

Appendix C

Chronology of Significant Events

January-December 1969

- 1 January South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu suggested that the ARVN was "ready to replace part of the allied forces" in 1969.
- 5 January President-elect Richard M. Nixon named Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge to succeed Ambassador W. Averell Harriman as chief U.S. negotiator at the Paris talks. He also appointed Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker to continue at his post in Saigon.
- 20 January Richard M. Nixon inaugurated President of the United States.
- 22 January Operation Dewey Canyon began in the Da Krong Valley of Quang Tri Province with the lift of elements of Colonel Robert H. Barrow's 9th Marines and supporting artillery from Vandegrift Combat Base into the area.
- 31 January U.S. military strength in South Vietnam numbered 539,800, of which 81,000 were Marines.
- 16 February Allied forces observed a 24-hour ceasefire during *Tet*. Despite the ceasefire, VC/NVA forces committed 203 truce violations, which resulted in the loss of six killed and 94 wounded in I Corps.
- 23 February Communist forces launched a major offensive throughout South Vietnam, one day following the expiration of the seven-day Viet Cong proclaimed truce for *Tet*.
- 25 February Fire Support Bases Neville and Russell came under heavy enemy ground and mortar attacks, resulting in the loss of 30 and the wounding of 79 Marines.
- 27 February During Operation Dewey Canyon, men of the 9th Marines uncovered the largest single haul of enemy arms and ammunition in the war to date.
- 28 February The 3d Marine Division ended Operations Scotland II and Kentucky. During Scotland II, more than 3,300 enemy troops were killed, while friendly casualties were 463 killed. Operation Kentucky resulted in over 3,900 enemy and 520 U.S. casualties.
- 2 March Village and hamlet elections were held throughout South Vietnam. In I Corps, the percentage of the population voting ranged from 82 percent in Quang Nam Province to 92 percent in Quang Tri. The enemy made no attempt to disrupt the voting.
- 3 March The Marine Corps received its first CH-53D assault helicopter. The helicopter, intended to replace the CH-53A, introduced into Vietnam in late 1966, could transport four tons of cargo or 38 combat troops.
- 7 March Allied intelligence estimates of enemy strength place 40,000 NVA and between 60,000 and 70,000 VC in I Corps Tactical Zone, a majority of which were said to be in the northern provinces.
- 9 March 1st Marine Division Operation Taylor Common ended in Quang Nam Province. The operation, which began on 7 December 1968, accounted for close to 1,400 enemy killed and 610 captured.
- 16 March The U.S. battleship *New Jersey* departed the coast of Vietnam.

- 26 March Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., replaced Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force.
- 30 March III MAF engineers completed the construction of Liberty Bridge, which spanned the Song Thu Bon, south of Da Nang.
- 3 April COMUSMACV confirmed that more Americans had been killed in Vietnam than in the Korean War. Vietnam had cost 33,641 lives since January 1961, compared to 33,629 lost in Korea.
- 7 April A Joint Coordinating Council was established by CG III MAF and CG ICTZ to monitor, coordinate, and support pacification and development programs within ICTZ.
- 10 April The first four AH-1G "Cobra" gunships arrived at Da Nang to begin air operations with Marine Observation Squadron 2.
- 15 April Major General William K. Jones replaced Major General Raymond G. Davis as Commanding General, 3d Marine Division.
- 17 April Marine firepower increased with the introduction of the first 175mm guns, scheduled to replace the 155mm guns of the 1st, 3d, and 5th 155mm Gun Batteries.
- 23 April More than 250 student leaders from colleges throughout the United States made a public statement that they would refuse induction into the armed forces so long as the war continued in Vietnam.
- 27 April A grass fire spread to the Navy/Marine Ammo Supply Point 1 at Da Nang, resulting in its complete destruction.
- 3 May Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird said the United States could begin troop withdrawals if any of the following three basic conditions were met: agreement of mutual withdrawals; sufficient improvement of South Vietnamese forces; and a substantial reduction of VC/NVA activity in South Vietnam.
- 6 May III Marine Amphibious Force, composed of the 1st and 3d Marine Divisions, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Force Logistic Command, and the Army's XXIV Corps, Americal Division, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), and 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), began its fifth year in Vietnam.
- 8 May The Vietnamese Communists issued a 10-point proposal for peace, the most important new element of which was an attempt to limit United States participation in negotiations to the subject of a unilateral withdrawal from South Vietnam.
- 10 May Operation Apache Snow began in the southern Da Krong and northern A Shau Valleys and involved the 9th Marines and elements of the 101st Airborne Division. During the operation, which ended on 7 June, troops of the 101st assaulted and captured heavily fortified Dong Ap Bia, or as it later became known, "Hamburger Hill."
- 12 May The VC/NVA struck throughout South Vietnam with the largest number of attacks since *Tet* 1968.
- 29 May The 7th Marines multi-battalion Operation Oklahoma Hills ended. Enemy losses during the two-month operation were placed at 596, while friendly losses numbered 53 killed and 487 wounded.
- 8 June President Nixon announced that 25,000 troops would be withdrawn from South Vietnam by the end of August.

- 14 June Marine, Korean, and South Vietnamese troops began Operation Pipestone Canyon, south of Da Nang. Before ending in November, the enemy would lose close to 500 troops.
- 13 June Secretary of Defense Laird announced that the 9th Marines, in addition to Army and Navy units, would be withdrawn beginning in mid-July.
- 15 June The 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion began deployment from Vietnam to Okinawa.
- 11 July Major General Charles J. Quilter was relieved by Major General William G. Thrash as Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.
- 14 July Battalion Landing Team 1/9 sailed from Da Nang for Okinawa on board ships of the Seventh Fleet, initiating Phase I of President Nixon's 25,000-troop withdrawal plan.
- 20 July Racial riots at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, resulted in the death of one Marine and serious injury to another.
- August The Combined Action Program reached its authorized strength of 114 platoons.
- 13 August Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 departed Vietnam for Okinawa under the announced 25,000-man troop reduction. The squadron was the first major unit of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to depart Vietnam.
- 14 August The 9th Regimental Landing Team completed its redeployment from Vietnam with the departure of the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines.
- 18 August The last UH-34D "Sea Horse" Squadron, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 362, departed Vietnam to be redesignated Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 after receiving CH-53 aircraft. The squadron was the first unit of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to serve in Vietnam, arriving in April 1962.
- September Three disturbances took place over alleged mistreatment of prisoners at the Camp Pendleton brig. Three guards were disciplined for using excessive force in quelling disruptive prisoners.
- 3 September Marine Corps Commandant, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., authorized "Afro" haircuts and the use of the upraised fist as a greeting among black Marines.
- 3 September North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh died.
- 16 September President Nixon announced another troop withdrawal. Of a total reduction of 40,500, more than 18,400 would be Marines, most of whom would come from the 3d Marine Division.
- 21 September Secretary of Defense Laird announced the deactivation of the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California. The 26th Marines, still in Vietnam, would not be deactivated with the remainder of the division.
- 29 September The Marine Corps announced a cutback of 20,300 in total strength. It was felt that a reduction in recruiting would reduce the size of the Corps without any rollback of temporary officer promotions or any reversion of temporary officers to enlisted status before 1 July 1970.
- 15 October Throughout the United States, Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations were held.
- 7 November The 9th Marine Amphibious Force was deactivated; I Marine Ex-

- peditionary Force was created as an amphibious ready force in the Western Pacific; and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Rear) was activated in Japan. CG, I MEF was to exercise operational control of the 3d Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Rear).
- 13-15 November Critics of the war in Vietnam demonstrated in Washington with a march from Arlington Cemetery to the Capitol.
- 19 November The Nixon Administration's military draft lottery bill was passed by Congress.
- 20 November Marine Air Group 36 completed its move from Phu Bai to Futema, Okinawa, where it assumed control of the helicopter and observation squadrons which had been redeployed from Vietnam.
- 26 November The 5th Marine Division was deactivated and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade came into existence.
- 1 December The first drawing of the draft lottery was conducted; those 19-year-olds whose birthdate was 14 September and whose last name began with "J" would be the first called.
- 15 December Major General Edwin B. Wheeler relieved Major General Ormond R. Simpson as Commanding General, 1st Marine Division.
- 15 December With the completion of Phase II redeployment, Marine authorized strength in the Republic of Vietnam stood at 55,300.
- 15 December President Nixon announced that the third round of American troop withdrawals from Vietnam was to be completed by 15 April 1970.
- 31 December Marine actual strength in South Vietnam stood at 54,559 at the end of 1969.