

18th MP BRIGADE
Three Years in Vietnam

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CPT Brent L. Richens & SP4 Russell B. Shor

"Police work like we've never done before," commented a veteran military policeman on an 18th Military Police Brigade operation in the jungle villages near Long Binh Post. This is a familiar comment from the military policemen of the 18th MP Brigade in Vietnam because its members have the most diversified missions of any military police unit in the world. In three years of operation 18th MP Brigade MPs have been thrust into many unfamiliar and unusual roles for policemen. But what was the unfamiliar role three years ago has now become commonplace in the MP missions today.

Their missions range from escorting enemy suspects to escorting mini-skirted singers; from the "spit and polish" MPs who patrol the city streets of Saigon to the camouflaged policemen-infantrymen who patrol the jungles and villages in their tactical area of responsibility near Long Binh Post. The diversity of today's 18th MP Brigade policemen is a result of answering the many calls for help in tactical operations.

The brigade was activated under the command of COL Thomas F. Guidera at Fort Meade, Maryland, on 20 May 1966 and "shipped out" to Vietnam in September of the same year.

After the advance party arrived in Vietnam in August,

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the brigade landed at the port of Vung Tau on September 8th and established headquarters at Tan Son Nhut near the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, compound. Initially, the unit was assigned the mission "to assume command and control of all non-divisional military police units in Vietnam." These units were the 92d, 95th, 504th and 716th MP Battalions. Prior to the brigade's arrival these units were under the control of area commanders in whose areas they were located. These non-divisional units were performing widespread security functions reaching from the ships and docks at Vung Tau to the US Embassy in Saigon, in addition to maintaining law and order and war detainee evacuation.

But the Vietnam Command desired the MPs to take a more active involvement in direct support of combat operations. Consequently, the plans for brigade strength and unit deployment were geared to this desire.

BG Harley L. Moore, Jr., then US Army Vietnam Provost Marshal, established the basic plan for the organization and deployment for the 18th MP Brigade and set its assigned strength at 5,600 officers and men. The two Military Police Groups were assigned to direct the military police battalions of given areas. The 89th MP Group, directing units in the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ), was located in the newly cleared Long Binh Post, some 18 miles northeast of Saigon, and was assigned the 92d, 95th, 716th, and soon to arrive 720th MP Battalion. The 16th MP Group, located in Nha Trang, was given control of the three battalions in the I and II CTZ: the 93d, 97th and 504th.

Many of the brigade's functions were similar to those of most military police units: discipline, law and order, physical security, traffic control, criminal investigation and confinement. But other missions involving direct support of combat operations thrust the military policeman into the midst of the fighting from the time the brigade arrived in Vietnam.

Two months after the brigade became operational it was involved in its first large-scale, combat-support operations. During "Operation Deckhouse IV" and "Operation Attleboro," brigade units provided convoy security and traffic control for the two-week operations.

However, the courage of the MPs was not confined to field operations. During 1966, three members of the 716th in Saigon gave their lives in defending a Saigon BOQ from a terrorist attack. 1LT Chester L. Lee and SP4 Michael Mulvaney were on security patrol when the sound of gunfire drew them to the hotel. Armed with only .45 caliber pistols, the two MPs engaged a superior enemy force armed with automatic weapons. Both were killed in their attempt to prevent the bombing of the building.

An MP security guard on duty at the building, PFC Patrick J. Brems, saw the explosive-laden terrorist vehicle and, armed with only a shotgun and pistol, fired at the charging vehicle despite heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, causing the driver to stop short of the building. Brems then alerted the residents and immediately returned to his post to fire at the escaping terrorists, but was killed when the vehicle exploded. The young MP was directly responsible for saving the lives of many Americans from the explosion in which he died.

All three MPs were posthumously awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for their bravery. Private First Class Brems was further honored, for the following year a 61-building complex housing elements of the 4th AIT Brigade at Fort Gordon, Georgia, was dedicated in his memory.

The then Deputy Commander of US Army, Vietnam, LTG Bruce Palmer, Jr., lauded the MPs on the brigade's first anniversary by citing their performance in their new roles.

"The men of the 18th MP Brigade have overcome numerous challenges as they have performed with distinction their arduous and frequently hazardous tasks. They have fully lived up to the Military Police Corps' motto: 'Of the Troops, For the Troops,'" he stated.

The brigade's physical security commitments were given a tremendous lift with the arrival of seven infantry companies—totaling more than 1,000 men—late in November 1966. These companies participated in basic training and infantry advanced individual training at Fort Lewis, Washington, before being assigned to the 18th MP Brigade in Vietnam.

Three of the companies, D/51, D/52, and C/54, joined the 97th MP Battalion headquartered in Cam Ranh Bay. Two were sent to Long Binh with the 95th MP Battalion, C/87 and D/87; while C/52 and D/53 joined the 716th in Saigon and the 93d in Qui Nhon, respectively. These infantrymen augmented MP security teams in guarding ships and docks, pipelines, pump stations, ammunition storage plants and other vital installations.

By January 1967 the brigade headquarters moved to Long Binh. Also during that month its combat support commitments increased rapidly. The MPs participated in "Operation Deckhouse V" and "Operation Cedar Falls." The latter, involving the 173d Airborne Brigade, was a full-scale strike at a thickly-jungled area known as the Iron Triangle, near Cu Chi. Here MPs from the 720th MP

Battalion began earning the brigade the reputation as "the only combat tested MP Brigade" by living and working in the "boonies." The platoon of men spent 20 days in the field with the infantrymen.

"When we got to a place called Ben Cat, we set up our own little camp and a refugee control point," one MP recalled. "We set up a perimeter, dug fox holes and bunkers and put up tents."

"Those were the three busiest weeks of our lives," the MP continued, "because we had so much to do."

The platoon from Company B, 720th, escorted supply convoys, provided security for medical and PSYOPS teams, and performed traffic control and bridge security. "We also escorted convoys of captured enemy rice caches," the MP continued, "the amount of rice we found was unbelievable."

One of the biggest jobs of the operation was refugee control. Here they escorted the war refugees to a control point, fed and transferred them to more secure villages. The policemen also questioned the villagers, which resulted in the apprehension of seven enemy suspects. As evidenced by the success of that part of the operation, it became apparent that the key to the effectiveness of a great many of the MP's missions was their constant fostering of good relations with the Vietnamese people. Today, this "good neighbor policy" remains an integral part of the 18th MP Brigade's operations, both on a day-to-day basis with combined police patrols and with numerous civic action projects.

During February 1967 the brigade again assumed a dual support mission, this time "Operation Junction City" with the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions and "Operation Thayer II" with the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Joining the 1st Cav were elements of C Company, 504th MP Battalion, then located in Qui Nhon. In addition to their "normal" commitments such as detainee escort and convoy and highway security, these MPs performed more down-to-earth functions, as "tunnel rats." The 504th MPs not only discovered and destroyed several enemy tunnels, but also aided in the apprehension of many enemy suspects.

In April 1967 the 18th MP Brigade supported "Task Force Oregon," a huge operation in the craggy Central Highlands. Here the brigade supplied convoy escorts, highway security, law enforcement and detainee escorts in addition to many other jobs. "You name it and they did it," the then Chu Lai Provost Marshal, MAJ Thomas G. Berry, commented. Again the MPs acted as "tunnel rats" and, more importantly, helped an entire war-torn village of 6,000 persons to relocate. Police escorted the throng of people and their possessions eight miles to the relocation site.

Through the summer of 1967 the brigade kept up its support of large-scale combat operations, providing convoy escort, highway security and detainee evacuation for Operations "Billings," "Paddington" and "Emporia."

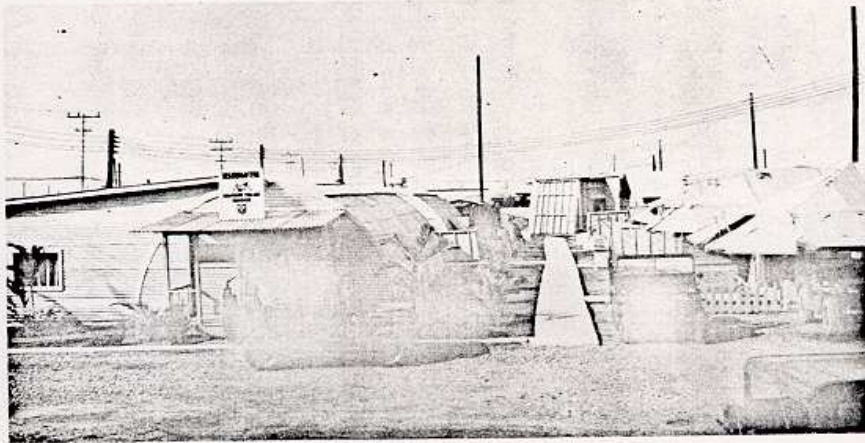
Keeping these convoys and roads clear and secure from ambushes, mines, snipers and accidents was one of the most vital—and most dangerous—missions. The MPs constantly contended with these elements in support of combat operations. Three members of the 720th earned the Silver Star for repelling a full-scale enemy attack on a convoy headed through a remote area some 45 miles northeast of Saigon. The enemy fired on the convoy with intense small arms, machine gun and rocket fire.

The three MPs, in an armored jeep, ran through the kill zone several times to aid the wounded, deliver ammunition and secure vital positions. The men continued their actions though wounded.

Even the massive Highway 1A between Saigon and Long Binh was not immune to attack. A member of the 720th was killed and two others wounded during an ambush while patrolling this highway. However, in July 1967, the 720th and 504th convoy escort teams received a bigger "punch" with the arrival of new armored cars (XM706). The armored, multi-purpose, amphibious vehicle carries a four man crew and is armed with two machine guns plus individual weapons. Unlike more cumbersome armored vehicles, the V-100 can attain a top speed of more than 60 miles per hour. Also, because it rides on over-sized tires rather than tracks, the vehicle does not damage the paved roads, which makes it particularly suitable for escorting convoys.

Contemporary reports stated that the V-100s were a big morale booster for the men who had patrolled in gun-jeeps, because of their increased protection and firepower. These vehicles were tested and evaluated by the military police in Vietnam, in addition to being used in regular service. After a favorable evaluation, modifications to TOEs were submitted, resulting in the present authorization of 72 V-100s for the brigade. Today these armored vehicles—augmenting, but not replacing, the gun-jeep—accompany virtually every major convoy and highway security operation for which the brigade is responsible. The MPs escort some 2,400 convoys per month along various routes throughout the Republic of South Vietnam.

A recent combat support mission involving brigade MPs was "Operation Corral" with elements of the 9th Infantry Division and the Vietnamese National Police (Canh Sat) in September 1967. It was a cordon and search operation designed to locate and destroy enemy close-in strike capability against the huge Long Binh Post complex which houses many major command headquarters.



Photo, above left, shows the 18th MP Brigade headquarters at Long Binh as it looks today. Photo at lower right, taken in December 1966, shows engineers preparing the buildings for occupancy in January 1967 when the brigade headquarters moved from Tan Son Nhut.

In November 1967, the brigade, now commanded by BG Karl W. Gustafson, began one of the most unique chapters in the history of the Military Police Corps. Following "Corral" the brigade was assigned the responsibility for a 22-square-mile area south of Long Binh Post, thus becoming the first MP unit in history to man a tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) in a combat zone. The brigade further assigned the TAOR to the 720th MP Battalion. This area is criss-crossed with hundreds of small streams and rivers where the MPs often set up night ambushes to stop VC who try to use these waterways as infiltration routes.

The MPs from Company B, 720th MP Battalion, began sweeps, night ambush patrols, reconnaissance patrols and cordon and search operations in the area. Having shed their shiny helmets and brassards for bush hats and flak vests, the men of Company B also set up small outposts at

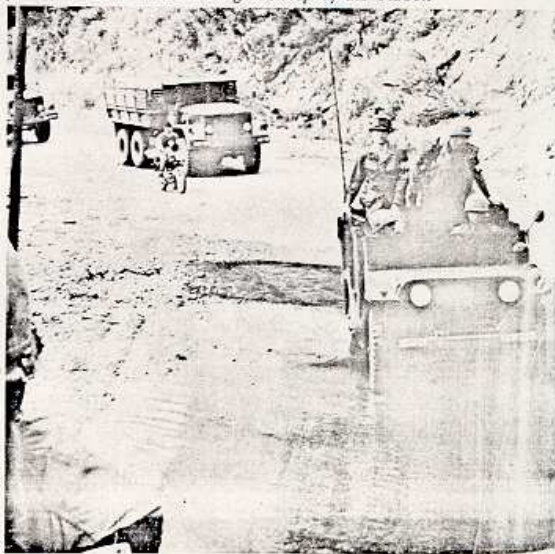
strategic points and initiated motorized patrols through the three villages. There are more than 5,000 Vietnamese people in the area.

The 720th took to the water in Boston Whalers to patrol the many rivers and canals in the TAOR and, more recently, have taken to the air in light observation helicopters to hunt down the enemy.

But this TAOR mission extends far beyond the "infantry" activities, for primary emphasis was, and still is, placed on helping the Vietnamese people become economically self sufficient.

A typical tactical police operation was conducted in the Fall of 1968. The MPs from Company B conducted an intensive search for Viet Cong in the villages and rice paddies of their TAOR. Working closely with the Canh Sats, Vietnamese intelligence personnel, PFs and local civilian officials, they questioned village residents on a non-stop basis for two weeks. The villagers were summoned peacefully by MP-led squads, then quietly questioned. The operation netted several VC suspects, a cache of medicine, and valuable intelligence information. One MP on the operation recalled that one of the biggest reasons for the success of the program was that "the people like us and know we are here to help. We've gone out of our way to prove that to them."

Left: Members from an element of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, under the operational control of the 720th, participate in a sweep of the TAOR. Bottom left: A 504th early-type gun jeep provides security for supply helicopters at a pump station near An Khe. Below: A convoy escort of the 504th moves through Miang Giang Pass on Highway 19. Top right: An MP and a member of the RVN Popular Forces man an outpost in the brigade TAOR. Bottom right: A V-100 from the 720th assists during a sweep of the TAOR.



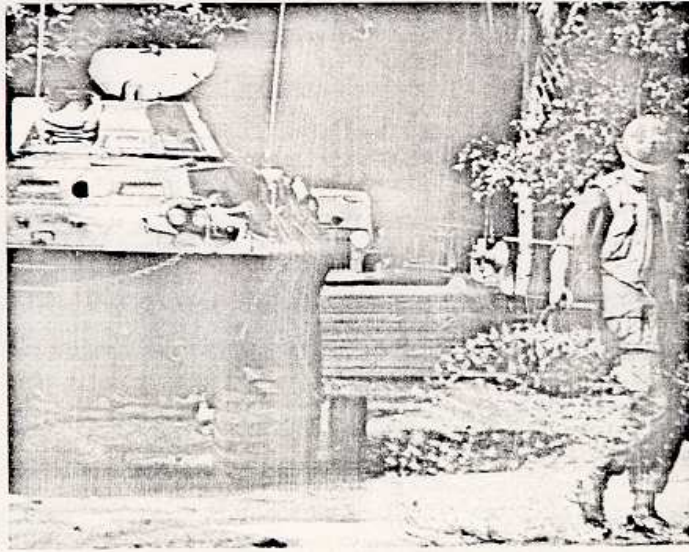
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While the 720th MPs patrolled the jungles, and helmeted, flak-jacketed MPs of other battalions roamed the remote highways, the spit-shined policemen of the 716th patrolled another type of jungle—the maze of crowded streets that make up the capital city of Saigon. Though there were numerous terrorist attacks throughout the city, these MPs were mainly concerned with law enforcement. But at 0445 hours, 31 January 1969, a Saigon MP patrol member shouted a brief radio message: "The driver caught a slug in the gut, and I'm under heavy automatic weapons fire. Can you send help?"

The radio went dead, but this terse message began the battle of Saigon during the Tet offensive which thrust the urban MPs into some of the most pitched fighting in which any MP unit had ever been engaged. Before the five day battle was over, 27 military policemen died and 44 were wounded defending the capital city. But units of the battalion killed 86 of the enemy.

During the initial part of the fighting, the MPs, along with a small reaction force from Headquarters Area Command, were virtually the only US units defending the city. Through quick and aggressive action the men of the battalion were able to delay and repel enemy attacks throughout all parts of the city until reinforcements arrived. But it was the MPs' gallant defense of the US Embassy which earned the members of the 716th a lasting place in the history of the MPC.

On that last day of January, a VC sapper unit launched a savage attack on the newly built Embassy. The enemy killed two MP guards and penetrated the area, but other MP guards held off the invaders. Two other MPs died in the enemy assault. Help came from the MP patrols. One patrol member, PFC Paul V. Healey, killed nine of the invaders himself.



"When we got there, the CO said we were going to take the place," Healey said. "I moved up and got as far as the gate. Every time a VC moved from behind a flower pot, I shot him." The MP then made it to the front door of the Embassy and was attacked by a grenade-wielding VC. He cut the man down, but not before the invader threw the grenade which hit Healey in the leg and rolled to the steps behind him. The MP jumped behind the fallen enemy and when the grenade went off the enemy body absorbed most of the blast. Healey looked up in time to see another VC trying to escape over the wall and killed him. "Then another VC tried to get behind the gate, and I shot him, too."

"I saw two more VC come around a corner. I threw a grenade and it landed right in the middle of them. When the smoke cleared there were three bodies."

Healy and two other MPs went after the last VC who had holed-up in the home of the US Mission Coordinator. They opened a door and the VC opened up with an AK-47. So Healey and a Marine guard went to another door, opened it and lobbed a grenade inside. But the enemy shot the Marine and the MP pulled him to safety. Healy then threw a pistol to the US Mission Coordinator who was stranded on the second floor without a weapon.

The MP and an officer threw two tear gas grenades into the house, causing the VC to flee up the stairs where he was killed by the Mission Coordinator.

Healey was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions, but every member of the battalion was honored for their part. Shortly afterwards, the battalion received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and later, special recognition from Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who paid thanks to the MPs during a ceremony in which a plaque, honoring the four MPs and the Marine who died in the assault, was placed in the chancery of the Embassy building.

Speaking of these men and the 716th, Ambassador Bunker said, "The alertness, aggressiveness and tenacity of these men during the Viet Cong attack on the US Embassy helped thwart the enemy from their goal of destruction."

The battalion's performance was most recently recognized when, in his first award of this type, President Richard M. Nixon awarded the Presidential Unit Citation to the battalion.

But since the brigade MPs patrol and defend most of the major cities in Vietnam, the other battalions distinguished themselves by repelling many enemy attacks in the country-wide fighting. A combined force from the 504th and 97th MP Battalions helped turn back an enemy assault on the coastal city of Nha Trang. A report from one of the company commanders said that the MPs "quickly adopted infantry-type roles for street and house-to-house fighting."

They also repelled an attack on the Roberts (MACV) Compound in the center of the city. The Nha Trang MPs killed 18 of the enemy without losing a single man.

At that time the huge Long Binh Post complex also came under attack when a large enemy force hit the large ammunition supply depot with a rocket and ground attack.

The VC penetrated the perimeter and a reaction force from D/52d Infantry, 95th MP Battalion, rushed to the area to reinforce the defenders. Following a savage fire-fight the reaction force confined the VC to one small area of the ammo dump and then flushed them out in a sweep. Men of the 95th also kept the Cogido barge site from being overrun by the enemy.

The 720th and 92d provided convoy security and cleared the roads and highways during the enemy offensive. On the second day after the Tet offensive began, the 720th received six armored personnel carriers, the first for any brigade unit in Vietnam, and pressed them into service within five hours after delivery, barreling through ambushes and escorting reinforcements defending the Cogido barge site.

No sooner had the smoke from the Tet offensive in Saigon cleared when the Viet Cong struck again on 5 May 1968. The MPs of the 716th immediately provided security for US installations and personnel. The MPs also moved convoys through Highway 1A which came under heavy attack.

At least one MP, SP4 Robert L. Scott, found himself in a real-life drama which he will never forget. Scott and several other MPs were engaged in a firefight at the Phan Thanh Gian Bridge in Saigon. The MPs were on the bank of the river and engaging the enemy who were holed-up in several nearby houses facing a small alley.

"Several of us moved up the alley to lay fire on the enemy when a Vietnamese soldier ran past me and began firing on an enemy strong point. I didn't know at the time that he was BG (Nayen Ngoc) Loan, Chief of the National Police."

During the fight General Loan was wounded and Scott pulled him to safety. The MP took up a position in the house and killed a VC trying to attack him with a grenade. He and the general then escaped through neck-deep water to another house.

Also in the Spring of 1968 another new facet of military police operations came into being when the 458th Transportation Company (PBR) became the first transportation company to be assigned to an MP unit. The company, which operates river patrol boats (PBRs), was assigned to the brigade to aid in the MPs' growing port security commitments.

These PBRs soon became a formidable mainstay of military police operations. The boats were deployed throughout some of the most important ports in Vietnam, including Qui Nhon, Vung Tau, Cat Lai, Newport (Saigon Docks) and Vung Ro Bay.

The PBRs are armed with twin electric .50 caliber machine guns on the bow, a conventional .50 at the stern, and a Honeywell 40mm grenade launcher amidships, in addition to the crew's individual weapons. The craft can travel 32 knots and stop or make a 180 degree turn within its own length. The PBRs are constructed primarily of fiberglass and, although they are propelled by two powerful engines, draft only nine inches of water. This shallow draft characteristic allows passage of the boats over water routes used by even the smallest sampans. To provide a greater capability during limited visibility, the craft is also equipped with radar gear.

The PBRs are manned by five-man crews consisting of two MPs, two personnel from the 458th Transportation

Company (PBR), and either a Vietnamese National Policeman or a Vietnamese MP (Quan Canh).

The boats patrol harbors and inland waterways to guard against the sabotage of allied vessels by enemy swimmers. The patrols also check debris floating into the harbors for hidden mines. In addition, nearly eight thousand junks and sampans travelling the harbors and waterways are checked by the patrols each month for contraband items and enemy supplies.

Another important function of the patrol boats is providing escort and security for huge ammo barges as they are towed from Cat Lai to the Cogido ammunition discharge point on the Dong Nai River.

One of the biggest boosts in the MP's police mission was the opening of an Army Crime Lab—only one of four in the world—by the 8th MP Group (CI) on Long Binh Post during July 1968. The laboratory, which now contains six divisions—chemistry, fingerprinting, document analysis, firearms, photography and polygraphic—has saved much time and has provided for quick interpretation of evidence and the administration of justice. Previously, evidence had to be sent to the US or Japan for analysis and, many times, a lab technician had to be flown to Vietnam to testify at courts-martial.

The 8th MP Group (CI) also has five criminal investigation detachments and field offices located throughout the Republic. Ninety-one investigators have opened more than 2,500 criminal investigations since the beginning of 1969, primarily into black market activities and currency and customs violations. Fatal traffic accidents and fatal accidental shootings are also investigated.

In August 1968, BG Gustafson was promoted to major general and transferred to Washington to become The

Right: A combined police patrol aids victims of a traffic accident. The patrol includes MPs, Vietnamese National Police and Vietnamese Military Police. Below: A PBR speeds through the rivers near Vung Tau. These swift, maneuverable boats have been very effective in blocking the enemy's river supply routes and in preventing sabotage against allied ships.

Provost Marshal General. Taking his place was COL William H. Brandenburg, who still commands the brigade.

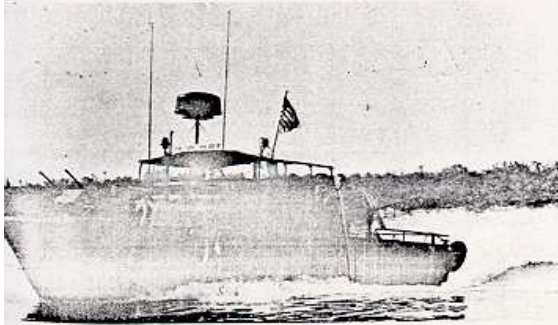
The military police worked in relative calm until February 1969, when they again found themselves at the front line of combat.

At 0200 hours, a 720th MP Battalion ambush squad, located on a hill in their TAOR, observed enemy rockets being fired into Long Binh Post. The squad leader, SSG Donald Meador, recalled that they also saw "about 300 VC crossing a small river nearby. We requested artillery. The view from our hill was fantastic, so we could see every move they made. We pinpointed the fire with extreme accuracy. Every round was right on-the-money."

The squad directed artillery fire and air strikes for several hours until they were discovered.

"Then they started to hit us with mortars, RPGs and automatic weapons fire," said SP4 Delbert Austin, "so we jumped into some artillery craters. But the fire got so bad we had to leave the hill and set up a defensive perimeter at the bottom."

Reinforcements from the 199th Light Infantry Brigade helped the squad retake the hill.



Another 720th squad, located just outside the Long Binh perimeter, came under attack from an enemy force of unknown size. "We formed up with several other squads for defense just as the squad on the hill called to tell us that a large group of VC were fleeing across the river. We looked in that direction and saw about 25 of them and opened-up on them," said SGT Ronald Robinson.

The squad made contact with another enemy force and fought a pitched battle just outside the post perimeter. A subsequent sweep by the 720th and elements from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 199th met with heavy resistance, but the enemy offensive was smashed.

When the fighting subsided, 132 of the enemy were dead and a score of rifles, a mortar, RPG launchers and thousands of small arms rounds were captured. Meador and SP4 Fred Pazmino were awarded the Silver Star for their actions that day. Eleven others won Bronze Star Medals with "V" device.

A big part of the brigade's law enforcement operation is conducted in conjunction with the Vietnamese National Police (Canh Sat), Vietnamese Military Police (Quan Canh) and, where needed, other allied police forces. The extensive use of combined patrols in the cities, on highways and even on the PBRs insures jurisdiction over any possible subject the patrol may encounter.

Initially, combined police patrols were set up informally and operations were based primarily on verbal agreements between local allied commanders. But in March of 1967 the first official combined police operation was established for the Canh Sat, Quan Canh and the 716th MP Battalion in Saigon. A written agreement signed by the Canh Sat Director General and the Commanding General of US Army Headquarters Area Command established the first combined police station and headquarters. The agreement also provided for extensive combined patrols throughout the city.

In May 1968 another combined police operation was begun on Highway 4, known as the People's Road, from the Saigon city limits through the Mekong Delta to the Can Tho Ferry. This written agreement, signed by the Canh Sat

Director General, Provost Marshal General (ARVN) and General Gustafson, provided for the establishment of combined police centers at My Tho, Vinh Long and Tan An. A combined radio relay station was also established at Cai Lay. In addition, combined police checkpoints and defile control points were set up on Highway 4 with MPs of the 92d, Canh Sats and Quan Canhs. Additional agreements have been established in other large cities throughout the country. There are now 183 combined patrols, 54 checkpoints, 22 combined police desks and 26 liaison teams in operation throughout the country. The latest combined police station was established in the city of Nha Trang in June 1969.

On 25 July 1968 a high level combined police agreement involving the Vietnamese National Police, ARVN Military Police and the 18th MP Brigade was formally ratified by the heads of the three participating agencies at the National Police headquarters in Saigon. This agreement established a Police Forces Central Operating Committee on which the Director-General of the Vietnamese National Police, the ARVN Provost Marshal General and the 18th MP Brigade Commander serve as members. The committee was set up to control and supervise the conduct of combined police operations throughout the country.

Information centers were established at each headquarters and were linked by a radio network. These centers collect all information and reports concerning combined police operations throughout Vietnam. Current information is updated daily at each center and each agency is advised on all police activities throughout the country. The three committee heads meet monthly in Saigon to discuss problems pertaining to combined police operations.

Besides eliminating jurisdictional problems, the combined patrols increase the understanding and friendship between the Americans and Vietnamese.

The National Police have total police authority and jurisdiction over combined raids. These raids are primarily conducted to suppress and halt black market and illegal drug activities. The Canh Sat, assisted by US and Vietnamese MPs, enter the premises and question suspects. The Canh Sat conduct the actual search of the premises and, if necessary, seize the suspect items. US forces personnel



Left: A troop of Vietnamese Boy Scouts, sponsored by MPs stationed in Saigon, perform a snake dance during an outing in Saigon Park. Right: Vietnamese residents of An Hoa Hung village in the TAOR draw water from their village well, using a water pump recently installed for them through the MP's Civic Action Program.

apprehended in such raids are turned over to the MPs by the Canh Sat. The Vietnamese Police Agencies are also very effective in identifying Viet Cong and controlling and verifying war refugees.

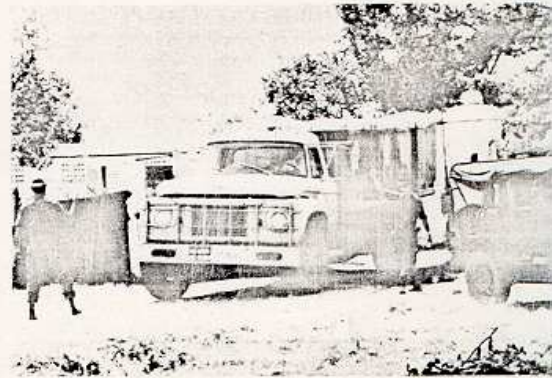
The brigade's expansion included much more than combat support actions and combined law enforcement patrols with other allied police forces. The brigade's dealings with the Vietnamese people often include much less formal circumstances than the combined patrols. These informal dealings are part of the brigade's civic action program.

Military civic action is the use of military personnel and resources to support or implement a National Internal Development Program. Revolutionary Development (RD) is the integrated military and civil process to restore, consolidate and expand government control so that nation building can progress throughout the Republic of South Vietnam. "Revolutionary Development," the central theme of the counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam today, is a

Below: MPs and a Vietnamese Navy shore patrolman check the ID card of a Vietnamese civilian employee as they man a combined checkpoint at a gate to the Vung Tau military complex. Lower right: An "Overtake" patrol investigates a cargo truck parked just off Highway 1A, near Long Binh. Right: MPs from the 97th unload black market merchandise confiscated in a combined police raid.



process by which the Republic of South Vietnam establishes and maintains security in populated areas and integrates the population into the structure of a viable, free, non-communist government. This process has evolved over the years under a variety of titles. Today, it is a dynamic, combined process embracing RVN, US and Free World military and civilian programs in one single integrated effort. Simplified, the mission of all the United States Government Agencies in Vietnam is "to advise, assist and support the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) to overcome the present communist-inspired insurgency and to



re-establish lawful and peaceful governmental control over her population."

The military plays an indispensable supporting role for RD. Without military security operations initially to establish the essential secure environment, the civil aspects of revolutionary development cannot be initiated. Only under relatively secure conditions can progress be made in the rectification of the political, economic and sociological imbalances which are the root causes of, and support the continuation of, insurgency.

The GVN is faced with the task of building a new nation and at the same time defeating the enemy in the field. Either of these tasks alone would be difficult, but in South Vietnam the problem is magnified by the fact that they must be accomplished simultaneously. In order to accomplish this dual task the GVN has combined the aspects of both military operations and civil nation building programs into a process which is called revolutionary development. This process is aimed at liberating the people from communist control, assisting them in choosing their own government and helping them to carry out various projects which will give them a better life under the protection of the Central Government. These tasks—clearing, securing and developing—actually take place concurrently.

In keeping with these goals, the brigade's civic action projects are as many and varied as the needs of the people which they serve: from helping to build bridges in a village to conducting ice cream and coke parties for orphans; from outfitting a troop of Boy Scouts to supplying village schoolhouses.

To support such projects the brigade maintains a 100,000 Piastre (some \$850 US Dollars) monthly fund divided between the 89th and 16th MP Groups, available to the various subordinate units. Most of the projects are selected by the battalions and companies because they are close to the people. This method allows for more flexibility in gearing the programs to the local needs.

"Most of the projects are geared on the 'self-help' principle," explained a former NCO in charge of the 89th Group Civic Action Team. "We'll supply the materials and, if needed, the know-how, but the villagers do the actual work. This isn't charity, and they can take pride in their part. This pride is important because the people will fight for a building they've built if the Viet Cong take it over. We work through the Republic of Vietnam government for most of our projects because we want the people in even the most remote villages to know that the RVN Government hasn't forgotten them and is seeking to help them."

But the civic action program can not really be evaluated in terms of money or materials. For example, many MP companies have adopted orphanages in their areas and the MPs help get clothing for the kids, build schoolhouses and help get the supplies, etc. "But," as one MP put it, "these kids need attention and friendship as much as anything else. So a bunch of us from the company load up on the deuce-and-a-half every Sunday—if we are off from work—and visit the kids. They always love it. I think it gives them a real lift."

Village security patrols from the 720th in their TAOR also perform this "non-material" civic action. They have rushed people—killed by accident or sickness—to hospitals, fixed up buildings and rendered other valuable services for

the villagers. It is in the 720th's TAOR that many of the 89th MP Group's Civic Action programs are centered. The primary objective of TAOR operations is to raise the level of security within the villages and around Long Binh Post. It was obvious from the start that an active Civic Action program would have to be implemented to go hand-in-hand with the police and tactical operations in the area.

To establish such a program, the 89th MP Group Civic Action Team, consisting of an NCOIC, his assistant and an interpreter, met with the MACV advisory teams already in the area. They helped determine the needs of the 5,000 people located in the three large villages. Then conferences with the hamlet, village and district chiefs were held to get their ideas, and integrate them into the Civic Action effort. Also, they met with engineer and medical units on Long Binh. The medical units provide the MEDCAPS personnel, who are American doctors who "set-up shop" in a village once or twice a week. Then the projects were begun—repairing bad roads, setting up MEDCAP facilities, building bridges, cleaning up, etc. Here the MPs, engineers and Vietnamese worked side-by-side to get the jobs done.

While some of the projects have changed, the purpose of Civic Action and methods of the group civic action team remain the same. The group team now makes regular trips to the field to confer with the villagers.

Though operating in a combat zone and participating full-time in combat operations, the 18th MP Brigade maintains an effective and extensive crime prevention and law enforcement operation. One of the biggest jobs is controlling the black market activities in Vietnam. Brigade MPs have established checkpoints at key locations to prevent US goods from being taken out of American installations, and have utilized combined town patrols to curtail the black-market operations in the cities.

One of the largest MP combined checkpoints is located near Cam Ranh Bay and is manned by MPs from the 630th MP Company, 97th MP Battalion, US Air Force Security Police, Korean MPs and Vietnamese National and Military Police. The personnel of this complex checkpoint check hundreds of vehicles and some 25,000 Vietnamese civilians every day. The security checks are located at three points along the only access road to the massive Cam Ranh Bay military complex. The security teams stop all vehicles over one-quarter ton and search them thoroughly. The Vietnamese police then search all the Vietnamese occupants and check identification, passes, etc. This check system has netted thousands of dollars worth of US equipment and merchandise. The town patrols conduct routine searches of markets and shops for contraband US goods. The Canh Sat question the possessors of the items in doubt, and, if the individual cannot produce paperwork indicating he is the lawful owner, the Canh Sat confiscate the goods and turn them over to the MPs. These anti-black-market operations not only help the US war effort, but also help stabilize the Vietnamese economy by helping control inflation.

One of the MP's most potent weapons against black-marketeters has been "Operation Overtake," a joint operation of the Vietnamese Police agencies and the 92d, 95th and 720th MP Battalions, to foil cargo truck hijackers on Highway 1A, the massive link between Saigon and Long Binh.

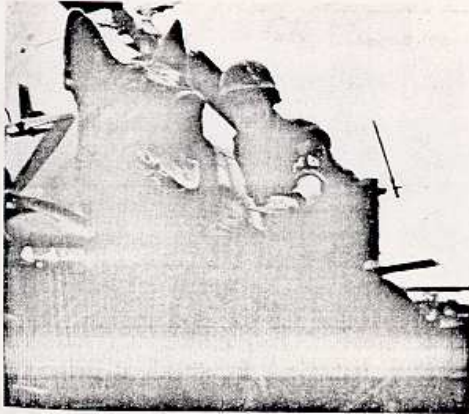
Begun in January 1968, *Overtake* is an extensive effort using gun-jeeps, V-100s and, occasionally, "airborne" MPs in a light observation helicopter to assure that US Government cargoes, contracted for transportation on government owned/civilian operated trucks, reach their destination. The MPs of *Overtake* patrol the highways and escort these contractor convoys to keep watch on civilian truck drivers who may decide to "detour" off the road and sell their cargoes to the black-marketeers.

"Some of the drivers will turn into a path just big enough for an oxcart," an MP explained, "but we'll go right in after them. We also check these back roads pretty often and have found hidden trucks with their cargoes still waiting to be unloaded and carried off." The MPs have also established many checkpoints at strategic turn-off points to catch the hijackers in the act.

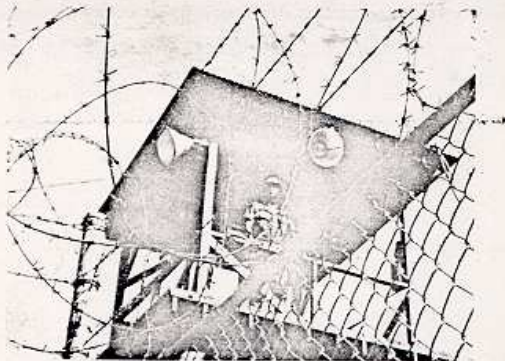
Since "Operation Overtake" began more than 270,000 vehicles, with cargo totaling more than \$162,000,000, have been monitored. Cargo losses through theft and hijacking decreased immediately after the initiation of the operation and have declined steadily over the past year. Proof of "Operation Overtake's" effectiveness over the most recent months is revealed in the fact that there have been no cargo losses, and only one attempt to divert government merchandise, since 6 February 1969.

Another effective deterrent against pilferage is the Sentry Dog. Several of these dogs were taken from their "jungle beats" to patrol indoor storage areas. They have cut pilferage there some 70 percent. The Sentry Dogs of the 212th MP Company have been in Vietnam since 1965 and became a part of the brigade upon its arrival. In December 1967, the 981st MP Company (Sentry Dog) arrived in Cam Ranh Bay. These Sentry Dogs and their handlers play an integral part in providing physical security throughout Vietnam. The 212th, operating in the III and IV CTZ, and the 981st, located in the I and II CTZ, have a total of 322 dogs employed at 15 locations, providing security for ammunition storage depots and heliports. Working mostly at

Sentry dogs of the 212th and 981st MP Companies are an invaluable defense for ammunition storage depots, heliports and airfields throughout the country.



SEPTEMBER 1969



An MP from the 720th MP Battalion stands guard over a war detainee hospital located on Long Binh Post. The 720th provides war detainees escorts throughout the southern part of Vietnam.

night, these German Shepherds can detect enemy movement more than 100 yards away. They are highly trained to remain calm under enemy fire.

One of the most demanding missions of the 18th MP Brigade is handled by the 284th MP Company which provides guards and confinement cadre for the USARV Installation Stockade.

The USARV Stockade was established as a small transient facility in October 1965 at Pershing Field, near Tan Son Nhut. As the size of the US commitment in Vietnam increased, there was a proportional increase in the prisoner population in the facility, and it became apparent that a larger facility would be required. On 21 August 1966, a new correctional stockade, replacing the one at Pershing Field, was opened at Long Binh Post.

The mission of the USARV Stockade is to provide for the custody and correctional treatment of military prisoners confined therein, pursuant to law and regulation. In response to this mission, two primary objectives have been established. The first is "to return to duty as quickly as possible the maximum number of prisoners, whose sentences do not include a punitive discharge, as morally responsible individuals and well-trained soldiers with improved attitudes and motivation toward their obligations."

To this end the skills of many of the facility's full-time attached personnel, including a chaplain, psychiatrist, JAG Officer and social worker, are utilized. This primary objective is, however, best met by a program of carefully prepared training. Thus, the prisoner's day, from morning drill through evening physical training, is filled with activities designed to return the man to duty with an increased motivation and improved attitude. In addition, many hours are spent counseling prisoners in their personal problems. Many cadre hours are also spent analysing and supervising work projects so that a combination of maximum benefit to the individual and greatest use to the Army may be obtained.

In order to monitor the training program and ensure properly motivated prisoners are returned to duty as soon as possible, a clemency board meets weekly to review the records of selected prisoners. At the present time, some 52 prisoners (or one-eighth of the stockade's average population) are granted clemency each month.

Unfortunately, not every prisoner is capable or willing to return to duty with the proper attitude and motivation necessary to make him an asset to his unit. Thus, the second objective of the installation is "to promptly identify those military prisoners who will not, or cannot, respond to correctional treatment, retraining or discipline. For these prisoners, an expeditious release from the stockade, either through separation from the service or transfer to other correctional facilities, such as the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, best serves the individual and the armed forces. In response to this second objective, the USARV Correctional Holding Detachment was activated on 19 January 1969, and became operational on 1 February. As of 2 June, the CHD had completed action on more than 300 administrative discharges, separating from the service prisoners deemed unfit or unsuitable for further retention in the armed forces.

The modernization of the facility and the introduction of progressive correctional techniques continues daily. With its philosophy that its location in a combat zone is no excuse for failure to maintain the highest standards of modern, progressive correctional treatment, the personnel of the USARV Stockade are meeting the dual objectives of their mission.

The brigade, since its arrival, has escorted many visiting VIPs throughout the Republic. While this is usually an extremely hectic job, with plans constantly changing, it is often the most enjoyable assignment an MP could want—like being actress Ann Margret's body guard. Besides providing security for ex-Vice Presidential candidate GEN Curtis LeMay and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, the MPs of the brigade have escorted every Bob Hope Christmas show since the unit arrived in Vietnam. The annual

Hope Show is a tremendous operation, involving most of the seven battalions of the brigade. For Hope's Long Binh visit, three battalions—the 92d, 95th and 720th—joined forces to provide VIP security escorts, crowd control, traffic control, and, of course, the front stage honor guards.

The show is always a success and, so far, the MP's mission has also been successful, with only a few minor incidents among the audiences. The show has provided entertainment for many thousands of servicemen over the last three years.

In April 1968, MG Gustafson, now The Provost Marshal General, returned to his old command and said he was "pleased and impressed with the progress of the brigade since I left Vietnam in August, particularly in its convoy and security missions."

The general also said he was continually seeking to improve the Military Police Corps, by taking advantage of the MP's new status to enlarge Military Police Corps school quotas and establish new schools. In Vietnam, the brigade has adopted this policy by setting up "on-the-scene" training programs for all new arrivals, and also a comprehensive week-long physical security survey course which teaches MPs to evaluate physical security measures and advise field and depot commanders.

Since the first award was presented in October of 1966, individual members of the brigade have won 303 decorations for valor. These include two awards of the Distinguished Service Cross, 42 awards of the Silver Star, 49 Soldier's Medals, 102 Bronze Stars with "V" device, and 108 Army Commendation Medals with "V" device. In addition, units of the brigade have been presented with 14 unit decorations, including a Presidential Unit Citation, a Valorous Unit Award and 12 Meritorious Unit Commendations.

The professionalism with which the 18th MP Brigade has accomplished its many and varied missions played a major role in the recent designation of the Military Police Corps as both an arm and a service.

The military policeman has always performed his duties with pride and professionalism and, though thrust into many unfamiliar roles, often unexpectedly and within the span of seconds, the 18th Military Police Brigade Military Policeman has more than upheld these standards.

Commanders of the 18th MP Brigade

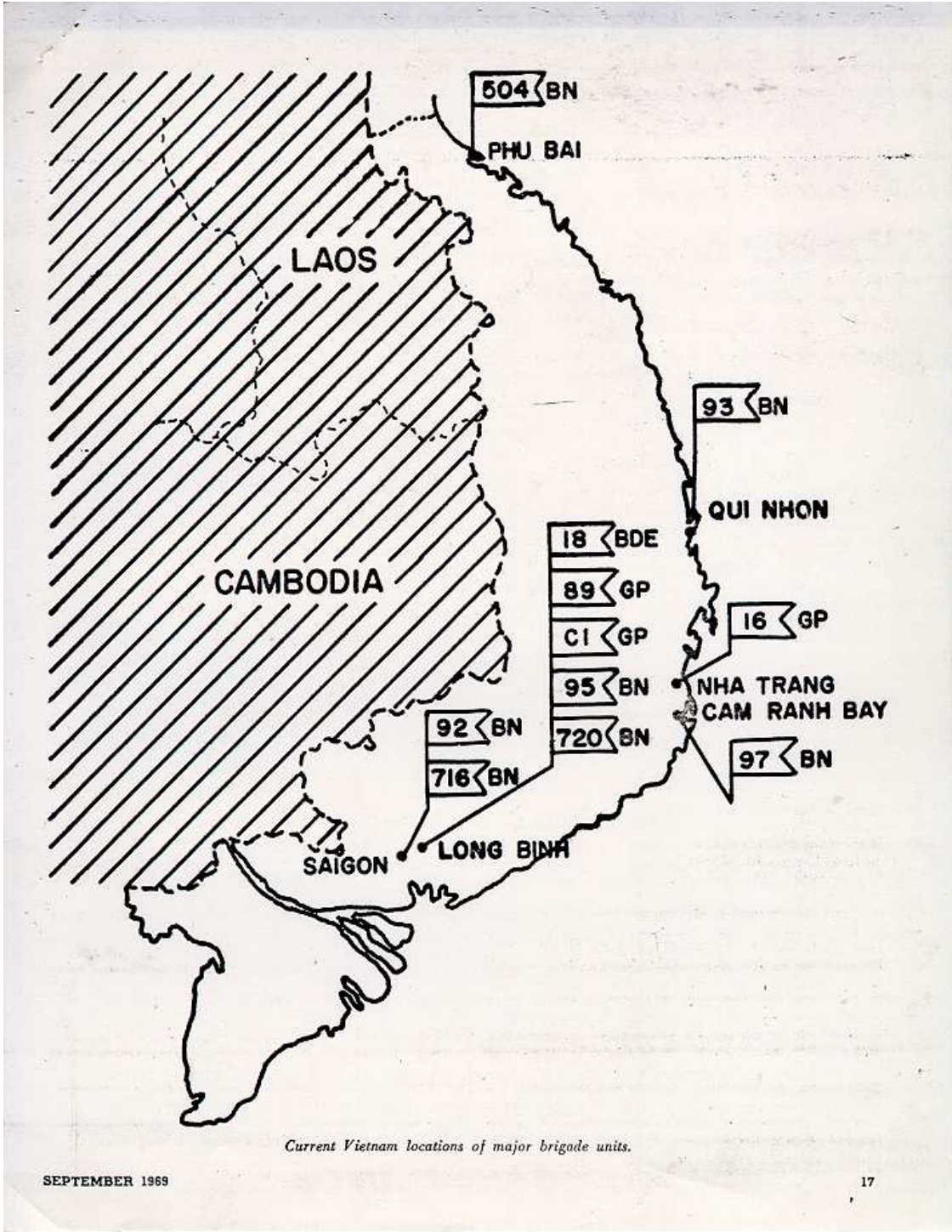


COL Guidera

BG Moore

BG Gustafson

COL Brandenburg



Current Vietnam locations of major brigade units.