory Group.
- NAIL—Radio call sign for USAF OV-10 aircraft.
- NAS—Naval Air Station.
- NATOPS—Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization.
- NCC—Naval Component Commander.
- NCO—Noncommissioned Officer.
- NEMVac—Noncombatant Emergency Evacuation.
- NGLO—Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer.
- NGS—Naval Gunfire Support.
- NKP—U.S. Air Force designation for Nakhon Phanom Air Base, Thailand.
- NLF—National Liberation Front, the political arm of the Communist-led insurgency against the South Vietnamese Government.
- NMCB—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, whose members are known as "SeaBees."
- NMCC—National Military Command Center.
- NOD—Night Observation Device.
- NPFF—National Police Field Force.
- NSA—Naval Support Activity.
- NSD—Naval Supply Depot.
- Nui—Vietnamese word for hill or mountain.
- Nung—Southeast Asian tribesman, of an ethnic group of probably Chinese origin.
- NVA—North Vietnamese Army, the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN); term often used by Americans to refer to a North Vietnamese soldier.
- O-1—Cessna Bird Dog, a single-engine, propeller-driven observation aircraft.
- O-2—Cessna Skymaster, a dual-engine, propeller-driven observation aircraft.
- OH-6—Hughes Cayuse, single-rotor light helicopter used for armed reconnaissance and observation. Also known as a "Loach."
- OH-58—Bell Kiowa, single-rotor light helicopter used for armed reconnaissance and observation.
- OIC—Officer-in-Charge.
- OpCon—Operational Control, the authority granted to a commander to direct forces assigned for specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location.

- OpO—Operation Order, a directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the execution of an operation.
- OP—Observation Post.
- OPlan—Operation Plan, a plan for a single or series of connected operations to be carried out simultaneously or in succession; directive issued by higher authority to permit subordinate commanders to prepare supporting plans and orders.
- OpsO—Operations officer.
- OpSum—Operational Summary.
- OSJS (MACV)—Office of the Secretariat, Joint Staff (Military Assistance Command Vietnam).
- OV-10—North American Rockwell Bronco, twin-engine, turboprop observation and light-attack aircraft.
- P-3—Lockheed Orion, four-engine, turboprop naval patrol aircraft.
- PATMA—Pacific Air Traffic Management Agency.
- Pave Nail—Radio call sign for U.S. Air Force OV-10 with laser-designator to control precision-guided munitions.
- PAVN—Peoples Army of Vietnam (North Vietnam). This acronym was dropped in favor of "NVA" (North Vietnamese Army).
- PersO—Personnel officer.
- PF—Popular Force, Vietnamese militia who were usually employed in the defense of their own communities.
- PGM—Precision guided-munitions, so-called "smart bombs."
- PIIC—Photo Imagery Interpretation Center.
- POL—Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants.
- POW—Prisoner of war.
- PRC25—Standard very-high-frequency radio used by Marine ground units in Vietnam for communication over distances up to 25 miles.
- PRG—People's Revolutionary Government (Viet Cong).
- ProvMAG—Provisional Marine Aircraft Group.
- PSA—Province Senior Advisor.
- QL—Vietnamese acronym for national highway.
- R&R—Rest and Recreation.
- Recoilless Rifle, 106mm—U.S. M40 single-shot, recoilless, breech-loaded weapon which weighs 438 pounds when assembled and mounted for firing; it has a sustained rate of fire of six rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,365 meters.
- Regt—Regiment.
- RF-4—Photographic-reconnaissance model of the F4B Phantom.
- RF-8A—Vought reconnaissance version of the F-8 Crusader.
- RF—Regional Force, Vietnamese militia who were employed in a specific region.
- Rifle, M14—U.S. gas-operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, semi-automatic, 7.62mm caliber shoulder weapon, which weighs 12 pounds with a full 20-round magazine; it has a sustained rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and an effective range of 500 yards.
- Rifle, M16—U.S. gas-operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, automatic, 5.56mm caliber shoulder weapon, which weighs 3.1 pounds with a 20-round magazine; it has a sustained rate of fire of 12-15 rounds per minute and an effective range of 460 meters.
- RLT—Regimental Landing Team.
- ROK—Republic of Korea.
- Rolling Thunder—Codename for initial U.S. air operations over North Vietnam.
- ROE—Rules of Engagement.
- RPG—Rocket Propelled Grenade.
- RVN—Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).
- RVNAF—Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.
- RZ—Reconnaissance Zone.
- S-1, -2 et al.—Designations for staff positions at regimental and battalion levels. S-1 refers to the staff member responsible for personnel; S-2, intelligence; S-3, operations; S-4, logistics; and S-5, civil affairs.
- SAC—Strategic Air Command.
- SACC—Supporting Arms Control Center.
- SAM—Surface to Air Missile.
- SAR—Search and Rescue.
- SATS—Short Airfield for Tactical Support, an expeditionary airfield used by Marine Corps aviation that includes a portable run-way surface, aircraft launching and recovery devices, and other essential components.
- SCAMP—Sensor Control and Management Platoon.
- SEATO—Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.
- SecDef—Secretary of Defense.
- SecState—Secretary of State.
- SeventhAF—Seventh Air Force, the major U.S. Air Force command in Southeast Asia.
- SeventhFlt—The U.S. Navy fleet assigned to the Western Pacific.
- SID—Seismic Intrusion Device, sensor used to monitor movement through ground vibrations.
- SitRep—Situation Report.
- SKS—Simonov-designed, gas-operated, 7.62mm semiautomatic rifle.
- SMA—Senior Marine Advisor.
- Song—Vietnamese for river.
- SOP—Standing Operating Procedure, set of instructions laying out standardized procedures.
- Sortie—An operational flight by one aircraft.
- SOS—Special Operations Squadron.
- SOW—Special Operations Wing.
- SPG—Special planning group.
- SptRept—Spot Report.
- SRF—Ship Repair Facility.
- TA-4—Douglas, dual-seat version of the A-4 Skyhawk used as trainer and FAC/TAC platform.
- T-39—North American Rockwell Sabreliner, twin-engine jet, used as trainer and passenger aircraft.
- TAC(A)—Tactical Air Coordinator (Airborne), a designated aviator who controls and coordinates air support from an aircraft.
- TACC—Tactical Air Control Center, the principal air operations installation for controlling all aircraft and air-warning functions of tactical air operations.
- TACP—Tactical Air Control Party, a subordinate operational component of a tactical air control system designed to provide air liaison to land forces and for the control of aircraft.
- TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center, an air operations installation under the Tactical Air Control Center, which directs aircraft and aircraft warning functions of the tactical air center.
- TAFDS—Tactical Airfield Fuel Dispensing System, the expeditionary storage and dispensing system for aviation fuel at tactical air fields. It uses 10,000-gallon fabric tanks to store the fuel.
- TAOC—Tactical Air Operations Center, a subordinate component

- of the air command and control system which controls all air traffic and air defense operations.
- Tank, M48—U.S. 50.7-ton tank with a crew of four; primary armament is a turret-mounted 90mm gun with one .30-caliber and one .50-caliber machine gun; has maximum road speed of 32 miles per hour and an average range of 195 miles.
- TAOC—Tactical Air Operations Center, a subordinate component of the air command and control system which controls all air traffic and air defense operations.
- TAOC—Tactical Area of Coordination.
- TAOI—Tactical Area of Interest.
- TAOR—Tactical Area of Responsibility, a defined area of land for which responsibility is specifically assigned to a commander for control of assigned forces and coordination of support.
- TASS—Tactical Air Support Squadron.
- TE—Task Element.
- TF—Task Force.
- TG—Task Group.
- TO—Table of Organization.
- TOE—Table of Equipment.
- TOW—U.S. M220 Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided antitank missile system.
- TU—Task Unit.
- U-21—Beechcraft King Air, twin-engine, turboprop utility and passenger aircraft.
- UCMJ—Uniform Code of Military Justice.
- UH-1—Bell Iroquois, single-rotor light helicopter noted for its maneuverability and firepower; carries a crew of three; it can be armed with air-to-ground rocket packs and fuselage-mounted, electrically-fired machine guns. Also known as a "Huey."
- USA—United States Army.
- USAAG—U.S. Army Advisory Group.
- USAF—United States Air Force.
- USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development.
- USARV—U.S. Army, Vietnam.
- USASupCom—U.S. Army Support Command.
- USIA—U.S. Information Agency.
- USMC—United States Marine Corps.
- USN—United States Navy.
- USSAG/SeventhAF—United States Support Activities Group/Seventh Air Force.
- Viet Cong—Term used to refer to the Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam; a contraction of the Vietnamese phrase meaning "Vietnamese Communists."
- VCI—Viet Cong Infrastructure.
- VIS—Vietnamese Information Service (South Vietnam).
- VMA—Marine Attack Squadron.
- VMF(AW)—Marine Fighter Squadron (All-Weather).
- VMFA—Marine Fighter Attack Squadron.
- VMCJ—Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron.
- VMGR—Marine Refueler Transport Squadron.
- VMO—Marine Observation Squadron.
- VNAF—Vietnamese Air Force.
- VNMC—Vietnamese Marine Corps.
- VNMC LSB—Vietnamese Marine Corps Logistics Support Branch, of the Navy Division, U.S. Defense Attache Office, Saigon.
- VNN—Vietnamese Navy.
- VT—Variably timed electronic fuze for an artillery shell which causes an airburst over the target area.
- WestPac—Western Pacific.
- WIA—Wounded in Action.
- Wild Weasel—Codename for special techniques and aircraft used to suppress air defense electronic systems.
- WFRC—Washington Federal Records Center.

Appendix G

Chronology of Significant Events 1973-1975

1973

- 27 January The United States, Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (Viet Cong) sign a peace agreement in Paris, France. The Paris Accords provided for three commissions to oversee the implementation of the agreements and resolve any differences. The commissions were the four-party Joint Military Commission (JMC) representing each of the belligerents, a two-party JMC representing North and South Vietnam, and an International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) consisting of representatives from Canada, Poland, Hungary, and Indonesia.
- 27 March The Marine Advisory Unit of the Naval Advisory Group in Vietnam is disestablished, and replaced by the U.S. Vietnamese Marine Corps Logistics Support Branch. This is the last day of the 60-day ceasefire period during which the North Vietnamese released American prisoners of war and in turn the United States turned over to the South Vietnamese its military bases and withdrew its last military forces from the RVN.
- 29 March The U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV), officially ceases to exist, replaced at 1900 Saigon time by the U.S. Defense Attache Office (DAO).
- 13 June The U.S., South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong sign the implementation agreement to the Paris Accords.
- 30 June Less than 250 U.S. military personnel, which includes the 50 at the DAO, remain in South Vietnam, the maximum allowed by the Paris Peace Accords.
- 1 July New Fiscal Year begins with a reduction from 2.2 billion to 1.1 billion dollars in U.S. assistance to South Vietnam.
- 15 December Communist troops ambush a JMC-sanctioned MIA recovery mission, killing a U.S. Army officer and wounding four American and several South Vietnamese soldiers.

1974

- June LtCol Anthony Lukeman replaces LtCol George E. Strickland as Chief, VNMC Logistic Support Branch, Navy Division, DAO.
- 1 July Fiscal Year 1975 begins with funding for South Vietnamese military forces set at 700 million dollars, down from 1.1 billion dollars.
- December The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) *968th Division* moves into South Vietnam's Central Highlands from Laos, the first overt deployment of a North Vietnamese division into the south since the ceasefire agreement.

- 31 December NVA units encircle Phuoc Long City (Song Be), capital of Phuoc Long Province, near the Cambodian border in Military Region 3.

1975

- 7 January The NVA captures Phuoc Long Province.
- 27 January The last allied Mekong River convoy from South Vietnam enters Phnom Penh. The Cambodian Communist Khmer Rouge have successfully halted resupply to the embattled Cambodian capital, threatening the downfall of the non-Communist Cambodian Government.
- 10 March The NVA attacks Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands, marking the start of its 1975 Spring Offensive.
- 19 March The South Vietnamese abandon Quang Tri City and Province.
- 24 March Quang Ngai City and Tam Ky in I Corps fall to the advancing NVA.
- 25 March Hue falls to the Communists.
- 26 March The NVA captures the former U.S. Marine base of Chu Lai.
- 30 March The NVA enters the major port city of Da Nang and captures the Da Nang Air Base.
- 12 April Marines of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB) execute Operation Eagle Pull, the evacuation of American and other foreign nationals from Phnom Penh, just before the city falls to the Khmer Rouge.
- 21 April Nguyen Van Thieu resigns as President of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and departs Saigon four days later for Taiwan, leaving the control of the government in the hands of his vice president.
- 28 April General Duong Van Minh becomes the new President of the Republic of Vietnam.
- 29 April Marines of the 9th MAB execute Operation Frequent Wind, the evacuation of Americans, foreign nationals, and various Vietnamese officials and citizens associated with Americans from Saigon to ships of the Seventh Fleet.
- 30 April The North Vietnamese Army enters Saigon and places General Minh and his cabinet under arrest. Organized South Vietnamese resistance to the NVA has collapsed.
- 12 May A gunboat of the new Cambodian Khmer Rouge regime seizes an American ship, the SS *Mayaguez*, in the Gulf of Thailand.
- 14 May Marines of B/1 in U.S. Air Force helicopters make a helicopter assault on Koh Tang Island off the Cambodian mainland where the crew of the *Mayaguez* is believed to be held. At the same time, Marines from Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines board the *Mayaguez* only to find it deserted. The Cambodians in the meantime release the crew of the *Mayaguez* who later are recovered at sea by the U.S. destroyer *Wilson*.
- 15 May With the recovery of both the *Mayaguez* and its crew, the Marines withdraw from Koh Tang Island. The American forces sustained total casualties of 15 killed, 3 missing in action (later declared dead), 49 wounded, and 23 other personnel killed in a related helicopter crash. U.S. forces inflicted an unknown number of casualties.

Appendix H

List of Reviewers

Gen Alfred M. Gray, USMC
Gen Louis H. Wilson, Jr., USMC, (Ret)

LtGen Edward J. Bronars, USMC (Ret)
LtGen Richard E. Carey, USMC (Ret)
LtGen Edwin J. Godfrey, USMC
LtGen Anthony Lukeman, USMC (Ret)
LtGen Carl E. Mundy, Jr., USMC (Ret)
LtGen Stephen G. Olmstead, USMC (Ret)
LtGen David M. Twomey, USMC (Ret)

MajGen George L. Cates, USMC
MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC
MajGen Norman W. Gourley, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Fred E. Haynes, Jr., USMC (Ret)
MajGen Carl W. Hoffman, USMC (Ret)
MajGen John I. Hopkins, USMC
MajGen Kenneth J. Houghton, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Herman Poggemeyer, Jr., USMC (Ret)
MajGen William R. Quinn, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Michael P. Ryan, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Henry C. Stackpole III, USMC

BGen William A. Bloomer, USMC (Ret)
BGen Harold L. Coffman, USMC (Ret)
BGen Walter D. Fillmore, USMC (Ret)
BGen Paul G. Graham, USMC (Ret)
BGen James E. Livingston, USMC
BGen William L. McCulloch, USMC (Ret)

Col Peter F. Angle, USMC (Ret)
Col Randall W. Austin, USMC (Ret)
Col Horace W. Baker, USMC (Ret)
Col George T. Balzer, USMC (Ret)
Col Charles A. Barstow, USMC (Ret)
Col Arthur A. Bergman, USMC (Ret)
Col Gerald L. Berry, USMC
Col John J. Carty, USMC (Ret)
Col Arthur B. Colbert, USMC (Ret)
Col Gerald L. Diffie, USMC (Ret)
Col Hans G. Edebohls, USMC (Ret)
Col Angelo Fernandez, USMC (Ret)
Col Herbert M. Fix, USMC (Ret)
Col Stephen R. Foulger, USMC (Ret)

Col Laurence R. Gaboury, USMC (Ret)
Col James R. Gentry, USMC (Ret)
Col Richard F. Johnson, USMC (Ret)
Col Fred L. Jones, USMC
Col James L. Jones, Jr., USMC
Col Douglas T. Kane, USMC (Ret)
Col Floyd A. Karker, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Burrell H. Landes, USMC (Ret)
Col Curtis G. Lawson, USMC (Ret)
Col Martin J. Lenzini, USMC
Col Robert E. Loehe, USMC (Ret)
Col Gene M. McCain, USMC (Ret)
Col William E. McKinstry, USMC (Ret)
Col Joseph F. Molineaux, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Robert M. Reed, USMC (Ret)
Col Alvin R. Ribbeck, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Edward J. Ritchie, USMC
Col John F. Roche III, USMC (Ret)
Col Jack D. Rowley, USMC (Ret)
Col Alexander S. Ruggiero, USMC (Ret)
Col Carl A. Shaver, USMC
Col Glenn J. Shaver, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Jerry L. Shelton, USMC (Ret)
Col George P. Slade, USMC (Ret)
Col Thomas J. Stevens, USMC (Ret)
Col Wylie W. Taylor, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Nicholas M. Trapnell, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Donald J. Verdon, USMC (Ret)
Col Jon M. Walters, USMC
Col Robert D. White, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert C. Wise, USMC (Ret)
Col Anthony A. Wood, USMC
Col Walter J. Wood, USMC
Col Tullis J. Woodham, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Richard K. Young, USMC (Ret)

LtCol Dwight R. Allen, Jr., USMC (Ret)
LtCol Daniel F. Bergen, USMC (Ret)
LtCol James L. Bolton, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Royce L. Bond, USMC (Ret)
LtCol John W. Bowman, Jr., USMC
LtCol Matthew E. Broderick, USMC
LtCol Kermit C. Corcoran, USMC (Ret)
LtCol James L. Cunningham, USMC (Ret)

LtCol James H. Davis, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Donald L. Evans, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol James A. Gallagher, Jr., USMC (Ret)
 LtCol David A. Garcia, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Charles W. Gobat, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Maurice O. V. Green, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Edward A. Grimm, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Ronald J. Gruenberg, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol William H. Hackett, Jr., USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Robert E. Hamilton, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol William Harley, USMC
 LtCol John B. Heffernan, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Charles E. Hester, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Robert T. Hickinbotham, USMC
 LtCol Harry Jensen, Jr., USMC
 LtCol James H. Kean, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Thomas A. Keene, USMC
 LtCol James P. Kizer, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol David A. Kratochvil, USMC
 LtCol Bertram A. Maas, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Michael T. Mallick, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol William R. Melton, USMC
 LtCol Cyril V. Moyher, USMCR
 LtCol Barry J. Murphy, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Ronald L. Owen, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Edward R. Palmquist, Jr., USMC
 LtCol Charles E. Parker, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Jerome T. Paull, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Raymond E. Porter, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Richard L. Reuter, USMC
 LtCol James P. Rigoulot, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Joseph J. Rogish, Jr., USMC
 LtCol Howard P. Shores II, USMC
 LtCol John F. Spangler, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Ronald E. Spratt, USMC
 LtCol Mykle E. Stahl, USMC
 LtCol Robert M. Stauffer, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Joseph J. Streitz, USMC
 LtCol George E. Strickland, USMC (Ret)
 LtCol Terry L. Tonkin, USMC
 LtCol Richard H. Zales, USMC

Maj Robert D. Amos, Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Maj Charles J. Bushey, USMC (Ret)
 Maj Michael A. Cicere, USMC
 Maj Donald O. Coughlin, USMC (Ret)
 Maj Thomas W. Kinsell, USMC (Ret)
 Maj Raymond J. McManus, USMC (Ret)
 Maj Joseph J. McMenamin, USMC
 Maj James L. O'Neill, USMC
 Maj Steven A. Shepherd, USMC (Ret)

Maj Bruce P. Thompson-Bowers, USMC
 Capt Eugene R. Hardman, USMC
 Capt Richard M. Jessie, Jr., USMC
 Capt Richard R. Page, USMC
 Capt Charles R. Provini, USMC
 Capt Russell R. Thurman, USMC (Ret)

1stLt Roger D. Gabelman, USMC
 1stLt Johnnie Johnson, USMC

2dLt James McDaniel, USMC

CWO-4 Allen F. Kent, USMC (Ret)
 CWO-2 J. C. Owens, USMC (Ret)

MSgt Michael A. McCormick, USMC
 MSgt Juan J. Valdez, USMC (Ret)
 GySgt Roger F. Painter, USMC (Ret)

Army

Gen Homer D. Smith, Jr., USA (Ret)
 MajGen John E. Murray, USA (Ret)
 BGen James A. Herbert, USA (Ret)
 BGen William A. Stofft, USA
 Col Edwin Pelosky, USA (Ret)

Navy

Adm Noel A. M. Gayler, USN (Ret)
 Adm Maurice F. Weisner, USN (Ret)
 VAdm George P. Steele, USN (Ret)
 RAdm Donald B. Whitmire, USN (Ret)
 Capt Roy W. McLain, USN (Ret)
 Capt James D. Tregurtha, USN (Ret)

Air Force

Gen William G. Moore, Jr., USAF (Ret)
 Gen John W. Vogt, Jr., USAF (Ret)
 LtGen John J. Burns, USAF (Ret)
 LtGen Leroy Manor, USAF (Ret)
 MajGen Andrew J. Evans, Jr., USAF (Ret)
 LtCol John F. Guilmartin, USAF (Ret)
 Lt David C. Jones, USAF (Ret)

Others

Hon. John Gunther Dean
 Dr. Alfred Goldberg
 Dr. Richard H. Kohn
 Hon. Graham Martin
 Dr. Ronald Spector
 LtCol Tran Ngoc Toan, VNMC
 Mr. Willard J. Webb

Appendix I

1st Battalion, 4th Marines Detachments 3-11 April 1975

USMC Security Detachments On Board MSC Ships

Military Sealift Command (MSC) ship*	Location	Estimated number of refugees on board	Date of USMC boarding	BLT 1/4 boarding detachment (officer in charge)
<i>SS Pioneer Contender</i>	Cam Ranh Bay	16,700	3 April	3d Plt, Co B (2dLt Robert E. Lee, Jr.)
<i>SS Pioneer Contender</i>	Phu Quoc Island	16,700	7 April	3d Plt, Co D (2dLt Joe Flores, Jr.)
<i>SS Trans Colorado</i>	Phan Rang	3,500	4 April	1st Plt, Co D (Unavailable)
<i>SS Green Port</i>	Phu Quoc Island	6,000 to 8,000	6 April	3d Plt, Co C (2dLt David L. Kiffer) 2d Plt, Co D (2dLt Edward R. Whitesides)
<i>SS American Challenger</i>	Phu Quoc Island	6,000	6 April	1st Plt, Co C 2d Plt, Co C (Capt Maurice O. V. Green)
USNS <i>Sgt Kimbro</i>	Ham Tan		9 April	3d Plt, Co A (Unavailable)

Source: Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group TG 79.9, Post-Exercise Report, 30 April 1975.

*All ships except the *Sgt Kimbro* were chartered by MSC.

Appendix J

Frequent Wind Forces

Summary of Forces Committed to Frequent Wind

U.S. Navy

Ships	
Carriers	2
Amphibious	17
Escorts	14
Replenishment	11
Sea-based aircraft	
Fighter/Attack	125
Support	33
ASW Helos	12

U.S. Marine Corps

Sea-based ground forces (BLT plus security evacuation force)	MAB
Land-based ground forces	3 BLTs
Sea-based helicopters	
Troop/Passenger lift	63
Gunship	8
Command and control	6

U.S. Air Force

Aircraft	
Fighter/Attack	193
Support	112
Troop/Passenger lift	69

Appendix K

Helicopter Flow Table for Frequent Wind

The helicopter time schedule as shown below was developed by Regimental Landing Team (RLT) 4 and Provisional Marine Aircraft Group (ProvMAG) 39 for movement of the ground security force from ships to the evacuation site, and is in fact a recap of the Helicopter Employment and Landing Table (HEALT) developed jointly by the RLT and ProvMAG:

Time	Ship	Event
L-2:00	<i>Hancock</i> (CVA 19)	Launch 6 CH-53s for troop pickup (3 to <i>Vancouver</i> [LPD 2], 3 to <i>Peoria</i> [LST 1183])
L-0:50	<i>Duluth</i> (LPD 6)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3) for refuel
L-0:50	<i>Hancock</i> (CVA 19)	Land 3 CH-53s w/troops from <i>Vancouver</i> for refuel
L-0:50	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Mobile</i> (LKA 115) for refuel
L-0:50	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup and refuel
L-0:45	<i>Denver</i> (LPD 9)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Okinawa</i> for refuel
L-0:45	<i>Duluth</i> (LPD 6)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Okinawa</i> for refuel
L-0:40	<i>Mobile</i> (LKA 115)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Peoria</i> for refuel
L-0:40	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Load 4 CH-53s w/troops
L-0:30		Launch first wave of 12 CH-53s (4 from <i>Okinawa</i> , 2 each from <i>Dubuque</i> [LPD 8], <i>Denver</i> , and <i>Duluth</i> , and 1 each from <i>Mobile</i> and <i>Peoria</i>)
L-0:30	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Land 3 CH-53s for troop pickup and refuel
L-0:15		Launch second wave of 11 CH-53s (5 from <i>Hancock</i> , 3 from <i>Okinawa</i> , 2 from <i>Vancouver</i> and 1 from <i>Mount Vernon</i> [LSD 39])
L-1:25	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Hancock</i> for refuel
L-1:25	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Land 2 CH-53s for troop pickup and refuel
L-1:20	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Launch 4 CH-53s (2 w/troops to <i>Dubuque</i> for refuel, 2 to <i>Peoria</i> for troop pickup)

L-1:15	<i>Hancock</i> (CVA 19)	Land 3 CH-53s w/troops from <i>Peoria</i> for refuel
L-1:15	<i>Mount Vernon</i> (LSD 39)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Vancouver</i> for refuel
L-1:10	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Load 4 CH-53s w/troops
L-1:10	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Launch 4 CH-53s w/troops (2 to <i>Denver</i> for refuel, 2 to <i>Duluth</i> for refuel)
L-1:00	<i>Hancock</i> (CVA 19)	Launch 2 CH-53s to <i>Okinawa</i> for troop pickup and refuel
L-1:00	<i>Dubuque</i> (LPD 8)	Land 2 CH-53s w/troops from <i>Okinawa</i> for refuel
L-1:00	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup
L-0:50	<i>Denver</i> (LPD 9)	Land 1 CH-53 w/troops from <i>Okinawa</i> for refuel
L-1:50	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Land 2 CH-53s from <i>Hancock</i> for troop pickup
L-1:45	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Launch 2 CH-53s w/troops to <i>Hancock</i> for refuel
L-1:45	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Land 1 CH-53 from <i>Hancock</i> for troop pickup
L-1:40	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Hancock</i> for refuel
L-1:40	<i>Hancock</i> (CVA 19)	Launch 3 CH-53s to <i>Vancouver</i> for troop pickup
L-1:40	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup
L-1:35	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Hancock</i> for refuel
L-1:35	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup
L-1:30	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Hancock</i> for refuel
L-1:30	<i>Okinawa</i> (LPH 3)	Load 2 CH-53s w/troops
L-1:30	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup
L-1:30	<i>Peoria</i> (LST 1183)	Land 1 CH-53 for troop pickup
L-1:25	<i>Vancouver</i> (LPD 2)	Launch 1 CH-53 w/troops to <i>Mount Vernon</i> for refuel

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