

# CHAPLAINS WITH MARINES IN VIETNAM 1962-1971



*Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam*  
1962-1971

In the field hospitals and on the line, the U.S. Navy chaplain in Vietnam could be found with the Marines who needed him most. His ministry and compassion extended into the villages, as well—as he sought to provide aid and comfort to all those victimized by the harsh blows of war.

The first chaplain arrived in country with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 362, in April 1962. Over the next nine years, more than 700 others followed in his footsteps. Technically speaking, the chaplain was a non-combatant; but he could not serve the Marines of his unit without sharing the hardships and dangers they faced on a daily basis.

It was not unknown for a chaplain to brave intense fire, in order to be at the side of a grieving infantryman who had just lost his best friend in combat. With skill and patience, he helped the survivor deal in human terms with the pain of inevitable—yet still traumatic—losses in battle, even while he comforted the wounded, the sick, and the dying.

In the relative safety of the rear areas, the chaplain's efforts did not diminish. He provided counseling over a wide range of subjects, to improve and ennoble the lives of Marines. He became a builder and restorer of orphanages, schools, and hospitals that had been destroyed or damaged. At least 46 new chapels became visible across the land.

As exemplified by the chaplain who received a posthumous award of the Medal of Honor, a common bond of sacrifice linked the U.S. Navy chaplain with the Marines he served. In this, the chaplain remained true to his heritage:

*Greater love hath no man than this;  
That a man lay down his life for his friends.*

# CHAPLAINS WITH MARINES IN VIETNAM 1962-1971

by

Commander Herbert L. Bergsma, CHC, U.S. Navy



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION  
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# FOREWORD

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This is the first of a series of functional volumes on the Marine Corps' participation in the Vietnam War, which will complement the 10-volume operational and chronological series also underway. This particular history examines the role of the Navy chaplain serving with Marines, a vital partnership of fighting man and man of God which has been an integral part of the history of the Marine Corps since its inception.

The first Marine aviation units to support the South Vietnamese Government forces entered Vietnam in 1962 and with them came their chaplains. When major Marine ground forces were first assigned to Vietnam in 1965, the number of assigned chaplains increased apace. By 1968 the III Marine Amphibious Force, occupying the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam, numbered over 80,000 Marines and had under its command the better part of three Marine divisions, a greatly expanded Marine aircraft wing, and a U.S. Army corps of multi-divisional strength. The number of Navy chaplains serving ashore with Marine units exceeded all past experience, and the scope of their ministry had expanded into new and sometimes troubling fields. When the American involvement in the war gave way to Vietnamization, Marine units phased down in strength, eventually departing the country from 1969-1971. Then, as today, they stood ready in the Pacific, on board ship and at bases in Okinawa, Japan, Hawaii, and California, to provide, as needed, a ready force to meet their country's call. And with them, as always, stood their chaplains, in peace or war ready to provide the counsel, comfort, and religious experience that are so much a part of military life.

The author, Commander Herbert L. Bergsma, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy, is a minister of the Christian Reformed Church and a graduate of his church's affiliated Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After serving a congregation in Michigan, he became a Navy chaplain in 1965 and served two tours in I Corps in Vietnam with Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 74 supporting the III Marine Amphibious Corps. Subsequently, Chaplain Bergsma served at Mare Island Naval Shipyard; with Destroyer Division 112; on board the destroyer tender USS *Bryce Canyon*; at the Marine Corps Air Station at Kaneohe, Hawaii; at the Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia; and with Submarine Group 2, Atlantic Fleet. In 1976 he earned a master of theology degree in homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary. Promoted to captain, he is at present serving at Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California.

E. H. SIMMONS

Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)  
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums



# PREFACE

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This work was begun in 1977 with agreements between Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired), Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, and Chief of Chaplains Rear Admiral John J. O'Connor, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy. Detailed arrangements were made by Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian of the Marine Corps, and Captain Carl Auel, CHC, USN, Director of Professional Development and Religious Programs in the office of the Chief of Chaplains.

General Simmons and his staff provided office space; research suggestions; editorial, design, and production assistance; and administrative support.

Commander Herbert L. Bergsma, CHC, USN, who served as Head, Chaplain Corps History Project during the years 1978-80, completed the first draft. Mr. Shaw and his staff continued Chaplain Bergsma's work, bringing it through the review, editorial, and production stages.

Commander H. Lawrence Martin, CHC, USN, Head, Chaplain Corps History Branch, and others reviewed the manuscript. Chaplain Martin additionally served as photographic editor.

The approach of the writer was to provide basic history of the war in Vietnam and to use it as the framework for dealing with the overall experiences and contributions of the chaplains involved and for highlighting the work of some individual chaplains. For the former, he used books, articles, and news releases; for the latter he used chaplains' end-of-tour reports, interviews, and correspondence addressed to the Chief of Chaplains and the Chaplain Corps historian.

No attempt was made to chronicle the known work of every chaplain who served, or even of those who submitted materials concerning their work. What is presented is that which was judged most significant historically, most representative of the whole, and most interesting.

Concurrent with the preparation of this volume is that of another which is expected to be a companion to it—*Chaplains With U.S. Naval Units in Vietnam 1954-1975*—to be published by this office under the editorial management of Chaplain Martin and the authorship of Rear Admiral Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN (Retired); Chaplain Bergsma; and Lieutenant Timothy J. Demy, CHC, USNR. With the publication of these two volumes the history of the naval chaplaincy in all the wars in which our country has been engaged will have been treated.

NEIL M. STEVENSON  
Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy  
Chief of Chaplains





# AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The risks of writing the history of almost-current events are great. Being too close to them chronologically may reduce objectivity and surely open the author to the legitimate differences of opinion of many who lived the experience. Yet, being too far from the events either chronologically or experientially invites a revisionist perspective or sugar-coated reminiscences which may be profitable for entertainment and human interest, but rarely for the elucidation of the times as they were.

If the history in question is of the Vietnam conflict a writer's problems are compounded. The attitude toward this event is anything but unified even today. Neither the nation, her churches, nor the chaplain corps of her military services manifest a singular approach or categorical understanding of it. I have tried therefore to avoid opinions, taking positions, or interpreting circumstances. I have attempted rather to show the texture of chaplains' contribution to the Marines: their sense of fulfillment in their calling, the personal and often emotional investment in their people, and the broad fabric of the clergyman in uniform.

To facilitate the achievement of these goals I chose a chronological rather than a topical approach. This renders the volume less handy as a reference work to find "what the chaplains did then in a case like this," but I hope preserves it as a cohesive framework of this momentous ten-year period. Hopefully all the topics germane to the Chaplain Corps were exposed within this chronological treatment and should, in any event, probably not be treated as a reference out of the context of the entire milieu in which they took place.

One piece of advice I received from an institutional historian when I began the writing was, "mention everybody's name." With mild apologies, I did not. It was not only impossible but unnecessary. Many of us simply arrived and served, following the pattern of those who preceded us, without uniqueness, without innovation, without distinction—as history measures distinction—but with infinite faithfulness. We are not mentioned because we did not serve at the time or in the place of focus upon which events turned. Yet in many ways it should be to those "unmentioned" to whom this and any history is dedicated, for they constitute its impact. The world may never know. We know.

I am particularly grateful to those many individuals who helped to contribute to the following pages. Much of my gratitude goes to chaplains who responded to questions, questionnaires, and interviews. Their perspectives were invaluable. Appreciation is also extended to the professional writers at the Marine Corps History and Museums Division, Dr. Graham Cosmas and Mr. Jack Shulimson, whose chapter reviews and comments were of the most patient, sensitive, and substantive kind; to Second Lieutenant Thomas E. Mead, USMC, who prepared the index included with these pages; and to Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns, who typeset the volume and dealt with many author's corrections, and Mr. William S. Hill, who designed and laid out these pages.

But special laurels are reserved for the Chief Historian of the History and Museums Division, and my friend, Henry I. Shaw, Jr., whose guidance and tenacity were a lesson in professionalism.

HERBERT L. BERGSMAN  
Commander, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy



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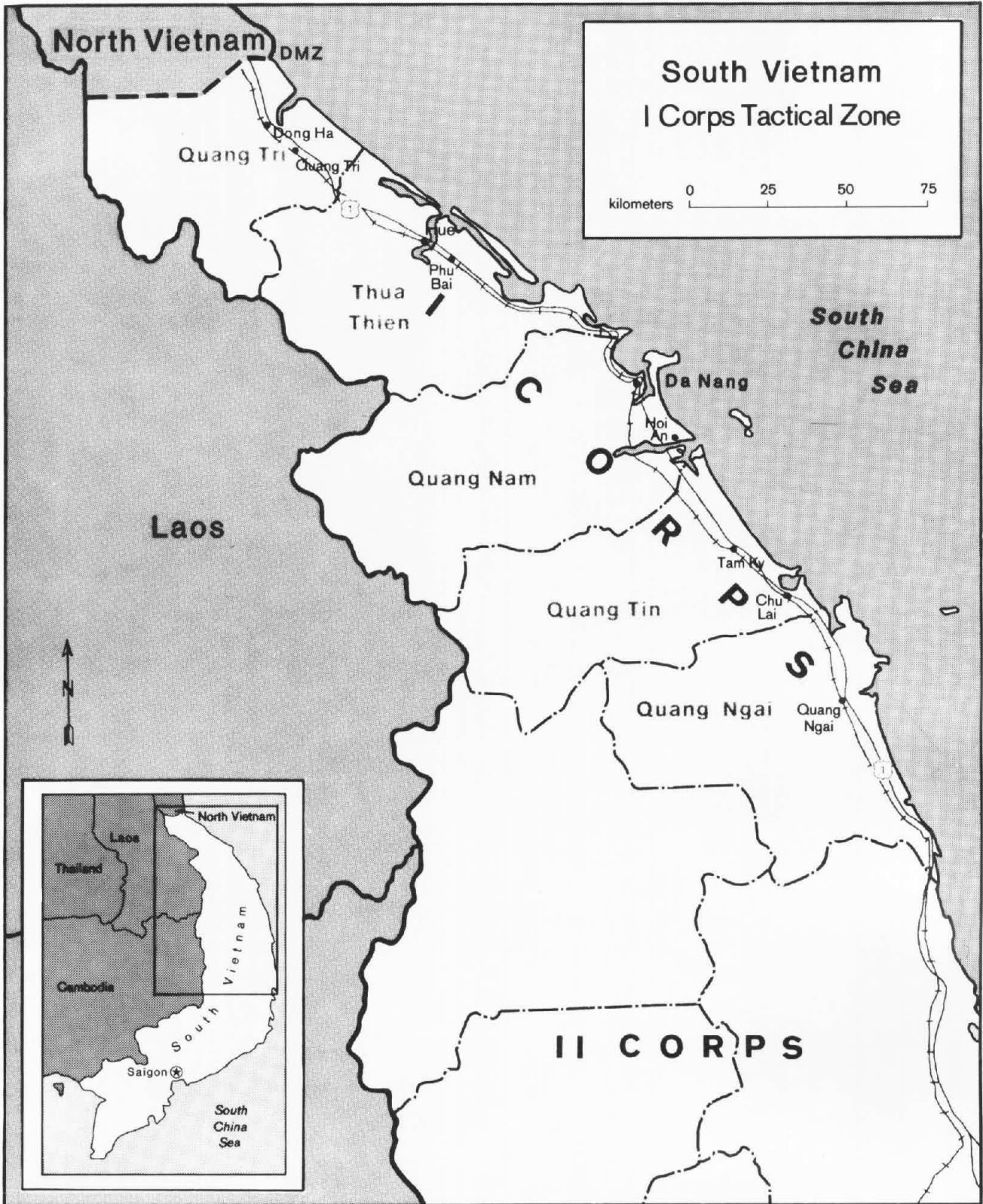
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PART I  
THE DRIFT INTO TURBULENCE



Photo Courtesy of Chaplain Samuel Baez

## CHAPTER 1

# “Ministering in a Mini-War” (April 1962-February 1965)

*Helping “Those Who Want to Be Free”—Relocation to Da Nang—Chaplains’ Routines Stabilize  
“. . . To Preserve the Freedom and Independence of South Vietnam”*

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The kinship between chaplains and Marines is as old as the United States itself. Both the Chaplain Corps and the Marine Corps were born in November 1775, and the admiration each has for the other has always been an important factor in their history. The late Lieutenant General Homer Litzenberg, USMC, said, “We are a peculiar breed of cat, and we like to have Navy . . . Chaplains with us who understand us and who like to be with us.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this affinity has been fueled by the mutual concern of Marines and chaplains for the worth and dignity of the individual and the common understanding that this concern is never greater than when the individual has committed himself to a cause larger than himself for which he may have to lay down his life. Since the Marine Corps has no Chaplain Corps of its own, Navy chaplains have shared these motivations and beliefs with them and have encouraged, comforted, and endured the stress of separation and combat with the Marines.

It was in 1914 that chaplains first were assigned to full-time duty with Marines. In that year a chaplain was ordered to the Marine Expeditionary Force of the Atlantic Fleet. In 1917 chaplains were sent to the 5th Marines and the 6th Marines to serve with them overseas. Thus began a ministry to combat troops that has become an essential ingredient in Navy Chaplain Corps and Marine Corps history. Most Marines would agree with General Matthew B. Ridgway who referred to chaplains and combat when he said: “When the chips are down, the men turn more and more to their chaplains, and the bigger the man, the greater good he does. His influence goes right down in the heart.”<sup>2</sup>

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*Tin Lanh Evangelical Church, Soc Trang. Under the leadership of Chaplain Samuel Baez, Shufly Marines constructed a ceiling in the church, which involved the labor of 50 volunteers over a period of four weeks and the contribution of more than 300 dollars.*

In World War II the six chaplains who went ashore with the Marines at Guadalcanal were the first Navy chaplains to see combat in that conflict with Marines on the offensive. Chaplains accompanied the Marine on every subsequent invasion from the Solomons through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas to the final operation of the war on Okinawa. The combat accomplishments of chaplains with Marines showed more conclusively than ever before that the role of the chaplains is vital. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz summed this up nicely on 25 September 1946 with this statement: “By their patient sympathetic labors with the men, day in and day out and through many a night, every chaplain I know contributed immeasurably to the moral courage of our fighting men.”<sup>3</sup>

It is apparent that the Marine Corps recognized this need for the reinforcement of moral courage, because after World War II a Marine division’s complement of chaplains was 16, but by the time of the Korean outbreak in June of 1950, the table of organization of a division called for 26 chaplains, plus those assigned to attached units. The Corps’ request for more chaplains was in itself acknowledgment of their worth to Marines.<sup>4</sup>

In 1962 sufficient chaplains were serving in the 3d Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, which were to supply the initial units entering Vietnam, to fill most of the table of organization billets.\*<sup>5</sup> With a few exceptions these chaplains were detailed to the division and wing generally and the senior chaplain would assign them to the units he determined would be most valuable for the chaplain and the unit. The senior chaplain was also able to adjust assignments so that the best possible denominational coverage could be achieved.

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\*The table of organization lists what a specific unit requires to function ideally. Money and personnel constraints often hamper the ideal from being reached.

As the tension in Vietnam mounted in the early 1960s it was reasonably clear to the chaplains serving the 1st Wing at Iwakuni, Japan, that at least one of their number would be going to Vietnam should a unit or subunit be ordered there. Finally in April 1962 the decision was announced.

The ministry of Navy chaplains to Marine personnel ashore in Vietnam began 12 April 1962. The arrival of Lieutenant Earnest S. Lemieux (Methodist) inaugurated what was to become the most comprehensive religious coverage ever given to Navy-Marine personnel under warring conditions. The Vietnam conflict marked the heaviest concentration of Navy chaplains ever committed to shore combat in a single geographical area, eventually involving more than 700 chaplains over a nine-year period. No American war would ever be fought over a longer span of time, demand so much, or disturb so many; but no one realized that in April of 1962.

Although the situation in Vietnam was serious and unstable at that time, it was not yet viewed as a war in terms of U.S. involvement. The intent of the American commitment was assistance and defense. Early indications were that additional helicopter strength would be needed to support an Army of the Republic of Vietnam swift-strike capability. The Chief, Military Advisory and Assistance Group, General Charles J. Timmes, USA, recommended that U.S. Marine helicopter pilots be assigned to temporary duty with Army helicopter companies already in Vietnam for familiarization. When asked to study the proposal, Major General Carson A. Roberts, Commanding General (Air), Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (Air FMFPac), suggested that the Commanding General, FMFPac, Lieutenant General Alan W. Shapley, offer a counter proposal that one complete Marine Corps helicopter squadron with support units be committed to a mission similar to that of the Army helicopter companies. This recommendation was approved and a Marine Corps helicopter squadron with its supporting Marine air base subunit was ordered to Soc Trang, Ba Xuyen Province, in the Mekong Delta, with the understanding that, when the tempo of operations in the northern corps tactical zone permitted, it would exchange places with the Army unit at Da Nang. The decision was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Vietnamese Government on 9 April 1962 and Operation Shufly was launched.

The personnel of Marine Task Unit 79.3.5, con-

sisting of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 362, and Subunit 2, Marine Air Base Squadron (MABS) 16, began to arrive at Soc Trang on board KC-130F Hercules transports from Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Futenma, Okinawa, on 9 April 1962 and immediately established a functional base. They were joined on 12 April by Chaplain Lemieux. The initial reaction of the task unit to duty in Vietnam was mirrored in Chaplain Lemieux's 1967 reflections. He wrote:

I shall never forget that first night. Most of the men were posted on security watch outside. It really made little difference since there were holes in the walls, and the windows had given up years before. We had a few cots and a few flashlights. Filth and debris littered the area. After a meal of "C" rations, we settled down to a restless night of watching ARVN soldiers and sleeping intermittently. I learned that we were in some kind of ARVN headquarters area and that the airfield was under the protection of about twelve hundred ARVN soldiers who were positioned about an outer circle of defense. The big question was whether we could safely entrust our security to people whose loyalties were uncertain. It was a new experience and we were all uneasy about it.<sup>5</sup>

By 16 April, the major body of HMM-362 arrived on station off the mouth of the Mekong River. The transfer of men and material from the amphibious assault ship USS *Princeton* (LPH 5) began immediately. Embarked as ship's chaplain in the *Princeton* was Commander Henry E. Austin (American Baptist). Recalling that experience, he wrote:

It was my custom to hold daily Bible classes on board the *Princeton* and when we were committed to lift a troop unit, I always held an embarkation service. One hundred twenty-five Protestant men of Lieutenant Colonel Archie J. Clapp's Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-362 attended the service. Our Catholic Lay Leader, Joseph Tucci, conducted a Rosary Service for the Catholic men of the unit.<sup>6</sup>

By the end of that day the airlift was complete and the elements of Shufly were ready to undertake their mission the following morning.

The Marine command was located near an old World War II Japanese airstrip, surrounded by patches of flat, sunbaked brown earth, laced with occasional glimmering squares of water-filled rice paddies. One building, a tin-roofed hangar of Japanese construction and sturdy enough to have withstood spring and fall monsoon rains for nearly 20 years, remained standing but in barely useable condition.

The airfield had the appearance of having been ravaged by some type of rats. The hangar, and even the runway itself, were full of holes and in a general state of cluttered untidiness and disrepair.<sup>7</sup> During the summer monsoon season the entire region was under 6-8 inches of water. In the months to come, helicopters were seen to sink to their wheelhubs when not parked on steel runway matting, even in the dry months.

The nearest village to the Soc Trang airstrip was 12 miles away; it could be reached over one, narrow, and at times, impassable road. The Marines made daily trips to the village's muddy reservoir for drinking water and contracted with a Vietnamese owner of a tank truck to resupply them daily with fuel. Both the water and the fuel runs braved sniper fire almost daily, a constant reminder to the Marines that they were in a mini-war, but a war nonetheless.

During the first weeks at Soc Trang, Chaplain Lemieux's chapel was a general-purpose tent; he experimented with its location until he found a spot that was most accessible to the troops at the base. Chaplain Lemieux recalled the conditions:

As life in the camp progressed a tent city was erected and personnel moved out of the hangar into more permanent and more suitable quarters. A complete restoration was necessary before other buildings near the strip and tent areas could be used. Four months later they were being used for office space and living quarters as the number of Shufly personnel increased.<sup>8</sup>

After erection of the tent chapel at its permanent location, Chaplain Lemieux had a plywood partition constructed inside and arranged his office on one side and the sanctuary on the other. The sanctuary was then equipped with an altar, lectern, communion rail, and crude but serviceable wooden benches for the worshippers. Thus the chaplain could counsel in his office, which had a separate entrance, while other Marines could meditate or pray in the chapel, neither disturbing the other.

The chapel had electricity and it seated 40 to 45 people very comfortably. Chaplain Lemieux later reported, "Even so, there were those who preferred to sit beyond the tent flaps, outside, on the blanket of grass surrounding the new location. Because of these "outsiders" it was difficult at times to determine just how many persons were "at church."<sup>9</sup>

The activities that Chaplain Lemieux undertook to provide worship facilities did not detract from his personal ministry to the troops. In the perpetually

uneasy, confusing, and often-troubled atmosphere of the Vietnam conflict, it was mandatory for the chaplain to be with the troops in a material and personal way. He had to live in the dust and mud with them; eat the same rations; drink the same lukewarm kool-aid; sleep fitfully, sweat, and pray with them. The presence of the chaplain was a ministry in itself. Living in intimate association with the men of their units, sharing the trauma of modern warfare was a reminder of divine concern and involvement.

The scope of spiritual service to the Corps also includes the familiar symbols of organized religion, and Chaplain Lemieux was to herald the hundreds of other chaplains to serve the Marines when he took great pains to supply traditional circumstances of worship for all faiths. The chapel, altar, the crosses, the candles, the vessels, the elements of communion, all were reminders and stabilizers of their faith and that of the church and the home of the Marines' youth.

Attached to Subunit 2 of MABS-16, the chaplain still provided religious coverage to all personnel of the task unit. The number of Roman Catholic chaplains then available in the Western Pacific did not allow both a Catholic and a Protestant chaplain to be in Vietnam. Consequently, Catholic Marines were trucked, often in full combat gear, to the Vietnamese Catholic Church in Soc Trang village for Sunday Mass. While this alternative was adequate and contributed significantly to the healthy cementing of relations with the village, it was not the ideal answer. The Roman Catholic Marine deserved and desired his own Catholic chaplain and he soon got him, although at first on a shuttle basis from Okinawa, in the person of Lieutenant Anthony R. Peloquin.

Chaplain Peloquin was attached to the parent unit, Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 16, at MCAS Futema, Okinawa. Chaplain Peloquin recorded:

When I heard that most of MAG-16 was to be assigned to South Vietnam, I volunteered to accompany them. The Commanding Officer said that they had selected Chaplain Lemieux, a Protestant, to go. I was the only Catholic Chaplain in the group and would be needed both in Okinawa and in Vietnam, and knew the job would require me to shuttle between the two places. From April to December 1962, that is what I did. Every month I would board a Marine C-130 and go South for about ten days. Some months I went more often, for shorter periods. I brought down supplies and necessary equipment that could be constructed back at home in Futema, Okinawa.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the unit was served by a Catholic chaplain on a regular basis, the men who had made initial contacts in Soc Trang still attended Mass there and continued to cultivate these relationships, undoubtedly beginning what was soon to be called "the second war," the battle for the allegiance of the people of South Vietnam. It is not surprising that the preponderantly Judeo-Christian characteristics of the American nation would display themselves by reaching out very naturally to the Vietnamese people, nor is it remarkable that the chaplain should find himself intimately involved in an effort of this type. In traditional fashion the Marines soon started people-to-people programs. Chaplain Pelouquin reported:

Chaplain Lemieux and I helped them contact local orphanages, and schools. I would bring back pictures and information about these places to Okinawa and return with generous donations of money, clothes, food, medicine, etc., for these projects. On most of my trips I had opportunity to participate in the various humanitarian activities and had opportunity to use my background in French to good advantage in the English language classes which were held several evenings a week in Soc Trang.<sup>11</sup>

During his visits to Shufly, Chaplain Pelouquin held daily Mass, confessions, counseling, and religious instruction. His impact was even broader; not only was he a Catholic priest and therefore able to minister uniquely to the Vietnamese Christians, the greater portion of whom were Roman Catholic, but Chaplain Pelouquin also was conversant in French, known by many Vietnamese. He thus found opportunity for a very helpful ministry to Vietnamese soldiers and their families. Following his regular Sunday Mass for Shufly personnel, he went to a chapel built by Vietnamese Army personnel to say Mass for Vietnamese Catholics.

Chaplain Pelouquin's facility in French also was tremendously valuable when he visited the local clergy of Ba Xuyen and neighboring provinces. He remembered:

Many outlying villages had untended Catholic populations. I arranged to have our helicopters carry local priests into these remote areas. I went with them to say Mass as the Vietnamese priests heard confessions. I also accompanied the commanding officer and the province chief to inspect villages which had been attacked the previous night. In fact, I spent many hours a day in the helicopters accompanying the men on every kind of mission. Some of the outposts visited on resupply missions had American advisors who had not seen a chaplain for a long time and who were always glad to see a priest.<sup>12</sup>

There was never a question of the chaplain's ability to fly in operational aircraft in the discharge of his ministerial tasks. As the conflict intensified, however, the relationship of the chaplain to hazardous operations became a concern. Chaplains generally found it necessary to involve themselves in the same circumstances as the men they served in order to understand their needs. Still, some commanding officers were forced to restrict their chaplains' operational involvement, both due to the need for the chaplain to have as broad a coverage as possible, and the incredibly heavy operational schedule kept by the units. By the time HMM-362 was relieved by HMM-136, Lieutenant Colonel Clapp's squadron had, for instance "executed 50 combat helicopter assaults, had flown 4,439 sorties, and had amassed 5,262 hours of combat flying time. All in unarmed aircraft."<sup>13</sup> The whole Marine posture was strictly defensive at all times, and Chaplain Lemieux reported:

The helicopters carried only light arms and no machine guns. Marines on sentry duty for inner perimeter security employed only minimum weaponry, the M-1 rifle, a few BAR's and light machine guns, but no heavy machine guns, no mortars, no grenades, and no mines. Ammunition was issued in limited, carefully measured amounts. In no way could the conduct of the U.S. Marine Corps in Soc Trang be construed in any way but defense and supporting.<sup>14</sup>

Operational requirements, restricted mobility, limited recreational facilities, isolation, and danger all combined to intensify the demands normally placed on the chaplains. The 1st MAW Chaplain, Commander Elihu H. Rickel (Jewish), charged with the rotation of operational chaplains in Vietnam with Shufly recognized this, and identified emotional maturity and stability, imagination and inventive resourcefulness as essential to a successful Shufly ministry.

He said:

The chaplain had to improvise, motivate, enthruse. The men were available and had ample time. It was up to the chaplain to develop a religious program and maintain interest in it. Daily worship, Bible study, formal discussion groups and other such activities were included in the program. I supplied the unit with religious literature and with general reading material from Bibles to whodunits.<sup>15</sup>

Chaplain Rickel regularly rotated the Shufly chaplains on a three- to four-month basis. To survey the religious situation in Soc Trang, he made one official visit with concurrent permission of Com-

mander in Chief, Pacific (CinCPac), FMFPac, and MACV. Permission to visit Vietnam was difficult to obtain and could not be acquired for routine, recurring visits. Although the United States was not a signatory to the 1954 Geneva accords, the nation voluntarily maintained a posture of no appreciable buildup or increase in U.S. military population in South Vietnam, or any acceleration of military activity. The situation was further complicated by the agreements then in force with the Government of Japan; United States military units stationed on Japanese soil (for example, the 1st MAW was at Iwakuni) were forbidden to engage in military activity against any other Asian nation.

*Helping "Those Who Want to Be Free"*

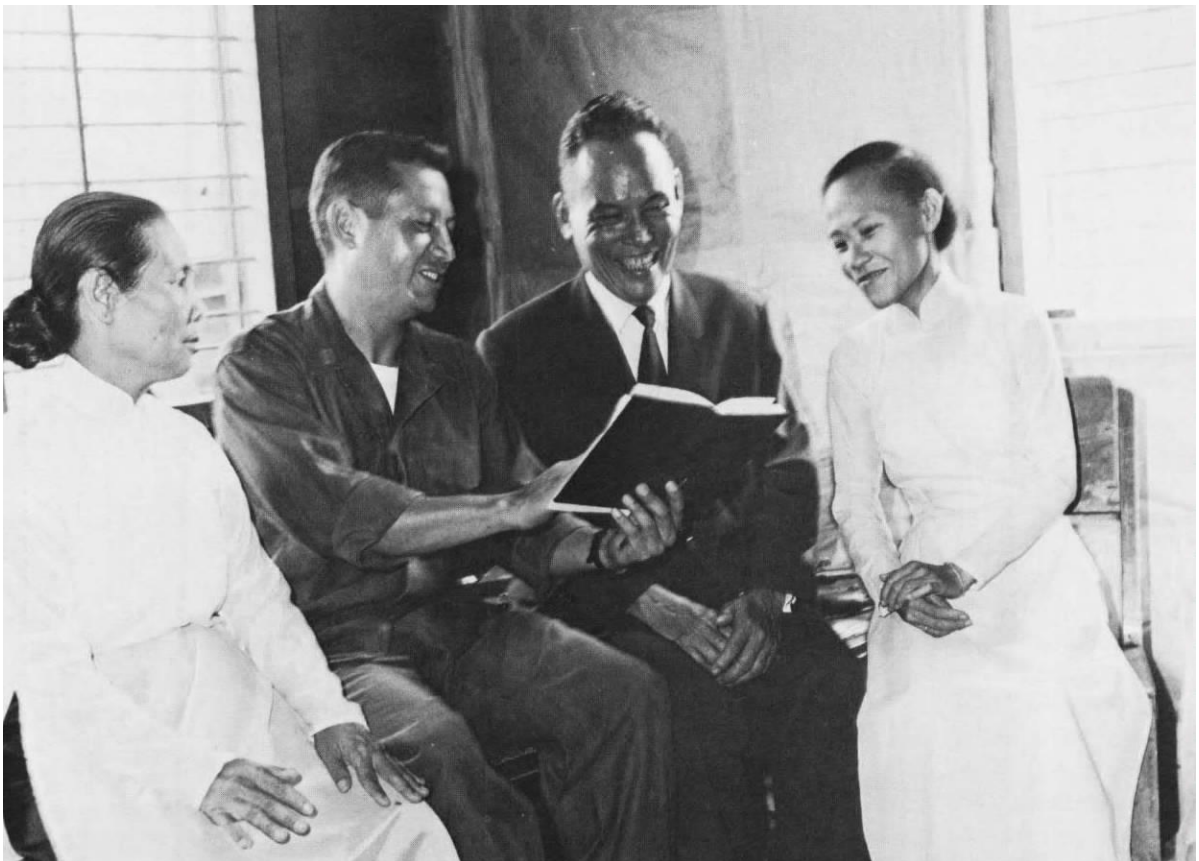
On 12 July 1962, exactly three months after the first chaplain came ashore in Vietnam, Chaplain Rickel sent Lieutenant Commander Samuel Baez (United Presbyterian) to relieve Chaplain Lemieux,

who returned to Iwakuni to complete his overseas duty. During his months of duty with the subunit, Chaplain Baez made a sizable impact upon it, and perhaps a still more remarkable impact upon the local Vietnamese. Following the excellent example of his predecessor, and during a lull in operation activity, Chaplain Baez concentrated on expanding the people-to-people effort. Within a few days of his arrival, he arranged for Shufly Marines to sponsor two benevolent projects among the people of Soc Trang and Ba Xuyen Province. The first was construction of a ceiling within the Protestant Church at Soc Trang.

Immediately after Chaplain Baez had arrived he participated in a rare type of pulpit exchange. During his trips through Soc Trang Chaplain Lemieux had discovered a Protestant church, which he was able to visit twice. The pastor and his son, also a Christian clergyman, were hospitable and friendly. One Sunday, therefore, when both chaplains were present, a dual exchange was effected. With a

*Chaplain Samuel Baez enjoys Christian fellowship with the Reverend Nguyen Dang, pastor of the Tin Lanh Evangelical Church at Soc Trang, and his wife and daughter.*

Photo 1st Marine Aircraft Wing



chaplain and an indigenous pastor in both places of worship, those portions of the service which caused the least linguistic problems were exchanged. It was a unique display of the unity of the faith.

In the aftermath of this experience, the need for a new ceiling in the Tin Lanh Evangelical Church at Soc Trang was pointed out to Chaplain Baez by the pastor, Reverend Nguyen Dang. Marines provided engineering expertise, the labor of more than 50 men over a period of 4 weeks, and contributed funds of more than \$300 to complete the repair. Chaplain Baez noted the remarkably high level of enthusiasm with which the Shufly Marines carried out their people-to-people projects.<sup>16</sup>

The second such humanitarian activity was initiated by the men of HMM-163. The chaplain found a Roman Catholic orphanage run by the Sisters of Providence in Soc Trang. Response to a routine appeal for funds for humanitarian projects has always been disproportionate in the United States Marine Corps, and so it was again. Sponsorship of the orphanage required funds which had to be donated by the men of the task unit, and in typical fashion more than \$450 was collected. The entire amount was used to buy a three-month supply of milk, 40 dozen diapers, 72 bottles of vitamins, and other infant supplies. This extraordinary expression of concern and outreach was to be duplicated time after time during the next nine years of Marine involvement in Vietnam.

A third project was implemented in response to a request initiated by Ba Xuyen's Provincial Chief, Lieutenant Colonel Chiu Nguyen. The chief invited the chaplain, two medical officers, the dental officer, and the Marine interpreter to teach the English language to a group of 150 women of the province. Many of them walked several miles, 3 nights a week, for a period of 2 months to attend classes. The project was judged of exceptional value to intercultural relations, and it was noted that, when secure and in a practical circumstance, the people of Vietnam responded to American cooperation dramatically.

One people-to-people effort that pleased both HMM-163 and relieving HMM-362 was the support and encouragement of the "Fighting Priest," Father Hoa, and the "Sea Swallows," as his followers were known. Father Hoa resided at the tip of the Vung Mau Peninsula in a village called Bing Hung. Father Hoa had been a colonel and a guerrilla specialist in China's war against the Japanese. Now, having been

granted a piece of land along one of the main canals at the southern tip of South Vietnam by the Diem government, the priest employed his military skills against the Viet Cong who controlled the entire peninsula except for his area. The fighting priest and his people sustained a disproportionately large number of casualties, but their courage and determination won the admiration of the Americans. Chaplain Baez wrote, "The Marines evacuated many of his casualties. The American commanders were so impressed with Father Hoa's organization that they regularly stocked him with supplies and equipment."<sup>17</sup>

Chaplain Lemieux recalled much the same attitude when he reported:

As we landed at Father Hoa's camp, my feelings changed from that of adventure to sober appreciation. At their very crude landing pad was a ragtail outfit, mostly boys and girls with bugles, drums and flags, attempting to give honors. The official honor guard of veteran fighters bore the unmistakable scars of battle, including arms and legs conspicuously absent. I shall never forget the faces of those people who were so earnestly attempting to present their best military manners. Their courage, and the conditions in which they had to live always serve to remind me of our nation's obligation to help those who want to be free.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Relocation to Da Nang*

On 14 September 1962, the Operation Shufly unit redeployed to the former French airfield at Da Nang in Quang Nam Province, northern I Corps. The city, called Tourane by the French, was a principal port of eastern French Indo-China and the second largest city in South Vietnam. The airfield was southwest of the picturesque city, beginning almost at the apex of the halfmoon-shaped bay that served the city as a quiet, deep-water port. The men and equipment of Subunit 2 and HMM-163 were established on the west side of the sprawling airfield. The airstrip was considerably longer than the one at Soc Trang, and was already in use by the Vietnamese Air Force. It was a mile-and-a-half long and was operated from a control tower housing radar and other essentials for all-weather, 24-hour operations. Both hangar facilities and barracks were in good repair and required no extensive renovation prior to moving in.

The strip was 375 miles north of Saigon and 84 miles south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), which, at the 17th parallel, divided South Vietnam from the Communist-controlled Democratic



Republic of Vietnam, or North Vietnam. The Marines had become used to flat, canalized, segmented delta land at Soc Trang; the terrain at Da Nang was completely different and varied vastly. White sandy beaches bordered the coastline, backed by a narrow coastal plain which rose toward jungle-covered mountains with inaccessible peaks of 6,000 feet and higher. The terrain was a new experience and a fresh challenge for the men of the task unit.

Because of the difference in terrain, the climate was almost the exact reverse of that at Soc Trang. The monsoon season, which so heavily affected operational ability, occurred in the winter at Da Nang, extending from September to March. In the extreme south it occurred during the summer. High altitude, high temperatures, high winds, coupled with low ceilings, fog, and heavy rains presented operational problems not experienced in the delta.

Weather was not the only problem to irritate the task unit. Security also proved to be awkward. Initially, a permanent sergeant of the guard was detailed to maintain a security force of men from Subunit 2 and HMM-163. Posts were manned around the flight line, the hangar, the motor pool, the communications area, and the billeting compound. This arrangement was workable but caused problems in effectiveness and morale. Marines who served all night as security guards often were expected to put in a full working day at their regular jobs. The command, realizing the problem, initiated a request via ComUSMACV to FMFPac for a permanent security force. This resulted in the assignment to Vietnam of a security platoon from the 3d Marine Division on Okinawa. As harassment continued the platoon was increased to a reinforced company.

The chaplain was active in the support of security personnel during this initial, difficult period, but was hampered by another problem area that affected everyone: transportation. The barracks compound was three miles east of the runway and connected by incredibly poor roads. Still further away were the motor pool and the communications section. The remarkable foresight of Shufly's first commander, Colonel John Carey, had caused the task unit to be supplied with three used school buses which were on hand when the Marines arrived from Soc Trang, but the chaplain visits to the flight line and the work spaces were difficult to coordinate with the bus schedule, and visits to the men on security watch were even more complicated.

Shufly's operational mission at Da Nang was essentially similar to that at Soc Trang, but there were important differences produced by the terrain, weather, and general plan on military activity in the I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ). In these northern provinces, landing zones for the most part had to be hacked out of the jungle, so surprise was difficult to maintain when moving to strike the enemy. When flat-bottomed, walled valleys with dangerous wind currents had to be used as landing areas, it was not uncommon for landing zones to be too far from the point of need, so effective employment of retaliatory troops was questionable.

The resupply of U.S. Army Special Forces outposts produced the single most important shift in HMM-163's mission, a mission not assigned in the Soc Trang area. It was clear that strategic hamlet defense would have to depend largely upon Special Forces units permanently positioned in the mountains and in the jungles whose primary duty was to halt infiltration. Chaplain Baez capitalized on this circumstance by offering an extensive ministry to Special Forces personnel at the outposts.

From the beginning of American involvement in Vietnam, the Chaplain's Division of MACV encouraged the concept of "area coverage" because of the vast dispersion of American personnel. American Navy, Army, and Air Force chaplains were asked to broaden their ministries to include internal coordination to serve the geographical areas. This was not an easy concept to put into practice owing to the intense loyalty chaplains with Marines tend to build with their specific unit and the resultant possessiveness of senior commanders toward the activities assigned their chaplain. The rapport a chaplain builds with "his people" is usually greater in kind and scope than even that which exists between a pastor, priest, or rabbi in a civilian setting, and enormously affects his spiritual impact. This relationship is, understandably, not readily transferable to any group or unit the chaplain happens to engage. With some reluctance, the demands of this strange conflict made area coverage a necessity, and chaplains and commanders supported it to the greatest possible extent, and it was rare that the practice was not found of special blessing to the chaplain and to all units.

A second major change to the operational mission occasioned by the Da Nang deployment was the relocation of some important hamlets that could not

be successfully defended. This meant transporting people, belongings, equipment, livestock, food, and fuel to areas more secure. The chaplain was often invaluable on missions, contributing to the positive relationship being built with the citizens of South Vietnam, by retaining a warm relationship with village dignitaries and pursuing an aggressive civic action program. These two major operational changes presented opportunities for the Shufly chaplain to make frequent flights with medical and resupply missions as a part of his routine, and his ministry was enriched by the opportunity to extend himself to Special Forces personnel and to the Vietnamese villagers and refugees.

On 6 October the men of the Shufly mission received a grim reminder of the fact that they were in genuine conflict filled with all the dangers accompanying warfare. A search and rescue helicopter crashed and burned 15 miles west of Tam Ky while participating in a 20-plane helilift of 2d ARVN Division units. Seven died in the crash, five Marines, a Navy doctor, and his corpsman assistant. These were the first casualties suffered by the Marine task unit since arriving in Vietnam, and they were deeply felt. The ministry of Chaplains Baez and Peloquin gave the Marines of Shufly occasion to express those feelings. Chaplain Baez reported:

A Requiem High Mass and a Memorial Service were held at which over three hundred persons were in attendance. Present were personnel of the Staff, CTU 7.35, MABS-16, Subunit 2, HMM-163, the Vietnamese I Corps Chief of Staff and his party, and several civilians, mostly missionaries who had been helpful in our program. The High Mass was conducted by Chaplain A. Peloquin and Chaplain S. Baez of MABS-16 conducted the Memorial Service. Four of the deceased were Catholic and three were Protestants. Letters of condolence, bulletins of the service and pictures of the ceremonies were sent to the next of kin by the respective chaplains.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Chaplains' Routines Stabilize*

Among the American missionaries present at the memorial service for the victims of the 6 October crash was Pastor G. H. Smith, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission, a remarkable man who had already befriended Chaplain Baez and who was to become the steadfast friend of many chaplains who would serve Marines in I Corps. During the Shufly era and the years immediately following, Pastor Smith was invited to speak to Marine groups about the Vietnamese people and their religions. His

lecture included the presentation of the film, "Jungle Beachheads," a study of the adjustments necessary when western culture comes into contact with a Vietnamese village. This became a part of the standard orientation for all incoming Marines, thus initiating a general program which, greatly expanded and carefully represented, was to acquire tremendous significance in the years ahead. Pastor Smith was also of invaluable aid to the Marines in understanding the cultural situation in which they found themselves. He was uniquely qualified to speak about Vietnamese customs and religious traditions, since he had been in missionary service in Vietnam for more than 24 years, and had only been recently displaced by the Viet Cong.

Lieutenant Richard P. Vinson (Methodist), who relieved Chaplain Baez on 12 October 1962, quickly became involved in what was beginning to be called civic action. He utilized Reverend Smith's insights liberally. During the period of Chaplain Vinson's tenure with Shufly, Reverend Smith was preparing to become an official for the Christian Children's Fund of Richmond, Virginia. The site selected for his orphanage, then in the planning stages, was surveyed by a Marine engineer, and the progress of the institution was closely followed by many of the task element's Marines. Shufly's men already actively supported an orphanage in Da Nang which was maintained by an American missionary family. On Christmas day the Marines participated in a "Father-For-A-Day" program which had been arranged by Chaplain Vinson. Each orphan spent the day with a Marine who had volunteered to serve as his "father." One Marine author observed:

The Vietnamese children were treated to dinner in the mess hall, presented with Christmas gifts, and then joined in singing carols with the Marines. At the conclusion of the festivities, Chaplain Vinson presented the director of the orphanage with a gift in Vietnamese currency equivalent to over \$800.00, money which the men of the task element had donated.<sup>20</sup>

From the very beginning, the Marines were concerned with civic action and compassion for children of the land. A supervisory chaplain, Lieutenant Commander George D. Lindemann (Lutheran) referred pointedly in his reports to the same kind of events. Chaplain Lindemann gained his insights on a mid-December inspection tour of the Da Nang facility sponsored by Wing Headquarters in Iwakuni. He spent 19 days with Chaplain Vinson,

meeting with key religious leaders and evaluating the religious program. He formulated a number of recommendations for extending the chaplain's ministry and enhancing its effectiveness.<sup>21</sup> One major observation, relative to the spiritual equipping of individual Marines for the environment of the particular conflict, was:

On the one hand the duty of the chaplain with Marines is the same as it has always been since the Chaplain Corps began; 'To bring men to God and God to men': to be by their side. On the other hand . . . in guerrilla warfare it is physically impossible to remain by the side of very many men at any given time and place. The men are widely dispersed; they hit and run; they withdraw and vanish into their hiding places. It seems to me that it is imperative that a fighting man who will operate alone or with small groups be trained and equipped not only in a military way, but also in a spiritual and moral way to withstand isolation and all the pressures that the feeling of being "cut off" brings to bear upon the mind and soul of man.<sup>22</sup>

In guerrilla warfare, Chaplain Lindemann suggested, the chaplain should:

. . . work his way from patrol to patrol, from post to post, from aid station to aid station, or back at the base of operations, extending his ministry on a personal or small group basis; and along with spiritual direction, collaterally, he would be able to help men of his unit to understand both the rationale and the responsibilities of their involvement. In both spiritual and moral realms, the chaplain's role must be a dynamic one including the inculcation of values and ideals for which men not only die, but for which they will also live.<sup>23</sup>

Recognizing the need to acquaint prospective chaplains who would serve in Vietnam with the customs, religious climate, and the social traditions of the Vietnamese people, Chaplain Lindemann conducted a course for the chaplains at Iwakuni highlighting those matters. The course was open to all interested personnel, laying the foundations, at least perceptually, of a Chaplain Corps-wide program which would be initiated on a more comprehensive scale in the months to come.

His inspection completed, Chaplain Lindemann returned to wing headquarters before the first of the year, 1963. He was followed less than a month later by Chaplain Vinson who had been relieved by Lieutenant Hugh D. Smith (Southern Baptist). Commander Earnest E. Metzger (Methodist) was then Wing Chaplain and the Catholic responsibilities fell to Lieutenant William M. Gibson,

when he relieved MAG-16's Catholic Chaplain Pelouquin.

During Chaplain Smith's first two months with Operation Shufly, chapel services were held in the airbase mess hall, where the services had moved some months earlier. This was an adequate but not altogether satisfying arrangement. In March the results of the persistence of all the Shufly chaplains were realized when a specific chapel building was dedicated. Chaplain Smith wrote:

One of the buildings in the compound was renovated and remodeled to make a nice chapel. It was dedicated on the third Sunday of March. In the rear of the chapel was a large area used for the chaplain's office. Sunday services and weekly Bible study were held in the chapel. Evening prayers were given at 2200 over a loud speaker system for the entire compound.<sup>24</sup>

While the routine of ministering was becoming progressively more consistent, there were always circumstances in the experience of chaplains which called for the resources of the deepest recesses of their faith. In a letter to his Bishop, Chaplain Gibson wrote:

Tragedy struck again in our group. We had twelve men killed while trying to locate an Air Force plane that had crashed. It had an Air Force pilot and a Vietnamese pilot, so that a total of fourteen were killed. I would presume by this time you have heard and read all about the tragedy.

To me it was more personal. One of my closest friends was killed. He was a Navy doctor. This man, Bishop, was a daily communicant and did work for the orphans in town and for the sisters at the orphanage. A more dedicated man you would never find. He also took care of the Vietnamese people and had a program all worked out whereby he could do much for the local people.

I do hope that you will remember this young doctor in your prayers. I know he was prepared—but am certain he would like for us to remember him.

I was in Vietnam on the day he was killed. I left on Tuesday evening. His last words to me were, "Father, don't leave. We need you down here." I laughed and told him that they weren't doing anything. With that I shook his hand and left. When I read his name on the dispatch I was deeply grieved, remembering his last words to me. I will always remember them.<sup>25</sup>

The same personal suffering and sense of loss was recalled by Lieutenant John G. Harrison (Lutheran), who served Shufly during the following year. He was having a conversation with a lieutenant colonel, prior to leaving Iwakuni for Vietnam:

"Chaplain," the Colonel said, "I hope you like your assignment. You have an opportunity to help a lot of men to understand their faith."



Photo Courtesy of Chaplain Hugh F. Lecky, Jr.

*The interior of the Shufly Marine detachment's chapel photographed on 4 July 1965.*

"I'm sure I will," I replied, not knowing at all why I would but confident that it was true.

He smiled and then said, "It will break your heart a lot of times."

I didn't fully realize what they meant until a month later when an Army helicopter was shot down by the Viet Cong. The young pilot, a husband of a few months, was killed. His mechanic, flying with him in the plane, was never found. That evening we held a memorial service. The small chapel could not hold all who came, and the driving rain outside was made such a noise on the metal roofs that much of what was said that evening was not heard. But a need was present that none of us will forget. Suddenly the glamour of war faded with the death of friends. At times like that everyone instinctively looked to God to heal the broken hearts and to give a word of hope and promise.

No one longed to be a hero after the first few days in the humid, tropical climate where death was only a breath away, but everyone felt willing to show that we as Americans were concerned about the Vietnamese people and willing to stake out all in showing this concern.

Somehow this made sense because it had a purpose that was as big as Christ himself, "Greater love has no man than

this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

What a wonderful opportunity it was to have been a Navy Chaplain preaching and living these timeless truths in an atmosphere and country where such insights were necessary for survival and for victory itself.<sup>26</sup>

The mood was subtly changing during these months in Vietnam, and nothing contributed more to the dark forboding than an event that took place 13,000 miles from Vietnam, in Dallas, Texas. On 22 November 1963, the United States was dealt a stunning blow when its President, John F. Kennedy, was shot by an assassin and died shortly thereafter. Lieutenant Herman F. Wendler (Methodist) was the Shufly chaplain at that time, having relieved Chaplain Smith in June of 1963. He served a little over a month past the assassination of President Kennedy, and when relieved on 31 December, completed the longest tenure of any chaplain with Marines in Vietnam to that point. Chaplain Wendler reported the shock and solemn sense of

tragedy that characterized the attitude of the armed forces personnel in the I Corps generally and the deep grief of the men of Shufly particularly. During the period of mourning the chaplain conducted memorial services for his own personnel and for Army and Air Force service members in Da Nang.

*“ . . . To Preserve the Freedom and Independence of South Vietnam ”*

Seven months prior to the terrible events of 22 November, the opinions of officials in the Defense Department were bouyant and positive. Predictions that the conflict would soon end could be heard. “The corner has definitely been turned toward victory,” a government spokesman said.<sup>27</sup>

But such was not the case, and deterioration was swift. Buddhists, objecting to Roman Catholic domination of the Diem government, rioted, and, some, while the world watched incredulously through media eyes, immolated themselves. The activities of some 2,000 Buddhists were interpreted to represent the attitude of the entire country and the United States believed that all Vietnam was

afire.<sup>28</sup> In November a military coup overthrew Diem’s government and he was assassinated.

Having received the mantle of the United States Presidency, Lyndon Johnson immediately was faced with burdensome decisions concerning Vietnam. Some Americans had begun to see the conflict as a civil war in which America had no honorable involvement. Others saw it as a blatant attempt on the part of Communism to annex the whole of Southeast Asia nation by nation, an encroachment that had to be resisted. The troops in Vietnam seemed largely to favor the latter view and found themselves adopting increasingly belligerent attitudes as they saw, though most American citizens did not, the terror and maiming carried on by the Viet Cong against innocents, as well as atrocities conducted against missionaries.<sup>29</sup>

The darkening mood of the American serviceman in Vietnam was fed by confusion in the direction of the war and increased activity on the part of the Viet Cong. Chaplain Harrison recorded this eloquently:

The tempo of the Viet Cong activity stepped up. Ambushes increased around the perimeter of the base. Snipers

*The first meeting of all Navy chaplains in Vietnam, photographed in front of the Shufly Chapel in June 1965. Seated, left to right: Chaplains R. G. DeBock; A. B. Craven; P. H. Running; P. J. Bakker (1st MAW); R. “Q” Jones (III MAF); J. J. O’Connor (3d Mar-Div); W. M. Gibson; R. J. Usenza; H. F. Lecky. Standing, left to right: R. C. Osborn; M. Goodwin; R. W. Hodges; T. Dillon; E. E. Jayne; E. V. Bohula; T. G. Ward.*

Photo Courtesy of Chaplain Hugh F. Lecky, Jr.



began to fire upon guard posts. Vietnam became an issue in the Presidential election of 1964. There were charges of poor supplies and old equipment. Suddenly everything coming to Vietnam took on a high priority. Vietnam entered the spotlight, and everything tightened up. War was no longer romantic.

As the war intensified, and security tightened in response to stepped up Viet Cong activity, my ministry moved into another sphere. There were Memorial Services; there were more troops in the area, and thus more formed, and the religious life of the camp took on a new vitality, a quality of honest devotion I had never before experienced in a group of men.

The last month I was with the Subunit, we had full alerts perhaps five to eight times. We knew without a doubt that something big was up. We were all frustrated because no one seemed to be making any decisions as to our involvement.<sup>30</sup>

It was apparent that the United States stood at a crossroad. To leave Vietnam now would make the investment of the past two years appear futile; to remain would entail stronger, more aggressive responses to the provocations and belligerency of the Communists. The tension was felt by the Americans in the States but not nearly as intensely as among the Marines in Vietnam. Chaplain Harrison gives a small picture of the character of the tension within some of his Marines:

On the day that I left, the C-130, which was the only real link with the outside world, was full of Marines returning to Japan after completion of their tour. We were flying over the Tonkin Gulf when word passed through the plane, "We're at war with North Vietnam." For some reason everyone broke out in a tremendous cheer. As it turned out, the North Vietnamese had attacked some of our ships with armed torpedo boats, and we retaliated. Somehow it indicated a new direction in our struggle to preserve the freedom and independence of South Vietnam, and it made sense. It made sense because we had witnessed at first hand the increasing infiltration of the North Vietnamese. We had visited villages where the leaders had been murdered because they had cooperated with the government. We had seen schools, which we helped to build, burned. We had seen our friends in the Special Forces wounded or killed by Communist insurgents. We had buried shipmates who had been killed because they could not fire until we had been fired upon, even though we knew the enemy was there.<sup>31</sup>

This psychological change was also noted by Lieutenant Robert V. Thornberry (Southern Baptist), who relieved Chaplain Harrison. He corroborated the Shufly mood:

It was evident that tension was high, probably due to the nature of the work. Even though the HMM people

were directly involved in the struggle, they never had the opportunity to assert themselves in battle, as such. Neither were the MABS personnel related to the war in such a way as to give real meaning to their presence in such an environment. I would imagine this to be frustrating to a Marine, a man who has developed aggressive skills for use in combat.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the quickening of the military heartbeat, combat concerns were put aside on 10 November 1964, but not to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday as may be supposed. Early monsoon rains flooded the coastal and piedmont areas of I Corps, threatening the lives of the Vietnamese living in the lowlands. The squadron was ordered to assist in the evacuation of civilians from the critical flooded area. The helicopters flew late into the night and all the next day through sniper fire, wind, and chilling rain. More than 2,000 flood victims were evacuated to the Da Nang airfield, wrapped in blankets and trucked to the city for food and medical care. A few, seriously injured, were flown to the USS *Princeton* cruising offshore. The refugees were frightened and cold; most were women, children, and the aged. Lieutenant Robert P. Heim (United Presbyterian) noted that the Shufly Marines exhausted themselves in the lifesaving mission and "even shared their Birthday cake with the refugees when they were brought into the hangar that night."<sup>33</sup>

The distraction of the monsoon flooding did not halt the somber intensification of the military situation late in the year. In December the security platoon, which had deployed to Da Nang from the 3d Marine Division in March was replaced by a reinforced company from the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. The threat of the Viet Cong was growing. After dark, travel was curtailed, as were routine people-to-people visits to the countryside. Terrorist activities within the villages just outside the airbase compound, and sniper fire at guard posts made the increasing hazards of Shufly duty a clear reality. Shortly thereafter a Marine light antiaircraft missile battery arrived to defend the airfield against possible air attacks from the North. By March of 1965 the situation had clearly changed, and Operation Shufly was officially terminated when the helicopter squadron and subunit were reassimilated by the arriving Marine Aircraft Group 16.

Lieutenant Commander Hugh Lecky (Lutheran) was the last Shufly chaplain to fly with the squadron. During this period the policy concerning the



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A186867

*Marine Sgt Dale McAnulty of Texarkana, Texas, prepares to receive Holy Communion from Chaplain LCdr Otto E. Kinzler, 12th Marines regimental chaplain. Chaplain Kinzler, from Da Nang, held services at many remote artillery and observation outposts.*



Photo courtesy of Chaplain Hugh Lecky

*Chaplain Hugh F. Lecky, Jr., conducts a service for men of HMM-163 in February 1965.*

chaplain flying with the squadron also changed. Chaplain Heim had flown only 20 missions during his five month's assignment. The policy, restated during the February-March transition period, was that the chaplain should avoid flying missions except when essential to his duties. While Chaplain Lecky observed the policy meticulously, he still became known to MAG-16 personnel as the "Heli-Padre," and, even though flying only "safe" missions, he was wounded, becoming the first Navy chaplain to be awarded the Purple Heart for action in Vietnam.

The defense-oriented American involvement was coming to a close. In response to Communist activities, such as the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the

Viet Cong attack on the U.S. Bachelor Officers' Quarters in Saigon on Christmas Eve 1964, which killed 2 Americans and wounded 109, President Johnson ordered retaliatory air strikes on North Vietnam. The VC continued their attacks by mortaring the U.S. compound at Pleiku on 7 February 1965. By the 27th, the President decided to commit a brigade-sized force to Da Nang with the mission of protecting that major base.

On 6 March 1965 the signal was sent to elements of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) off Vietnam shores: "Land at once at Da Nang MEB command and control elements, a surface battalion landing team . . ." <sup>34</sup> The mini-war was no more.



## CHAPTER 2

# Supporting Amid Confusion (March-August 1965)

*The 9th MEB Comes Ashore—The III Amphibious Force is Created—Landing at Phu Bai—Chu Lai is Born—The Seabees Arrive—MAG-12 at Chu Lai—Chaplain Organization at Da Nang*

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The events of March to August 1965 in the area of Da Nang, South Vietnam, bear eloquent testimony to the combat readiness of the United States Marine Corps. During the first week of March of that year, only the Shufly detachment with but one security company was situated at the Da Nang airstrip. By the end of the summer, Marine infantry regiments, the 3d, 4th, 7th, and 9th Marines, were in Vietnam, together with four Marine aircraft groups; MAGs-11, -12, -16, and -36.

The achievement of this incredibly rapid buildup produced understandable, though temporary, confusion and the chaplains' sections were not exempt from the headaches of rapidly changing circumstances, expectations, and projections.

In March there was one chaplain serving MAG-16, and, at best, two when a Roman Catholic priest could be broken loose from his duties with personnel in Okinawa. By late summer a total of 32 chaplains were located in the greater Da Nang area, with some 8-10 more projected to report. Writing at the end of the period about change in the Da Nang complex Lieutenant Paul L. Toland (Roman Catholic) observed:

This past year I have seen three general phases to this Marine operation. From December 1964 to mid-March 1965, the operation was relatively small and quiet. Mid-March to mid-June saw the arrival of several thousand Marines and an acceleration in activity. Since mid-June the buildup had been astronomical. There is now a full scale war in progress. In the first phase the Marines were offering small helicopter support to the ARVN's; in the second phase we had buildup of security and the operation was largely defensive; in the third phase the Marines began their own great offensive.

Today as I go about the Da Nang area, it is like a different country. The airfield which in the beginning serviced a single squadron of helicopters and a squadron of U. S. Air Force fighter planes, is a beehive of activity; planes of every description and size come and go. The city of Da Nang has been taken over by the Marines, the Seabees, the Air Force, Army and Navy. American servicemen crowd

the sidewalks; American vehicles fill narrow streets. There are vast camps, compounds and complexes to house the thousands upon thousands of American Service personnel. Many of the old RVN camps are now taken over by Americans. Where there were rice paddies and thatched huts and grazing cattle, there are now huge American camps filled with troops, vehicles and supplies.<sup>1</sup>

Contributing hugely to the confusion of the period was the continual instability of the government of South Vietnam in Saigon. After the assassination of President Diem, a succession of heads of state paraded to the position of power only to prove unable to secure it and stabilize the national structure. Foremost among the influences that contributed to the undermining of confidence in the Saigon-based government was the often bitter rivalry between Buddhists and Roman Catholics which continued until June of 1965, when it quieted somewhat under Vice Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, who became Premier of the eighth government for the RVN in 20 months.

### *The 9th MEB Comes Ashore*

Since mid-1964 battalion landing teams from the 3d Marine Division on Okinawa had rotated as special landing forces on board the Navy's amphibious ready groups in Vietnamese waters. BLTs functioned within the command structure of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), which varied in size and composition from one to two battalions according to the requirements of specific crisis. In the north of South Vietnam they were poised against the potential need to defend Da Nang or evacuate American personnel at Da Nang and Qui Nhon. In the south they were positioned off Cape St. Jacques to support Saigon-based Americans, to bolster the regularly constituted government, and to demonstrate the capability of American military might in the area while observing the 1954 Geneva agreements by remaining out of the country in international waters.

The events of this fascinating and complex period had their initial focus at 0600 on 8 March 1965 when the order to land the landing force was given to the 9th Brigade embarked in four ships of Amphibious Task Force 76. The USS *Mount McKinley* (AGC 7), USS *Henrico* (APA 45), USS *Union* (AKA 106), and USS *Vancouver* (LPD 2) had closed to within 4,000 yards of Red Beach 2, north of Da Nang. The ships, with Battalion Landing Team 3/9 and its chaplain, Lieutenant John F. Walker (Episcopal) on board, had been steaming off the coast of South Vietnam for the past two months, awaiting the contingency that would require the Marines to land. The possibility of such need had loomed greater toward the end of 1964 and early 1965, when the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese appeared to risk U.S. intervention by asserting their ability to infiltrate and employ terrorist tactics in the south. To counter, President Johnson ordered air retaliation and then, after an offer of negotiations received no North Vietnamese response, ordered the landing of the 9th MEB.

The mission of the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines was to land in the vicinity of Da Nang and move to the airfield, taking up defensive positions on the perimeter, augmenting and absorbing the security company, Company D of 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, in country from Okinawa since February. Deploying about the perimeter, the Marines of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines dug fighting pits and prepared to defend the airstrip and the compound which housed MAG-16 and the newly arrived 9th MEB command group. Concurrent with the arrival of the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines over the beach, the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines started landing in C-130s from Okinawa. The men continued to arrive for the next two days and upon the establishment of unit organization, relieved the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines of close-in defense enabling the latter battalion to deploy further west on the slopes of the surrounding hill country, dominated by Hill 327.

Lieutenant Commander Paul H. Running (Lutheran) with the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines was the second 9th MEB chaplain to deploy south from Okinawa to Da Nang. He and his battalion had just completed cold weather training at Camp Fuji, Honshu, Japan, when word concerning the 7 February guerrilla attack at Pleiku and the bombing of the Saigon BOQ arrived. Upon return to Okinawa, Company D departed immediately to reinforce the

detachment of security personnel guarding the airbase at Da Nang. On Sunday afternoon as Chaplain Running, his battalion commander, and two other officers returned from an officers religious retreat and entered the gate at Camp Schwab, they were informed that 1st Battalion, 3d Marines was mounting out. Within a few hours the battalion was standing by at Marine Corps Air Station, Futema, Okinawa, awaiting immediate transportation to Vietnam.

Chaplain Running later reflected:

Our battalion deployed around the airfield upon arriving in country, replacing 3d Battalion, 9th Marines who moved west to Hills 268 and 327, where some of the LAAM (Light Anti-Aircraft Missile) batteries were emplaced. From the time of our arrival on we received sporadic sniper fire, especially from the southwest. "B" Company was on constant alert.<sup>2</sup>

Chaplain Running set about organizing the structure of his ministry and was quickly made aware of one of the major organizational necessities of the Vietnam chaplain's experience; the necessity for cooperative, cross-unit ministry. He commented:

Sunday services were conducted in all company areas, and in the missile batteries and engineer battalion areas where no chaplains were attached. Chaplains Walker 3/9, Lecky with MAG-16 and I, divided up Protestant responsibilities roughly in a three piece pie and arranged for an Army and an Air Force chaplain to provide Roman Catholic Masses. In those days it was simply a matter of locating a unit, passing the word, assembling the men and proceeding with the service. With the advent of patrols on a seven-day-a-week basis, religious services sometimes slipped from Sunday to Monday or Tuesday, but they were always held.<sup>3</sup>

While the center of the city of Da Nang was only two miles east of the airbase compound and approximately seven miles from Hills 268 and 327, neither Marines nor their chaplains had any extensive contact with indigenous Vietnamese during the first month of their assignment. The task of the Marine units did not as yet stress civic relationships with the Vietnamese. Their task was purely defensive. Security personnel were ordered to refrain from firing unless first fired upon. At first only defensive patrols were sent out, and these were deployed along the perimeter and within the confines of the enclave, which included the city, its airfield, and the countryside immediately adjacent to them. Travel for any distance beyond the confines of the command post, whether on foot or by vehicle, was considered hazar-

dous. From the very first, however, chaplains were noted for the facility with which they moved from position to position to minister to the religious needs of their scattered personnel. Chaplains Walker, Running, and Lecky made their way by hitching rides upon the first available transportation, or later, when more vehicles were available, by moving from one isolated outpost to another in a "mighty mite" or jeep in company with an armed driver and a clerk riding "shotgun." Setting the pattern for all other chaplains in country with Marines, they looked upon regular visits among personnel of the unit outposts, as an important professional duty which must at all costs be fulfilled.

The defensive character of the Marine Corps stance at the time does not mean that the pain and suffering that results from combat experience was foreign to chaplains or to the individual Marine. In fact, the regulation not to carry a loaded weapon and not to fire unless fired upon, contributed to the potentiality of heightened anger, frustration, and agony. Lieutenant Clarence A. Vernon (Disciples of Christ) wrote:

In 1965 I saw our power applied so gently that we were using only our presence. The last words of the Marine corporal who died in my arms were: "I couldn't get my clip" . . . Under orders not to fire unless fired upon and not to carry a loaded weapon, he was shot in the back by the Viet Cong. In his hands were soap, bandages and medicine for the sore-covered children of the village.<sup>4</sup>

In the early days of the 9th MEB's presence in Vietnam the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines and the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines had reasonable contact and good-natured competition between them that contributed to the easing of the tensions produced by the gravely serious business at hand. Nor were the respective chaplains exempt from such competition. Chaplain Walker would enjoy reminding Chaplain Running that Walker's unit was, after all, the first infantry battalion in country. Chaplain Running is reported to have countered with his characteristic twinkle that, while it was true that Walker's outfit was the first battalion physically in country, Running's was the first "effective" infantry unit to land.<sup>5</sup>

#### *The III Marine Amphibious Force is Created*

Following the initial landings in Vietnam, the 3d Marine Division Chaplain, Captain Robert Q. Jones

(American Baptist), and his assistant, Commander John J. O'Connor (Roman Catholic), at division headquarters in Okinawa, assembled equipment and supplies and made preparations necessary for combat ministry, should the entire division be committed to duty in Vietnam. Attempts had been made to arrange a trip for either the division chaplain or the assistant even before the initial landing of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. During March Chaplain O'Connor visited the units of the 9th MEB and MAG-16 and conferred with Chaplains Running, Walker, and Lecky. Upon his return to brief the division chaplain, it became reasonably obvious that a sizable buildup was certain, and Chaplain O'Connor was assigned 30 days of temporary duty as brigade chaplain, and returned to Vietnam the following month.

On 2 April 1965 Chaplain O'Connor arrived in Da Nang to join the command group of the 9th MEB as brigade chaplain. Since Chaplain Toland with MAG-16 was on Okinawa with the parent wing at that time, Chaplain O'Connor was the only Roman Catholic chaplain serving the Marines in the enclave. With characteristic zeal and competence that was later to contribute to his being chosen the Navy Chaplain Corps' fourteenth chief of chaplains, Chaplain O'Connor coordinated the entire religious program of the brigade, provided Catholic coverage for the two battalions in country and for MAG-16, and was virtually ever-present at the field hospital being established by Company A, 3d Medical Battalion.

Chaplain O'Connor remained in Vietnam much longer than the scheduled 30 days. Near the end of his first month in Da Nang the next significant step in the buildup of forces occurred. Early in May, the 3d Marine Division, with its skeleton staff, moved from Okinawa to the Da Nang base to become the 3d Marine Division (Forward), and the 9th MEB was shortly absorbed into a new superior command, the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF). The battalions of the 9th MEB were then restored to the command of the 3d Marine Division. At this point Major General William R. Collins commanded both the III MAF and the 3d Marine Division.

III MAF, with its headquarters in the cramped, crowded Da Nang Airbase compound, exercised command over the 3d Marine Division (Forward), 1st MAW, and the forming Naval Component Command which was to include all U.S. Navy commands

ashore in the five I Corps provinces. When the entire 3d Marine Division, most of the remaining aircraft groups of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and Seabee Battalions 3 and 10 arrived in the spring of 1965, the command structure of the III MAF would be fully formed. Shortly after the reorganization was complete, Major General Lewis W. Walt relieved Major General Collins as Commanding General, III MAF, and one of his initial acts after arriving in country was to redesignate Chaplain O'Connor as 3d Marine Division chaplain, anticipating that the remainder of his senior staff, temporarily remaining on Okinawa, would soon arrive in Vietnam, and that Chaplain Jones, former division chaplain would be assigned to the new senior billet with III MAF.

Considerably before there was any large-scale commitment of chaplains to Vietnam, Chaplain Jones, on Okinawa, was identifying problem areas and moving to solve them. The most pressing of these areas was chaplain preparation and training, and the availability of religious supplies. Upon the conclusion of his most demanding tour Chaplain Jones remembered:

As the Division Chaplain on Okinawa, where most of the Marine Chaplains remained (early in 1965), it was necessary for me to make periodic trips to Vietnam to obtain first-hand information on the chaplain's duties, responsibilities, and hardships. Such information was inculcated into the continuous training program for chaplains on Okinawa as preparation for their ministry under arduous circumstances in Vietnam. On these trips I was able also to carry religious supplies to the combat area to be stored and await the arrival of unit chaplains.<sup>5</sup>

The training program spoken of by Chaplain Jones was designed to equip each combat-bound chaplain with a fundamental knowledge of guerrilla warfare, and specifically the working environment in war-torn Vietnam within which his ministry was to be conducted. The division chaplain insured that plans were formed for all chaplains attached to the division to receive two weeks of intensive orientation to guerrilla warfare. This training was conducted at the Northern Training Area on Okinawa under simulated combat conditions. It was arduous and taxing, but the profitable results were to be in evidence a few months later in the jungles of Vietnam. Chaplain Jones reported:

The major portion of our weekly chaplains' conferences were devoted to the chaplains' ministry in the field and the chaplains' ministry in combat. Chaplains were instructed on the availability of resources, personal initiative, over-

coming hardships, and related subjects. During this predeployment period, chaplains held religious weekend retreats for their individual battalions. Ten Protestant and twelve Catholic religious retreats were held involving over 1200 enlisted personnel. The weekend prior to the initial Marine landing in Vietnam, a religious ecumenical retreat for 170 Marine officers was held at Okuma, Okinawa. Seventy-two hours after the retreat terminated Marine Battalions with forty-eight officers who attended the retreat were walking ashore in Vietnam to face combat, hardship, and loneliness.<sup>6</sup>

Having organized and supervised these extensive preparations, Chaplain Jones would be directed to the war zone itself in June of 1965, and would observe the fruits of his foresight.

#### *Landing at Phu Bai*

The second enclave\* to be established by Marine Corps ground units in Vietnam was at Phu Bai near the ancient capital city of Hue, in Thua Thien Province. Three chaplains were involved in the four-day operation which began on 11 April 1965. Two of those chaplains were attached to Marine battalions; Lieutenant Colin E. Supple (Roman Catholic) was with the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, which landed the first day, and was followed up three days later by Lieutenant Commander William A. Lane (Southern Baptist) with the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. The third chaplain was Lieutenant Edward Wilcox (United Presbyterian) in the Amphibious Landing Ship Dock, USS *Vancouver* (LPD 2) part of Task Group 76.7 which also included Attack Transport USS *Henrico* (APA 45), Attack Cargo Ship USS *Union* (AKA 106) and Attack Transport USS *Linawee* (APA 195). Chaplain Wilcox, whose ship participated in the initial landing at Da Nang a month earlier, recalled:

Once again *Vancouver* was called upon to perform her primary mission, along with *Henrico* and *Union*. *Vancouver* loaded Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/3 at White Beach, Buckner Bay, Okinawa, and three days later, anchored two miles from the mouth of the Hue River. Precisely at H-hour, tractor landing vehicles (LTVs) hit the beach and were followed by landing craft carrying land vehicles and cargo. Convoys of landing craft in company with Marine fire teams were dispatched to patrol the river banks. The operation was more time consuming than originally planned due to the fact that the staging area was

\*An "enclave" was the designation given a protected area immediately surrounding the major population centers in the I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ) of South Vietnam.

13 miles up the river. Helicopters were also employed by *Vancouver* to airlift supplies and equipment over the distance.<sup>7</sup>

On the first day of the operation, Chaplain Supple landed with the main body of his battalion at Red Beach 1 near Da Nang. The landing was without incident, and two line companies of the battalion were immediately flown by chopper to the Phu Bai strip to join the advance party and its equipment, while the remainder of the BLT assumed defensive positions in the hills west of Da Nang. Chaplain Supple remembered, "I went immediately to Phu Bai where we set up a defense for the airstrip and an adjacent Army Communications Camp. Never before did the Army welcome Marines more cordially!"<sup>8</sup>

Chaplain Supple's work assumed the classic Marine chaplain's pattern. The companies of 2d Battalion, 3d Marines lived on the ground in shelter-halves and proceeded to send patrols throughout the area. It was cold and damp during those early days and Mass, confession, and worship were held out under the open sky.

Although the two companies of 2/3 remained in Phu Bai only two weeks, the character of Chaplain Supple's ministry broadened immediately. Even as the Phu Bai enclave was being secured, he was asked by the U.S. Army chaplain in Hue to cover Catholic service at a remote Special Forces Camp.

My clerk and I flew by TWA or, to use the term employed by Army personnel, "Teeney Weeney Airlines," from Hue to the Special Forces Camp. Our single engine Army bird landed us in the jungle about forty miles to the west at a small fenced and mostly underground camp containing seven Army and about one hundred fifty irregular ARVN troops. Only one American was Catholic. We began Mass with three people. Just after the Consecration, nearly all the Vietnamese men trooped in and took over. Continuous loud singing of native hymns, taught by their French Nuns, was impressive. Talk about participation, and in the vernacular!<sup>9</sup>

On Easter Sunday, just two weeks after the initial landing at Phu Bai, the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines relieved the two companies of 2d Battalion, 3d Marines which returned to the parent body in Da Nang. Chaplain Lane landed with his battalion following a trip up the Hue River. From the city of Hue it was transported to the Phu Bai defensive perimeter. Heavy sniper fire plagued the convoy and the battalion sustained its first Marine killed in action.

Chaplain Lane was with 3d Battalion, 4th Marines for only a month as he had 30 days left on his current tour of duty when the battalion landed. That month was comparatively quiet, although a reconnaissance platoon under the command of First Lieutenant Frank Reasoner, who was later to be awarded the Medal of Honor, was routinely engaged in operations against the Viet Cong.

When he arrived to relieve Chaplain Lane at the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, Lieutenant Leroy E. Muenzler, Jr. (Cumberland Presbyterian), found Hue-Phu Bai to be a fascinating area. Phu Bai lies approximately 50 miles north of Da Nang along the eastern coastline. It was strategically well chosen as a coastal enclave in that it was capable of defense and support by naval force offshore, and provided military cover for the historically and psychologically important former home of the Annam kings, the city of Hue. The terrain presented the white sands of the beachline blending into a strip of coastal plain and then rising sharply westward through dense, jungle-covered country to the heights of the Annamese Cordillera running northwest to southeast, parallel to the coastline of South Vietnam's panhandle.

The impact of 3d Battalion, 4th Marines on Phu Bai and the contribution that Chaplain Muenzler was able to make to the Vietnamese of the area, would prove to be extremely significant. When the chaplain reported for duty the battalion was still engaged in searching and clearing the tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) assigned to it. The units were widely scattered and Chaplain Muenzler's time was heavily committed to providing religious coverage throughout the entire area. The battalion TAOR included several villages whose population totalled about 12,000 people. Medical aid and civic action teams began going into these villages about the first of June. In addition, the chaplain's workload increased when the battalion commander formed a civic action council and assigned him to direct its expanding humanitarian efforts.

Out of the work of this council a practice evolved which was to become supremely important for Marine Corps pacification efforts in Vietnam. It was noted that the villagers lived in fear of the Viet Cong, and for fear of reprisal were hesitant to accept badly needed self-help material and medical aid offered them by the Americans. It was obvious that they urgently required protection if they were to

make the best use of assistance available to them. A combined action company, charged to formulate a workable plan of protection for the village Vietnamese, was established. Within a brief period each hamlet was assigned a Marine squad. Riflemen were committed to live in the hamlet, with and among the Vietnamese, to train defensive Popular Force troops and become an integral part of a Popular Force platoon. They also attempted to implement what civic action programs they considered workable. Chaplain Muenzler noted, "The Marines learned enough of the Vietnamese language to engage in simple conversation. The villagers grew to know, to trust and to love the Marines through this close contact."<sup>10</sup> The combined action concept proved to be sound and workable, and soon attracted the attention of General Walt, the III MAF Commander, and in time became a major instrument upon which the Marine Corps pacification efforts were to be based in the following years.

The heaviest burden placed on the chaplain involved in a civic action program as extensive as the one in which Chaplain Muenzler was active, was in terms of the time required to discharge the responsibility. Both transportation difficulties and necessary public relations with local dignitaries are up vast amounts of time. The increased civic action, Chaplain Muenzler reported:

... meant that the chaplain was in the villages increasingly more frequently. I went to Hue and met the Archbishop, who in turn introduced me to the Roman Catholic Priest living and serving in the area. Everyone was immediately receptive and extremely responsive. The same method was employed in meeting Buddhist religious leaders and laity. The American Consul in Hue was more than happy to introduce me to Doctor Ba', who took me to the Dom' Pagoda, and to the area Buddhist headquarters. I toured their facilities in the area, including an orphanage, and saw a number of areas where we could be of help. Eventually several projects were completed in the orphanages at Hue, in a refugee camp then being establishing in our TAOR, and in the villages of the area. This involved a great deal of local traveling on the part of the chaplain, as did religious coverage of the combined action squads living in the villages. Every man, however, had the opportunity to attend church services at least once a week.<sup>11</sup>

At this time, midyear 1965, the Phu Bai enclave produced a remarkable example of chaplain commitment and cooperation. It was nothing dramatic like a life-saving effort or dangerous rescue, simply the day-by-day dedication to outstanding goals. Lieu-

tenant Paul E. Roswog (Roman Catholic) was completing his tour with the 3d Marine Division on Okinawa. In view of the rising need for additional chaplains in Vietnam, he offered to use two weeks of the leave he had expected to take en route to duty at the Naval Station, Key West, Florida, to provide additional Catholic coverage in the I Corps. Division Chaplain Jones agreed and made the appropriate recommendation to the G-1 section. In view of the needs he saw upon arrival in Phu Bai where he joined Chaplain Muenzler, Chaplain Roswog requested a three-month extension and eventually a second. His two-week tenure in Vietnam lasted from July to November!

That there was profound need for Chaplain Roswog in Phu Bai is amply demonstrated by a recounting of the units that he, in conjunction with Chaplain Muenzler, served in the TAOR. These units included the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines with attached tank, antitank, reconnaissance, engineering, and truck platoons; Company A, 3d Medical Battalion; Force Logistics Support Unit 2; four batteries of the 2d and 4th Battalions, 12th Marines (Artillery); and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 (HMM-161) of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Also included within the Marine camp perimeter were the Hue civilian air terminal, the U.S. Army Eighth Radio Research Unit (RRU-8), an ARVN artillery regiment, and the Dong Da ARVN Basic Training Camp.

The units to which Chaplains Muenzler and Roswog traveled each day were located within a 1½ mile radius of the center of the compound. Chaplain Roswog reported, however, that the average jeep mileage for a day on which he did not leave the perimeter was 30 miles. He was quartered in the field hospital to facilitate care of the wounded and to afford more efficient unit coverage which he shared with Chaplain Muenzler. Each chaplain was available at all times for religious counseling and ministrations to the troops throughout the area. As a practical matter, however, Chaplain Muenzler assumed responsibility for the units on one side of the highway which divided the compound, and Chaplain Roswog covered the others. Chaplain Roswog served the field hospital and the medical battalion, the artillery units, and the helicopter squadron. Chaplain Muenzler was available to the infantry company, the units attached to reinforce the battalion, and the detached support platoons. While

Chaplain Muenzler was the overall coordinator of the civic action program, both chaplains shared the Combined Action Platoon (CAP) ministry.

The work that Chaplain Roswog did in the refugee village was significant for several reasons, not the least of which was that it represented the first occasion of III MAF chaplains formally working in South Vietnamese Government-sponsored refugee camps. "Having once made liaison with the Reverend Francis Thuan, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Hue and director of all refugee settlements in the Hue area," reported Chaplain Roswog, "my specific role in civil affairs was coordinator of programs for refugees."<sup>12</sup> The chapel funds at Phu Bai were collected with the understanding that they would be used solely for these villages or civic action generally. Numerous donations were made to both the Christian communities and to the outreach program of the Buddhist structure in the Hue-Phu Bai area. Lieutenant Roswog reported:

All communications with and projects for the Buddhist orphanage were handled through the office of the American Consul General. We concurred in the opinion that we should help the orphanage, not only as a means of promoting good will among the people of the city of Hue, but more basically because of the dire need of the orphans and the sad lack of facilities available for their use. At his suggestion we did not give money, but rather determined what they needed most, purchased it, and then presented it to them.<sup>13</sup>

Chaplain Roswog also reported at length on the initial successes of the combined action platoons. In one of the villages, while the Marine squad and Vietnamese Popular Forces were out on patrol, the Viet Cong slipped in and visited the home of an ARVN soldier. The intruders ordered his wife to have her husband at home the following night and prepared to join the Viet Cong. No choice or alternative was stated. None was required; the consequences for refusal were clearly understood. Instead of attempting to influence her husband to desert, she approached the Marine squad leader and informed him of the threat. She was reassured by the promise of a continuing night-watch on her home. Five weeks passed before Chaplain Roswog left the area, and the Viet Cong had not returned. The significance of the story, he suggested, was the fact that the Vietnamese housewife had sufficient faith in the CAP personnel to approach them with her story rather than succumbing to the threats of those whom she sensed were the real enemy. Every day the threatened family re-

mained free from Viet Cong reprisal further improved the mutual trust which was developing between the South Vietnamese and their Marine benefactors.

The Phu Bai chaplains record that their religious ministry not only did not suffer because of their Combined Action Platoon involvement, but their spiritual ministry was extended by it. Tuesdays and Thursdays were reserved for services at the CAP units in the villages. While attendance varied from three to five with the various squads, Chaplains consistently reported the majority of CAP personnel attended. The men in the CAP squads obviously looked forward to the weekly visits of both chaplains.

### *Chu Lai is Born*

The almost-white sand is deep and soft, about the consistency of sugar. It sucks at your feet; it fouls wheeled, even tracked vehicles. It blows up easily into eyes and nostrils in the dry seasons and is cloying quagmire in the monsoon. The sun-washed days are squinted at through half-closed eyes, and the heat is like a weight, making each step an effort. Perspiration never stops, it just slows with the lessening of activity. Next to his rifle, salt tablets are the Marine's best friend. This is Chu Lai, Vietnam.

Chu Lai is not a royal city or an ancient seaport. You will not find it on Vietnamese maps. It was merely sun and sand until 13 July 1964 when Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, Commanding General, FMFPac, on an exploration flight in search of a suitable site for an additional airstrip in I Corps, noted this spot 57 miles southeast of Da Nang. The Civil Engineer Corps officer flying with the general remarked that the site looked good but there was no way to identify it. General Krulak quickly replied. "The name is Chu Lai." He later explained "In order to settle the matter immediately, I had simply given (him) the Mandarin Chinese characters for my name."<sup>14</sup> Thus was Chu Lai christened. It was to receive its baptism by fire in the not too distant future.

In early March 1965 when it became obvious that the 3d Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were to be committed to action in Vietnam, tactical concerns centered upon backup reserve. The decision was made to restore the 4th Marines (which had belonged to the 1st Marine Brigade in Hawaii since 1954) to the division. On 10 March, the 4th Marines embarked and sailed for Okinawa with Chaplains Lieutenant Commander John P. Byrnes

(Roman Catholic), Lieutenant Commander William A. Lane, and Lieutenant Commander George S. Thilking (United Churches of Christ), remaining with their units through a training period on Okinawa and eventually landing over the sands of Chu Lai.

Chaplain Byrnes landed with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph R. "Bull" Fisher in the first wave of boats that carried their battalion to the shore. The sand was soft and marching was difficult. "Had it not been for the LVT's, tank and other vehicles, most of the men would have been marching into the night just to reach the Command Post. It was quite an experience for all of us. There were no lights, no fires, no noise. We ate cold C rations and remained on the alert."<sup>15</sup>

Since Chaplain Byrnes, with the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines was the only Catholic Chaplain ashore at Chu Lai, he set about coordinating his religious ministry with Chaplain Thilking with the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines positioned several miles away but about equal distance from the beach, and the 4th Marines Regimental Command Post which was strategically deployed between them and closer to the beach for security. This positioning was fortunate at the outset of the enclave since it allowed both chaplains to cover all units with relative ease. Even so, Chaplain Thilking who rotated out of country in just 33 days, his tour with the brigade ended, recorded 35 helicopter flights and countless trips by jeep and foot in the discharge of his ministry.

Chaplain Thilking noted, as did Chaplain Byrnes, that worship services at Chu Lai were first held under the open sky. In the midst of heavily wooded ground in the 1st Battalion area, Chaplain Thilking found a configuration of five trees with arching limbs forming a natural, open-air cathedral. He pointed out the location for his commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Harold D. Fredericks. That evening at the officers' meeting the colonel announced that all officers and staff NCOs who were available were to meet the chaplain under the trees with the appropriate instruments to clear away the dense underbrush. On Saturday morning a sizable group prepared the area and on Sunday, 16 May, the 1st Battalion chapel was used for both Protestant and Catholic worship services.<sup>16</sup>

The initial mission for the Regimental Landing Team (RLT) 4 was the protection of the area within which the projected airstrip was to be built. It was a monumental task, trying to construct a stable strip

on the huge expanse of shifting sand. Joining the 1st and 2d Battalions, 4th Marines in RLT 4 were the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines with Lieutenant Commander Eugene M. Smith (Presbyterian Church in the United States) as Chaplain, and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10 (NMCB-10), the unit which would actually build the strip. Later Chu Lai would be the home of the 1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines; 3d Shore Party Battalion, Naval Beach Group, supported by the Force Logistic Supply Unit; companies of the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion; and Company A, 3d Tank Battalion. But for now there was RLT 4, the airstrip to be built, and the Seabees were ordered to do it—on the double.

### *The Seabees Arrive*

On 7 May 1965, in coordination with the amphibious landing of RLT 4 at Chu Lai, the first Seabee battalion to make an amphibious landing into a shooting conflict since World War II, moved across the beach. Lieutenant George M. Sheldon (Episcopal), battalion chaplain of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10, became the first Seabee chaplain to enter South Vietnam.

Chaplain Sheldon reported that the Seabees took their "Can Do" motto very seriously. In keeping with the decision to establish shoreline defense enclaves which had the capability of air support and vertical envelopment, NMCB-10 threw itself into the construction of a modern, jet-capable airstrip and helicopter pad, on the sandy beachfront. The Chu Lai airfield developed rapidly into the projected 8,000-foot runway with taxiways and support facilities capable of accommodating two jet fighter squadrons of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, then slated for immediate in-country deployment. In record time, 29 days later, the strip was opened for limited air operations and received the first planes of MAG-12. When General Krulak notified his superiors in Washington of the operational capability of the airstrip in so short time, he received a one word message in reply, "incredible!"<sup>17</sup>

Since chaplains were providing a kind of complementary, cooperative religious coverage across organizational lines, MCB-10's chaplains regularly cared for Company B, 3d Medical Battalion, and provided Protestant coverage for the hospital. Coverage there included a crisis ministry to casualties and the conduct of religious services appropriate to the need of patients, medical officers, and corps-



men. In return Catholic chaplains attached to nearby Marine units brought the ministry of their church to the Seabees.

Although the location and situation at Chu Lai never lent themselves to extensive people-to-people projects, Chaplains Sheldon of NCMB-10 and Smith of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines cooperated in benefiting an orphanage in Quang Ngai and refugee camp sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church south of the perimeter. Both of these efforts required the passage over roads controlled by the Viet Cong at the time, and necessitated the use of a convoy of trucks from the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines when materials were delivered. NMCB-10 also dug surface wells and drainage ditches and did extensive construction work for the Chu Lai New Life Hamlet, a Vietnamese relocation effort.

With the remarkable buildup of Marine battalions and support units, the need for new construction was keenly felt and the commitment of Mobile Construction Battalions to Vietnam continued. On 26 May 1965, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 arrived at Da Nang to begin construction of cantonments for the field hospital of the 3d Medical Battalion. Additional projects included cantonments for the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters, lately arrived in country, and for a permanent Seabee camp from which the new Seabee battalion could proceed with its part of 150 million dollars worth of construction planned for Vietnam during 1965.

Lieutenant Edward E. Jayne (United Methodist) accompanied the battalion of 20 Civil Engineer Corps officers and 600 professional construction men ashore. He wrote:

Following a full eight-month deployment on the island of Guam, MCB Three was ordered to execute a total mountout operation to Da Nang, South Vietnam. This movement was one of the first full scale Seabee mount-out operations utilizing both air and sea services since World War II. Approximately thirty C-130 aircraft were used to transport the advance party to Da Nang for the purpose of selecting a site for MCB Three's base camp and initiating construction. The main body of the battalion departed Guam on the LSD's *Point Defiance* and *Belle Grove* and the USS *Tallegaga*.<sup>18</sup>

For the first two months MCB-3's Sunday worship services were conducted in the messhall, which was the only early building of sufficient size to accommodate the worshippers. The Seabees chaplain usually enjoyed exceptional attendance at worship

due to the professional closeness of the members of the battalion and the practice of keeping the entire battalion quarters within the perimeter of the camp as much as possible. The camps thus tended to become more permanent as did the daily pattern of the Seabees. Chaplain Jayne conducted the Protestant services and the Catholic Masses were covered by the chaplain from the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, Lieutenant Edwin V. Bohula. In keeping with the practice of crossing unit lines to provide broader religious coverage, Chaplain Jayne offered his services to the Force Logistic Support Group (FLSG), which was without a chaplain. For three months, until the first unit chaplain was assigned to FLSG, Chaplain Jayne conducted worship services, a weekly Bible study, and daily counseling sessions. He also gave professional assistance to the 7th Engineer Battalion which was without a chaplain during the early months of the buildup of the Marine force.

Chaplain ministry to a Seabee battalion was much like that which was offered the men of the U.S. Marine Corps, but it did differ in one major respect. A Seabee was ordered to spend a number of years attached to one unit, and he deployed with that unit and not as an individual. The result was that a Seabee could deploy two or three times during his years with a certain unit, regardless of how many months he'd already spent away from his family. Before and during Vietnam, Seabee deployments usually resulted in the constructionman's being with his family only four or five months a year, for a succession of years. This often strained marital ties and created personnel problems with which the chaplain had to cope. The recurrence of a familiar pattern of family problems over the years demonstrated the need for a workable system of communication between the deployed Seabee and his family. Lack of communication had proven to be a major cause of deficient relationships in the past. Acting as personal representative of his deployed counterpart, the chaplain at the Construction Battalion Center in the U.S., visited and counseled with the families at home. Voluminous correspondence, both detailed and confidential, equipped the Center chaplain to function as a trusted and objective third party to smooth rough edges of strained family relationships.

Intimate knowledge of the 600 men of his battalion which the chaplain derived from extended deployments with them, coupled with his long-range facility in dealing with family problems, serv-

ed to enrich the chaplain's religious influence upon the personal lives of individual constructionmen. It also served to enhance and maintain the high level of unit morale consistently apparent among the Navy's Seabees.

### *MAG-12 at Chu Lai*

On 22 May 1965, two weeks after the Seabees, the 4th Marines and part of MAG-13 landed at Chu Lai, and two weeks before the airstrip was ready to receive the first jet aircraft, the first of two Marine aircraft wing chaplains arrived for duty. He was Lieutenant Richard A. Long (Roman Catholic) attached to MAG-12. Chaplain Long moved into Chu Lai with the group's Marine air base squadron sent to set up housekeeping support facilities for the jet fighters.

The squadron had left Iwakuni, Japan on 16 May for the six-day passage to Vietnam by LST. The chaplain found the voyage to be profitable as he employed the time as he could for ministry. Each morning the working day began with a prayer over the ship's loudspeaker system. He wrote:

I believe the men enjoyed beginning the day with a prayer, and as I looked over the deck from the bridge, I could see that the men stood with heads bowed in a reverent attitude. The captain offered me a compartment where I spent the morning hours counseling with men who wished to see me in private. Then at 1130 I said Mass on the forward mess deck. Mass was well attended each day. Afternoons were spent moving about the ship, giving the men an opportunity to talk with the chaplain in an informal atmosphere. By the time we were ready to land in Vietnam I had met more men and had come to know them better than I had in four months at Iwakuni. Familiarity in its right perspective breeds, not contempt, but confidence.<sup>19</sup>

When the LST beached at Chu Lai, Chaplain Long and the Marines of his unit were met by an advance party of MAG-12 who had left Iwakuni two weeks earlier. A small compound was already established but it did not admit of any office space, or any space large enough to hold services. The form of ministry adopted by Chaplain Long, therefore, was that time-honored elemental methodology known as walking and talking. He recalled:

For two weeks I spent the entire day from 1500 to 1900 walking. My office became the entire MAG enclave, and services were held wherever a cool spot could be found. I walked from one end of the proposed airstrip to the other, and from the beach to the sand dunes west of the strip. I merely made my presence known to the men working

under the hot sun sometimes offering a canteen to a sweating man, sometimes accepting a canteen from a Marine who was generous enough to offer it. At first the men would merely return the greeting I gave them; later they would ask if I had a few minutes, and we would sit on a packaging box or in the sand while he unloaded his mind of a problem that was bothering him. Before long it became customary to do most of my counseling this way. If I missed a particular spot, the following day the men would comment on my absence.<sup>20</sup>

Two weeks after Chaplain Long's arrival in Chu Lai, Lieutenant Charles L. Reiter (United Methodist) reported as the group's Protestant chaplain. When he arrived the temporary compound was completed, but conditions were still Spartan and space was at a premium. Having to share quarters with six other officers, the two chaplains repeatedly advised future planners to include an all-purpose tent with chaplain's mount-out gear to facilitate worship area and counseling privacy. This, they contended, could usually be done at least with the wing groups as their stability was more predictable than was that of the infantry battalions.

The experience of beginning a ministry with virtually nothing, in a place that was, to all purposes, "nowhere," was frightening to Chaplain Reiter, and occasioned his reflections concerning the need for the chaplain to be the embodiment of his faith and not merely the carrier of the external accoutrements of it. Once the chaplain had proven his commitment to his unit and its men, he said, "He need not . . . give a testimony; in fact he need not say anything at all. The chaplain's presence is a very ameliorating influence."<sup>21</sup>

### *Chaplain Organization at Da Nang*

Although this period was characterized by confusion and rapid change in all the enclaves, it was in the Da Nang area that it was felt most seriously. Until the arrival of Chaplain Jones as Force Chaplain III MAF, the burden fell most significantly on Chaplain O'Connor, the senior and supervisory chaplain who had the responsibility for coordination of the Navy Chaplain Corps ministry throughout the entire I Corps Tactical Zone which included the three enclaves and all isolated units. In the relatively slow paced beginning of the Marine commitment to combat, chaplains pooled their efforts and went anywhere and everywhere, wherever there were troops and whenever they were needed. With the arrival of more chaplains, it was obvious that specific



Photo courtesy of Chaplain H. F. Lecky

*Chaplain O'Connor offers Mass in the Cathedral at Da Nang on Memorial Day, 1965.*

responsibilities had to be assigned and a comprehensive concept of organization established.

Since March, battalions had operated independently of their parent regiments, and sometimes, when operating in the vicinity of another regimental command post, were attached to it for purposes of operational coordination. Describing organizational conditions as he saw them, Chaplain O'Connor said:

A regiment has become a "sometime thing." Elements of one regiment may be in three different enclaves. The title of regimental chaplain has substantially less significance. It is useless to think of a regimental chaplain as a coordinator of battalion chaplain activities. On the other hand the concept of sector or area coordinators is developing.<sup>22</sup>

Because organizational structures and conditions were as Chaplain O'Connor described them, he made a continuing effort to establish a "pool" of chaplains, responsible directly to the division chaplain. It was believed that only thus could mobility and flexibility be achieved to meet the highly fluctuating needs of the expanding war. The pool concept was realized and proved feasible. The division chaplain was in a position to rotate chaplains among units; to broaden their professional experience; to relieve a chaplain of one faith by a chaplain of another, periodically, in order to establish equity for all faiths; to hold chaplains of various faiths available to be dispatched to an area or a unit where a sudden need had arisen; to "ease" a chaplain out of a difficult command relationship,

where, because of personalities, neither the chaplain nor the commander was profiting, though each may have been quite sincere; to position chaplains in accordance with their talents and, perhaps with their desires, as far as possible.

Supporting this concept still further, Chaplain O'Connor reported:

It should be noted in this regard that many current (Marine) Tables of Organization are chaotic. Units of several thousand persons, e.g., Force Logistics Support Group, may have no chaplain in the T.O. An entirely new concept, a Base Defense Group of 1,000 men drawn from all units except infantry to release the latter for forward lines, has no chaplain in its T.O. The old deep-rooted conviction that a specific chaplain must stay with his battalion because of esprit, knowing the men, etc., must be dramatically revised because transplacement battalions are being fragmented. Every week or two companies are detached from their original battalions and attached to others; battalions will no longer transplace as battalions, but on individual orders and on a draft basis.<sup>23</sup>

While it is true that after the initial period of fragmentation and confusion experienced by the Marine units involved in the rapid buildup there was a return to the more formal and traditional organizational relationships, many of the moves made according to the insight of the division chaplain were retained as highly profitable concepts. The ability of the division chaplain to move chaplains from unit to unit as the need was perceived remained as established by Chaplain O'Connor. The concept of area coverage continued in effect for years to come, and in some instances was employed by the Chaplain Corps in other parts of the world. The single-unit, single-chaplain idea did not die, however, and a preponderance of chaplain after-tour reports speak longingly, nostalgically, and proudly of "my men." The traditional, formalized command relationships were married to the area coverage and mission-oriented need in a most stable way.

In June Chaplain Jones, Division Chaplain, 3d Marine Division (Rear), arrived in Da Nang with his headquarters command groups. Chaplain Jones had been among the senior staff officers who remained with the division's rear echelon on Okinawa to provide for a planned and orderly transition of personnel and equipment to Vietnam as required. On 15 June, the decision was made that the division chaplain transfer his headquarters to the Da Nang enclave.

Chaplain Jones reported:

Shortly after I arrived in Da Nang, General Lewis Walt, CG III MAF, was made Commander of the I Corps Area. My area of cognizance as staff chaplain for Commander, I Corps, included Wing, Division and Construction Battalion Chaplains plus two Army and three Air Force Chaplains. Since General Walt was responsible to General William Westmoreland for coordination of all United States Military activities in the I Corps area, it was strongly recommended that, as his advisor on matters of religion, I be assigned to his III Marine Amphibious Force Staff as Force Chaplain. The recommendation was approved . . . . The new assignment as Force Chaplain, III MAF placed me in a better position to lend direction and purpose to all religious activities in the area. With this responsibility came the authority to reassign chaplains to units or activities to assure full religious coverage.<sup>24</sup>

The first broad policy implemented by the new force chaplain related to the chaplain's image as a non-combatant. To preserve that image, pursuant to the provisions of the Geneva Agreements on military chaplains, he set forth a broad prohibition against chaplains carrying any kind of defensive weapons. Each chaplain, was given the option to comply with the policy or be transferred to Okinawa for the remainder of his tour. Every chaplain complied with the directive.

Chaplain Jones' second policy related to the provisions of instruction in the mores and folkways of the Vietnamese people for every chaplain in country. Neither the substantive content of the instruction nor the importance attached to its dissemination were new. The first Shufly chaplains had engaged the services of distinguished Christian missionary personnel to instruct both chaplains and newly arriving Marines. The real innovation was to be found in the extension of such instruction without exception to every chaplain, with the intention that he would further disseminate the information to personnel of his unit. Similar efforts based on more careful and comprehensive academic research, and broader in scope, were then being implemented by FMFPac and the Chief of Chaplains in Washington. Nevertheless, Chaplain Jones' calling upon local missionaries to share their knowledge and insights into typical Vietnamese thinking and to enhance intercultural understanding and respect represented a significant contribution to Marine Corps and Chaplain Corps efforts in Vietnam.

The third major policy consideration to which the force chaplain addressed himself related to the establishment of independent unit, division, and



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187118

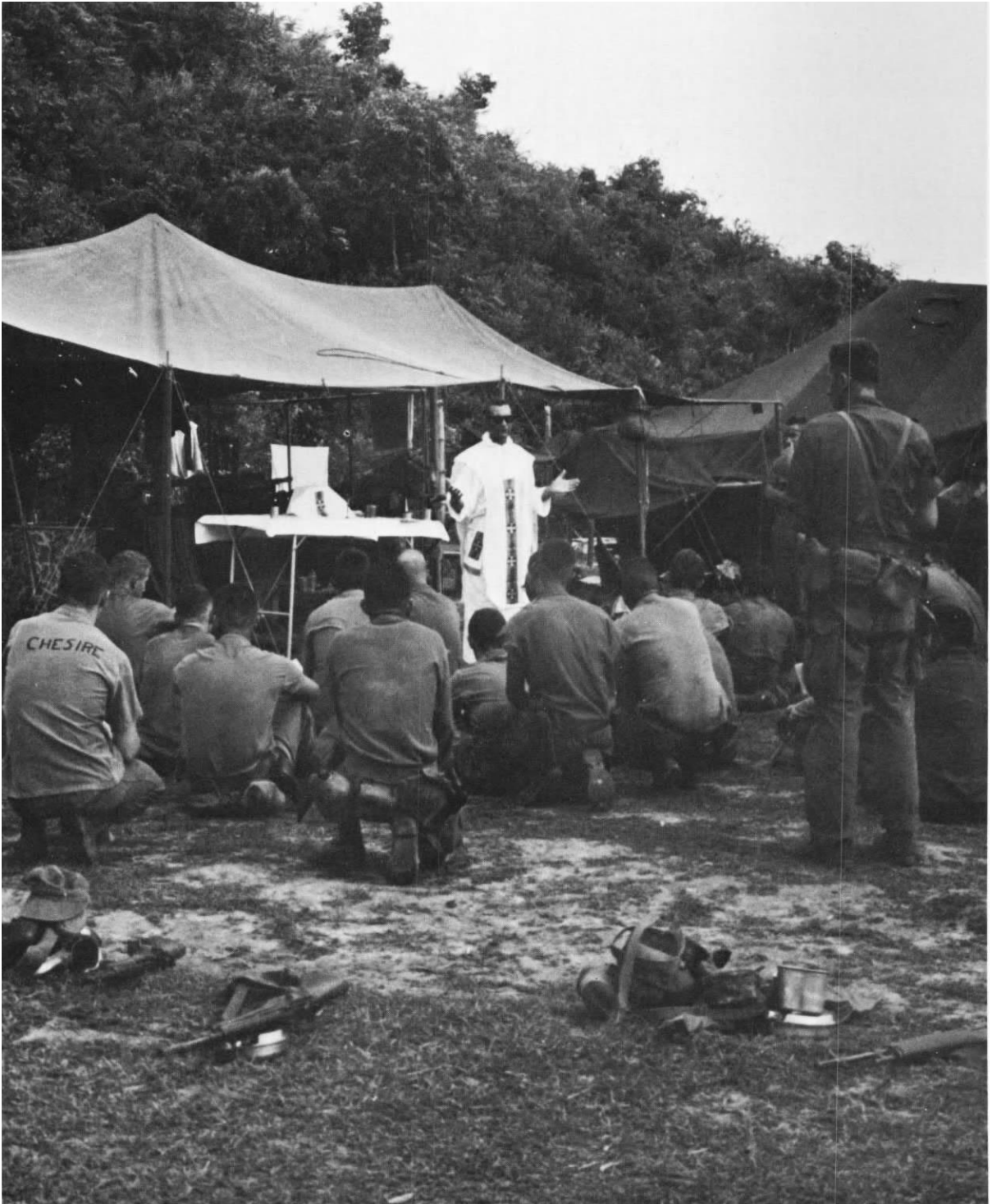
*Stacks of C-ration cartons serve as both seating and altar for the Protestant service conducted by Chaplain Lt L. L. Ahrensbrak for members of the 3d Platoon, Company G, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, at a cleared and sandbagged position on a steep hillside in 1966.*

wing chapel funds. These were monies received by the chapel program for Christian distribution. On Okinawa, chapel funds were administered at the division level. As the battalions deployed to Vietnam, unit chapel funds were established but were never officially authorized by division policy. It became clear, when Marine air and ground units were again located in close geographical proximity to each other, that the lines of Chapel Fund administration should again be drawn taut, and broad III MAF policies should be formulated for their most effective employment. Officially authorized unit funds, according to Chaplain Jones, "enabled the chaplains to extend their missionary ministry to the local Vietnamese villages. A large proportion of the chapel funds was used to build or restore Catholic, Protestant, and Buddhist houses of worship. A portion was turned over to the local Catholic bishop for

his work in providing food and shelter for refugees."<sup>25</sup>

These broad policy designations came none too soon. The volume of Marine units arriving with their chaplains and other chaplains ordered individually to the 3d Division was increasing by the day. Since for almost all chaplains in Vietnam this experience was the first large-scale field deployment with combat potential they had ever had, it was extremely reassuring to be met at Da Nang with not only courtesy but also stable direction. Many chaplains remarked in their final reports that the welcoming face and smile of a fellow chaplain from the III MAF staff did much to ease the apprehension, confusion, and uncertainty they felt when deplaning at Da Nang. Acquainting these incoming chaplains with the broad guidelines of their ministry was doubly reassuring.

PART II  
THE BUILDUP ACCELERATES



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A184673

*Roman Catholic Chaplain LCdr J. P. Byrnes conducts tentside Mass for men of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, their weapons and gear left aside, at the unit's base in June 1965. Father Byrnes, in church robes, makes use of a high folding table for the altar.*



## CHAPTER 3

# Growing and Responding (July-September 1965)

*Civic Action Assumes Greater Importance—Arrivals and Adjustments—The Arrival of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing—The Seabees Continue Their Buildup*

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On 1 June 1965 10 chaplains were serving Marines and Seabees in Da Nang. Chaplains Lecky and Toland were attached to MAG-16; Chaplains O'Connor, Walker, Running, Craven, Vernon, and Bohula were on duty with battalions of the 3d Marine Division and the field hospital. Chaplain Jayne was the only Seabee chaplain in the area. By the end of September, however, a total of 32 were located in Da Nang, for a net increase of 22 or one new arrival every six days. At the same time the number of Marine units in the enclave also increased. Thousands of Marines arrived each week; the tactical area of responsibility was rapidly expanding and new facilities were feverishly constructed to accommodate increased personnel levels.

Early in this period of phenomenal increase in numbers of Marines, Seabees, and naval support personnel, it had become obvious both to III MAF Chaplain Jones and to Division Chaplain O'Connor, that the requirement for chaplains other than those organically attached to arriving units, was steadily increasing. The field hospitals in each of three enclaves were being covered by chaplains actually attached to other units in the vicinity. Increasing numbers of casualties from illness and accident as well as from defensive combat activity, made it necessary to man the hospital with fulltime chaplains who were available 24 hours a day. In response to the analysis done by Chaplain O'Connor, Chaplain Jones began requesting that chaplains be ordered to Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division (Rear), and not to specific battalions as in the past. This established a pool from which they could be assigned as required. Lieutenant Ronald G. DeBock (Assemblies Of God) and Lieutenant William M. Gibson (Roman Catholic) were among the first to be so assigned. Upon their arrival at the division they received further orders to Company C, 3d Medical Battalion, for duty with the field hospital at Da Nang. To provide for full utilization of all chaplains,

Chaplain John Craven requested that FMFPac Headquarters be authorized to transfer chaplains in WestPac with Marines, and this was approved.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the arrival of Chaplains DeBock and Gibson, the field hospital was relocated to a gentle slope between Marble Mountain and a large rice paddy near the city of Da Nang. Chaplain DeBock wrote:

Friendly Vietnamese farmers cultivated the rice crop during the daylight hours and returned to their homes at night. Harrassment by the Viet Cong was anticipated from this rice paddy. Because of this ever-present possibility, our Marine sentries kept watchful eyes over the field at night. When the watch sounded an alarm, infantry troops were quickly dispatched to the scene. One such attempt at infiltration by a band of five or six Viet Cong in late June was quickly contained by the troops.<sup>2</sup>

Chaplain DeBock and Gibson met helicopter and jeep ambulances, day and night, and initiated their ministries by being among the first persons to greet and assist the casualty when he arrived. Chaplain DeBock further noted:

I discovered, I was most appreciated in the role of comforter to the more seriously wounded men, sometimes reassuring them in the operating room, sometimes just mopping their brows with a piece of gauze dipped in cool water. I visited the patients in the wards several times daily distributing literature, praying, or merely engaging men in conversation. A few men made commitments to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

On a typical Sunday the hospital chaplains conducted worship services in the fly tent hospital chapel and in several nearby troop sites. They had pitched the chapel tent near the edge of the rice paddy. Chaplain DeBock recalled:

It had no stained glass windows or even a single picture, but our blessed Lord was ever present, and the men knew it. They sang and worshipped as they had back home. They gradually adjusted to the sights and sounds of the area, and continued to pray or sing despite the noises of jets, helicopters or artillery fire. Attendance at worship services was generally in small groups. In the hospital area

and in nearby troop sites large assemblies of personnel were neither practicable or desirable. Nevertheless, they came weary from long days and sleepless nights, they came to worship God. The Marines seemed to take their religion as seriously as their duties.<sup>4</sup>

Chaplain Gibson was the first Navy chaplain to serve two tours of duty with Marine units in Vietnam. In 1963 he rotated between Okinawa and Da Nang providing Roman Catholic coverage for Operation Shufly personnel of MAG-16. His second tour began in 1965 and ended in May 1966. He remained at the field hospital until later in 1965 when he was reassigned to Force Logistic Support Group Alpha.

Chaplains continued to arrive in Da Nang as the units to which they were organically attached deployed in country. The first of these, during June 1965, was Lieutenant Robert W. Hodges (Christian Science) with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. The battalion was deployed to Da Nang to relieve the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines which had been the first BLT to arrive in the country three months earlier. In effect Chaplain Hodges relieved Chaplain Walker, when his battalion moved into the perimeter defense positions formerly occupied by the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines.

The itinerary and organizational evolutions affecting the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines from its departure as a unit from the west coast of the United States until its arrival in Vietnam, provides an important insight into the movements of chaplains toward the area of conflict. For several years, while the 3d Marine Division was garrisoned on Okinawa as Far East contingency unit of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, troop replacements were effected by transplating battalions from the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California. Overseas tour lengths were maintained at 13 to 14 months. In its 13th month, an Okinawa-based battalion could expect to be relieved by fresh troops of a 1st Marine Division battalion. Upon arrival on Okinawa they were redesignated as a 3d Marine Division battalion and relieved the battalion then concluding its tour of duty overseas. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines of the 1st Marine Division to which Chaplain Hodges was attached became the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines of the 3d Marine Division upon arrival on Okinawa. The battalion immediately began intensive guerrilla warfare training, sending companies both to the Northern Training Area and to the Raid School.

When the training was completed, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines deployed from Okinawa as a unit, to relieve the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines on the outskirts of the Da Nang enclave. The practice of transplating battalions from the 1st Marine Division, continued for several months after the buildup of forces in Vietnam began. This practice was phased out when the entire 1st Marine Division, itself a reinforcing unit of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, prepared for its own mount-out deployment to Okinawa.

When the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines relieved the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, it spent the first weeks regrouping within the Da Nang perimeter.

Chaplain Hodges remembered:

Less than two weeks later, we were alerted to move the entire battalion from the airstrip to previously unoccupied positions on the southwestern perimeter of Da Nang. The company commanders were given word to move at 2000 in the evening and the entire battalion moved the following day. We positioned the battalion so as to secure the area into which the field hospital was soon to be relocated.

On 1 July the VC infiltrated Da Nang air base, destroying several aircraft and inflicting light casualties. The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines was ordered to move back to the airstrip where it remained for the next two months. During this time I had additional duty as chaplain for the newly formed Airstrip Defense Battalion, an off duty defensive unit comprised of supply and administrative personnel. In late August it moved to new positions south of Da Nang on the northern bank of the Da Nang River. Two companies remained in this position for about a month before the battalion CP joined the relocated companies. From this new position, where the battalion was a consolidated unit once again, several battalion sized sweeps were conducted in the vicinity of Marble Mountain.<sup>5</sup>

During the operations in and around Marble Mountain the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines cleared the countryside of Viet Cong in preparation for the arrival of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's MAG-16 which was soon to take up position there.

By July it was apparent that the buildup of forces in Vietnam would include all battalions of the 9th Marines and, for that matter, the entire 3d Division and possibly the 1st. Immediate steps were taken to consolidate the 9th Marines in the Da Nang enclave, manning it with fresh troops from Camp Pendleton.

On 18 July the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines arrived on Okinawa and was redesignated 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. On 15 August Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Peter D. McLean (Episcopal) the newly designated Chaplain, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines joined the regiment at Da Nang. For a time 3/9 established posi-

tions at the airfield and prepared to move into the rice paddies beside the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines south of the river. Chaplain McLean wrote:

The ministry within an infantry battalion is broken up by the very structure of the unit. I found that I was chaplain to five different companies, four letter companies and one Headquarters and Service Company; each has its own personality, largely created by the Commanding Officer, his First Sergeant, and his Gunny. In some cases I had to fight my way into the process of arranging services, and in others everything was ready.

Some companies were more willing to turn out for services: all unnecessary work was dropped; a space was provided, and the word was passed. In others nothing was done. There were surprises, for as it happened in one company where no preparation had been made, I spent one night talking almost until dawn with a group of men over the very deepest thoughts of their lives.

Often our talk centered upon our relationships with the Vietnamese people. For the most part, our older Marines were not emotionally equipped for a counter guerrilla-counter insurgency type of warfare. This one area alone took up more time than any other during the first months.

There were crises also. Our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Tunnell, USMC lost one of his legs when he triggered off a mine on a recon mission, and two days later 13 men from Mike Company were killed in a classic VC type ambush. The make-believe war for us had become an open and bitter reality.

Back at "C" Med I found Colonel Tunnel just coming out of his unconscious state, following the operation on his leg. We had spent many hours talking with each other coming across the Pacific. Words didn't fail us even under these lousy circumstances, and as is often true of those who suffer, he was more concerned about the others who had been wounded with him and for the battalion than he was for himself. I said good-bye that night to one of the big men in my life.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Civic Action Assumes Greater Importance*

In one way or another during the first half of 1965, every chaplain in Vietnam had some part in people-to-people projects and in the developing concept of civic action. In Da Nang, Chaplains Walker and Running were personally involved. In a brief report to the Chaplain Corps Planning Group, Chaplain Walker wrote:

I established a food run to the orphanage in Da Nang and to the orphanage at Marble Mountain which was run by the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres. After the evening meal each night my clerk and I along with an armed driver and an S-2 scout, would go into each company area, pick up unused food, deliver it to one of the orphanages and return before dark.<sup>7</sup>

Chaplain Running noted that in the spring, contacts with the Vietnamese were limited but that the situation soon changed. He began to accompany patrols of his battalion into the villages of the countryside and before long established an impressive program of humanitarian projects. Chaplain Running took with him a field organ which he played for the entertainment of Vietnamese children and their parents. Marines of the civil affairs team took along volley balls and nets and softball equipment. A medical officer and corpsman, equipped with stocks of medical supplies, went along to examine and treat village patients who needed their help. The activities were scheduled for simultaneous employment. Instrumental music, group singing, and athletic contests were conducted in widely separated areas of the village, while physicians and corpsmen concentrated in a single area to treat the ills of the people.

Such visits became a frequent occurrence for Marine and Navy personnel of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines. During the late spring and early summer the program became even more extensive with a small combo upstaging the chaplains organ, and organized volunteer medical teams implementing a carefully planned approach to meeting the physical needs of people.

Marines of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines on routine patrol near the battalion area noticed a pitifully harelipped child standing with her grandmother beside the road. They spoke to Chaplain Running about the child and requested that he find a way to have the defect surgically repaired. The chaplain made inquiries throughout the area and contacted a Roman Catholic hospital at Bien Hoa near Saigon whose senior surgeon agreed to perform the operation.

Chaplain Running accompanied the child and her grandmother to Saigon. It became clear upon arrival that the Bien Hoa Hospital was not equipped to accomplish cleft palate surgery. Inquiries were made to admit the child to the American facility for the operation. The surgery was successfully accomplished. Chaplain Vernon flew to Saigon to arrange return transportation for the child and her grandmother.

In one of his regular letters to Chaplain Jones during the period Chaplain Running wrote:

We got our little girl with the "cleft-lip" operation back from Saigon. The operation was 100 percent successful and we are all overjoyed. Dr. A. C. Hering (Capt, MC) was real-

ly wonderful about admitting her in Saigon Navy Hospital and they all did a wonderful job there. Our Colonel wrote him a personal letter of thanks.

We are grooming two more children for the same operation in the coming weeks. It is a lot of work getting them well enough and cleaned up enough to be operated on. Lice, sores, and anemia resulting from parasitic organisms are all working against you.<sup>8</sup>

Chaplain Running's pioneering efforts in the repair of harelip deformities among the children of his immediate area gave impetus to an I Corps-wide medical program to accomplish humanitarian surgery. As the program expanded more children were located. With the help of unit chapel funds and later, the Chaplain's Civic Action Fund, the facial features of the children were restored to normal. In the summer of 1965 a firm agreement was reached with Navy surgeons to accomplish one or more such operations each week. The humanitarian effort caught the interest of the international press and received wide and continuing press coverage in the United States.

Early humanitarian projects in Vietnam were pursued within policy guidelines which had been quite familiar to Navy and Marine Corps personnel since September 1956 when the "People to People Program" was formally implemented by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The basic objective was to promote better mutual understanding, respect, and good will through direct person-to-person communication between Americans and citizens of other lands.

Humanitarian efforts in Vietnam were initially identified as being a part of the civil affairs program, reverting to the use of a term commonly employed in occupied territories during and following World War II. Later in the summer of 1965 the term "Civic Action" supplanted "Civil Affairs." Chaplains' end-of-tour narrative reports throughout most of 1966 continued to use them interchangeably, but as official 3d Marine Division programs were implemented by written instructions, "Civic Action" gradually came into common and exclusive use.

Some problems of significance for chaplains occurred in early humanitarian contacts with the Vietnamese people. First, the relationship of the Navy chaplain to what was to become the Marine Corps Civic Action Program was established and identified in the early mercy missions of Chaplains Walker and Running and their contemporaries who arrived in I Corps during April and May 1965. It was the unit

chaplain who established the precedent and set the pattern for civic action. The chaplain's motive was one of Christian charity while that of the Marine was understandably largely military-political pacification. The chaplain was concerned to relieve distress and suffering whenever he found it. But the end result of his charitable activity was precisely the result considered militarily essential to the eventual pacification of the Vietnamese people and their homeland. Consequently, the pattern of the chaplain's activity was taken over and applied to the pacification formula in I Corps in the hope that a principle which traditionally worked well in isolated circumstances and on a small scale would produce equal results on a massive scale. Thus both the chaplain and his methods became a part of an I Corps-wide program of indigenous public relations.

Also of concern was the fact that the Marine intelligence S-2 scout accompanying the chaplain on his mercy mission into the surrounding countryside represented the wedding of intelligence gathering and religious activities among indigenous Vietnamese. Once again the need for crystal clear definitions of responsibility and motive were needed. Once his role and motives were identified by the Vietnamese, the chaplain enjoyed a ready access to the people. To permit his acts of charity to be employed as, or construed to be, a means of gathering counter intelligence information was to place his primary mission and his ultimate effectiveness, to say nothing of his peaceful conscience, in grave jeopardy. It was to the credit of the chaplains, enthusiastic as they were for the principles which underlay American military involvement in defense of South Vietnamese people, that they recognized the inherent dangers of hazy definitions and sensed the possible damage done to the church and her mission if they became identified with the role of intelligence scout.

Another problem became apparent as civic action became formalized and sophisticated. So successful were the chaplain's efforts and so strong was official Marine Corps support for his work that the chaplain soon discovered more and more of his time was being consumed in humanitarian activity. It became obvious that the growing program could prove to be detrimental to his primary mission to provide a formal religious ministry for American military personnel.

III MAF Chaplain Jones became aware of the pro-

blem and determined to assist his Vietnam chaplains to preserve an acceptable proportion of their workday for primary duties. He strongly supported the process by which Marine officer personnel were trained in the objectives and procedures of civic action, and, as they assumed official responsibility for the conduct of unit programs upon assignment as S-5 officers in I CTZ, chaplains were relieved of the mounting burden of activity.

### *Arrivals and Adjustments*

On 27 June 1965, Mobile Construction Battalion 9, with Lieutenant George P. Murray (Reformed Church of America) attached, landed on the narrow peninsula strip of sandy lowland between the city of Da Nang and the South China Sea, referred to as Da Nang East. Construction of the MAG-16 cantonment near Marble Mountain on the southern end of the peninsula began immediately. Construction of Camp Adenir, MCB-9's home for the following seven months, was begun as well. Both cantonments were initially well fortified inasmuch as the Viet Cong controlled the countryside adjacent to and surrounding Marble Mountain.

This 700-man battalion, normally based at Davisville, Rhode Island, was the first Atlantic construction battalion to augment Pacific Seabee strength. It had moved from Davisville to Port Hueneme, California, and from there to Vietnam to engage in combat construction.

The missions assigned to MCB-9 also included construction of a 400-bed advanced base hospital, construction of warehouse and refrigerated storage buildings for the Naval Support Activity Headquarters which was soon to be established, and building a network of highways, access roads, and numerous small facilities.

In the MAG-16 compound MCB-9 erected 250 strongbacked tents, a 1,600-man galley, head and shower facilities, and maintenance and storage buildings. In the smaller cantonments of Da Nang East, 185 wooden-frame tents, four galleys and messhalls, and supporting facilities were placed in position. They did not remain in position long.

According to an unpublished Seabee document entitled "Advanced Base Construction, Vietnam 1963-1965":

The advanced base hospital, the major project of MCB-9, was well underway when on October 28, Viet

Cong mortars and infiltrators with satchel charges wreaked savage destruction in the hospital complex as well as in the battalion's camp. The assault killed two Seabees, and wounded over ninety. Eight quonset huts housing surgical, laboratory, X-ray, and other wards were wrecked.

Immediately, MCB-9 began rebuilding. By early 1966, the battalion had rebuilt the surgical and clinical wards and completed 16 living huts, galley and messhall, heads and showers and utilities systems. The hospital admitted its first patient January 10, 1966.<sup>9</sup>

The report also provided information on other construction problems at Da Nang East. Concerning those problems the report stated:

Chief among them was the climate. Heavy monsoon rains interrupted construction and required much time consuming surface stabilization and repair to roads and construction sites. The effect of fine mud particles on vehicle systems was considerable. Brake linings wore out rapidly. One battalion reported 50 percent of vehicles deadlined half the time. When dry, the area was plagued by dust and flying sand, which eroded tent foundations and excessively wore the canvas tents.

Supply initially was a problem but was essentially solved by August 1966, as Da Nang port facilities were rapidly made adequate to handle cement block, concrete pipe, and lumber. While materials were sufficient, the need for spare parts exceeded supply. Twenty-four hour operations wore out machines rapidly.<sup>10</sup>

Each of the problems noted had its effect upon the chaplain's work, either directly or through the men whose work was most directly affected by it. While Seabee chaplains were fortunate to be attached to units housed in centralized camp locations, they served adjacent Marine units as well and required transportation for their rounds. With a large percentage of the unit rolling stock deadlined for repairs occasioned by excessive wear, transportation was extremely difficult to acquire. While Chaplain Murray himself made no mention of transportation problems, other chaplains of the period invariably made some note of it in their reports. Almost without exception the chaplains reported that climatic extremes and ground conditions produced by alternating rain, heat, and wind added to the burden of their constant mobility. Many reported that they encountered some degree of difficulty safeguarding ecclesiastical equipment from the sand and dust and in preserving consumable supplies. As the Da Nang complex expanded, however, and as newly constructed facilities multiplied, conditions improved. Replacement supplies became easier to acquire, hard-surfaced roads reduced the wear on



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*The chapel of the 1st Marine Division at Da Nang. Note its unusual triangular shape.*

vehicles, and more sophisticated housing and working facilities made living conditions within the security perimeters of the enclave more comfortable.

Chaplain Murray was active in the civic action projects undertaken during the period. In a report to the Chaplain Corps Planning Group, written after conclusion of MCB-9's first deployment to Vietnam, he said:

I discovered that our men loved to work with orphans or any underprivileged child. Both our doctor and dentist repeatedly risked their lives by holding village sick calls in notorious VC strongholds. We were mortared three times with over 100 wounded. That made civic action-type work difficult. Yet, I still discovered Seabees were out helping the people, and working with children, often on the sly. Almost all sailors love little children and I have seen them literally take the clothes off their back and give them to the children. We had many touching incidents. I recall a whole gang of tough little boys who played in our dump. They each managed to scrounge an old pair of Marine combat boots which were thrown away, and they would lace these boots and then clump around proudly. But, at night, our men noticed that they always left the boots inside the dump. We asked them why they didn't take them home, and through the interpreter learned that they knew

their parents would take the boots from them and sell or trade them.

We distributed tons of Handclasp materials which consisted mainly of clothing and toys. Churches at home sent us many small packages, which we used at village sick calls. At Christmas nearly everyone received packages from family and friends around the camp. Most of our sailors were pretty suspicious of older people, but they were so soft-hearted when they saw the terrible suffering of the Vietnamese children, that we had to struggle to keep them from turning our Base Camp into a children's home. Our electricians and utilities men practically rebuilt the Catholic Orphanage. We gave them so much scrap lumber that they were able to build two dormitories, much to the astonishment of our builders.<sup>11</sup>

The rapid acceleration in the buildup of Marine Corps personnel and units in Da Nang in the summer of 1965 increased the Navy's need for larger support facilities with which to maintain them. In addition, increasing numbers of ships were ordered to the area in anticipation of mounting coastal surveillance and gunfire support needs. The requirement for improved facilities at a naval base north of Saigon became more urgently apparent. Com-

mander Force Logistic Support Group, Da Nang was feverishly working to prepare the area for the arrival of U.S. Naval Support Activity, Da Nang when it was due for commissioning in October.

No chaplains were assigned to naval personnel attached to the developing base facilities. As the growing requirement for chaplains became evident Lieutenant John Q. Leshner (United Methodist), Landing Ship Flotilla 1 chaplain, was ordered to temporary additional duty with the staff unit ashore. Chaplain Leshner was there from July to October 1965 and was the only chaplain for Navy personnel attached to the Support Group until Lieutenant David Hunsicker (Southern Baptist) came to relieve him.

The "White Elephant" Building, a two-story, cement, U-shaped structure surrounding a brick courtyard, was the chaplain's office and headquarters. At first the group had one room for an office, but later the command embarked aboard the attack transport USS *Navarro* (APA 215), and later, USS *Okanagan* (APA 220), commuting by boat from ship to shore.

The chaplains reported that the sailors' work was around the clock, seven days a week. The large-ship cargo was unloaded into small cargo craft, and unloaded again at the commercial pier to Tien Sha ramp.

Until pier facilities were constructed and the harbor was dredged sufficiently to accommodate deep draft cargo vessels, the situation remained unchanged. Long and costly delays were encountered by cargo vessels waiting to unload. With the arrival of the Seabees and American commercial contractors who set about construction of a modern port facility, the situation changed dramatically. Mail from home, which Chaplain Leshner indicated was sometimes very poor, was speeded up as the flow of material into the Da Nang complex began to move at a more rapid rate.

Chaplain Leshner's arrival marked the beginning of the Navy Chaplain Corps ministry to shore-based naval personnel, other than deployed Seabee units, in Da Nang. The next year was to bring an important buildup of chaplains serving Navy personnel in the Da Nang area. From one chaplain assigned temporarily to the Support Group, chaplains were to expand to serve with Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, and assigned to provide religious coverage for all naval units and a new 450-bed naval hospital.

In addition to the arrivals of unit and naval component chaplains, individual chaplains arrived for

assignment with the III MAF and 3d Division staffs. Chaplain O'Connor was detached from his division chaplain duties on 10 August 1965, as he was under orders to report to Parris Island as senior chaplain with the recruit command. Chaplain O'Connor having departed without a contact relief, Chaplain Jones wore the division chaplain hat as well as that of the III MAF staff chaplain until the arrival of Chaplain O'Connor's replacement.

Upon his departure, Chaplain O'Connor voiced his gratification for the rich relationship he saw growing between chaplains and Marines. He wrote in a letter to the Chief of Chaplains:

I repeat that duty in the 3d Marine Division has been as fruitful as any I could ever have hoped for, and that the past four months in Vietnam have been the highlight of my years in the Navy. I pray sincerely that more and more senior chaplains will come to recognize the honor and privilege that it is to serve with the Third Marine Division. I can think of no better duty. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Arriving with the rapid influx of Marine units was Commander Connell Maguire (Roman Catholic), who was Chaplain O'Connor's replacement as Division Chaplain, 3d Marine Division, and Lieutenant Commander James E. Seim (Lutheran), who served as assistant division chaplain. Among Chaplain Maguire's immediate concerns as the new division chaplain was the necessity for geographical orientation. He noticed that one arrived with little concept of the geography and almost no knowledge of the deployment of troops. In a report to the III MAF chaplain he said:

Since a schedule of our services deploying the chaplains for the fullest coverage of the troops had to be prepared weekly and constantly revised, I realized that I must obtain a grasp of the geography and location of all troops immediately. Chaplain Gibson, who was on his second tour in Vietnam, drove me around the area the first day and brought me to the Bishop of Da Nang. But it takes a second time around at least to fix even the major units into a clear mind map. Fortunately, we had a vehicle and a driver at the time, a luxury I took for granted then.<sup>13</sup>

In keeping with the Chief of Chaplain's policy of assigning Eastern Orthodox and Jewish chaplains to large centers of Navy-Marine Corps population, two such chaplains were detailed to division headquarters to work with Chaplains Maguire and Seim. The first of these was Lieutenant Robert M. Radasky (Russian Orthodox), slated as the relief for Commander Nick S. Karras, who had been deployed to

Okinawa for a year as the Eastern Orthodox representative for the division. Chaplain Radasky arrived in the latter part of August and was assigned to Headquarters Battalion as an administrative assistant to the division chaplain. Later in the year he relieved Chaplain Seim as Administrative Assistant to the III MAF chaplain. In addition to his administrative duties he provided a ministry for all the Orthodox Navy and Marine Corps personnel he could contact.

Jewish chaplain Lieutenant Robert L. Reiner reported for duty with Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division in early September. As with Chaplain Radasky, his duties were both administrative and ecclesiastical, being unofficially assigned during Chaplain Jones' tenure to III MAF and later as the logistics assistant to the division chaplain, and exercising religious oversight of all Jewish personnel then in I Corps.

Lieutenant Delbert J. Cory, the first Navy chaplain to represent the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also arrived in late August. Division Chaplain Maguire had decided to assign Chaplain Cory to the field hospital temporarily. He discovered that his education in clinical pastoral training at Riverside Methodist Hospital, California, equipped him well for a hospital ministry. Chaplain Cory reported:

The two weeks at the hospital gave me a chance to get oriented to the situation and to adjust to the heat. It also allowed the Division Chaplain to decide where to assign me permanently; there was some initial hesitancy, as usual, because of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints denominational affiliation. Being the first Navy Chaplain of that faith, it usually takes a while to reassure supervisory chaplains that my ministry is not unduly restricted.

On 13 September I was assigned to Force Logistics Support Group, Da Nang, where I relieved Chaplain Seeland and worked with Catholic Chaplain Gibson. I set up a program of troop visitation, moral guidance lectures and worship services.

Over fifty Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints personnel in the Phu Bai, Da Nang and Chu Lai enclaves were located and a ministry was offered to each one. This often included letters to their families indicating that the contact had been made. I also collected the addresses of all RLDS personnel in Vietnam and mailed out about 200 RLDS Vietnam Newsletters each quarter.<sup>14</sup>

#### *The Arrival of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing*

When 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplain Commander Peter J. Bakker (American Baptist) arrived at

Da Nang in June with the wing command, the chaplain participation in the structure of III MAF was complete. Other ground battalions and aircraft groups continued to arrive during the following months to augment the forces already ashore in the combat area, adding flesh to the bones and capability to the body of Marine forces in country. In fact, in terms of chaplain arrivals, the acceleration had hardly begun. Nevertheless, essential command structures were at last complete, in country and operating, by the end of June 1965.

As a result of survey trips from Iwakuni, Japan, to Da Nang in April and May, Chaplain Bakker was fully acquainted with the work of his chaplains and with the terrain at Da Nang and Chu Lai. As was characteristic of his entire tour of duty in South Vietnam, when he landed he hit the ground running. Like the III MAF chaplain, his function was to provide the leadership and counsel necessary to keep the widely dispersed chaplains of the wing operating to the limits of their energies and abilities. It was apparent that an effective ministry to wing personnel required an optimum effort. A 24-hour operating schedule with the attendant hazards of constant combat missions was sufficient in itself to keep the chaplains operating 24 hours a day. Coupled with the impressive requirements for routine sorties were the requirements to construct bases and support facilities and to relate well to the Vietnamese people living in the vicinity of Marine air group facilities.

Chaplain Bakker's area of supervision encompassed chaplains serving with units in three countries. Wing Headquarters, Marine Wing Headquarters Group (MWHG) 1, and MAG-16 were in Da Nang; MAG-12 was at Chu Lai; MAG-13, having been restored to the wing when the 1st Marine Brigade deployed from Hawaii to the western Pacific, had arrived on Okinawa on 14 June and was slated for duty at Iwakuni, Japan in the near future; and MAG-11 was at Atsugi, Japan, preparing for imminent departure to Da Nang.

Lieutenant Thomas J. Dillon (Roman Catholic) with MAG-11 arrived in country during the first week in July to join other wing chaplains Bakker, Lecky, Toland, and Ward already there. Chaplain Dillon wrote that he had reported to the group at Atsugi on 26 April and found the group in a moun-tout situation. He recalled:

After several false alarms we finally got the call to mount out the last week of June. I packed everything that was not



nailed down, with exception of the Mass vestments. I preferred to work out of the Mass Kit until we had a permanent chapel. We boarded and arrived in Vietnam on 10 July. We debarked on the 11th and went to the permanent site of the liberators with the people waving and cheering along the route. Then we saw our future home, a sandy waste with three GP tents and supplies stacked all over. Charlie Med and their "C and C" facility was in process of moving from the area to its present location, the job being about seventy-five percent complete. About 1100 the following morning choppers started landing in our area bringing casualties to what remained of the hospital. I raced over and spent the rest of the day, until 0300, assisting Father Gibson in administering the last rites to the KIAs and WIAs. He appreciated my presence and assistance, especially in view of the fact that he himself was carrying a feeling of nausea.<sup>15</sup>

Wing chaplains undertook civic action as spontaneously as had chaplains with the infantry. Chaplain Bakker reflected that he encountered the same kinds of indigenous responses he had met on similar projects elsewhere in the world. He wrote:

Human nature is the same the world over. After the First Marine Aircraft Wing had started the Tin Lanh Evangelical Church in Da Nang's school project, one of the elders from the Hai Chu Evangelical Church started grumbling. His complaint was that we were helping the larger, richer church, and not helping him. After hearing of it, I had a talk with this fine Christian man and spoke to him of faith, hope, and love; faith, and hope that they too would be able to build, and love to appreciate what their sister church was getting done. Before leaving Vietnam I had the pleasure of seeing the downtown school complete and dedicated and see Hai Chu's pastor, Mr. Lee, smiling from ear to ear as he spoke with pride about his school building going up, and needing more funds for the secondary story. MAG-11 took on the project of the downtown church, and MWHG-1 sponsored the construction at Hai Chu.<sup>16</sup>

In a report to the Chaplain Corps Planning Group, Chaplain Bakker pointed out that of all the things that were being done, of all the money spent, of all the programs that were underway, the most important factor of all was very simple and very fundamental. The easiest items to contribute were the material, money, mortar, and mechanics. However, the item which was desperately needed in Vietnam was genuine love. To illustrate his point Chaplain Bakker referred to the true story of the kind of love his missionary friend, John Haywood, had for the people of Vietnam and the respect given it by the Marine Corps:

John Haywood was a citizen of the United States. Simone, his wife, was a citizen of Switzerland. They met in

the leprosy training hospital in Hong Kong. Here was a Christian couple who had dedicated their lives to serve the lepers of Vietnam. The government had given them some land south of Marble Mountain, but at this time the VC still controlled the area. A good number of the cured lepers lived there as they were still outcasts from the rest of Vietnamese society. About a month and a half before Simone was to deliver their first child, John had to go to the city of Hue, to complete plans for a chicken farm for the lepers. The VC, thanks to the Marine air-ground team, were well along the way to being secured from the area of the hospital. John went down to the Da Nang Air Field with Major Rushkowsky, USMC. There was room for only one in the plane so John agreed to drive a borrowed automobile in the company of a military convoy to Hue.

As the car was proceeding north through the mountain pass, John had to stop and allow a convoy of ARVN trucks to go by. Shortly after his stop, the lead truck hit a mine in the road. John jumped out of his automobile when the shooting started, only to startle a VC with a rifle in his hand. The VC fired four rounds through John's body and fled to the hills. During this time, Major Rushkowsky was waiting for John in Hue. When John failed to appear the major returned to Da Nang to the missionary compound, and asked about John. At that time, John's blue car was being driven into the yard. In it was John's body.

Through the kindness of Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt, USMC, the Commanding General of III MAF, Mrs. Haywood was extended the condolence of the U.S. Marine Corps, and the opportunity of having Major Rushkowsky accompany her to her home in Britran for the burial of her husband. She replied, "Thank you very much. Your kind offer is appreciated but I will bury my husband here in Vietnam. I will have my baby here in Vietnam, and with God's help, I will serve the lepers of Vietnam."

The funeral services were simple, yet stately. The little chapel of the World Evangelical Crusade in Da Nang was filled to capacity and overflowing with other missionaries and Vietnamese Christians. Local pastors preached. At the cemetery both missionaries and local pastors took part in the committal services. One of the large wreaths of flowers which surrounded the open grave had a large ribbon across the center of it. It said, "To Saint John Haywood."

This young man was loved by the Vietnamese because he loved them and was willing to lay down his life for them. His wife is also loved by these wonderful people. With a labor of love such as this, the love of God is communicated.<sup>17</sup>

On 1 August Lieutenant Commander Richard M. Tipton (Southern Baptist) came down from Iwakuni, and relieved Chaplain Lecky. Chaplain Lecky had worked intensely for six months and was in need of a rest. MAG-16, under the leadership of Colonel John King, had grown from a single squadron to a full-strength group, and was now being skippered by "Big Tom," Colonel Thomas J. O'Connor. A new camp was being built at Da Nang East, now to be called Marble Mountain.

In an article in the MCAS Iwakuni, Japan newspaper, *Tori Teller*, of 22 December 1965, a sketch-account is given of Chaplain Lecky's receiving the first combat wounds sustained by a Navy chaplain in Vietnam. The article quoted Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, as saying in Lecky's citation for his second Navy Commendation Medal:

On one occasion he was painfully wounded by the insurgent Communist forces while courageously assisting in organizing and comforting the Vietnamese villagers of Gia during the evacuation of their village. Fragments of mortar landed so close to him "I was covered from head to toe with the blood of two Vietnamese who were torn to bits by the explosion." Chaplain Lecky is the only chaplain so far to receive the Purple Heart Medal for Vietnam service.<sup>18</sup>

When Chaplain Tipton relieved Chaplain Lecky, MAG-16's new camp at Marble Mountain was nearly ready for occupancy. For a period of two weeks or so the group was divided, half of the men working to prepare the new camp while the others maintained their facilities at the Da Nang airstrip.

Marble Mountain, like the 9th Marines complex just to the west of it, was Viet Cong infested. After having been in the new camp only a month, a Marine security patrol from the Marble Mountain airfield spent hours in contact with infiltrators in the area. These infiltrators were eventually traced to a small Vietnamese village of Hoa Long district outside the compound. As the Marine patrol approached this village, it was fired upon and returned fire. At least one rifle grenade entered one of the homes. As a result three Vietnamese nationals were mortally wounded. The mother, father, and youngest child of a family were killed. As the body of the father was returned from the hospital, the ambulance attendants met with open animosity on the part of the villagers. They were struck about the head and shoulders by the women, and cigarette burns were inflicted upon their hands and arms. Feeling against Americans and the Marines of MAG-16 in particular was running high in the village.

Chaplain Tipton recalled:

It was evident that something must be done to effect a reconciliation and establish a better working relationship with this village located so close to our compound. Colonel O'Connor requested that the Chaplains pay a visit to the village in an attempt to express our sorrow and to offer help during this tragedy. Due to the fact that it had been reported that the family was in financial trouble and had

borrowed money to defray the cost of the funerals, it was suggested that a donation be made to them from our chapel funds.

On 30 September Chaplains Tipton and Toland accompanied by three nuns from the nearby Catholic Orphanage entered the village. Chaplain Tipton continued his report:

Due to the fact that Sister Alphonse was acquainted with the villagers and another Sister was the teacher of one of the family's surviving daughters at the Catholic School, we were received without too much animosity or open hatred. There was evidence of a great deal of distrust at the beginning of our visit but as the sisters explained our mission, all distrust seemed to disappear. We were able to express our sorrow over the unfortunate incident and assured the people that it had not been the intention of the Marines to take the lives of women and children, and extended to them our continuing good wishes and assistance in any way possible. A gift of 3,000 piasters was left with the paternal grandmother to help defray the expenses of the funerals.

As we left the village all the villagers crowded around us to assure us of their understanding of the situation, to shake our hands and invite us to return.<sup>19</sup>

Like others before and after him, Chaplain Tipton discovered that his duty with a Marine aircraft group in combat was often similar to Marine duty elsewhere. He encountered the same kinds of problems. "Disagreeable conditions and lurking hazards brought some of the problems to the surface a little earlier," he remarked. "I think the men here have a tendency to think about their religious responsibilities. The dangers that are faced from time to time make them realize their own limitations. It had been enjoyable to work with them under these conditions and help them draw closer to God."<sup>20</sup>

On 22 September two additional chaplains arrived for service with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. They were Lieutenant Gerald T. Richards (Southern Baptist), and Lieutenant John R. Daly (Roman Catholic). Chaplain Richards was assigned to Marine Wing Headquarters Group 1, and Daly moved south to the Qui Nhon enclave with HMM-363 as that squadron supported the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines security operation there.\*

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\*The landing at Qui Nhon will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### *The Seabees Continue Their Buildup*

During September 1965 two chaplains arrived in Da Nang with their mobile construction units. Commander Everett B. Nelson (American Baptist) was with MCB-5 when it reported to Naval Construction Regiment 31 for duty to relieve MCB-3. Between 23 and 28 September MCB-3 personnel embarked on shuttle aircraft for their home port at Port Hueneme, California, being replaced by incoming echelons of MCB-5. Five days later, MCB-8 also arrived and set up camp on the sandy peninsula called Da Nang East, with Commander William F. Hollis (American Baptist) attached.

Chaplain Nelson's battalion assumed and continued construction assignments at the 3d Marines, 12th Marines, and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Headquarters cantonments. Chaplain Nelson continued the same type of program as his predecessor, Chaplain Jayne. In addition to his ministry at Camp Hoover, he provided religious coverage for the 3d Shore Party Battalion, located nearby on the beach of Da Nang East.

During the construction of Camp Hoover's galley, mess hall, shops, sheds, and tinroof strongbacks, Chaplain Nelson moved about the work sites visiting and counseling with his men. As civic action officer for the battalion, in coordination with the 3d Shore Party Battalion, he worked through the World Evangelization Crusade Mission, to assist orphanages, schools, hospitals, and refugee camps in the Da Nang area.

Chaplain Nelson's civic action efforts as a MCB chaplain were typical of the numerous Seabee Battalion chaplains' preparations and programs. He sketched his program in an early report:

The Seabees had collected several tons of clothes, food, soap and toys prior to our deployment overseas. Private persons, churches and veterans' organizations shipped at least 200 additional parcels of medicine, food and clothing to the Seabees for distribution while we were overseas. They sent \$500.00 in addition to another \$2000 which the Seabees raised themselves for assistance in Civic Action projects. The Civic Action Program was one of the most spontaneous and talked about programs in the Seabees and Marine Camps. They saw the need of the people and they responded to those needs through this program. Men were constantly offering new ideas and suggesting ways in which we could assist them. Even though Seabees and Marines worked six and one-half days a week, they still volunteered to work on schools and orphanages in their spare hours. The Seabees contributed their labor to special

projects as overhauling plumbing in buildings, remodeling buildings, grading playgrounds, and improving roads.<sup>21</sup>

MCB-5 was responsible for building the hill road overlooking the western perimeter of the Da Nang complex and maintaining several miles of camp roads. It installed two water supply systems involving a three-mile, eight-inch water line connecting the 3d Marine Division cantonment with the Cao Do River.

Numerous cantonments were then being constructed by the Seabees for Marines in the area, and when 28 Seabees donated blood to the 3d Medical Battalion late in the year, the Seabees jokingly said, "with so much Seabee blood in their veins, they'll (the Marines) soon be able to build their own cantonments."<sup>22</sup> The major project assigned MCB-8, however, was construction of massive pier facilities for the developing seaport complex. The battalion built two gravelled unloading areas, four landing-boat ramps, three docks, a 314-foot timber pier, and a 1,700-foot quay wall in addition to countless storage buildings for the Naval Support Activity, and completed Camps Adenir and Faulkner as well as the MAG-16 and shore party cantonments, all of which had been begun by MCB-9.

Chaplain Hollis had been assigned temporarily to MCB-8 on 11 September 1965 when that unit, then at Construction Battalion, Atlantic Fleet Headquarters at Davisville, Rhode Island, was ordered to deploy to Port Hueneme, California, and had no chaplain permanently attached. MCB-8 was the second of the succession of Atlantic construction battalions to join Pacific-based battalions in the construction effort in South Vietnam, and moved on short notice. After a period of training and preparation in California, Chaplain Hollis enplaned for Da Nang on 26 September. He remained with MCB-8 until 17 December when Lieutenant George F. Tillet (United Church of Christ) arrived at Da Nang East for permanent assignment to the battalion. Chaplain Hollis then returned to Davisville, where he was staff chaplain.

Chaplain Hollis undertook an active program including acting as a civic action officer. Civic action involved him in a variety of contacts and projects and occasioned this important observation:

The Oriental philosophy of life and the acceptance of different-system values are the hardest things for our men to understand about the Vietnamese. They cannot understand the slow pace and seeming lack of concern for time,

life and progress, and the unimportance of the central government since their loyalty may not go past their father or the village chief.

The courage of one village chief who took office after his predecessor was kidnapped and probably executed by the VC, and the village chief who insisted upon returning to live in his village as soon as he was partially recovered from wounds inflicted by a VC squad which invaded his village and left after attempting to murder him, greatly influenced many of our men's attitudes about the worth of our being there.<sup>23</sup>

The United States was not only there with the presence of Marines and Seabees, but that presence was rapidly growing. The future was uncertain and a bit frightening to the chaplains serving with the burgeoning units. Still, their commitment to their military ministry would not only insure that they would grow along with the increased buildup, but they would respond to the increased needs with stepped-up ingenuity and dedication.

## CHAPTER 4

# Listening and Learning (September-December 1965)

*Activity in the Southern ICTZ—Landing at Qui Nhon—New Chaplain Leadership—Ceremonial Events and Administrative Concerns—Chaplains for NSA and MCB-8—Christmas Highlights*

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The Chaplains Corps paid close attention to denominational representation in the Marine Corps and in the III Marine Amphibious Force to insure that the ideal of religious pluralism was thoroughly met. Since the Corps required increasing numbers of chaplains, the call had gone out to the nation's church bodies, and pastors, priests, and rabbis were responding in gratifying numbers. With few exceptions, these men were ordered for a short tour to shore stations to familiarize themselves with military life and the chaplaincy, and were subsequently sent to Vietnam. During this period the procurement of chaplains from the civilian clergy was a major priority at the Chaplain's Division of the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington. Under the guidance of Lieutenant Commander Carl A. Auel (Lutheran) at the procurement desk, the Chaplain Corps grew from 929 active duty officers in June 1965, to 1013 in June of 1966, and would reach a high of 1102 in June of 1969. As the momentum of the buildup increased these chaplains who were young in the Corps began to predominate. By the end of 1965 there were 50 chaplains in Vietnam of whom 70 percent were in the grade of lieutenant and lieutenant (junior grade). There were 31 Protestants, 16 Roman Catholics, and one each from Jewish, Orthodox, and Reorganized Latter Day Saints clergy. These men made up what some called the "new" Corps.

Paramount in the development of this "new" Corps was the chaplains' ability to understand and adjust to the military, the Marines in particular, and the Vietnamese environment generally. For the most part they adapted excellently. What it took was a lot of listening and learning. Listening is rarely hard for a clergyman, being so necessary a part of his craft. Learning, however, was harder.

The "new Corps" chaplains seemed to recognize how much they could be taught by the Marines of all ranks. They watched, practiced, followed, and quickly learned what it took to minister in that con-

text, and enjoyed remarkable support from the Marines in return. In a report presented to the January 1966 Supervisory Chaplain's Conference, Captain Francis L. Garrett (United Methodist), Force Chaplain III MAF, was able to state:

The Chaplains are accepted, respected, supported and encouraged as none of us have ever been before, and this is reported to you as a spiritual factor because of the spiritual effect it has upon the chaplains themselves. They feel needed and wanted and I am certain that the intensive effort they are exerting every day is due to, in some good measure, the encouragement they are receiving. Perhaps the most unique a part in this regard is that it is universally true. I do not know of a single command in all of III MAF in which the attitude toward the chaplain and his ministry is even indifferent, let alone hostile.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly grateful for the strong support they received, the chaplains in the latter days of 1965 listened hard and learned much. The complexion of the Vietnam conflict was changing for the worse. It became increasingly clear that offensive operations would have to be initiated. The VC pressure was increasing in the Chu Lai area and south of Da Nang. As the U.S. effort tightened, the chaplains prepared for the first combat most of them had experienced, and the first even the very senior chaplains had known since Korea.

### *Activity in the Southern ICTZ*

From June through September 1965 11 chaplains arrived for duty in Chu Lai. On 7 June Lieutenant John J. Glynn (Roman Catholic) reported to relieve Chaplain Byrnes with the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, and on 9 June Lieutenant Gordon S. Cook (Reformed Church in America) relieved Chaplain Thilking with the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. On 13 July Lieutenant Patrick A. Dowd (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Philip F. Kahal (United Church of Christ) reported to Company B, 3d Medical Battalion which had only recently establish-

ed the B Medical Field Hospital at Chu Lai, and, on 14 August Lieutenant Commander John T. Goad (Southern Baptist), Lieutenant John R. McNamara (Roman Catholic), and Lieutenant Ralph C. Betters (United Presbyterian) arrived with units of the reinforced 7th Marines which was configured as a highly mobile strike force and designated Regimental Landing Team 7.

Chaplain John Glynn's description of Chu Lai, on his arrival in early June, provides an interesting and comprehensive picture of the area which was to become one of the more significant combat areas in Vietnam from mid-1965 through mid-1966:

Chu Lai was a six mile stretch of desert coastal plain bordered by the foothills of a green mountain range and a fringe of rice paddies about three miles inland. It was a desert of sand dunes with scattered clusters of tents near an airstrip which was under construction near the beach. A narrow, once-paved north-south road, Highway One, paralleled an abandoned railroad track along the inland edge of the desert.

The chopper dropped me and my gear near a sand dune which was blowing through a battered tent marked "Air Freight." Inside a Marine was huddled by a radio. He called a local helicopter which lifted me a couple of miles inland to another Africa-Corps-type location on the sand which was the original CP site for the Fourth Regiment. There Father Byrnes found me. A short time later we moved by Mite a bit further inland, across Highway One, to the rolling foothills, and thus began six unforgettable months at Chu Lai.<sup>2</sup>

It was at Chu Lai, during the last months of 1965, that the first succession of multi-battalion operations against the Viet Cong took place. Like other infantry units at Da Nang and Phu Bai, the Chu Lai battalions routinely mounted out local patrols to acquire intelligence and locate Viet Cong positions, but here the Viet Cong seemed to be preparing for heavy guerrilla attacks upon American forces. The villages that dotted the countryside offered cover and camouflage for local guerrillas. Larger patrol operations in the form of company-sized sweeps soon supplanted squad and platoon patrols. Early indication of a shift from a purely defensive military posture to extensive operations came with the first search and destroy missions at the battalion level.

While the level of tension was increasing the chaplains in the enclave supported their concern for the spiritual welfare of Marines of all faiths. In August, before the III MAF Jewish Chaplain's arrival, Chaplain Cook arranged for Chaplain Glynn of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines and U.S. Army

Jewish Chaplain Richard Dryer of MACV to accompany him to Hill 69 for trifaith ministrations to the Marines of a Company C platoon then holding the isolated position. The final report of Chaplain Cook of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines submitted at the end of September, showed that during the month he arranged for Chaplain Dowd of the field hospital to accompany him by helicopter to visit an isolated Company A platoon on Hill 69 to provide a Mass while Protestant worship was being held. To reciprocate for the cooperation of his Roman Catholic and Jewish counterparts, and further to support the objective of the broadest possible Chu Lai ministry, Chaplain Cook also served as Protestant Chaplain of the 4th Marines.

When Chaplains Dowd and Kahal arrived at division headquarters in Da Nang in early July the chaplain situation at the field hospital in Chu Lai was critical. The ever-increasing pace of operations against the enemy was producing a growing number of casualties. The Chu Lai chaplains gave first priority of their ministry to casualties arriving at B Med. Chaplain Dowd had reported to Da Nang from Okinawa with units of the 12th Marines. Within a few days Chaplain O'Connor had arranged to have him detached from the Da Nang-based artillery regiment and ordered to duty at the hospital at Chu Lai.

Chaplain Dowd reported:

Chaplain Phil Kahal and I boarded a C-130 on July 13 in search of Chu Lai, and we found it. "B" Med had more to offer than any other unit in Chu Lai. The second day we were assigned a general purpose tent for home base and the open sand flats for a chapel. Food was trucked in a 6-by. For breakfast and dinner we had C-Rations. The mess table was our lap, our chair a sand mound.

The Commanding Officer of "B" Med, Lieutenant Commander Scott Husby, MC, USN, his team of physicians, surgeons, dentists, corpsmen, and Marines attached commanded our respect immediately. They had a smooth running team in operation and accomplished, miraculously, a Herculean mission, the first eye-opener of my tour as we arrived. Passing by a screened-in GP tent, I noticed a corpsman clad in cap, gown, gloves, shorts and tennis shoes, standing beside someone lying on a table. I'd seen surgical procedures performed before, but never like this. No tile deck, just blood stained three quarter inch plywood. I still marvel at how little these men had to work with in the early months of field combat and at the lives they saved and the comfort they brought the sick and wounded.<sup>3</sup>

In a paper entitled "Comforting the Afflicted," which he wrote during his tenure of duty with the

field hospital, Chaplain Kahal touched on some extremely important issues for field medical chaplains:

With the advent of the helicopter the transport of casualties from the battle scene to the field hospital has been revolutionized. What once required many hours and sometimes days to accomplish has now been reduced to minutes or at the maximum a couple of hours. The helicopter is to be credited with the saving of many lives. The seriousness with which the helicopter pilot approaches his work is humorously inscribed on the side of one plane: "God saves, but we Help."<sup>4</sup>

Chaplain Kahal reported that as casualties came in their religious preference was obtained immediately. This enabled the chaplain to introduce himself in an objective context, providing the patient was conscious, and also served to take the Marine's mind off his injuries. Chaplain Kahal had a pointed caution, however. He stated:

There is one complication of which the chaplain needs to be aware. Because the wounded Marine is sometimes fearful for his life, the offering of prayer on his behalf carries for him the connotation of death. It then becomes necessary to assure the patient that you are sharing with him a prayer of thanksgiving for his having been spared and for full restoration to health. In every case when he understands that prayer is not being offered because he is dying, prayer is requested and welcomed. The whole process needs to be accomplished quite rapidly and, more often than not, intuitively.

Another practice which has proven helpful is the carrying of a Jewish Prayer Book when receiving casualties. Jewish boys welcome assistance with prayer by the chaplain even though the latter is a Christian. The book contains a prayer for those who are ill. If the lad is not in pain, he might be invited to read the prayer for himself.

The Episcopal Church publishes a small, compact Armed Forces edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Those casualties who are Episcopalians may have the benefit of the short prayer for the ill together with the laying on of hands.<sup>5</sup>

Chaplain Kahal felt that it was imperative that the chaplains realize that the speedy medical and surgical treatment of the patient was always of primary importance, and he advised chaplains not to impede this process with their ministries. He reported that doctors are generally very cooperative with respect to chaplains' wishes. But he cautioned:

Cooperation is a two-way enterprise. The most advantageous position for the chaplain seems to be at the head of the patient. The patient may sometimes be required to raise his eyes to see the chaplain, but in this way much needed space is allotted to the medical personnel. At this

point in the treatment of the patient the chaplain can render assistance in another way in addition to prayer. He can engage the patient in conversation in order that the doctors can make initial explorations which sometimes cause considerable pain. Conversation helps the patient take his mind off the pain. Of course, each situation is unique, and what the chaplain needs to do is determined by the needs of the patient at a given moment.

As the Protestant chaplain it would amount to a travesty to ignore the marvelous cooperation rendered by the Catholic chaplain. Field hospital work requires team work between the respective faiths. A common understanding of our roles has served to cement our relationship. There is mutual assistance in times of service.

It may be appropriate to mention that to see young lads with torn, broken and bleeding bodies is not an experience from which one can derive any satisfaction; yet it is an experience and duty which cannot be shirked, for there is a vital and necessary work to be performed at the Marine Field Hospital. Not only does the chaplain serve God in the service of men, but his own life is enriched by the experience, for he too is forced to search for the strength and courage of God deep within the recesses of his own life.<sup>6</sup>

The Chu Lai arrival of Lieutenant Commander Marvin W. Howard (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Commander Gerard W. Taylor (Roman Catholic) in the company of the helicopter group to which they were attached marked the first significant augmentation of Far Eastern aircraft combat capability by West Coast units. As the buildup of forces in Vietnam continued to accelerate, both air and ground augmentation was needed. MAG-36 deployed from its parent 3d Marine Aircraft Wing at MCAS El Toro, Santa Ana, California and was placed under the operational control of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in I Corps.

Chaplain Howard was the first of the two to arrive, landing on 27 August with the forward echelon consisting of the headquarters staff and Marine Air Base Squadron 36. He had made the voyage on board the Dock Landing Ship USS *Comstock* (LSD 19) leaving Long Beach, California on the morning of 3 August. On 2 September, Chaplain Taylor with the operational squadrons debarked from the USS *Princeton* and moved ashore to join their counterparts in the newly defined group compound.

On 20 September, Wing Chaplain Bakker produced an exchange of MAG-36 and MAG-12 chaplains. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had now grown in size and strength, with the addition of MAG-13 from Hawaii, but more was to come. A small problem was evident in MAG-36 from the viewpoint of chaplain assignments. Both the Protes-

tant Chaplain Marvin W. Howard, and Jerry W. Taylor, the Catholic Chaplain, were senior lieutenant commanders. Over in MAG-12 Rieter and Long were recently promoted Lieutenants. The wing chaplain transferred Chaplain Taylor to MAG-12, and Chaplain Long to MAG-36. Chaplain Bakker wrote:

MAG-12 gave the Wing Chaplain a little static, because of their identification with and loyalty to Dick Long, but the change proved to be sound and logical. Of course it meant that Chaplain Long would have the added burden of starting from the sand again, and building up two times in succession. It was the Wing Chaplain's considered opinion that his stamina of body and soul was equal to the task. From MAG-36's side of the question Chaplain Howard had been with the group longer. Chaplain Taylor had been in the 3d MAW office with Wing Chaplain L. C. M. Vosseler at El Toro, until shortly before the deployment. He had had little opportunity to get acquainted with MAG-36.<sup>7</sup>

### *Landing at Qui Nhon*

The only Marine Corps enclave established in the II Corps Tactical Zone of South Vietnam during the war was in the northeastern corner of Binh Dinh Province, south of the city of Qui Nhon. Qui Nhon was the seaport terminus of Highway 19, the most direct route from the coast to the strategically important military base in Pleiku. Travel over Highway 19 was being disrupted almost at will by Viet Cong of the central highlands. Much of the time logistic support for the military garrison at Pleiku was limited to resupply by aircraft. The plateau offered a convenient mountain-pass infiltration and supply route for North Vietnamese troops entering South Vietnam from Cambodian trails. Qui Nhon represented the key to overland supply. U.S. Army engineers were ordered to the area to build an airfield and a garrison for a swift-striking airmobile division. To secure the area from local Viet Cong, the Navy-Marine Corps Special Landing Force comprised of the helicopter carrier USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2) with HMM-363 aboard, attack transport USS *Tallegaga* (APA 205), and attack cargo ship USS *Muliphen* (AKA 61) and the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines was assigned the mission of searching and clearing the area.

On 1 July Lieutenant Ralph C. Betters (United Presbyterian) landed with the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. The Marines landed unopposed and

established a defensive perimeter skirting the building sites for the airstrip and garrison adjacent to the city of Qui Nhon.

Chaplain Betters' battalion was the first unit of RLT 7 to land in Vietnam. He recalled:

I received dispatch orders in May 1965 while stationed at the Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego. I joined Chaplains Goad, Hiskett and McNamara at the 7th Regimental CP at Camp Pendleton. Chaplain Goad was assigned as Regimental Chaplain, John McNamara to the First Battalion, Wally Hiskett to the Second Battalion, and I was given the Third.

In Qui Nhon we suffered our first casualties and learned VC tactics, first-hand. Though I am a veteran of World War II and Korea, and have seen and lived with destruction, dread, deprivation, disease and death, the initial shock of ministering to mutilated bodies caused a trauma that I did not anticipate. Indeed I thought myself hardened to the horrors of warfare and death.<sup>8</sup>

The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines was ashore only a week when the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines with Lieutenant Walter A. Hiskett (Lutheran) attached arrived to relieve it. The 3d Battalion returned to duty as the ready SLF, cruising the coast of I Corps in reserve. Chaplain Hiskett's battalion was to remain in the countryside near Qui Nhon until 4 November when it was replaced by the newly arriving Tiger Division of the Republic of Korea.

Chaplain Hiskett reported that the battalion's rifle companies took up positions a mile or so beyond existing perimeters. Three days after their arrival they established a forward command post approximately 10 miles inland, adjacent to the 84th U.S. Army Engineers compound, leaving logistics units and the battalion aid station in the secure area at the rear CP. Upon the recommendation of battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Leon Utter, Chaplain Hiskett remained temporarily at the aid station to minister to a rising number of heat casualties. Later in the week he moved to the forward CP in order to be closer to his troops in the field, being followed a few days later by the aid station itself.

Two Army chaplains assisted Chaplain Hiskett in providing a ministry for the men of his battalion. The chaplains were stationed at Pleiku, and gave religious coverage to the 84th Engineers. They invited men of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines who remained in the CP over Sunday, to join them for worship. This released Chaplain Hiskett to move about the area conducting ministry to the deployed rifle companies. The tactical area of responsibility for the



2d Battalion, 7th Marines was large and in time covered an area of over 50 square miles. Chaplain Hiskett noted:

Most of the positions were located on isolated hilltops. All transportation was by helicopter and was arranged by the Battalion Air Liaison Officer. The Logistics Support Unit remained on the beach during our entire stay at Qui Nhon and I made arrangements for their Protestant men to attend services at the Army Signal Battalion area close by. Some of the isolated companies split up to cover two or three forward outpost positions. This made it impossible to cover all of the positions on Sunday. Therefore, religious services were conducted usually on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, and as many as thirteen services in one week.

Most of the combat operations of Qui Nhon consisted of platoon or squad sized patrols. Occasionally we would conduct company-sized search and clear operations and there were two or three operations involving two companies but, strictly speaking there were no large scale combat operations. I accompanied the battalion commander as he visited the troops in the field on the larger operations. This gave me an opportunity to be with the men as they were engaged in operations, at least for short periods of time.<sup>9</sup>

Chaplain Hiskett reported an incident that points up that the chaplain's ministry is not only to the wounded and dying, but in the sensitivity of religious pluralism, also to the dead. Two Marines on the forward perimeter were killed by rifle fire from another Marine position. Chaplain Hiskett accompanied the men by helicopter to the aid station. He later recorded:

One of the men was Catholic so I tried to contact a Catholic Chaplain to administer Last Rites. There was no Catholic Chaplain in the area. I escorted the body to the Christian Brothers School where I knew a priest resided. At 0300 no one could be aroused. We returned to the school. Mass was in progress. When it was over I asked the priest to administer Last Rites. In spite of the language problem the priest understood and Extreme Unction was administered. A Requiem Mass was also said for the Marine.<sup>10</sup>

On 28 September Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 363 of the Chu Lai-based MAG-36 was deployed to Qui Nhon to support the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines in its mission. Lieutenant John R. Daly (Roman Catholic), then less than a week in Vietnam, was assigned to the squadron. Upon arrival, the squadron moved into a former Army compound, Camp Goldberg, on the outskirts of Qui Nhon. He soon discovered that much of his activity would be

directed toward Catholic coverage of nearby Army personnel. He observed that the squadron was of such size that he knew all of the officers and men personally and could keep his finger on the pulse of the unit. His Army flock was composed of detachments of the 498th Aviation Company, the 197th Aviation Company, the 78th Transportation Company, and the 540th Transportation Company. For the five weeks that HMM 363's Qui Nhon duty coincided with that of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, he said a 1500 Sunday Mass at the Battalion CP and during the week made use of his squadron's resupply flights to say Mass, three times a week, to the outlying companies of the battalion.

On 5 January 1966 HMM-363, which had relieved HMM-163, followed the assignment pattern of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines and was ordered to duty at Chu Lai, 120 miles to the north. Chaplain Daly then rejoined his parent organization, MAG-36, as a relief for Lieutenant Commander R. A. Long (Roman Catholic) who was among the first of the group's chaplains to arrive, and who had been ordered to new duty in the United States.

#### *New Chaplain Leadership*

In early October Captain Francis L. Garrett (United Methodist) reported to the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force for duty as force chaplain. Chaplain Garrett and Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt had served together at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico and were well acquainted. On his way through Iwakuni, Japan, enroute to assume command of the 3d Marine Division, General Walt had informed the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplain Bakker that "Frank" Garrett was coming to the Far East to be his staff chaplain and that he was delighted with the Chief of Chaplains decision to send him. Bakker noted that the general and chaplain "made an ideal team."<sup>11</sup>

Chaplain Garrett relieved Chaplain Jones upon his arrival in the country. After completing the necessary check-in procedure, and visits to General Walt and members of his staff, Chaplain Garrett was briefed by Chaplains Jones, Maguire, and Seim. The briefing included duties of the new force chaplain, the current status of the commands and chaplains encompassed by III MAF's organizational structure,



Photo III MAF

*LtGen Lewis W. Walt, Commanding General, III MAF, presents a check for \$4,000 to Force Chaplain Francis L. Garrett for the Chaplains Civic Action Fund. The contribution is from the Protestant Chapel Fund of the Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina.*

the ministry of I Corps chaplains and the complications of religious coverage, the status and problems inherent in the developing Civil Affairs program, and the geographical location of chaplains attached to III MAF commands.

The duties of the force chaplain had been set forth in III MAF Force order 1730.1, just three days after the establishment of the billet. The force chaplain was directly responsible to the commanding general in the performance of his duties. He served (1) to advise the commanding general on matters pertaining to the moral, spiritual, and religious welfare of the force; (2) to coordinate broad policy, with regard to division, wing and force chaplains, and integrating their efforts into a single program; (3) to conduct periodic inspections of the religious programs of force organizations and of command efforts relating

to the moral, spiritual, and religious welfare of personnel; and (4) to assist the commanding general in carrying out his responsibility as related to religious activities of Army and Air Force units in the III MAF area and as special area coordinator for the Da Nang complex and also to establish and maintain liaison with COMUSMACV and other services commands, and local civilian organizations, with respect to religious affairs.<sup>12</sup>

Chaplain Garrett was peculiarly sensitive to the need for a deep and meaningful quality of ministry in I Corps. He came with an awareness of the need for delicate balance in the amount of time chaplains devoted to primary and collateral duties. One of his first acts as force chaplain was to conduct a detailed study of chaplain involvement in Civil Affairs. He anticipated that the humanitarian assistance pro-

gram, already developing to massive proportions, would inevitably require an increasing amount of the chaplains' time. III MAF had moved into Civil Affairs with great energy, fully aware of the importance of winning the trust and confidence of an indigenous people involved in a guerrilla war. In view of the size of the effort and official Marine Corps sponsorship of it, Chaplain Garrett set about to do three things: draw chaplain civic action activities into a coordinated III MAF program with carefully defined perimeters; refine the objectives and improve the thrust of the chaplains' effort; and prescribe the limits of individual chaplain involvement in essentially secular, command-sponsored projects.

Conclusions and recommendations resulting from his study were forwarded, by memorandum, to General Walt on 21 October 1965. In the memorandum Chaplain Garrett noted that: (1) chaplain participation had been largely the result of individual initiative; (2) activities had been directed toward "targets of opportunity," as opposed to an aggressive program of systematically searching out opportunities; and (3) financial support had been limited to local unit resources. He stated:

These conclusions clearly point the way to the next steps to be taken. First we must organize our effort so as to bring to bear the experience and work of all our Chaplains, and second, we must mobilize massive financial and material support from sources available to us in CONUS. Only thus can we mount and sustain a significant and viable program over a long period of time.

With your concurrence, I propose to undertake the development of a long range program which is intended to encompass those areas in which the churches have been traditionally involved, i.e., orphanages, schools, homes for the aged, hospitals, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The III MAF Force Chaplain proposed specifically that a four-phase effort be undertaken to accomplish his stated objectives. Phase I provided for the location of every private institution of human welfare within previously defined geographical areas. Phase II included the determination of real needs within the institutions, with a view toward concentrating assistance in those areas which would improve institutional effectiveness and tend to make the institutions permanently self-sustaining. Phase III set in motion machinery for mobilizing financial support in Vietnam, and from Navy and Marine Corps chapels and other religious bodies in the United States. Phase IV represented the action phase, the

actual execution of individual projects, on a fully implemented and sustained basis.

The most significant result of the memorandum and its subsequent approval by General Walt, was the official formulation of a clear-cut definition of the chaplain's role in Marine Corps Civic Action. The memorandum identified special areas of activity, and in effect prescribed limits to those areas within which chaplains would thereafter direct their efforts. The chaplain's role in the Civic Action program was sanctioned by the commanding general as a separate and distinct program within the formal structure of Marine Corps civic action was to focus upon urgent needs within the religious community of South Vietnam, and was to be directed toward development of Vietnamese self-reliance and self-support.

While humanitarian activities continued to require great expenditure of the chaplain's time and effort, the new definitions in effect created a structure within which the force chaplain could coordinate the thrust of the effort to eliminate duplication, improve effectiveness, and insure that the unit chaplain's time for essential priorities of his ministry was not diminished.

If the quality of Chaplain Corps leadership was demonstrated by Chaplain Garrett's approach to Civic Action in the first weeks of his tenure of duty as force chaplain, it was amplified during the month of October by personnel management policies the newly reporting division chaplain, Captain Frank R. Morton (Lutheran), formulated with regard to areas of supervisory chaplain responsibilities. Chaplain Morton arrived in Da Nang within two weeks of Chaplain Garrett. Upon arrival he relieved Chaplain Maguire who had been interim 3d Marine Division Chaplain since late August. In a briefing for the Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly (Southern Baptist), the following year, Chaplain Garrett said:

Chaplain Morton was cordially welcomed. He among all the senior chaplains in Vietnam at the time had a background of Marine experience that was invaluable. Frank, more than any of us, had the know-how when it came to living in the field with Marines. This was one of the reasons his presence was so valuable to us. He was extremely active throughout the year, always on the move, and always present wherever things were breaking. Certainly his contribution to the organization of the Chaplains' work in the Third Division was superior to anything I have ever seen, in terms of internal organization.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after his initial briefing, and a cursory survey of the geographical location of the chaplains, Chaplain Morton set to work with Chaplain Garrett on what the former called "a divorce." Since the spring of 1965, before the staff billet of III MAF Force Chaplain had been established, there had been a natural state of ambivalence with regard to lines of authority and responsibility at the division's highest echelon. Chaplain Jones had been 3d Marine Division chaplain in Okinawa. In that position he had exercised overall supervision of 9th MEB, whose chaplains were, however, under an independent command several hundred miles to the south. When III MAF was established in Vietnam the division chaplain occupied the same office-tent with the MAF chaplain and they were participants in the decision-making process for both MAF and division. Upon Chaplain O'Connor's departure, and before Chaplain Maguire's arrival, Chaplain Jones was doubled-hatted for two weeks, and for six weeks immediately prior to his departure, again occupied office space with the division chaplain, employing the services of Chaplain Seim, who was officially attached to the division, as his administrative assistant. In all of this at both MAF and Division Headquarters he was working with a double-hatted commanding general and among the same staff officers with whom he had been associated from the beginning.

A change of chaplain leadership provided the opportunity for well-defined lines of responsibility and clear-cut organizational interrelationship to be firmly drawn. From late October through mid-November, Chaplain Morton conferred with Chaplain Garrett on the interrelationships of their respective billets. They concurred in the decision that Chaplain Morton would exercise full, supervisory control with regard to division chaplains, keeping the force chaplain fully informed, and would turn to him for coordination of joint efforts, broad policy decisions, and would seek counsel in all chaplain-related activities transcending command lines. Chaplain Bakker, the wing chaplain, had succeeded in operating on this organizational principle since the wing had arrived in country.

Tending to support the provisions of "the divorce" was the 3d Marine Division Headquarters physical relocation which came in mid-November. For some time the new headquarters had been under construction. A massive concrete bunker referred to as "Walt's Vault" by the troops, was built to accom-

modate the general's office and several of his staff advisors. Located at the base of a hill line, on what earlier had been the outer perimeter road, several miles west of the airstrip and MAF-Wing compound, the surrounding acreage supported a tent complex for housing the various staff sections of the headquarters. Chaplains Morton, Maguire, Seim, Reiner, and their Marine clerks, moved from one-third of a strongbacked tent to two covered, wooden frame structures.

The division chaplain, assistant division chaplain, administrative assistant, and three clerks occupied one of the more spacious office-tents while the other was used for equipment and supply storage and for temporary offices of the Jewish and Episcopal chaplains. Chaplain Morton's tent was located on the side of a hill, affording what he called a "meditation porch." Down a ladder and under the back of the tent was a comfortable, spacious area for use by any of the chaplains who wished to counsel privately with visitors or to confer with small groups and not disturb the routine functions of the office.

Occupied with organizational concerns, relocation of office spaces, and the administrative orientation of the division, Chaplain Morton could initially do little more than observe the process of chaplain coverage. This was the broad concern to which he turned his attention the remainder of November and early December. The issues awaiting his resolution were: how to provide the 3d Marine Division with religious coverage on a seven-day-week basis; and how to provide equitable and appropriate, denominational coverage. His objectives were simple. Every Marine in the 3d Marine Division must have opportunities to worship a minimum of once a week in a worship service of his denominational preference. He had already observed that he was working in a widely scattered Marine division with chaplains in four separate enclaves. Units were interspersed among wing units and with the Seabees. Chaplains were extending their ministries to men of many smaller units who otherwise would have had no opportunity to receive the ministry of the church. Units were highly mobile and enclave perimeters were expanding throughout each week. Small unit operations were scheduled on short notice. Transportation was a continuing problem which further complicated the overall task of providing comprehensive religious coverage.

Factors effecting religious coverage by chaplains

had been undergoing subtle and continuing changes since the buildup of forces began in March. In the June to October period individual chaplain cooperation continued to be the key to a successful effort. Beginning in November, unit chaplains were informed in weekly meetings of their responsibilities and were given a detailed overview of the entire enclave. Chaplains highly motivated toward energetic cooperation still remained the key to success, but it soon became apparent that the system was refined to such a degree that the personalities of Chaplain Corps leaders, the force chaplain, division chaplain, wing chaplain, and the Chief of Chaplains, could be seen in the Corps ministry in South Vietnam.

Chaplain Morton, in conference with the division chief of staff, confirmed his own staff authority to move chaplains in accordance with his own judgment. The freedom of personnel management Chaplain O'Connor had requested, and Chaplain Jones had established as standing operating procedure, Chaplain Morton confirmed. It became necessary only to supply a nomination for orders to the division G-1, and official, in-country changes of duty were effected in a matter of hours.

Describing concepts governing his assignments, Chaplain Morton said:

All chaplains reporting aboard for duty directly from Chaplains School are assigned to separate battalions. The Assistant Division Chaplain is their immediate senior chaplain. They are observed, counselled and advised during a six-month assignment. After the six-month period they are available for assignment to line battalions. All chaplains reporting as recalls from the Naval Reserve where they held civilian pastorates are assigned either to separate battalions or to line battalions under the direction of a regimental chaplain. Lieutenant Commander chaplains are first assigned to a medical battalion or to a regiment, depending upon previous Marine Corps experience.

Young chaplains should have a varied experience during this tour of duty. They are the regimental or division chaplains in tomorrow's Marine Corps. However, no chaplain is moved about for experience alone. During the twelve-month period many factors appear which necessitate objective moves. The subjective moves are effected only when the Division Chaplain or advising Regimental Chaplain recommends a move for the individual chaplain's sake.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Chaplain Morton felt that no chaplain should remain attached to a field hospital in excess of six months. The drain upon the spiritual, physical, and emotional resources of a chaplain pro-

viding a crisis ministry for mass casualties created the need for such a change. As combat operations became more frequent and intense during late 1965 and 1966, it became a matter of policy to reassign line battalion chaplains in a similar manner. The opportunity to listen and learn was being supplied chaplains in the broadest possible way.

Lieutenant Max E. Dunks (Southern Baptist), who reported in early October to relieve Lieutenant Commander Charles C. Kary (American Baptist) for reassignment as Regimental Chaplain, 3d Marines, was one of the chaplains reporting to Da Nang direct from Chaplains School and the Field Medical Service School. Three and one half months prior to his arrival he had been serving a civilian congregation and had had no previous military experience. For the first six months of his duty in Vietnam he was assigned to the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion with additional responsibility for 3d Motor Transport Battalion, 3d Anti-Tank Battalion, and 3d Tank Battalion, succeeding Chaplains Kary and Goodwin. In his "end of tour report" he spoke directly to the issues which Chaplain Morton was attempting to resolve:

My greatest difficulty during my tour in South Vietnam, was learning how to get things done in the military framework, and particularly in the Marine framework. I had to learn the importance of requesting needed services and materials in writing, using appropriate military forms. I had to learn that even though it is widely understood that certain sections in a battalion organization perform certain functions, every commanding officer had his distinctive preference as to how the various functions within the sections are carried out . . . .

I also had to learn patience and the art of flexibility in Vietnam more than ever before in my life. The plans and policies of my parent unit were often changed, and I had to adjust, as everyone else did. Frustration was always just around the corner, and I often came face to face with it. I expected, and adjusted to it. I feel that any chaplain who does not assume this attitude may find himself with an abnormal emotional disturbance or an ulcerated stomach. Last of all I learned that one needs to have a positive, aggressive attitude toward his goals in South Vietnam. The 'can do' attitude prevails among the Marines, and Navy Chaplains serving with the Marines are out of place if they do not have this attitude.<sup>16</sup>

As an important part of his philosophy of leadership Chaplain Morton considered the position of regimental chaplain to be an indispensable link between the battalion chaplain and the supervisory chaplains on the division level. He himself had been a regimental chaplain with the 4th Marines in Japan and Hawaii in 1954-1955, and had learned the

significance of the position in a regiment geographically isolated from division headquarters.

Chaplain Kary's reassignment to the 3d Marines as regimental chaplain was accomplished by Chaplain Maguire before Morton's arrival. The 3d Marines had previously had no regimental chaplain in Vietnam. Assignment of Chaplain Kary gave evidence of two factors coming to the fore in this period which influenced assignment of chaplains. The need for more comprehensive coverage was pressingly apparent to Chaplain Maguire and subsequently to Chaplain Morton. When an experienced chaplain became available the effort was made to assign a fourth chaplain to augment the ministry of the three line battalion chaplains assigned a regiment. This evolved into a policy of assigning two Protestant and two Roman Catholics to line regiments, the greater proportion of separate battalions such as engineers, tanks, amphibian tractors and the like, having Protestant chaplains assigned to them for duty. Previously scattered battalions were becoming consolidated with their regimental headquarters within a single tactical area of organizational responsibility. Operational conditions had not always permitted the regiment to operate as a unit. Nevertheless, consolidation of the regiments, and assignment of chaplains as regimental chaplains gave evidence that the regiment remained very much an integral part of Marine Corps organization.

In view of the fact that neither the division chaplain nor the assistant division chaplain could possibly exercise direct supervision of religious activities and the work of chaplains in enclaves 50 or more miles away, Chaplain Morton made good use of his regimental chaplains. In time an assignment policy evolved in which Chaplain Morton delegated both unit and geographical responsibility to each enclave's senior chaplain. This also carried over to code-named combat operations which lasted from a few days to several weeks. In these instances the senior chaplain attached reported to the division chaplain for direct supervision of unit chaplains and their work.

#### *Ceremonial Events and Administrative Concerns*

Three ceremonial events occurred during November 1965. The first was the Marine Corps Birthday on the 10th. In slack moments of the day, ceremonies appropriate to the occasion were held.

This was the first Marine Corps birthday to be celebrated by Marines in combat since the Korean War. The occasion was as festive as conditions would permit, with cake cutting ceremonies and speeches. In deference to "The Night War," by which name the conflict in Vietnam was being characterized, ceremonies were held during daylight hours. Chaplain Scanlon, with the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines near Hill 327, wrote:

Monsoon season had arrived in earnest now, to the tune of 27 inches of rain a month, and mud was everywhere. Third Battalion, Third Marine Division with A.D. Seeland had come up from Chu Lai and had taken up a position on our left flank. For the Marine Corps Birthday, our cooks had made a huge cake. They were up all night making it. The weather was so damp that the icing wouldn't stick to the cake; it kept falling off. But to us it looked magnificent. We had a ceremony befitting the occasion, in which the Chaplain took part. Village Chiefs and the District Chief were invited.<sup>17</sup>

Lieutenant Allen B. Craven (Southern Baptist) reported that the 12th Marines' regimental services on 7 November, commemorating the Marine Corps' 190th Anniversary, was the highlight of his worship services in Vietnam. He reported:

The command asked that all batteries in the Regimental CP form up and bring their guidons. It was a beautiful sight to see the guidons, battalions, regimental and national colors as they marched in during the processional hymn. An inspiring message was given by Chaplain Garrett, the Third Marine Amphibious Force Chaplain. It was inspiration to see over a hundred Marines worshipping God and honoring the Corps; knowing that they would leave after the service to continue their duties in the service of their nation.<sup>18</sup>

The next ceremonial occasion was Thanksgiving Day. It was followed by the Navy Chaplain Corps Birthday Celebration on 2 December. Thanksgiving was appropriately observed with services of worship and with hot meals of turkey and trimmings for all hands. Even the line companies on the enclave perimeter had hot meals taken out by the choppers. The day was similarly observed, from CP to farthest outpost and from the smallest to the largest ship offshore.

The Chaplain Corps Birthday was observed at luncheon in the Da Nang enclave. Attending guests of honor included General Walt; Brigadier General Keith B. McCutcheon, 1st Wing Commander; other senior staff officers; and, with one exception, every battalion commander in the enclave. Chaplain Seim

addressed the gathering and reflected on the chaplain's ministry. He concluded:

As desired by the churches of the land and by Navy Regulations, chaplains have taught men both secular and sacred subjects. Always they teach the larger lessons of life, the lessons of God's Word, His way for man. Chaplains have administered the sacraments. They have confronted men with the sacred acts most holy precious to their churches, baptizing the new believers from helmets and in oceans, offering the Holy Supper, confirming, hearing confessions, blessing marriages, going with them to the final moment of life and bridging the gap with the last rites. They have brought the assurance of God's care to sailors and Marines on wooden ships, in polar ice, on violent seas, in roaring helicopters and in silent depths, in rotting jungles, on comfortable stations, in foxholes, bunkers and bamboo chapels.

Chaplains have shown the nation the meaning of religious cooperation by working together, and have led the way, honoring one another. . . .

We are proud of our Corps today. How frequently have you heard it said, "he's the best blankety-blank chaplain in the Navy?" So many times. Chaplains have received a wide variety of medals and given many to young men—a St. Christopher medal here and an "I am an Episcopalian" there.

All this because we are here to serve God and the military man. It is our unique profession.<sup>19</sup>

During one of the chaplain meetings in November, a conversation between Chaplain Bohula, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines and Force Chaplain Garrett, an idea concerning the maintenance of a historical record of the ministry of the Chaplain Corps in Vietnam impressed itself on Chaplain Garrett's mind. As he sat listening to the experiences of the younger chaplain, he was moved by the depth and power of the chaplain's ministry and by the spiritual impact the chaplain had obviously had upon the lives of Marines. He was stirred by the effectiveness of the Corps' efforts to fulfill its mission by "bringing God to man and man to God." Chaplain Garrett conceived the idea that an end of tour narrative report of the chaplain's duties in Vietnam, preserving a record of his services and experiences and anecdotes pertaining to his ministry, should be required of each chaplain prior to detachment. In keeping with his responsibility to formulate policies on matters transcending division and wing command prerogatives, he issued a force order initiating the requirement. Chaplains being detached from duty in Vietnam from that time forward, spent a few hours of their last days in Vietnam composing a narrative account of their duties in Vietnam for submission to the Force Chaplain who then, in

turn, forwarded copies through official channels to the Chief of Chaplains.

On an inspection trip to Vietnam in September, Chaplain John H. Craven, Force Chaplain, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in Hawaii, who had participated in the preparation of the history of the chaplains in the Korean War, solicited historical information which he planned to publish in summary form in his FMFPac Bulletin, and for fuller treatment later. In addition he requested that supervisory chaplains provide a steady flow of materials of historical interest for use in future articles at his level and at the level of the Chief of Chaplains. Chaplain Craven's brief historical summaries were great benefit to chaplains being oriented for duty in Vietnam, and to the corps historian in reconstructing the events of early 1965. Chaplain Garrett's sense of history, foresight, and initiative resulted in a flow of valuable historical data to the office of the Chief of Chaplains.

As early as mid-November, the III MAF Chaplain began preparations for distribution of tons of Christmas cards, letters, and packages already beginning to arrive from the United States. Chaplain Garrett and his colleagues anticipated the impending mountains of mail, including thousands of packages and letters addressed to "Any Marine in Vietnam," with dread. Nevertheless they accepted the assignment reluctantly, simply because, this first Christmas in Vietnam, there was no one else to whom such activity with its great morale enhancement potential and public relations value, could be entrusted. Most chaplains, in their end of tour reports, commented favorably on the value of the effort and the sheer pleasure the packages gave the troops.

Some believed the gifts represented a spontaneous response on the part of a segment of the American people to the demonstrations against the war then beginning to be seen in the United States. Assistant Division Chaplain Maguire wrote:

There had been a series of demonstrations against the Vietnam War back home and now many people, evidently representing a large majority, started sending Christmas greetings and gifts to servicemen. The plight of many poor and sick Vietnamese had also been publicized back home. The result was that from late November on into January packages arrived daily for servicemen and for the Vietnamese people. The MAF Chaplain's Office became the distribution point. Chaplains established Christmas displays in the units, usually a large bulletin board for

cards and tables for packages. The enthusiastic response of the troops was pleasantly surprising. In early autumn, Martha Raye had sent many packages, mostly books. The distribution of those and the establishment of book shelves for the troops was in a small way a rehearsal for the Christmas avalanche.<sup>20</sup>

Preparations were underway in late November for the festive season. With regard to these Chaplain Maguire reported:

Chaplain Morton was away at the time performing a Christmas miracle. He procured and somehow carted two tons of Christmas equipment from Japan. The gear filled a 16' x 16' area to the roof. The result was that every Marine and Navy man in I Corps saw a strategically located Nativity scene and heard Christmas music broadcast.<sup>21</sup>

One of Chaplain Morton's administrative concerns during December was the welcome, orientation, and assignment of five chaplains reporting for duty with the division. He kept each new chaplain at division headquarters for a few days prior to assigning them to a unit. During the period they were briefed on the operational situation, given time to "get their gear in order," and generally oriented by trips into the field, by artillery fire demonstrations, and at a series of personal interviews.

It had become apparent to Chaplain Morton during his first weeks in country that denominational coverage of troops in each enclave promised to present difficult problems. In a combat zone the availability of Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish chaplains to minister to men of their respective faiths represented the absolute minimum denominational coverage. The entire chain of supervisory chaplain responsibility, from division through MAF, and FMF to the Chaplain Assignment Officer in the Chief of Chaplains' office, to the Chief of Chaplains himself, were intimately involved in establishing in Vietnam the broadest religious coverage in the history of naval warfare. All of the major American religious bodies were represented in I Corps in December and a number of smaller churches. The problem became for Chaplain Morton one of refinement and balance. Additional Catholic chaplains were needed to man his projected plan of two Protestants and two Catholics for each regiment in country. In conference with Chaplain Garrett the decision was made to request that the 1st Marine Division, by this time settled on Okinawa, furnish the required Catholic coverage. Captain John L. Wissing (Roman Catholic), Division Chaplain of the

1st Marine Division agreed to send Lieutenant Raymond A. Roy (Roman Catholic) to Da Nang for a 60-day period of temporary additional duty. Reporting in mid-December Chaplain Roy was assigned to the 9th Marines, now consolidated south of Da Nang on perimeter defense.

In a "Newsletter" he wrote to friends on 2 January 1966, Chaplain Roy pointed up the developing problem of Catholic coverage. He said:

My duties with the Marines send me wandering around the perimeter, my Mass kit on my back. Some of the Catholic boys in the outlying Companies had not seen a priest in six weeks. It isn't true that there are no atheists in foxholes. Yet it is true that, for a great number of young men, foxhole faith is a reality they cannot and have no desire to escape. When a boy in muddy and torn utilities comes to Mass there is a rapport established between us that I have never experienced anywhere else in the ministry. That boy, who might normally shy away from a priest, often hears himself revealing thoughts he has never expressed to anyone else. And I have no doubt that, just as often, the grace of God made its entry through such conversations. Those who have never had the faith? Well, I have been here only a short while, and already, six Marines have asked me for instruction in the intention of receiving Baptism. God sure spoils a priest out here.<sup>22</sup>

Changing circumstances in Vietnam prevented Chaplain Roy's permanent return to Okinawa at the end of his 60-day tour. Soon after the first of the year the decision was made to commit the 1st Marine Division to combat in Vietnam. Many of its regiments and separate battalions, and most of its chaplains, were already in country under operational control of the 3d Marine Division. The remainder of the division was to be committed to duty in Vietnam in the early spring of 1966 and Chaplain Roy was to return to Vietnam with the 5th Marines after a brief interlude on Okinawa.

#### *Chaplains for NSA and MCB-8*

During the final quarter of 1965, three chaplains assigned to naval units under the Commanding General, III MAF's cognizance as Naval Component Commander, reported to duty in Da Nang. The first chaplains permanently assigned to the newly established command, Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, were Commander Martin F. Gibbons (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant David S. Hunsicker (Southern Baptist).

Chaplain Gibbons remained on duty in Da Nang for a full year tour of duty and witnessed the buildup



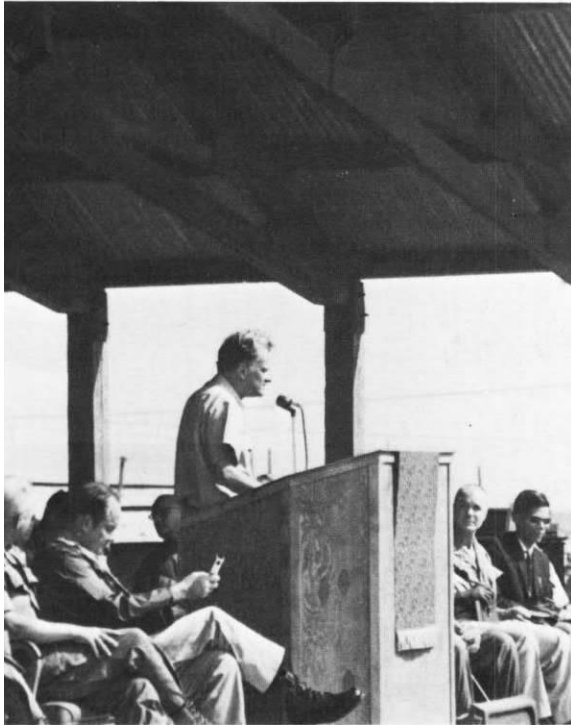


Photo courtesy of Chaplain John E. Zoller  
*Evangelist Billy Graham preaches at an open air meeting for several thousand Marine and Army personnel at Phu Bai, during the Easter season 1969.*

of Naval Support Activity Chaplains from two to six and an almost overwhelming increase in numbers of naval personnel for whose benefit a comprehensive ministry had to be carefully organized. Since July, Lieutenant John Q. Leshar (Methodist) had been attached to the Force Logistic Support Group, until Naval Support Activity could be officially commissioned in October. He was relieved by Chaplain Hunsicker, who with Chaplain Leshar, participated in the activating ceremonies.

When Gibbons reported for duty as senior chaplain he found physical accommodations to be essentially as they had been during the days when the entire command was housed in a single room in the administration building, dubbed the White Elephant. In a letter to Captain Edward A. Slattery (Roman Catholic), Assignment Officer for the Chaplains' Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Chaplain Gibbons wrote:

When you said this job was a challenge, you didn't know how true the expression was/ We had nothing and could have been here a year without ever getting anything. Tremendous numbers of men had been ordered in, confusion reigned (and still reigns) everywhere. Kingdoms were

already established, and since we chaplains came last, we had no space, no gear, no transportation, no yeoman—nothing. Morale was rock bottom, that's why we were wanted, and our role was to be ecclesiastical morale builders, riding the boats, tossing off witty sayings and cheering up the boys. That's not meant to be a joke, Ed, it is what Chaplain Leshar and Dave Hunisicker had to do before I arrived. Their office was an attache case.<sup>23</sup>

Five days after Chaplain Gibbon's letter to the Chaplains Division was written Lieutenant Commander Paul H. Lionberger (Lutheran) who had recently relieved Chaplain Seim as assistant to the division chaplain volunteered to help the NSA chaplains fulfill their schedule of Christmas Day services. Having reported aboard only a week before and having completed his unit's schedule of services by 1400 on Christmas Eve, Chaplain Lionberger offered to assist in the following day's schedule. He remembered:

0900 Christmas found me hitchhiking to the White Elephant Landing in Da Nang where I met Chaplain Marty Gibbons, NSA Chaplain, who was surprised to see me ready to conduct services. He helpfully steered me to the right "mike" boat to transport me to the assigned ships in the harbor. Rounding the sea wall we were hit by hard rain squalls and high swells so that to board the APAs for services I had to climb cargo nets rather than using the accommodation ladders. Fond memories of cooperative sailors rigging for church, warm and dry compartments, as well as a rich variety of Navy chow, linger on for Christmas Day, 1965.<sup>24</sup>

The Da Nang area was not without its action late in 1965. The attack which destroyed or damaged a large proportion of the NSA Hospital, then under construction, occurred on 28 October. Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Robert S. Collins (Lutheran) had just relieved Chaplain Murray. He said:

On the third evening after I reported aboard MCB-NINE located then at Da Nang East, our campsite was hit quite severely by thirty-one rounds of Viet Cong 81mm mortars. Within moments I was in the underground sickbay, ministering to the wounded. Before the night was over, I had held open the chest of a young Marine so our Battalion Surgeon could massage his heart, and helped to carry the lad to a medical evacuation helicopter.<sup>25</sup>

Commander William F. Hollis (American Baptist) with MCB-8, at Da Nang reported that his unit sustained neither the damage nor the personal injuries that the sister unit received. MCB-8, working on facilities at Camp Faulkner and the 5th Communications Battalion compound, escaped the devastating mortars. Lieutenant George F. Tillett (United



Photo courtesy of Chaplain Henry T. Lavin

*Francis Cardinal Spellman (center) conducts Mass in Da Nang on Christmas Day, 1966. Other priests (left to right): David J. Casazza, 1st Division Chaplain; an unidentified Army chaplain; Bishop Patrick Ahearn; and Henry T. Lavin, 3d Division Chaplain.*

Church of Christ), Hollis's relief, arrived in November to serve with Chaplain Hollis for approximately two weeks before the latter was detached. Chaplain Tillett remained with MCB-8 for the following six months, until completion of the battalion's first deployment to Vietnam in May 1966. He served Camp Faulkner; Company B, 3d Tank Battalion; and the 5th Communications Battalion, the latter units being located near the compound of his parent command. "We worshipped," he said, "in a tent replete with pews and altar at MCB-8, in the EM Club at 'B' Tanks, and on the patio of the Officers' Club overlooking the South China Sea at Fifth Communications Battalion. MCB-8 had the only Navy choir in Vietnam. Its director was a Chief Electrician with a Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of Texas."<sup>26</sup>

Chaplain Tillett's experience was very similar to that of many other chaplains in Vietnam in that he found the men of MCB-8 very appreciative of informal discussion groups. "These were conducted," he said, "three or four times a week and it was not uncommon to find five or six of us sitting on the sand at 10:00-11:00 o'clock at night. The letters I still receive from former Seabees and Marines attest to their worth."<sup>27</sup>

#### *Christmas Highlights*

For Chaplains in the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam, three-fold highlights of the Christmas Season 1965, consisted in the services of worship they each conducted on Christmas Eve and Day, the avalanche of Christmas mail, and the visits of Cardinal Spellman and the Chief of Chaplains.



Department of the Defense (USN) Photo K-45300  
*Navy Chief of Chaplains James W. Kelly shakes hands with a Marine lance corporal on board a fast coastal patrol craft during his third Christmas visit to Vietnam in 1967.*

A total of 214 services of worship were conducted by chaplains of the 3d Marine Division units. This was without question on the busiest single weekend to that time for chaplains in Vietnam. It should also be noted that Chief of Chaplains Kelly dedicated seven new chapels and preached at a dozen or more services of worship in a four-day period while Captain Leon Darkowski (Roman Catholic), accompanying the Chief of Chaplains on his Christmas trip to Vietnam, said several Masses.

Referring to some of his memories of late 1965, Chaplain Roy said:

There would be so much to describe—the joy of celebrating Midnight Mass outdoors by candlelight, with Marines singing Christmas Carols; the heartwarming experience of distributing the tons of Christmas cards and packages sent by the Americans who cared enough; the almost comic feeling of hearing confessions in the belly of

an AmTrac; the pride in the eyes of the men who helped me put up a tent chapel and a 14 foot white cross; the grandiose Mass of Cardinal Spellman on Christmas Day, and the frolicking Bob Hope show a couple of days later on the same stage; the rain and the mud which was soon to give way to the heat and dust; and when the sun did shine, the beautiful green mountains and valleys or rice paddies on the shores of the South China Sea. . . .<sup>28</sup>

Chaplain Lionberger wrote:

Slogging through the mud, I visited the shops and men of the 3d Engineer Battalion on Christmas Eve. At dinner with the officers, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Nick Dennis, asked me to lead the group in a Christmas Service. Impromptu singing of Christmas carols, a short devotional message, the Commanding Officer reading the Christmas Gospel-Luke, opened our hearts to the meaning of Christmas, even when separated from loved ones. At midnight, a Candlelight Christmas service was held for Protestants in the Battalion messhall.<sup>29</sup>

Chaplain Scanlon of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines near Hill 327 said:

Christmas Eve 1965, I shall never forget. I had been talking to the Colonel and we weren't sure whether we should make a big fuss or just be ordinary because we didn't want the men to feel more homesick. It was the men who made the fuss. I returned to the chapel on Christmas Eve to find a Christmas tree there set up by the H&S Co. Captain. Two Marines dressed it and the rest of the chapel. We put up a Creche outside. Along about 11:00 PM, I was sitting in my tent alone, thinking about the Midnight Masses of other years and the hushed expectancy of that hour. I was reconsidering our decision not to have a Midnight Mass because of required light and the danger of attack and mortar possibilities. Then I heard carols being sung. I waited a minute to be sure and then went to the flap of the tent. There, outside, to serenade me with Christmas carols were 12 Marines . . . and with candles and small hymnals, they managed to get through five or six carols and I sang with them with tears in my eyes. So who was making a fuss about Christmas? You just can't take that out of a man's heart.<sup>30</sup>

Chaplain Cory of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, at Marble Mountain recalled:

Numerous boxes and letters were received in "Operational Mail Call: Viet Nam 'for Any Marine'" and the troops were really enthused about it. One of them was seriously wounded two hours after I gave him one of the letters. The corpsmen cut away his shirt, but he insisted that we give it back because it had the letter in it which he wanted to answer. We got it for him and he was content.<sup>31</sup>

In his turnover narrative Wing Chaplain Bakker said:

From a spiritual point of view, the highlight of tour here in Vietnam was the visit of the Chief of Chaplains during the Christmas season. The 'Chief,' Chaplain James W. Kelly, Rear Admiral, USN, gave us a truly spiritual ministry. His visit was not a routine VIP mission, but a hard working, evangelistic inspiration. His message of the "Marine With His Rifle and a Loaf of Bread" will long be remembered. His different dedicatory messages at the dedication of our chapels were both inspirational and appropriate to the occasion. His letters to the Commanding General, the Commanding Officers and the Chaplains of the Wing were pleasant surprises, and treasured communications.<sup>32</sup>

Division Chaplain Morton remarked later that the Chief of Chaplains' Christmas visit, 23-27 December 1965, provided the spiritual impetus needed to sustain the respective chaplains for the remainder of their tours of duty. Chaplains were inspired by the Chief of Chaplains' punishing schedule of command visit and worship services. Chaplain Morton said, "None of us had ever seen a chaplain function on a

twenty-four hour basis as did the Chief of Chaplains. He hardly took time for a breath. From that moment forth Chaplain Kelly served as an example for the younger chaplains."<sup>33</sup>

Chaplains Maguire, Glynn, and Scanlon spoke at length about Cardinal Spellman's Mass for I Corps personnel at Da Nang. Chaplain Scanlon reported:

Christmas 1965 was memorable for another reason. On Christmas afternoon, Francis Cardinal Spellman, who had the responsibility for all the Catholic members of the Armed Forces of the United States, arrived in Da Nang to offer a Christmas Mass for and with the troops. At the foot of Hill 327, his Eminence alighted from a Huey and came to an altar placed on stage for the event. Chaplain Garrett of the MAF and Chaplain Morton of the 3d Mar Div were on hand to see that all arrangements were made properly and also Chaplain Maguire and many others. I heard confessions for a while and after Mass, when the Cardinal addressed the troops, we all had the opportunity to meet him once again. It was thrilling for me because he has been such an example of devotion to the troops and also because he ordained me back in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, in 1953 on Memorial Day. I was wearing a poncho because it started to rain and the Cardinal quipped, "You're in disguise."<sup>34</sup>

Chaplain Maguire was intimately involved in the details of arranging the Mass and reception for Cardinal Spellman. He recalled that he had met the Catholic dignitary only once before:

His coming presented me, as senior Catholic Chaplain, with many problems to be solved, many details to be worked out with limited equipment and transportation, and lots of water (rain). Due to bad weather and bad memory I came within a whisker of disaster on a few counts. It was not until the Mass was started that I could appreciate and enjoy his visit. His clear, happy countenance so belied his age and feeble physique. His devotion to the troops and their welfare came through without a word to everyone present.

Chaplain Garrett and Chaplain Morton had a part in the Mass, a non-speaking, walk-on part, but one of tremendous support. The loud speaker system went dead. Chaplain Garrett drove to his office with Chaplain Morton. They picked up a portable amplivoice. Chaplain Morton adjusted and tested it on the back of the bouncing jeep on the way back. They carried it on just before the Cardinal spoke.<sup>35</sup>

Chaplain Glynn of the Field Hospital at Da Nang added the capstone to the reports of Cardinal Spellman's visit. He remarked about the more than 1,000 Marines praying in the rain and Cardinal Spellman standing at the altar. "The aged visitor, who did not move around easily" he wrote, "said with a triumphant twinkle eye just before his jeep moved away, 'I did it.'"<sup>36</sup>

## CHAPTER 5

# Slogging and Sharing (July 1965-March 1966)

*With the Wounded or on the Line?—Combat Activity at Chu Lai—Chaplain Participation in Major Operations—Adaptability and Patience*

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War is a massive and complicated undertaking. It demands extensive administration and supervision, planning and coordinating, and influences more lives at approximately the same time in an unforgettable way than perhaps any other single event men have yet evolved. Although volumes have been and are being written about the supporting activities that attach themselves to war, the final focus for those intimately involved will always be the same: combat operations.

It was in combat with his men that the chaplain in Vietnam often found his greatest worth. Lieutenant Commander Frederick E. Whitaker (American Baptist) when asked to submit his end of tour report, expressed a representative attitude most clearly:

There will never be an end of tour for the chaplain who has served in Vietnam as long as Vietnam appears on the map of the world. One cannot end that to which he has given so much of himself. One may leave the country as a person, but he will always be here in thought, spirit and emotion. . . .

At one time I thought I would entitle my report, "The Beloved Grunts," but that would exclude a great number of heroic people who served in an important but different way than the infantry. My ministry here was primarily with the infantry Marines. It would be easy and expedient to use this means to pay tribute to the Marines of the Third Division. I am convinced that the American people have but small knowledge of what they have done here and what their contribution has been in this American effort on behalf of this needy people.

As I arrived in country I expected the worst and hoped for the best. Both my expectations and hopes were fulfilled. I shall always remember with pride and admiration my eight months with the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines. What a ministry! Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, great days for the Christian. Never have I felt closer to Almighty God or felt a greater spiritual communication with a group assembled than at those times. I can never be sure how the men I served felt, but I cannot remember a single divine service I conducted here that was not meaningful. I can only pray that the men derived even a small part of the great good that came to me. It was my ministry but God knows these men did much more for me than I did for them. The greatest reward I have ever received, the

best satisfaction derived, and the finest hour of inspiration was the greeting, "Hey Chaplain, are we glad to see you"; or, "Come back soon, Chaplain, we like having you with us." What more could anyone ask than that!

It was not only that chaplains appreciated serving with Marines; the reverse was often true also. The Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, penned this note on a memorandum of Force Chaplain John H. Craven to all chaplains in the Fleet Marine Force: "May I add a word. . . . The burdens and frustrations of the counterinsurgency war, and the consequent effect on our fighting men, are underscoring the critical importance of spiritual leadership. It is a big task that faces you, and you certainly have my full support."<sup>2</sup>

General Krulak was anticipating by two years a paragraph in a letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., to the Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly:

It is significant that in the spirit of mutual cooperation between the Marine Corps and the Navy Chaplain Corps, the Chaplains have endeavored to identify with the individual Marine. Although technically considered non-combatants, they have shared dangers, deprivations and adversities. By doing so, they have contributed immeasurably to any glories which may have accrued to our Corps and have been an exemplification of the personal readiness required of every Marine. While the Marine Corps is instrumental in the development of a man's esprit and physical readiness, the Chaplain must be the cultivator and guardian of that man's spiritual and mental readiness. As demonstrated daily in Southeast Asia, this is a difficult task but one the Chaplains have achieved and are achieving in an extraordinary manner.<sup>3</sup>

This level of Chaplain-Marine rapport was largely hammered out in the combat environment. Until the middle of August 1965, the Marine effort in Vietnam did not know a major operation in the field. There had been plenty of danger and certainly enough contact with the enemy but no regiment-size

operation. It was then, however, that the war began to accelerate and the slogging and sharing so often spoken about by chaplains in their reports began in earnest. The life of an infantryman, his platoon, company, and battalion was noteworthy for the wide variety of its experience. There was the heat, thirst, humping (walking) with a 35- to 40-pound pack on his back; the boredom, fear, blood, and death; and positions gained and abandoned as the shifting strategy of the strange conflict demanded. Only rarely was this pattern broken by what seemed truly pleasant things, such as letters from home or warm beer.

In the year from August 1965 to July 1966 the operations sped by one after the other as the war grew hotter in the southern I Corps Tactical Zone. By 15 August there was indication that the *1st Viet Cong Regiment*, about 2,000 strong, was concentrated south of Chu Lai, on the Van Tuong Peninsula, and the airfield was undoubtedly its target. To frustrate those plans an operation called Starlite was outlined. This, the first regiment-size operation since Korea, involved the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines; 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines; led by the 7th Marines headquarters, all accompanied by their chaplains. The operation was a study in coordination. One company of one battalion made a river crossing from the north in amphibian tractors (LVTs), another battalion landed to the west from helicopters, and the third came in from the sea in an amphibious landing. By the 24th of August almost 1,000 Viet Cong casualties were counted.

After Starlite came a host of operations whose code names sped by with the fighting Marine hardly knowing the name of the operation he was currently on. Chaplains in the field shared the same response. One chaplain, when asked if he participated in a certain operation said, "Maybe I did. If my unit did then I did. All I know is that it seemed that once we went to the field we stayed there until I was medevaced."<sup>4</sup> The operations were more successful at some times than others, but the success of the operation was almost incidental to the chaplain and his ministry. Somehow, cold statistics did not tell the whole story of the realities of field operations. The story, for instance, of Marines half-submerged behind a dike in a foul-smelling rice paddy while machine gun bullets cracked overhead. The story of chopper pilots coming to a landing zone at night

without lights to pick up a wounded Marine who had cheated death for 10 hours, and beside whom his chaplain had remained, cramped and cold, the entire time; the story of a Navy corpsman moving across the fire-swept battlefield to save an injured Marine rifleman only to become a casualty himself. These, along with the punji pits, boobytraps, mines, stifling humidity, and biting packstraps, were a few of the pictures of operational reality that statistical success or lack of it does not measure.

#### *With the Wounded or on the Line?*

A clear and constant question that persisted with the chaplain in combat with the infantry was: How do I serve both the wounded and the men on the line? Every operation is unique and different from any other. It is probably impossible to lay down a well-defined set of operational procedures for a chaplain in combat; he must be ready to serve whenever and however he can. It is in this crucible that the chaplain with Marines must display his particular genius. As the conflict began to speed up in the latter months of 1965, Lieutenant Commander Eugene M. Smith (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.) with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, faced this ever-present dilemma when his battalion was engaged in Operation Rice Straw. He reported his solution:

The 3d Battalion, 3d Marines had been flown from Chu Lai to Da Nang to set up a blocking force for units already engaged in Operation Rice Straw. We were helo-lifted into our zone of operation, and the men quickly set a perimeter defense. I went in with the BAS (Battalion Aid Station) and our two battalion doctors. Shortly after our arrival in the area, and about dusk, one of our troopers was blown apart by a land mine. At first light the following morning our battalion commander, Colonel Muir, stepped on a land mine and was instantly killed. By this time we all realized we were in a mine field, and that the less movement we made the better-off we would be. I was very concerned for my men, I wanted to minister to their needs in some way, but it was obvious that I could not bring them together in any kind of group. So I slung my field combat kit over my shoulder, rosaries hanging from my belt and missals in my pack as I trooped the foxholes, giving communion where it was desired, praying with all, Catholic and Protestant alike, giving rosaries and missals. All Saturday morning I served the men on the perimeter. Saturday afternoon I climbed on a helicopter and flew to Charlie Med., which was to be the receiving area for our wounded. I remained there on duty all that afternoon and all that night to minister to any men of 3/3 who were brought in. Late in the evening an incident took place which pleased me very much, and seemed to indicate the wisdom of my

dual ministry. A Marine from 3/3 was brought in on a stretcher. After he was placed in the surgery and was awaiting attention, I leaned over him and started to talk. He began to smile and said, "Oh, you served me communion this morning." He was very pleased to see me, and seemed equally pleased that I had been ministering to him that morning. Needless to say, I felt very good about it also. The following morning I returned to the operations area and once again went out to a different company and served communion and ministered where and how I was able. I truly believe that my ministry on that particular operation was more effective than on any other operation I had been on.<sup>5</sup>

It was each combat chaplain's ideal to be with his men in the combat situation and also in their pain in injury and potential death, but that ideal was most difficult to maintain. If he had to choose, the chaplain's highest priority was his religious ministry to the wounded and dying. In World War II and in Korea during combat operations, the battalion chaplain was invariably to be found at the battalion aid station (BAS), receiving casualties as they arrived for treatment.<sup>6</sup> In Vietnam, with extensive use of the medical-evacuation helicopter, personnel wounded in action were flown directly to medical aid centers: A Med, at Hue-Phu Bai; B Med at Chu Lai; C Med, the Naval Hospital at Da Nang; or offshore to the hospital ship *USS Repose* (AH 16). As a consequence, unit chaplains seldom saw their own wounded. Other Navy chaplains were necessary at these medical treatment points to insure that the religious dimensions of the Marines' lives would be fully served at this crucial time. On the occasion of a visit to C Med at Da Nang, the Commanding General, III MAF, Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt, remarked to his staff chaplain, "It is a wonder to me and a source of deep pride in your Corps, to have wounded Marines tell me over and over again the first thing they remember on arrival or after surgery is talking to the chaplain."<sup>7</sup>

Early in the mid-year 1965 buildup, Chaplain O'Connor had addressed himself to the imperative need for a chaplain other than the unit chaplain to be available at all times at the medical collecting points which, in the age of the helicopter, meant the nearest field hospital. Lieutenant Commander C. Albert Vernon (Disciples of Christ), a volunteer for Vietnam duty, was one of the first chaplains assigned to the field hospital at Da Nang, where he and Chaplain O'Connor shared the duty, one or another of them remaining at the hospital 24 hours a day.

Chaplain Vernon wrote:

The casualties who were evacuated to Da Nang were either returned to their unit after treatment and released from the hospital or were medically evacuated via the Nha Trang, Saigon, Clark Air Force Base (Philippines), route to the United States. Chaplain O'Connor and I met each helicopter at the landing pad, day and night. In the early months many of the casualties were from heat exhaustion. The heat was unbearable. Salt tablets, ice water baths and rest would see most of these returned to their units in a few hours. Salt and malaria tablets were essential. The Marines who felt they did not need them were happy to follow the routine after one bout with exhaustion.

There were many heartbreaking incidents in these early weeks of the conflict. I learned during these weeks that a man who has mistakenly and accidentally killed his best friend needs a chaplain on the spot quickly, perhaps even more than when his friend has been killed by enemy action.<sup>8</sup>

Lieutenant Allen B. Craven (Southern Baptist), sent to Vietnam as an emergency replacement for Chaplain John Walker who had suffered an apparent heart attack, initially served Chaplain Walker's 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. When Chaplain Walker's trouble had been diagnosed as heat exhaustion and he was speedily returned to his battalion, Chaplain Craven was transferred to the field hospital to ease the burden upon Chaplains O'Connor and Vernon. Chaplain Craven's reflections on that duty indicate its pivotal importance to ministry in the combat environment:

At first...I found myself growing tense at the sound of a helicopter, afraid that more young Marines would be brought in with their bodies torn. But I soon sensed the great contribution a chaplain could make to these young men. The cross on the cap alone calmed and comforted. I will never forget the night one Marine was brought in. His abdomen was torn, his left lung collapsed, and his legs were shattered by shrapnel. I cannot praise the team of doctors and corpsmen highly enough. They brought the boy back from death's door. The boy was going in and out of coma and thrashing about wildly. I asked the doctor if I could talk to him and he asked me to please try. I took his hand and talking into his ear told him I was the chaplain. His eyes flickered open and he saw the cross on my cap. He immediately calmed down but my hand was in his the rest of the night. Each time I tried to remove it he would start to move around and grip my hand even tighter. I went with him to X-ray, was gowned and then accompanied him into the operating room. He was evacuated before he could recognize the things around him and he will never remember my hand in his that night, but the look in his eyes when he saw my cross, and the grip of his hand, can never be erased from my mind.<sup>9</sup>

The constant ministry available to the casualties at the medical evaluation points made possible by

assigning chaplains directly to them, greatly eased the anxiety of the battalion chaplain concerned for his men and released him to continue his ministry on the operation.

*Combat Activity at Chu Lai*

Chu Lai remained the hub of activity in South Vietnam from August 1965 to April 1966, in terms of battalion and multi-battalion, amphibious and heliborne combat operations. Beginning with Operation Starlite, 17-24 August 1965, six major multi-battalion operations were to take place before Operation Indiana was concluded on 30 March. Piranha (6-10 September 1965), Blue Marlin I & II (8-18 November 1965), Harvest Moon (9-21 December 1965), and Double Eagle I and II (20-25 March 1966) represent the code names of the six largest operations to occur during the period near the Chu Lai enclave.

The necessity of amphibious support for some of the operations created problems for chaplain coverage. On Operation Piranha for instance, the 1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines were scheduled for a three day search and destroy mission on Batangan Peninsula and the *Princeton* was assigned to support the operations, receiving and treating casualties as they were helilifted aboard from combat areas ashore. The support function of LPHs of the amphibious force, centering as it did upon delivery of Marines to the combat zone and then standing by offshore to receive casualties, created a requirement for additional chaplain services. Customarily the helicopter landing ship carried a single chaplain. Reinforced battalions, embarked as passengers for a joint Navy-Marine Corps amphibious operation, usually had their unit chaplains with them. Together, the ship and battalion chaplains, usually two in number, provided for the spiritual needs of ship's company and passengers. Since mid-1964, when the landing team concept was fully applied in Southeast Asian waters, chaplains had cooperated in such joint coverage. But with Operation Piranha and subsequent similar combat missions, requirements for religious coverage changed. For the first time the landing teams actually debarked to engage in combat. Passenger chaplains went with their troops. With the requirement to stand by for receiving casualties a need for the broadest possible religious coverage arose onboard the LPH. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains, as a minimum, were

needed to minister to casualties. In time amphibious squadron (PhibRon) chaplains, usually moving with their ships in the company of the LPHs, were instructed to move aboard the larger ship during combat to provide a ministry to casualties. The amphibious force chaplain, Captain Malcolm S. Carpenter (United Methodist) recommended to the Chief of Chaplains that of the two chaplains assigned to each PhibRon and LPH respectively, one should be Roman Catholic. Approval of Chaplain Carpenter's recommendation eventually assured that Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains were always available to the LPHs for the ministry to casualties.

During Operation Piranha however, Chaplain Carpenter's recommendation had not yet been implemented. The *Princeton*, in company with other amphibious ships of the SLF, had carried BLT 3/7 since 9 July. The battalion landing team, after an amphibious landing, had resumed its offshore position as the ready battalion of the SLF. Four chaplains gave religious coverage to embarked personnel. Commander Willie D. Powell (Southern Baptist) was the *Princeton* chaplain. Lieutenant Robert L. Bigler (United Presbyterian) was the PhibRon 5 chaplain. Lieutenant Commander Gerard W. Taylor (Roman Catholic) with the main body of MAG-36 was a passenger on board the *Princeton*. When Operation Piranha began, Lieutenant Ralph C. Betters (United Presbyterian) accompanied BLT 3/7 in MAG-36 helicopters to establish a blocking position at the base of the peninsula. Already ashore, Chaplain Taylor had to return to the *Princeton* to provide Catholic coverage for any casualties evacuated to the operating rooms of the ship during the operation. BLT 1/7 with Lieutenant John R. McNamara (Roman Catholic) was making an amphibious assault on the beaches at the northern tip of Batangan Peninsula, and beginning the push along the length of the Viet Cong infested strip of vegetation-covered, jungle-patched terrain. This was the first of three major combat operations for both Chaplain McNamara and Chaplain Betters and the one on which American Marines sustained the lightest casualties. BLT 1/7, in company with Vietnamese Marines and ARVN soldiers on its flanks, drove forward to search the countryside and the villages. The Viet Cong were entrenched in caves and underground tunnels reminiscent of the Japanese fortifications on Iwo Jima in World War II.



During the four-day land operation, the Viet Cong lost 198 men killed in action and eight men wounded. The accomplishment of Operation Piranha was that a traditional Viet Cong stronghold, Batangan Peninsula, less than 15 miles from the airstrip at Chu Lai, was made temporarily secure.

It was significant that several chaplains reported extending their ministry to Viet Cong dead and wounded on successive operations near Chu Lai. Bodies of Viet Cong were collected following each engagement for mass burial by American troops. Respect for the dead enemy was enhanced by brief funeral services conducted by chaplains. Viet Cong wounded were recovered from the field of battle. They were given medical treatment by Navy physicians and corpsmen and a ministry by a Navy chaplain. Chaplain Taylor remembered:

Two Marines were wounded and several Viet Cong were killed, two of them on our flight line. Not knowing what their religion was I gave conditional last rites. Later one of the Viet Cong was brought to our sick bay, regained consciousness and told me through an interpreter that he was Catholic. He was just a young lad, and from what I could gather he had been picked up in some small hamlet and forced to come along with the Viet Cong. He died later on that night.<sup>10</sup>

The import of these humanitarian acts lay not only in the chaplains' willingness to extend their ministry even to a deadly enemy, such had been the case with enemy wounded for generations of Navy chaplains, but also that their commanders readily approved the humanitarian acts as appropriate and right and extended their efforts to support such ministries. The philosophical stance that one should do one's enemy the least amount of injury necessary under the circumstances seemed to permeate the thinking of many field commanders. It was a natural extension of the concept of limited warfare and was closely tied to the growing realization that the war in Vietnam would be finally won only when the indigenous population was convinced that their best interests lay in strong support of the Saigon government. Guerrilla warfare, it soon became apparent, was inevitably a war of attrition. Nevertheless, where it was possible to do so, enemy lives were spared. Concern for the best interests of the Vietnamese people also expressed itself in other ways. Chaplain McNamara wrote:

Another example of sincere interest in the people was the great effort by our command to be as humanitarian as

possible in combat. The troopers exercised great fire discipline. Once some fleeing Viet Cong snatched children as shields. Our Executive Officer, Major Max J. Hockenauer, refused permission to fire. For a Marine Sharpshooter they were easy targets. The major's decision was made out of concern for possible injury to the children. Another time a patrol refused to return fire that came from an enemy [having] seen women and children in the area. The people sense the fairness and compassion of such action and respond accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

Lieutenant John J. Glynn (Roman Catholic) with 2d Battalion, 4th Marines and Chaplain Taylor, in times of relative quiet, extended their ministry to South Vietnamese Catholics, many of whom had been without the ministry of their church for several months. Chaplain Glynn said:

Once it was determined that several hundred Catholics lived in the various hamlets and villages near Chu Lai, it was decided to send out word by the village chiefs that Catholic Mass would be said in the area by a squad of Marines. Late one summer afternoon, we drove to the school house in the settlement of An Tan to find over a hundred people gathered there. After a very touching speech of welcome read by an elder and translated by an ARVN interpreter, we offered what was to become the first of a series of weekly Masses in the local hamlets.<sup>12</sup>

Lieutenant George S. Goad (Southern Baptist) with the 7th Marines reported similar contacts by Protestant chaplains at Chu Lai; he recalled:

Protestant chaplains undertook a project to construct a church for a Protestant congregation in the village of Chu Lai. Our primary support was to be the provision of funds for the construction. Among the very interesting things we learned were that such construction required the approval of the District and Province Chiefs. These men were reluctant at first to approve the project unless they could be done for Catholic, Buddhist and Cao Dai congregations in the village.<sup>13</sup>

In this instance approval was finally granted and the funds raised. It became apparent that the chaplain should release the funds only in small amounts rather than the entire sum at once. The total amount, relatively small to Americans, was overwhelmingly large to the Vietnamese. They seemed unable to cope with the problem of the efficient expenditure of so much money at one time. The first increment was presented to the congregation in a special service conducted in the village. Wisdom dictated the necessity of placing the pastor and two of his laymen very much to the fore during this special service. Every attempt was made to enlist

the congregation in a renewed support of that confidence in the local paper. Marine units were learning the principles of their civic action on the job.

During this period chaplains were most often introduced to combat activity almost immediately upon arrival. In August 1968, Lieutenant Arthur D. Seeland (United Methodist) arrived to relieve Chaplain Smith of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. When he arrived in Da Nang, he was initially assigned by the III MAF Chaplain to C Med as a relief for Chaplain DeBock, who had returned to the United States on an emergency leave occasioned by the accidental death of his brother.

When 10 days later, Chaplain Seeland was assigned to 3d Battalion, 3d Marines the battalion was engaged in Operation Rice Straw and Golden Fleece. His tenure at Chu Lai, like that of this battalion, was to be very brief but action-packed. He participated in numerous multi-company operations and the battalion operation, Triple Play (18-19 October), before his battalion was ordered on board the USS *Paul Revere* (APA 1248) to prepare for participation in Operation Blue Marlin, the first joint U.S. Marine-Vietnamese Marine assault landing a few miles north of Chu Lai.

BLT 2/7, whose chaplain was Lieutenant Walter A. Hiskett (Lutheran), a Marine infantry squad leader in 2/7 during the Korean War, also participated in Operation Blue Marlin I, in which the landing force conducted a search and destroy mission to secure a Viet Cong-infested area south of the enclave.<sup>14</sup> Blue Marlin I and Blue Marlin II continued from 8-18 November to secure Highway No. 1 north of Chu Lai. Chaplain Hiskett's unit took up new, semi-permanent positions at Chu Lai in a previously constructed compound, which had a small chapel in the battalion CP area. It was constructed of native materials and had been removed forward to new perimeters. Chaplain Hiskett noted that the chapel was no longer adequate and so, even with the pressure of combat operations, the Marines decided something should be done. Chaplain Hiskett reported:

The men decided to contribute toward building a new chapel which would be large and erected at a more desirable location. We did this and the new chapel was completed by Christmas Eve, when the highlight of religious services for me in Vietnam occurred. The men decorated the chapel with Christmas trees, evergreen branches and red candles. I think this was the most moving Christmas service I have ever experienced. When we mov-

ed the CP to our new location, almost two months later, we also moved our chapel.

Attendance at religious services, both Catholic and Protestant has been outstanding. I owe much of the success to the command of all levels who encourage their men in both word and example. The Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Leon Utter, USMC, takes part in the service every Sunday.<sup>15</sup>

### *Chaplain Participation in Major Operations*

Chaplains centered on a few major operations as especially significant, mostly from the point of view of encountering problems of coordination of ministry in the field and to the wounded.

One of the most ambitious operations during this period was called Harvest Moon. West of Chu Lai and 30 miles south of Da Nang in the Hiep Duc/Viet An/Que Son region, the Viet Cong controlled a rice-filled valley 10 miles wide at the mouth and stretching 20 miles inland from the coast. It was bordered by steep hills and jungle-covered mountains on each side. ARVN troops were positioned in heavily fortified emplacements in strategic locations in the valley. Intelligence indicated a massive buildup of enemy troops because the *1st Viet Cong Regiment*, three separate VC battalions, two local force VC companies, and smaller attached units attacked and overran the ARVN position at Que Son, forcing its abandonment.

Three U.S. Marine battalions were selected to join four ARVN battalions to sweep the valley and destroy VC capability for offensive action in the area. One battalion from Chu Lai, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was chosen for the operation. The 3d Battalion, 3d Marines recently repositioned in Da Nang from Chu Lai, and the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines embarked in the Amphibious Ready Group as the Special Landing Force, were the two remaining combat battalions participating. Chaplain Hiskett came in with his battalion by helicopter while Chaplain Seeland moved into the area with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines by truck convoy. Accompanying him was Chaplain Gibson of Fleet Logistics Support Group, who provided Catholic coverage. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, accompanied by Lieutenant Thomas B. Handley (Southern Baptist) was also flown into the valley by helicopter in the classical vertical envelopment movement.

On 8 December the battalions were in position and began their sweep through the valley. They

began uncovering caches of food and found scores of weapons. The 3d Marines was first to come under intense fire when Company L approached a hill through adjacent rice paddies. The VC sprang an ambush and the fierce firefight continued for 1½ hours. Air support was called in, the Marines stormed the hill and engaged the heavily entrenched, heavily armed enemy troops. Chaplains Seeland and Gibson attended Company L's casualties.

The following day the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines landed by helicopter to join the push through the valley. Heavy resistance continued near the mouth of the valley but the battalions succeeded in routing VC defenders. Sweeping through the valley, the three battalions captured tons of equipment, factories for the manufacture of clothing and for the publication of propaganda documents, and huge caches of food and ammunition.

As the operation continued, Lieutenant Commander Joe E. Davis (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Commander John C. Keenon (United Methodist) of the helicopter landing ship USS *Valley Forge* (LPH 8) and amphibious force flagship USS *Eldorado* (AGC 11), ministered to casualties evacuated by helicopter to the hospital facilities of the Amphibious Ready Group. In the final days of the first week they began to see more cases of immersion foot sustained by Marines who had been wading for days in the valley's rice paddies searching out the enemy. Punji traps also represented a major hazard for infantry Marines. It was a miserable conflict, a dirty war of boobytraps, ambushes, hit and run tactics, and a frustrating continually-moving enemy.

At the operation's midpoint Chaplain Scanlon (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Peter D. MacLean (Episcopal) were sent to join the medical company which had been formed to accompany 3d Battalion, 3d Marines into the field. Like Chaplains Gibson and Seeland who had preceded them, they spent the remaining days of the operation receiving the wounded at the medical company before the casualties were medically evacuated to field hospitals in Chu Lai and Da Nang, to the *Valley Forge* and to the hospital ship *Repose*.

By 15 December enemy resistance had dwindled to sporadic small arms fire. The enemy dead count was placed in excess of 1,000 Viet Cong confirmed killed with even larger numbers sustaining wounds and being carried or dragged away by their comrades. Hundreds of tunnels and bunker-emplaced

guns were destroyed. A regiment and three separate VC battalions had been rendered incapable of sustaining the fight. Que Son and other ARVN positions were secure.

The 3d Battalion, 3d Marines and 2d Battalion, 1st Marines with supporting companies of other battalions, and Chaplains Seeland, Scanlon, Gibson, MacLean, and Handley, were helilifted out of the valley and returned to Da Nang and the Amphibious Ready Group respectively.

From Que An, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines retraced its sweep path searching for the *80th VC Battalion*, covering 30 kilometers on foot in 2½ days. At the end of the second day of the battalion's return to the mouth of the valley, a furious ambush firefight occurred which was to compare in intensity to any engagement of the operation, and was to be the last big battle of Harvest Moon. Along the hill line near the village of Ky Phu, two companies of approximately 300 Viet Cong had regrouped and re-equipped themselves. They were lightly dug in and lay in waiting for the long column of 2/7 troops to pass before them. Company G led the way, followed by two platoons of Company F and H&S Company, and the remainder of the battalion. The Viet Cong permitted Company G to proceed past them and opened fire on the following platoons of Company F and H&S Company with mortars and machine guns, attempting to divide the column and destroy the headquarters command echelon in the first burst of fire. Many casualties were sustained in the first moments of the ambush. Chaplain Hiskett, marching with H&S Company, the first to be fired upon, dropped into the cover of the nearest rice paddy dike. He landed in the heavy mud, on his back, burying the heavy pack which he carried on his shoulders. Later he told III MAF Chaplain Garrett that he was like a turtle on its back, since the suction vacuum of the heavy mud made it extremely difficult to right himself. As he did so, Lieutenant Colonel Utter had given orders deploying the battalion, and Company F was driving back through the town, killing VC at a distance of 4 to 10 yards. The Viet Cong were attempting to encircle H&S Company. Chaplain Hiskett had made his way to the side of a house in Ky Phu, in the midst of heavy fire and took position beside a large concrete urn. Seeing a broken window in the house, he threw his pack inside and followed it. Shortly afterwards, he ventured forth again, "moving from position to position, from

squad to squad, from Marine to Marine" providing encouragement to the embattled infantry men.<sup>16</sup>

It was three hours before Companies F and G and the rear guard reinforcing platoons stormed the VC positions and routed the enemy. The situation then clarified a bit and casualties could be evacuated to the house on the main street of Ky Phu which became the place of Hiskett's ministry of consolation and personal encouragement throughout the evening and into the night. He remarked that when he later examined the concrete urn beside which he had taken cover, he discovered that it had a neat six-inch hole through it, on line with where he had lain.

After the fight, 105 VC bodies had been counted. Two wounded VC soldiers taken captive revealed that the enemy force were indeed from the North Vietnamese-manned *80th Viet Cong Battalion*, for which the 7th Marines had been given permission to search. After an uneventful night at Ky Phu the battalion moved to a suitable helicopter landing zone for the return to Chu Lai.

Operation Double Eagle, extending from 28 January to 1 March 1966, represented the largest Marine operation of the war to that date. This was true of the chaplain participation also. Phase I began at dawn on 28 January in Quang Ngai Province, almost 20 miles southeast of Quang Ngai City. North Vietnamese regular units were known to be operating freely in the area and Task Force Delta, augmented by the Amphibious Ready Group/Special Landing Force, and appropriate support units, was assigned the search and destroy mission. Chaplains Morton and Kahal, from division headquarters in Da Nang, joined Lieutenant Commander Nilus W. Hubble (Roman Catholic) of Task Force Delta to provide broad religious coverage for the operation. Chaplain Frank Morton, the division chaplain, climbed the nets with Chaplain Hubble and made the amphibious landing. Hubble later reflected:

Frank's usual indomitable spirit and "can do" attitude saw me through this episode as well as the next few days. It was much better to see such things in the movies and recalled Chaplain Cy Rotrige's remark when I was leaving San Francisco, "Remember you wrote the letter volunteering for this. We did not send you against your will."<sup>17</sup>

The task force comprised the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, with Lieutenant Raymond Swierenga, (Christian Reformed) attached; the 2d Battalion, 9th

Marines with Lieutenant Patrick J. Dowd (Roman Catholic); and the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, whose Chaplain, Lieutenant Henry K. Loeffler (Lutheran), arrived in Vietnam just as Phase I of Operation Double Eagle began. Chaplain Dowd, recently transferred to the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, came down from Da Nang to join the operation. He wrote:

Upon reporting to the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, I was in for a new experience! I had a pretty good idea what to expect in a line unit, but within the first two weeks I was out on Operation Double Eagle. I learned first how to pack a pack and carry one. It was at this time that I really got a good look at the life of the "grunt." I had always had great respect for these men, but this put all the finishing touches on it. The greatest and bravest men I know are the men in the line companies. They don't live; they exist. All they want is for someone to at least recognize the fact that they exist, asking for little more. Every day they wake from too little sleep, faced with another day which might just be their last. They eat C-rations three times a day; body odor doesn't bother them any longer. There are only two luxuries that interest them, mail and warm beer. I marvel at these men. I wish there was a special medal just for them. These are the MEN.<sup>18</sup>

Chaplain Loeffler's battalion, 3/1, while not designated as the Special Landing Force, was embarked in amphibious ships and made an amphibious assault landing in Quang Ngai Province. The battalion, after leaving Okinawa for Vietnam in mid-January, participated in Operation Hilltop in the Philippines in preparatory training for Operation Double Eagle. Chaplain Loeffler was riding in ships of PhibRon-5 with Lieutenant Richard C. Harnett (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant Robert L. Bigler (United Presbyterian) attached. At sea, all chaplains highlined to provide Catholic and Protestant Communion services for all troops in the convoy. In the early morning of 28 January just before loading the 'Mike' boats, devotions were held in all ships' troop compartments. The Marines then landed in South Vietnam and the operation was begun. Chaplain Loeffler recalled:

After camping in a semi-CP situation on the beach for a week with three sites and four major holes to be dug, my Battalion Commander requested that I join a small, two-company search and clear operation in the highlands. With the gear that can be put in a pack, an altar kit and sometimes a clerk, I began my most intimate acquaintance with the joys of the infantry, hot and cold, wet and dry. I began what was to become my practice on all exercises and operations. Evening Prayers, which consisted of small groups gathered together to hear scripture and to pray for home and help. Every Sunday in the field to crawl from

Marine to Marine to serve the elements as in the middle of the service a sniper opened up on the company CP and held us all below three feet. Sniper fire was as commonplace as inclement weather, and it seemed that every weekend became the occasion for the first-rate rainstorm.<sup>19</sup>

After the chaplain and his battalion came out of the field they had one day to begin unloading at Chu Lai when they were recommitted to what became Double Eagle II. They were to march another 10 long days in the hills of South Vietnam. At Chu Lai Chaplain Loeffler requisitioned a can of small altar breads, with the standard 300 in a can, to replenish his supplies for Ash Wednesday field communion. The supply system sometimes makes mistakes. They sent only one bottle of wine, in accordance with this requisition, but instead of a small can of 300 host-wafers the Marine supply system came through with 300 full-sized loaves of bread.

In spite of recurring night mortars the chaplain's pattern for worship continued, with evening prayer services if they did not march into the night, and Sunday Communion when possible. While slogging and sharing a chaplain soon learned to carry only essentials in his combat kit. A helmet, for instance, often doubled nicely as a fine baptismal bowl.

Three chaplains on board ships of Amphibious Ready Group/Special Landing Force during Operation Double Eagle were Lieutenant Commander Joe A. Davis (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant John W. Pegnam (Roman Catholic) in the *Valley Forge*, and Lieutenant Edwin V. Bohula (Roman Catholic), who rode the USS *Montrose* with his troops of the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. Following the battalion on this operation gives another vivid picture of chaplain participation in a major movement.

The 2d Battalion, 3d Marines was not involved in the initial landings of Operation Double Eagle, but a day later it was helilifted deep in country. The battalion landed at an old French airstrip and met no resistance. Almost immediately it formed up and started marching. This first march was well remembered since the Marines walked all day and suffered quite a few heat casualties. The helicopters picked up these men as the battalion was traveling fast. Chaplain Bohula wrote:

The pace was terrific and the heat was intense. By the end of the day we had all just about had it. Thank heaven we had to ford a stream waist deep just prior to settling for the night. As on all operations we slept on the ground

under the stars. The next day we started walking again but we first had to recross the stream which meant we walked all day with wet clothes and shoes, since we crossed more streams.<sup>20</sup>

Half of the force started out and half were to start out a few hours later. The chaplain was with the first half. After a while the heat casualties began to come again and the doctor, corpsman, two others, and the chaplain remained with them, waiting for helicopters to pick them up and for the rear personnel to come up and join them.

After about an hour explosions were heard as Hueys attacked in the vicinity of the forward positions of 2d Battalion, 3d Marines and jets bombed and strafed the area. The forward echelon was ambushed and air strikes were called in. The group with the heat casualties was alone with one machine gun, one rifle, and two pistols and was in a precarious position. An hour or so later the rear guard came up on them and joined the forward elements. The unit dug in beyond a neck-deep river to avoid being entrapped. Its radios by this time were useless since the batteries were worn out. The battalion was unable to contact anyone. Chaplain Bohula remembered:

We crawled over hills, through marshes, and across rice paddies all night. It was pitch black and the trek was almost unbearable. Apparently the artillery had word that we were returning another way and our path was being shelled by H&I fire. Pitch black, rough terrain, and the frequent whine of shells marked the whole night.<sup>21</sup>

As they neared the base snipers fired at them from a farm house, a fatal error since the place was immediately demolished. The weary Marines stumbled into the base camp and sought rest and water. The chaplain held services, and in about three hours the men formed up again and mounted out on another strike by helicopter. As they were taking off, snipers opened up and two helicopters were hit and the one had its gunner killed. When they were landed at the objective, jets were strafing the area, and a couple of Marines were hit by projectiles from a jet which started its run early. Corpsmen and the chaplain attended them immediately.

The next few days were spent mopping up villages and marching through the day. At one point the men boarded amtracs to go by water. Again they walked and climbed, and settled in to await a join-up with other forces, wrapped in ponchos for the cold and clammy night. Chaplain Bohula reported:

Since we were to remain in this area for a few days I caught a copter out to the LPH to get my Mass gear, visit the sick and also visit the *Repose*. It took forever to hitch a ride. With my gear in tow I hopped rides to other units in the area who had no Catholic Chaplain. It was just hit and miss, and running from one unit to another by copter entailed long waits. I was grateful, though, for the C-rations which were always waiting at the units visited. I never knew whether I'd get back to my people at night or even for the next several days. I said Mass on large rocks, C-ration cartons, and even in a hole with the ground before me as the altar. But we held services and the turnout was gratifying even though the men were dead tired.

About mid-February it was hoped the battalion would get a breather in Hong Kong . . . but their hopes were short-lived since they just steamed around for a couple of days to give us time to get combat ready again. Then word came that Phase II of Double Eagle was going into effect. Once again they were transferred to the LPH via the rope nets and in full pack, and took off into VC territory.<sup>22</sup>

Phase II of Operation Double Eagle was another search and destroy mission, but this time north of Chu Lai, in the vicinity of the village of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province. ComUSMACV had requested that the Amphibious Ready Group/Special Landing Force remain in the area, following Phase I, to give support for Phase II operations. Phase I terminated on 17 February and Phase II continued from 19 February to 1 March.

Chaplain Bohula recalled the rapid landing, take-off patterns of the helicopters when the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines was recommitted:

My luck was to have our copter land in the middle of a rice paddy and as I jumped out I went waist deep in the muck. The first minute in the field on a new operation and I smelled 'like that' again. We walked and climbed over hills. Snipers worked us over but prisoners, weapons and supplies were taken. Phase II was another series of long treks, wet, hot dusty treks. Leeches were all over us from the paddies. The rains came at this point as on the other operations, and we were wet day and night. I was lucky to get to the LPH to get my Mass gear replenished and also to get some ashes for Ash Wednesday. It was during this time that the headquarters was hit and our S2 and S3 were hit. Other nearby units sustained heavier losses.<sup>23</sup>

Chaplain Bohula was out forward because his colonel wished it so. Since there were chaplains on the beach at the aid station, in the LPH, and in the *Repose*, there was reason for him to follow his colonel's desire. If any one of these places had been short a chaplain, he would undoubtedly have stayed in the rear. During Phases I and II of Double Eagle, these circumstances caused the chaplain of 2d Bat-

talion, 3d Marines to become a familiar face around the transportation and supply points. Coming in and catching copters to the different units' positions became routine. For the most part he took care of his own men but if there was a chopper going to other units who requested a Mass he would go up and work his way back. The control tower did its best to line him up on the first supply run. Without this aid and interest it would probably have been impossible to do half of what needed to be done.

During the latter half of Operation Double Eagle, Lieutenant Lowell M. Malliett (Nazarene) and Lieutenant Walter J. Blank (Roman Catholic) arrived from Okinawa assigned to the 11th Marines and remained with the operation throughout the month, covering artillery units at their scattered locations.

Early in the operation various smaller units taking part in it boarded ships and helicopters and were landed about 10 miles further south along the coast. Chaplain coverage became more of a problem. Some infantry battalions were broken into separate companies or smaller detachments and moved in various directions, some being separated by as much as 15 miles.

Chaplain Hiskett participated in both Harvest Moon and Double Eagle II. His experiences in the two operations highlights the necessity for rapid adjustments by chaplains in this conflict. He began slogging with the rifle companies until he discovered that he was ultimately more necessary at the medical aid station. He describes it as follows:

I travelled with the B.A.S. as a part of the Command Group. The day before the operation was to end the battalion made solid contact as a result of a V.C. guerrilla band set up in ambush. After being pinned down by small arms, machine gun fire, and mortars for over an hour we were finally able to maneuver into a village and set up a Battalion Aid Station. Because of the tactical deployment of the troops and the fact that we were on the move most of the time it was impossible to conduct religious services but I did visit with as many of the men as I could under the circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

Because of these experiences, on subsequent operations the battalion commander felt that Chaplain Hiskett should station himself at the medical unit to which the wounded would be primarily evacuated. The reasoning behind this was that most operations were lasting only a few days, and due to the tactical deployment of troops the chaplain would be in contact with a relatively small number of troops in the command group. Almost all



Photo courtesy of Chaplain Edwin V. Bohula

*Chaplain Edwin V. Bohula in the vehicle assigned to him at Da Nang. In the rear is his clerk, Cpl Earl Benner, and the driver, LCpl Rosales, who frequently rode "shotgun."*

casualties are evacuated by helicopter from the area in which their individual unit was operating; therefore, the chaplain would have little opportunity to minister to the wounded and dying. This, of course, was not a firm policy and could be adjusted if the situation warranted. On operations lasting more than two or three days, the chaplain would accompany the troops in the field.

Following Operation Double Eagle, the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines returned to Da Nang, taking up a position on the perimeter which had shortly before been vacated by the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Chaplain Bohula reported:

I was amazed at the changes in the Da Nang area since we left in November. There seemed to be more of everything and the roads were wide and decent. Being the only Catholic Chaplain in the regiment I was assigned to cover units other than my own. It was a blessing that my Colonel insisted that I have a Mighty Mite to myself to give spiritual help to all the units.

It was also a great help in getting my personal affairs in

order for my detachment. At my own camp, the chapel was set up and a GP strongbacked tent was erected and connected to the chapel for my successor. All in all I left Vietnam with little reluctance. It was rewarding work. It was hot; it was dusty; it was uncomfortable. But it was real apostolic work—an opportunity that comes to few men.<sup>23</sup>

Chaplain Bohula remained in Da Nang until late March when Lieutenant Commander Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak (Assemblies of God) was relieved at B Med in Chu Lai for reassignment by the 3d Marine Division. Chaplain Ahrnsbrak had been in Vietnam since December and had served at the field hospital in Chu Lai. When the 1st Marine Division moved in country in late March, and took operational control of the Chu Lai chaplains, their units, and the enclave TAOR, 3d Marine Division chaplains were restored to their division. The result was that manning B Med became the responsibility of 1st Marine Division Chaplain, Captain John L. Wissing (Roman Catholic) and he assigned Chaplains Ahrnsbrak and

Lieutenant Commander Thomas P. Kenny (Roman Catholic). Chaplain Ahrnsbrak's brief tour of duty with a field hospital was terminated in March and he was reassigned as Chaplain Bohula's relief in the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. He welcomed the change from Chu Lai's B Med Field Hospital to a line battalion. He stated:

It was my hope in coming to Vietnam to be assigned to a line battalion. The time spent in the medical battalion had allowed me to prepare for the ministry to the wounded and dying that became a frequent occurrence in the months ahead. The frustrations of guerrilla warfare became suddenly apparent to me. During the first three months in our TAOR, one company took a number of KIAs and many WIAs from booby traps only. It was hard on the troops to see their buddies 'blown away' by an unseen enemy. After a few weeks of hearing the explosions, watching the med-evac being effected, scanning the med-evac roster to see who was hit, the frustrations continued to build.<sup>26</sup>

In early summer the battalion was called on to expand the TAOR, and moved to Dai Loc District. Since there were fewer mines and booby traps there, and the companies had opportunity to actually see the enemy and engage him, morale and attitudes improved greatly. Prior to the move they had learned how hard it was to lose casualties constantly to an unseen enemy. Chaplain Ahrnsbrak showed that frustration. By spending as much time as was feasible in the company positions, he became very close to the companies. During operations, this closeness proved to be a great asset in ministering to the wounded and dying. The days spent in the medical battalion prepared him well for the ministry to casualties when med-evacs were not possible or were delayed. The ministry out in the field on an operation was not just to the casualties, although until the med-evac was completed this became first in importance, but also to the medical staff and the close buddies of the casualty after the evac had been completed. He remembered:

I have seen and shared the heartbreak and frustration of a young doctor who did all he could to save a life under a jungle canopy, only to have the man die of wounds. After attending the dead and having bodies moved, while awaiting other casualties to be brought in, the doctor and the hospital-men need a spiritual ministry. Often this is nothing more than the sharing of the sorrow together. At such times empathy is far more meaningful than words.<sup>27</sup>

Combat operations were not civic action oriented but chaplains were discovering that in Vietnam at-

ention to the Vietnamese population was always crucial. When Lieutenant Max E. Dunks (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Commander Robert C. Franklin (Roman Catholic) were positioned at the battalion aid station in the An Hoa CP area, some office buildings were vacated by the Vietnamese engineers, and because of previous positive contacts, one was graciously given to them to be used for a battalion aid station. During Operation Georgia, the battalion aid station was used as a collection and clearing station for the wounded and sick before they were evacuated to the appropriate medical facility. On several occasions there were as many as 20 wounded men at the aid station for emergency medical treatment. Many men were brought in to be treated for heat exhaustion.

After his experience on Operation Georgia, Chaplain Franklin held that a chaplain—in fact anyone—can communicate his interest in the Vietnamese people as fellow human beings essentially through the exercise of the words of mercy and actions prompted by mere common sense. Assuming that spiritual ministrations are impossible due to differences in religion or other circumstances, the chaplain can at least help comfort the parents of a wounded child. Chaplain Franklin remembered several incidents:

While the 3d Battalion was on Operation Georgia at An Hoa, a little boy was brought into the Battalion Aid Station with both legs severely burned and infected. His parents were terribly distraught and on the point of tears. I took them aside while the doctors and corpsmen were working on the child, gave them a seat in the shade, some cold water, and sat with them trying to convince them that the child would be all right and was getting the best of care. Finally, through an interpreter this was explained at length and they were terribly thankful to me and expressed their appreciation with the "prayerful hands gesture." On another occasion, a wounded Vietnamese soldier was brought in the Aid Station. An interpreter explained I was a Catholic priest. The soldier was Buddhist. While the doctor and corpsmen worked on him, I bathed his face with water, cleaned the blood and grime from around his mouth with my right hand; the left hand he grasped firmly and would not let go.<sup>28</sup>

Operation Georgia also involved Lieutenant Roger K. Hansen (Lutheran) who arrived in January and was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 12th Marines, to work with Lieutenant Commander Otto E. Kenzler, Jr. (United Methodist). Chaplain Hansen quickly became aware of the fact that artillery emplacements in guerrilla warfare are frequently located on what



might be the front lines. He learned that artillerymen provided their own perimeter security. When walking from post to post at night and learning to sign out when challenged, he became a familiar part of the *modus operandi*, and staying with the troops at night became routine. He reported:

On Hill 55 one of our mortar batteries had moved in and I wanted to be with them. A problem arose in that everytime I visited that battery, the VC would decide that it was a good night to probe and mortar the position. That first night as they hit I tried for what seemed an eternity to get my trousers on. Just why I had to have my trousers on I do not know, but finally the feet slipped through the openings and I remember thinking, "At least I won't die with my pants off." This kind of thing happened the first three times I stayed at this position. The fourth time I went out they jokingly said, "If we get hit again tonight, Chaplain, we are not going to let you come out any more."<sup>27</sup>

Fortunately for his reputation, it did not happen that night. The next day he moved from position to position to conduct services under a sun that caused temperatures to soar to 136 degrees. After walking up and down the roads that were literally boot-deep dust, the worship with the troops and the swim in the lake nearby were among those things which will long live in the chaplain's memory. The swim was always good for washing out sweat-soaked clothes, and the ingenuity of the men to improvise with C-rations, adding rice purchased from the Vietnamese, made an otherwise ordinary meal seem like a banquet. Mail, good chow, a chance to catch some kind of shower or bath in a stream or lake, cool refreshments on a hot day, and the knowledge of when they could expect to go home, all these made for high morale in the men in the midst of some very difficult circumstances.

#### *Adaptability and Patience*

The composite experience of coordinating combat ministry was working in the hearts and heads of all the chaplains so involved. In one, Chaplain Nilus W. Hubble, it broke into expression. The assignment as Regimental Chaplain, 4th Marines, and later at Company A, 3d Medical Battalion prepared Chaplain Hubble for the writing of a lengthy study he called, "The Role of the Chaplains in a Multi-Battalion Operation." In it he clarifies several of the most troublesome areas of the combat chaplain's frustration. He introduced his thoughts in a

characteristically brief manner; "Schedules were fluid, conditions varied. Adaptability became the word for the day. Patience became a necessity."<sup>30</sup>

Chaplain Hubble acknowledged that conditions and troop movements varied from operation to operation, and he realized that the chaplain in combat needed to exercise his own ingenuity and dedication in the light of his personal interpretation of his mission. Nevertheless, Chaplain Hubble felt that the basic combat role of the chaplain remained the same and that certain guidelines could be stated.

Whenever possible, it was advantageous for the task force chaplain to talk with battalion chaplains as well as their commanding officers prior to the beginning of an operation, meeting with agreement on where the chaplain would be. This prepared the way for most effective utilization of chaplains.

Wherever it was that the battalion had set up a central command post with units working out of it and coming back to it, the chaplain would probably find his best operating area. He could carry out his work at the CP for those coming and going as well as going to his units when advisable.

When the battalion split up into companies or smaller units, Headquarters and Service Company of the battalion involved had usually had a rear echelon adjacent to the task force CP/shore party/med-evac area. Since the shore party was the support unit in this area, it could also support the chaplain operating from there. Thus a chaplain of the scattered-unit battalion would usually find this the best operating area for him.

Some chaplains were concerned and frustrated that Divine Service could not be held frequently and regularly for their troops while in the field on an operation. One advantage of working out of the med-evac/shore party area was knowing when and where the chaplain could go. All chaplains had to keep in mind, however, that Divine Services, while wanted and needed by their troops, were not included in the operational plan according to any schedule.

Another advantage of unit chaplains working out of the med-evac area was that they frequently were able to minister to their troops who were wounded and dead. The wounded often stated that seeing the familiar face of their chaplain had been a welcome sight when they were brought in. Unit chaplains had found from experience that they usually had been of more help to the troops in this way rather than "humping it" with a rifle company and having no

contact with anyone except the man before him and the man behind him on the trek.

Slogging and sharing in combat will always be a serious and necessary undertaking of chaplains with Marines, and circumstances are always changeable, and methods debatable. However, as a general summation Chaplain Hubble listed an experienced and valuable insight. He concluded:

Many chaplains feel that they have to be with their

troops on patrol no matter what. If they have not identified themselves with their troops back in the base C.P., it is too late to do it on the line or on the patrol. This is not World War II or Korea. The chaplain on the line or on a patrol is mostly a burden rather than an asset. The men are sacrificed from the ministry of the chaplain when the chaplain finds himself with a squad or a patrol or even a company under the guise of being with his troops. Chaplains who have been in Vietnam from the beginning and thought their place to be in the line of fire with their troops have concluded (after learning the hard way): stay where you can minister to all your troops.<sup>31</sup>

PART III  
THE CONFLICT BROADENS



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A192210

*The hood of a jeep serves as a makeshift altar for Cdr Martin J. Doermann, 12th Marines regimental chaplain, at Gio Linh, south of the Demilitarized Zone, on Thanksgiving Day 1968. Cdr Doermann was among 20 chaplains visiting forward units that holiday.*

## CHAPTER 6

# Calming and Comforting (January - June 1966)

*Combat Action in Early 1966 – NSA and MCB Chaplains at Da Nang – Administrative Adjustments – 1st Marine Division Arrives at Chu Lai – 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplains, January-April 1966 – The Buddhist Revolt – Easter and Passover in I Corps*

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The year 1966 dawned rather hopefully for the chaplains in Vietnam. The structure of the coverage and ministry to the Marines and sailors in country was gratifyingly complete and joined to a secure system of chaplain distribution inaugurated by the cooperative efforts of the III MAF and 3d Division chaplains. Civic action efforts in which many chaplains were involved seemed to be progressively well organized, a genuine benefit to the people of Vietnam living near the enclaves, and beneficial to the military units in terms of good relations with the villagers. The Marine Corps was increasingly aware of the need for and value of greater efforts in the direction of understanding and respecting the Vietnamese people and culture, and chaplains generally felt they had significant contributions to make to this category of the American impact on that small country.

The commitment of Marines in 1965 had stopped the deterioration of Government of Vietnam control over the vital areas of the I Corps. Marines hoped that in 1966 they could start rolling back the Communist forces. These hopes were to be frustrated as more North Vietnamese regulars entered the war and the fighting broadened in area and in intensity. Chaplains had dealt with disappointment, pain, and death in the previous year. They were to experience more of the same on a larger scale during 1966.

The chaplains were alternatively encouraged, amazed, frightened, and sobered by the events of the broadening war, yet, their ministry never faltered. They comforted the troubled, wounded, and dying, and substantially increased the ministry in combat to the men they loved. "Ever since Bunker Hill, the man behind the man behind the gun has carried a Bible, comforted the wounded and prayed for the dead,"<sup>1</sup> noted *Time* magazine in February 1966. By the end of the year the U.S. Forces in Vietnam grew to 389,000 including 70,000 Marines in the ICTZ. The Chaplain Corps now numbered 93 chaplains assigned to Navy and Marine Corps units

for duty ashore in Vietnam. This was the largest number committed to a combat area at one time since World War II. Seventy-six chaplains were attached to Marine Corps combat units and elements in Vietnam, almost 20 percent of the entire Corps and already 32 more than the total number serving ashore in the Korean War.<sup>2</sup>

The principle of ministry in Vietnam was one of accessibility of worship opportunity to every individual at least once a week. It was to that task that the Chaplain Corps dedicated itself despite the fact that by 1 November 1966 the III MAF tactical area of responsibility was extended to 75 times its size of a year earlier. The job was there to be done.

### *Combat Action in Early 1966*

The first four months of 1966 were eventful ones for chaplains in the Da Nang combat base. The mounting intensity of search and destroy missions near Chu Lai was felt by Da Nang chaplains who participated alongside their Chu Lai comrades in the combat operations. The 9th Marines was positioned on the southern perimeter of Da Nang and was responsible for a rapidly expanding TAOR. By the summer months the 9th Marines TAOR was to exceed an area of 200 square miles.

On the northern and western perimeters of Da Nang were battalions of the 3d Marines. Since Chaplain Running had come ashore with the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines in March of 1965 and Chaplain Bohula had taken up position with the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines in country in May, the regimental TAOR had been steadily expanding. It became apparent that an operational link-up with Phu Bai, similar to that planned between Da Nang and Chu Lai, should eventually occur. Before Easter 1966, although Phu Bai was rapidly building and operations near the DMZ appeared to be just beyond the horizon, most of the action remained between Da Nang and Chu Lai. A breakthrough in operational activity, and movement northwestward, began to occur in the ear-

ly summer. At this stage in the buildup it appeared as if the coastal enclave strategy was a sound one and as the enclaves expanded it was anticipated that regiments would once again become consolidated. This had occurred in the 3d and 9th Marines at Da Nang, the 7th Marines in Chu Lai, and soon to occur with the 4th Marines at Phu Bai. In view of the growing number of chaplains within the command structures of the 3d Marine Division it became necessary, in the interest of effective supervision and training of younger, inexperienced chaplains, to reaffirm the position of regimental chaplain and depend upon him to function as a structural intermediary between the battalion chaplains and the division chaplain. Chaplain Morton's decision in the 3d Division was to assign a regimental chaplain to each regiment with two Protestants and two Roman Catholics. Independent or separate battalions were staffed largely with Protestant chaplains who looked to assistant division chaplain Maguire as their immediate supervisor.

Commander Jonathan C. Brown Jr. (Southern Baptist) was the 3d Marines first regimental chaplain in Vietnam. At the time of his arrival only two of the three battalions were in country and each of them had a Protestant chaplain attached. Lieutenant Curtis W. Brannon (Southern Baptist) was with the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines and Chaplain Arthur D. Seeland had recently relieved Chaplain Eugene M. Smith with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines and had relocated, with his battalion, from Chu Lai to Da Nang. Since Chaplain Bohula was with the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines on Okinawa, Chaplain Brown was woefully short of Catholic coverage in the regiment until Lieutenant George R. Witt (Roman Catholic) was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3d Marines in March.

Chaplain Brown was well received by the regiment. He was given a tent as a combination office and living space, central to the command and to the chaplains. There was no chapel at the regimental CP but a strongback tent was soon erected and dedicated as the CP chapel. Chaplain Brown's schedule consisted of two or three divine services each day, and on Sunday. Each day was filled with religious instructions, counselling, Red Cross messages, and small-group lectures.

Once Chaplain Witt reported to his battalion on 19 March he displayed that most essential quality in a combat chaplain—a sense of humor. He reported:

I spent two weeks under the wing of the Division Chaplain Frank Morton, who kept shaking his head.

Despite his doubts, I "graduated" and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3d Marines. However, prior to my relieving Curt Brannon, the battalion had mounted out on Operation Orange. Since this was my first operation, I gave extra attention to digging an adequate foxhole. I will not claim to have had the deepest hole, but I was the only one who had a ladder.<sup>3</sup>

The 1st Battalion, 3d Marines TAOR was the northern area of the Da Nang perimeter, and included more than 20 positions maintained by four line companies. Protestant coverage was given by Chaplain Brown, and later Chaplain Paul Lionberger who, in June, relieved Brown as regimental chaplain. Divine services were held weekly in every position, from the Combined Action Companies to Dong Den, 950 meters high on a mountain. Chaplains Witt and Brown conducted a teamwork ministry that proved highly productive. Chaplain Brown remembered:

The First Battalion had companies and platoons scattered all across our northern sector of the TAOR, so I spent Monday through Friday having three and four Divine Services a day for these companies. For some of the locations Chaplain Witt and I would go together. While I was conducting my services he would be hearing confessions, and when I finished, he would celebrate Mass, and I would interview Protestant men who needed my assistance. Then we would move to another platoon. My Regimental Commander and Executive Officer were devout men and attended the chapel services each Sunday. This kind of leadership resulted in excellent attendance at our Divine Services.<sup>4</sup>

It was during the first quarter of 1966 that Chaplain Morton devised a system of unit coverage which he proposed to the regimental and battalion chaplains for use in increasing their religious coverage of the units. It was a matter of procedure and scheduling in which the unit chaplain would visit each of his scattered positions, remaining overnight with each company once a week. This meant that he was out of the CP area from Monday through Friday and returned to his headquarters for his Sunday services. Chaplain Morton's program was implemented throughout the division and met with routine success. Chaplain Ahrensbrak reported that he adopted the system and found it helped him to meet the needs of his people and to fulfill his responsibilities to them.

At this time it was becoming apparent that combat operations in the Hue-Phu Bai enclave were increasing. Subtle changes in Viet Cong strategy were beginning to manifest themselves and appeared to



Photo 3d Marine Division

*LtGen Walt reads the scripture lesson at the 1966 Protestant Easter Service in Da Nang.*

be tied to the succession of defeats suffered by North Vietnamese forces in the Chu Lai and Da Nang areas. North Vietnamese troop concentrations were being discovered more frequently in the more northern provinces of I Corps. The succession of multi-battalion search and destroy operations south of Da Nang had succeeded in bloodying a number of hard-core North Vietnamese regular units. The tactic of deploying blocking forces by the same aircraft, all within a few hours, made mobility of VC forces more

difficult to maintain. It became obvious that sanctuaries, which American forces were not permitted to enter, represented an answer to vertical envelopment blocking tactics. Combat activity, therefore, increased near the sanctuaries of Laos. By the time the first quarter was past the next phase of the war was clearly outlined. There would be a gradual shift northward in major combat operations.

Five combat operations originated from Phu Bai during the first four months of 1966. The 2d Bat-

talion, 1st Marines, responsible for the security of Phu Bai's perimeter, conducted the first four, all single-battalion operations, in February and March. The fourth battalion operation to occur in Thua Thien Province was Operation Oregon, with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines probing deeper into the coastal plain north of Hue. Operation Virginia was the fifth and most extensive probe of the period. Chaplain Scanlon accompanied his troops of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines and Chaplains Johnson of MCB-7 and Handley of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines went into the field to provide Protestant coverage for the battalion.

Chaplain Scanlon reported:

Operation Virginia was to take us north near the DMZ, to Khe Sanh, close to Laos and the North Vietnamese border where there was a Special Forces Camp. During the first phase the battalion would probe the areas surrounding Khe Sanh. The buildings at Khe Sanh which were used for a temporary hospital were infested with rats. We slept with the rats running around all night. They could not be poisoned because the Montagnards in the area were reputed to eat rats raw.<sup>5</sup>

During the first phase, Mass was offered in the field and confessions heard at all company areas. Chaplains Handley and Johnson gave services at all company areas. There was no lack of chaplain support.

The second phase of Operation Virginia was to take 1st Battalion, 1st Marines on a march from Khe Sanh to Quang Tri and Dong Ha along Route 9. Chaplain Scanlon remembered:

The Colonel wanted me to go along. I had misgivings because the temporary hospital at Khe Sanh would be left without a chaplain. Still, the Colonel was apprehensive about being hit at night without a chaplain for the casualties. And so, I went.

We started our hike at midnight, and without a moon it was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of you. As a matter of fact, when the column stopped we frequently ran into one another. We sweated profusely and we drank water and ate salt continuously. It had been anticipated that we would reach our first checkpoint by dawn and pick up rations to be flown in.<sup>6</sup>

The terrain proved tougher than expected and by mid-afternoon the battalions were still heading for the checkpoint. The path was in a valley and was infernally hot. It had been a road large enough for cars some 20 years earlier and traffic signs which appeared seemed rather ludicrous since they were now practically in the middle of a jungle. Bridges over

scenic chasms gave mute evidence of past hostility since some of them had been blown by charges and were just hanging on by a few inches of steel over concrete bases. This was the first time an allied force had been through here since the withdrawal of the French many years before.

Some of the difficulties of field operations can be gathered by tracing Chaplain Scanlon's experience on Operation Virginia. The enemy was not only ambushes, mortars, or fire-fights, but also fatigue and exhaustion. Chaplain Scanlon continued:

Since we had expected to arrive at dawn for our provisions, many of us had no food. I for one. It was oppressively hot once the sun got up in the sky, and along about mid-afternoon the sun began to take its toll. I realized I was starting to fade. I remember trying to go up a hill. The next thing I knew I was at the side of the path with a blanket over my head to shade me from the sun, and Corpsman Blaze, a Jewish lad from "A" Co. 1/1 was saying, "Take a little of this, sir, and take deep breaths." What a feeling. This was my first experience with heat exhaustion.

After a while the Marines helped me down to the stream bed and in I went, clothes and all. One of our Lieutenants said to me later that those were the worst few minutes he had had in Vietnam. We were apprehensive of fire from the opposite bank but got out without difficulty. I remember that the men treated me like the most important man in the world, the same sensation I am sure all of our injured and ill have experienced. I was returned to Khe Sanh by chopper and was evacuated to "A" Med at Phu Bai. Those of us who came in from Khe Sanh drank freezing cold soda like there was no tomorrow. During these days I prayed for our men still on the operation.<sup>7</sup>

Happily, the battalion came through the entire march with no battle casualties.

#### *NSA and MCB Chaplains at Da Nang*

Although small in size, the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang occupied an enormously important place in Lieutenant General Walt's conduct of I Corps operations. The III MAF chaplain, Captain Garrett, clearly recognized the importance of NSA and the work of its chaplains. Chaplain Garrett was both the senior Chaplain Corps officer in ICTZ and the organizational supervisor for all Navy chaplains. Under one of the five hats he wore, General Walt was designated Naval Component Commander which placed all Navy activities directly under his command until March of 1966, and his force chaplain was responsible for supervision of chaplains attached to Navy units. In that capacity Chaplain Garrett was deeply interested in the work of NSA



chaplains and was concerned that their ministry should meet with the same degree of success enjoyed by Marine and Seabee chaplains.

In a speech before the Chaplains School Class in November 1966 Chaplain Garrett discussed the work of the NSA Chaplains. Logistic problems, he recalled, were exceedingly grave in I Corps during late 1965 and early 1966. The most obvious reason for the problems was to be found in the nature of Da Nang as a seaport. It was picturesque and beautiful, but it was shallow. Deep water stopped two miles out from the coastline. Cargo ships were forced to remain at anchor and unload their cargoes onto lighters which in turn moved the cargo ashore. The labor for unloading the ships and the lighters was provided by NSA personnel organized into hatch gangs. Work routines were uncomplicated. Each hatch gang worked 12 hours on and 12 hours off, 7 days a week, 31 days a month. Chaplain Garrett said that, to his personal knowledge, NSA hatch gangs operated in this manner for three months without the loss of a single day. He noted that active combat operations have within them a sort of psychic income from which the troops can draw a sense of satisfaction, but that the work of the hatch gang provided little sense of accomplishment or satisfaction. He said that he asked Chaplain Gibbons how the men of NSA could continue such a pace, apparently doing the backbreaking work with great enthusiasm, and maintain a phenomenally high level of morale. Chaplain Gibbons responded with the statement, that most of NSA personnel found themselves reinforced by the knowledge that Marines ashore are deeply dependent upon the supplies and equipment made available to them by the hatch gangs. When someone on a hatch gang failed in the performance of his duty, some Marine was more likely to be killed. Chaplain Garrett said that the morale of NSA personnel remained as high as Marine Corps morale even as harbor operations mounted steadily and measurement tonnage unloaded increased to seven, eight, and nine thousand tons a day. Fortunately, and the credit being solely due to Seabee units, one deep water pier was operating and several LST ramps were in full operation before the fall of 1966.

Two long-awaited and badly needed chaplains to man the recently opened Naval Support Activity Hospital at Da Nang arrived in March. In addition, a relief for Chaplain Hunsicker, forced to return home due to the death of a son, arrived to assist Senior

Chaplain Gibbons. First to report was Lieutenant Commander Herman F. Wendler (United Methodist) who arrived on 3 March. He was the second former Operation Shufly chaplain to return to Da Nang for duty, the first being Lieutenant Commander William H. Gibson (Roman Catholic) then serving with FLSG-A near the airstrip. Chaplain Wendler had served seven months at Da Nang in 1963. Coupled with the 15-month tour of NSA he was now beginning, his tenure in Da Nang was to establish a long-standing record for Navy Chaplains in Vietnam at 22 months.

Chaplain Wendler was assigned to provide a religious ministry for Navy personnel at Camp Tien Sha, the main billeting area for NSA personnel, where Chaplain Gibson had moved in December. The two chaplains served more than 4,500 men who by 1 March were attached to NSA Da Nang and lived in Tien Sha or on board barrack ships. On 9 March Lieutenant Commander George E. Paulson (American Baptist) reported for duty as the Protestant hospital chaplain, relieving temporarily assigned Chaplain Christmann of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing who then proceeded to Iwakuni, Japan for duty with MAG-13. On 15 March the second hospital chaplain, Lieutenant Alfred S. Pepera (Roman Catholic) reported for duty, relieving Chaplain Gibbons who had been held close to the hospital for his entire tour with the command.

Chaplain Pepera reported that the hospital chapel, a quonset hut, was nearing completion upon his arrival. It was located at the extreme end of the hospital compound thought later to be a very impractical location for the patients as well as the doctors and corpsmen. Until the chapel was completed church services were held in the mass casualty area. It can be imagined what consternation was caused when a helicopter came in and set down on a sandy and dusty landing pad to discharge wounded Marines during church services.

Patients not being able to get to the chapel on their own had to be transported. They found it difficult to attend weekly Mass or worship services, and the distance from the casualty area kept the doctors and corpsmen away from church since they were required to stand watch in the casualty area. After several months, having convinced the commanding officer that the ministry was suffering, the chapel was relocated to a position where patients could very



*Cdr W. W. DeGroot III, Commanding Officer of Mobile Construction Battalion 58, cuts the ribbon for the 1967 opening of new duplex homes built in the hamlet of Phuoc Quang by the Vietnamese with assistance from the Seabees after a fire left many people homeless. Chaplain R. E. Blade, Civic Action Officer of MCB-58, is in the background.*

easily get to it and the hospital staff could still be available for emergencies.

Arriving in Da Nang in February and March were two construction battalion chaplains to join the roster of Navy chaplains in Quang Nam Province. The first was Lieutenant Thomas A. Saygers (United Methodist) who arrived with MCB-11. MCB-11 replaced MCB-9, which had been at Camp Adenir since June 1965. The second was Lieutenant French M. Gothard (United Methodist) of MCB-1, who moved into Da Nang's Camp Haskins I, north of Da Nang.

MCB-11 was at Camp Kinser, Okinawa, when Chaplain Saygers joined the unit the previous July. Returning to the United States in September 1965 the battalion began preparing for an early redeployment to Vietnam. After five months of intensive military and technical training, on 1 February 1966 the battalion flew to Da Nang. Construction projects

for which the battalion was responsible included those on which MCB-9 was working: facilities for the Support Activity Hospital; a road on Monkey Mountain; petroleum, oil, and lubricants storage for MAG-16; a Marble Mountain cantonment for the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines; and miscellaneous smaller projects.

Chaplain Saygers was heavily involved in civic action projects. It appeared obvious to the skilled Seabee technicians that their most effective contribution toward the success of American/South Vietnamese joint efforts toward pacification and ultimately winning the peace, lay in establishing a will for achievement in the minds of the Vietnamese with whom they had routine contact. Seabees were especially gifted for this kind of intercultural activity because of the constructive skills they possessed, which were as profitably employed in civilian projects for the Vietnamese as they were in military construction.

### *Administrative Adjustments*

The arrival of Lieutenant Robert F. Wood (Latter Day Saints) occasioned important personnel changes at Da Nang during the first months of 1966. Supporting battalions were usually located in a single compound. This provided the chaplain attached to such support units with greater ease of coverage of his own units and those not having their own chaplain. Since Chaplain Wood was expected to cover an extensive area of the I Corps as the only Latter Day Saint chaplain, he was attached to 9th Motor Transport Battalion. This gave him unit stability and also transportation opportunities.

In addition to the interdenominational services he supplied his unit, Chaplain Wood was personally innovative in important areas. He reported:

To assist the troops at 9th Motors, I established classes in French and Spanish languages, which I offered to anyone who might be interested, and as the battalion Civil Affairs officer, I became involved in the battalion's plan to build a well and a school for a nearby village. Frequent visits with corpsmen to that village also enhanced my rapport with the native populace, and my understanding of the people. From the beginning, I made an attempt to learn and speak the language of the Vietnamese. As I practiced it with them, rapport became much warmer, and my own interest in the presentation of lectures to the troops on the religions of South Vietnam was increased a great deal.<sup>8</sup>

In keeping with the division's desire to provide a broad denominational base for religious coverage, division Chaplain Morton decided that Chaplain Wood's services as an LDS chaplain would be employed more effectively if he were to have more ready access to all LDS personnel in I corps, and that could be accomplished if he were to travel the three enclaves with Orthodox Chaplain Radasky, Christian Scientist Chaplain Hodges, and Jewish Chaplain Reiner. On 27 March, Chaplain Morton reassigned Chaplain Wood to Force Logistics Support Group Alpha, which he envisioned as a second pool for denominational chaplains. Chaplain Hodges was already attached to FLSG-A. With the addition of Chaplain Wood, a pool of denominational representatives similar to that of the division headquarters was established. After approximately a month in the new unit, Chaplain Wood began a series of trips to Chu Lai and Phu Bai to provide denominational coverage for LDS personnel in those enclaves as a normal practice, logging hundreds of hours traveling in jeeps, trucks, helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, buses, and on foot.

In his quarterly report for the period, Chaplain Reiner provided a brief description of his travels about the three enclaves to minister to Jewish personnel. He recorded:

I served as the circuit riding Jewish chaplain covering three Marine enclaves (Da Nang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai), officiating at six to nine daily and Sabbath services per week at six different locations. I provided Jewish religious services for the Jewish personnel at the Naval Support Activity and on the ships in the Da Nang harbor. I visited Jewish personnel aboard the hospital ship USS *Repose* (AH 16) and conducted religious services there.<sup>9</sup>

Chaplain Reiner's activities were duplicated by every chaplain who was attached to one of the two division pools for denominational coverage. Chaplains Hodges and Wood with FLSG-A and Chaplains Radasky, Reiner, MacLean, and Lionberger at division headquarters provided Christian Science, LDS, Orthodox, Jewish, Episcopalian, and Lutheran services respectively. The larger proportion of chaplains attached to the more numerous line battalions were representatives of the major religious bodies of America.

Operations during February, contributed to the extraordinary workload. Chaplain Lionberger, the assistant division chaplain, reported that during February alone, while other chaplains of the office were away on Operation Double Eagle, he conducted nine administrative inspections of various 3d Marine Division units. He reconciled his activities in a final report:

I represented the Division Chaplain on the Division Inspector's staff. This gave me the opportunity to visit the chaplains and their Commanding Officers in the field. I was able to visit the Phu Bai enclave while inspecting 2d Battalion, 1st Marines and observed a new program, the Combined Action Company, operating in the hamlets. One day a rush call came from the Commanding Officer of the 7th Marines at Chu Lai. "Send me an Episcopal Chaplain. General Krulak (FMFPac) is coming and my chaplain is on Okinawa!" Since the Division Chaplain was on Double Eagle, and P. D. MacLean had not yet reported to headquarters from 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, Chaplain Maguire decided that I should go. This gave me the opportunity to visit the Chu Lai enclave as well as visiting other Division Chaplains. It had to happen this way; Sunday morning the General did not show.<sup>10</sup>

Near the first of April, Chaplain Morton was offered new office spaces by the division chief of staff. Two quonset huts were assigned the division chaplain and the headquarters chaplains made their

second move in less than five months. Although it was not apparent at the time, such moves were to become even more frequent in the coming months. It seemed to be the story of the Marine chaplain's life; settle in and prepare to move. Nevertheless Chaplains Morton, Maguire, Lionberger, and MacLean made the move this time as if it were a permanent and final arrangement. One of the spacious quonsets was used for office space for Chaplains Morton, Maguire, and Lionberger. The other was used as office space for Chaplains Reiner and MacLean with a section reserved as a division chaplain's storeroom. Happily by late April ecclesiastical equipment and supplies had ceased to be a problem. The 3d Force Service Regiment (FSR) on Okinawa, and the Force Logistics Support Groups A and B at Da Nang and Chu Lai respectively, maintained a steady flow of equipment to meet the needs of expanding division and wing activities.

III MAF Chaplain Garrett later remarked that Chaplain Morton was, "the best supply man in the Corps. His store room showed it. The condition of equipment in use by chaplains and the state of chaplain consumable supplies confirmed it. Chaplain Morton had a talent for internal organization and chaplain-supply that I have never seen equaled anywhere."<sup>11</sup>

Another of Chaplain Morton's interests in the pre-Easter period of 1966 was related to the construction of a 3d Marine Division chapel in the vicinity of division headquarters. He selected a site on what he later named "Cathedral Hill" and approached the commanding general for approval of the site and tentative construction plans. The general voiced enthusiastic support and approved the division chaplain's proposals.

The projected 3d Marine Division Chapel, to be named "Chapel of the Abiding Presence" was to be an area chapel designed to meet the worship needs of a number of adjacent units. Characteristic of their leadership, Chaplains Morton and Garrett formulated policy guidelines for chapel construction which were intended to make the best use of available worship facilities. Two types of chapels were considered essential to guidelines objectives. First were the area chapels, buildings erected between two or more unit campsites to serve the needs of adjacent units. The second type consisted of unit chapels, construction by individual battalions which were physically isolated from other units. The first

area chapel was that constructed for use of the 7th Engineers and 1st Battalion, 3d Marines and was dedicated by Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, during his Christmas visit in 1965.

Groundbreaking for the second area chapel, for the use of the 3d Division AmTrac, Tank, Anti-Tank, and Motor Transport Battalions, occurred on the same day. The third chapel to be planned and constructed as an area chapel was the division's own, "Chapel of the Abiding Presence" on Cathedral Hill. Located as it was on a choice piece of real estate with a splendid view of the area, the Cathedral Hill construction site was in great demand by adjacent units. The commanding officer of the 12th Marines, knowing nothing of Chaplain Morton's previous conversation with the commanding general, expressed his intention to use the site for projected expansion of his regimental CP. Chaplain Morton informed him of his intended use of the hill for a new chapel. To end the matter once and for all the colonel remarked to Chaplain Morton, "Chaplain, I wouldn't want to have to bring this matter to the attention of the Commanding General." Chaplain Morton's quiet response, was classic. In soft tones he said, "No, Colonel, you sure wouldn't." He didn't.<sup>12</sup>

In the weeks following, firm plans were projected and materials for a large V-shaped structure were acquired. Chaplain Morton took time to describe the building:

The chancel is in the north apex of the V-shaped structure. A common sacristy and confessional borders one end. The roof is fiberglass plastic composition, structured with 12 x 12 rejected bunker timbers. The timbers are seven feet apart. The entrance is at the inside of the V. The chapel will seat 250 persons. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel is diamond-shaped and will seat 35 to 55 persons. The all-purpose chapel is octagonal, and will seat the same number as the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. This complex may have three services at one time. The chapels could serve as a retreat center accommodating four groups. The complex is near housing and messing facilities and is adjacent to the Division Chaplain's quonset hut office.<sup>13</sup>

#### *1st Marine Division Arrives at Chu Lai*

The most significant organizational evolution to occur during the first four months of 1966 was the arrival of the 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) in Vietnam. For several years the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California had been configured as the reserve-back up division in support of the mobile, combat-ready, 3d Marine Division on

Okinawa and Hawaii. When the 3d Marine Division was committed to combat in Vietnam, and moved its forward elements, its main body, and finally its rear detachments in country, the 1st Marine Division was making preparations to deploy to Okinawa to replace the 3d Division and to stand in reserve ready to support it as required. In August 1965 the 1st Marine Division (Forward) deployed to Okinawa, with 1st Marine Division (Rear) following the first week in March 1966.

During the entire course of the year, from March 1965 to March 1966, the 1st Marine Division Chaplain, Captain John L. Wissing (Roman Catholic) had been preparing battalion chaplains for deployment to Vietnam. The final (37th) transplacement battalion, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines with Lieutenant Curtis W. Brannon (Southern Baptist)

attached, sailed for Vietnam to become 1st Battalion, 3d Marines of the 3d Marine Division in August. The 7th Marines, maintaining its identity as a 1st Marine Division unit but being assigned to the 3d Marine Division had already deployed in May of 1965 and had landed segments in June and July at Chu Lai and Qui Nhon. The 1st Marines had deployed in August, the Regimental Command Group and 3d Battalion, 1st Marines remaining on Okinawa while the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines moved to Da Nang and 2d Battalion, 1st Marines assumed duties as the Special Landing Force embarked in the Amphibious Ready Group. In August, the 7th Engineer Battalion was assigned to the 3d Marine Division at Da Nang. The 1st Marine Division (Rear) deployed from Camp Pendleton on 11 February and arrived on Okinawa approximately one month

*The new 1st Marine Division chapel is dedicated on Memorial Day 1966, with the division commander, MajGen Lewis J. Fields, and his senior staff members in attendance.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A369171



before the division was scheduled to be committed to duty in Vietnam. Between 15 December and 15 March, the 5th Marines, which had been depleted through transplacing battalions shortly before the division deployed to Okinawa, was remanned and designated Regimental Landing Team 5.

On 27 March 1966, the 1st Marine Division, less RLT-5, which remained on Okinawa, arrived at Chu Lai and joined III MAF. Responsibility for security of the Chu Lai Combat Base and Tactical Area of Operational Responsibility surrounding the base itself was relinquished by the 3d Marine Division and was reassigned to the 1st Marine Division. First Marine Division units in Chu Lai reverted to administrative and operational control of their parent organization and 3d Marine Division units in the area, for the first time, came under operational control of the 1st Marine Division.

From the point of view of chaplains in the enclave the transition was a smooth one. Chaplains Kinderer and Loeffler of the 1st Marines readdressed their official reports to Chaplain Wissing. Chaplains Goad, Usenza, Hiskett, and Epps of the 7th Marines and Chaplains Malliett and Blank of the 11th Marines were returned to control of the 1st Marine Division.

Only for Chaplains Stewart, Usenza, and Epps did this mean an official change of orders from one command to another. Chaplains Howard and Daly of MAG-36, Chaplains Taylor and Abel of MAG-12, and MCB Chaplains Haney and Hunkins continued to report to wing and construction regiment respectively, but coordinated their religious coverage of area positions with Division Chaplain Wissing.

Third Marine Division Chaplains Kenny and Ahrnsbrak, attached to B Med Field Hospital, were returned to Chaplain Morton for reassignment, and the 1st Medical Battalion, with newly reassigned chaplains, Lieutenant Dudley C. Hathaway (Nazarene) and Lieutenant Brian E. Kane (Roman Catholic) attached, assumed responsibility for a distinguished hospital ministry to the ill and wounded Marines in the Chu Lai enclave.

On 31 March, Chaplains Garrett of III MAF and Morton of 3d Division visited Chaplain Wissing's office and participated in a senior chaplains' conference. The division chaplains and MAF chaplain conferred at length about inter-division chaplains' relation and about administrative matters confronting their units.

In a letter to FMFPac Force Chaplain Craven of 25 May 1966, Chaplain Wissing said:

On 31 March, Chaplains Garrett, Morton and myself met at Chu Lai to discuss chaplain personnel. At that time it was known that Chaplains Usenza, Goad and Hiskett were to be detached in May. We agreed that in order to meet minimal needs of the First Marine Division, and at the same time to temporarily assist the Third Marine Division in their shortage of chaplains, Usenza would be relieved by a Catholic Chaplain; Goad and Hiskett would be relieved by one Protestant Chaplain from those ordered in to the Third Marine Division at that time.<sup>14</sup>

FMFPac ordered chaplains Lieutenant Vincent R. Capodanno (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant Stanley J. Beach (General Association of Regular Baptists) to the 1st Marine Division as a result of that agreement and III MAF's request. Chaplain Capodanno reported on 30 April. Chaplain Beach's orders were cancelled at the request of III MAF, since he had already been assigned in the 3d Division. The division was given assurance that another Protestant would be ordered to them in lieu of Chaplain Beach. Chaplain Wissing wrote:

On this date, at a meeting in Da Nang with Garrett and Morton, I was informed that because of their shortage a Protestant Chaplain would not be ordered from the 3d to the 1st Division. Thus my dispatch requesting a Protestant Chaplain from 3d FSR was sent out. This Protestant Chaplain is required to fill a minimum need, especially with Stewart gone to FLSG. If the above request is granted I still required one more Protestant Chaplain to fill my T/O of 23 chaplains.<sup>15</sup>

It was readily apparent that 1st Marine Division Chaplain Wissing was undergoing the same trauma experienced by Chaplains O'Connor and Jones in the early days of the buildup of forces. Chaplain Wissing adopted as a minimum requirement that every 1st Marine Division unit in the country have the benefit of religious coverage of Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains.

Still, in a letter to the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain Wissing stated:

I will be forever grateful to the Chief of Chaplains for this assignment . . . . It has been the most challenging, exciting, rewarding, satisfying, memorable and enjoyable experience of my years in the ministry, both as civilian priest and as a military chaplain. If I would choose one word as being descriptive of the best of this period I would use the word "cooperation" . . . . The cooperation of the Staff Chaplain, Headquarters Marine Corps and the Chaplains Division of the Bureau of Naval Personnel in their prompt

answers to appeals for chaplains on very short notice was most gratifying.<sup>16</sup>

Administrative control of all 1st Marine Division chaplains reverted to Chaplain Wissing on 1 May. This meant that he was responsible for effecting such liaison with III MAF, FMFPac, and the Chief of Chaplains in Washington that his roster would remain filled at all times. He was responsible for supplying chaplains and reliefs as required for all 1st Marine Division chaplain billets in Vietnam although a substantial number of his chaplains were under the operational control of, and reported to, Chaplain Morton in the 3d Marine Division. The control situation was to become reciprocal in the fall of 1966 when a number of 3d Marine Division battalions were shifted temporarily to the 1st Division. But for the 1st Division's first six months in country, in effect Chaplain Wissing and his relief, Captain David J. Casazza (Roman Catholic), supplied the chaplains and Chaplain Morton kept them busy.

Immediately upon landing in country and surveying the chaplains' coverage of Chu Lai-based personnel, Chaplain Wissing became aware of the need for a number of additional changes in assignments. Combat operations had not slowed to permit a formal reception of the new arrivals. Chaplains Usenza and Hiskett of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines and 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, respectively, left Chu Lai on Operation Indiana (28-30 March) the day after Chaplain Wissing arrived. It also became apparent that two chaplains would have to be assigned immediately to the 1st Medical Battalion to replace 3d Marine Division Chaplains Kenny and Ahrensbrak who were returning with Company B, 3d Medical Battalion, to Da Nang. Chaplains Hathaway and Kane were assigned to cover a new 1st Medical Battalion Aid Station as part of the transition in anticipation of B Med's departure.

Lieutenant Edward Kane (Roman Catholic) was assigned to the 1st Marines. At this time the regiment was without a Catholic chaplain; Chaplain Kane was therefore assigned as assistant regimental chaplain to provide for the deficiency in coverage.

As was anticipated, the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines left Chu Lai almost immediately to rejoin the 4th Marines at Phu Bai. Chaplain Wissing had formulated policy decisions affecting the assignment of chaplains several months before on Okinawa. He was determined to provide adequate Protestant and Roman Catholic coverage for every unit. In so far as

possible, regiments were to have two Protestant and two Catholic Chaplains.

Chaplain Wissing was unable to implement other desired but not essential policies with regard to coverage. For instance, the matter of relieving chaplains after six months with a line battalion or medical unit simply took secondary precedence. Facing him in the immediate future was the prospect of relieving every chaplain in the 7th Marines, all of whom were due for rotation to the United States in May. With no prospect for new chaplains to arrive until July, Chaplain Wissing simply had to defer action on desirable policy implementation until sufficient chaplains were available, and marshal his resources to meet requirements which were to present themselves for resolution in the immediate future.

Problems with personnel changes in Chu Lai in May and June 1966 also occupied great amounts of the 1st Marine Division Chaplain's planning time. Since Chaplain Wissing could expect no new arrivals from the United States during May and June, it became necessary to fill the vacancies with chaplains already on board. Chaplains Goad with the 7th Marines; Chaplain Usenza with 1st Battalion, 7th Marines; and Chaplain Hiskett with 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, were detached in May. It was necessary to move Chaplain Baxter from 1st Motor Transport Battalion (leaving the latter position vacant) as a replacement for Chaplain Goad. Chaplain Capodanno was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines as a numerical and denominational relief for Chaplain Usenza. Lieutenant Paul W. Pearson (United Methodist) was assigned to the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines as a relief for Chaplain Hiskett. Chaplain Epps in the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines was to remain on board until detached on 1 August. Chaplain W. C. L. Asher reported on 30 June for assignment to 1st Motor Transport Battalion.

Chaplains Goad, Hiskett, McNamara, and Betters who had preceded Chaplains Usenza and Epps in the 7th Marines, had experienced some of the most intense combat to take place in Vietnam during the first 15 months of the buildup of forces. The series of search and destroy missions at Chu Lai and the perimeter security activity at Qhi Nhon had been combat of the type which sapped the energy of the unit chaplains and left them virtually exhausted after a year of effort. Chaplain Goad had described his regiment's mission as one of search and destroy.

The regiment participated in 10 combat missions while he was attached for duty. However, the picture began to change in the late spring of 1966. "Shortly before departure," Chaplain Goad said, "the mission of the regiment began gradually to change from search and destroy to security and holding."<sup>17</sup> Chaplain Goad then addressed himself to the attitude and approach he thought a newly arriving chaplain should cultivate before entering Vietnam. In so doing he mirrored the general mood of chaplains up to mid-1966. Chaplain Goad explained:

The chaplain must understand as thoroughly as possible why we are in Vietnam. He should be totally and personally committed to this aspect of our foreign policy. This commitment must go deeper than mere compliance with military orders; that is to say, just because it is his duty. The chaplain's personal motivation, and the motivation which he attempts to inspire in his men, will be greatly enhanced by a deep and honest commitment to the value and desirability of our mission in Southeast Asia.<sup>18</sup>

It can be safely said that Navy chaplains in Vietnam, without a known exception at this time, were fully supportive of the American effort in South Vietnam and its underlying philosophy. As opposition to the war was developing in the United States, combat-committed chaplains remained firmly in support of U.S. policy. Being on the scene they shared the enlisted Marine's viewpoint. They could see for themselves what the Viet Cong were attempting to do by terror and atrocity and utter disregard for life. Such visible evidences of the need for American forces to be in Vietnam being readily apparent, it was difficult for troops in Vietnam, and the chaplains who accompanied them, to understand the opposition which they heard was developing at home. There was a tendency to dismiss the demonstrations in the United States as being perpetrated by the uninformed who themselves wished to avoid personal involvement in the cause of freedom for the South Vietnamese people.

As early as mid-1966, as opposition to the war developed, Chief of Chaplains James W. Kelly made it known to members of his staff that any chaplain who was unable, in conscience, to approve or participate in the war in Vietnam would be given another assignment. Any chaplain who, after being committed to combat in Southeast Asia, asked to be relieved on the basis of opposition to the war would be immediately reassigned. No such requests were received and not a single voice of dissent among the

highly motivated Navy chaplains in Vietnam was heard during the buildup of forces.

*1st Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplains,  
January-April 1966*

Eight chaplains were expected to report for duty with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing during the first three months of 1966. An equal number was to be detached. The total effect of these changes, coupled with the three arrivals during the last months of 1965, was that almost a complete turnover of wing chaplains had occurred. Four detachments and one arrival occurred in January 1966. Chaplains Toland and Tipton of MAG-16 were relieved by Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Donald T. McGrogan (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant Commander William W. Bartlett (United Church of Christ), who were detached on 3 January. At Chu Lai Chaplain Long of MAG-36, relieved by Lieutenant John R. Daly (Roman Catholic), who had been reassigned from duty with HMM-163 in Qui Nhon, was detached on 11 January. On the same day Lieutenant Commander William J. Wright (American Baptist) reported to Chaplain Bakker for duty as assistant wing chaplain. Chaplain Wright arrived from El Toro, California, where he had been attached to the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing. He assumed the administrative duties in the wing chaplain's office which had been handled by Chaplain Bakker with the assistance of MWHG-1 Chaplain Richards. In February Lieutenant Commander Harold L. Christmann (Assemblies of God), who reported to Chaplain Bakker, was slated for further assignment to Iwakuni. It was intended that he would be a relief for Chaplain Smith in MAG-13. Chaplain Smith, however, was not due for detachment until late March and the NSA Chaplain had indicated that a critical need for chaplains existed at the newly opened Naval Hospital, Da Nang. Chaplain Christmann was therefore assigned temporary duty at the nearby hospital for a period of a month until NSA chaplains arrived in March to fill the newly established billets. He remained at the hospital for five weeks before reporting to MAG-13 as Chaplain Smith's relief.

Lieutenant Ray W. Fullilove (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Kenneth B. Abel (United Presbyterian) reporting in February were added to the rosters of other enclaves: Chaplain Fullilove was assigned to MAG-16 in the expectation that, after a period of indoctrination, he would go to Phu Bai for service with HMM-163 of MAG-16 which had been



without the services of a wing chaplain. Near the close of his tour with the wing in late February, Lieutenant Thomas J. Dillon (Roman Catholic) of MAG-11 was given three weeks duty with HMM-163 but returned to Da Nang in mid-March in time for his own detachment. Chaplain Abel, arriving on 17 February was ordered to duty in Chu Lai as Chaplain Reiter's relief in MAG-12.

Lieutenant Richard T. McCue (Roman Catholic), reporting for duty with the wing on 5 February, was ordered to MWHG-1 where he was to give Catholic coverage for the following six weeks. He then relieved Chaplain Dillon as the Catholic chaplain of MAG-11 when he later was detached on 23 March.

The final chaplain-personnel change of the quarter represented the most significant of all the changes because it occurred in the wing chaplain's billet. Commander Paul C. Hammerl (Roman Catholic) reported on 9 March for duty as Wing Chaplain in relief of Chaplain Bakker, detached on

14 March. Chaplain personnel structures thereafter were to remain stable for the next six months.

Relinquishing the leadership of wing chaplains to Chaplain Hammerl, Chaplain Bakker remarked, "Chaplain Hammerl arrived 9 March to take over as the new wing chaplain. The Wing will have passed from Paul (Bradley) to Peter (Bakker) and back again to Paul (Hammerl)."<sup>19</sup> Chaplain Bakker had relieved Commander Paul F. Bradley (Roman Catholic) as wing chaplain at Iwakuni on 24 March 1965.

Apart from the official reports of activities during the period, prepared by Chaplains Hammerl and Wright, the most comprehensive account of wing chaplains' work was provided by Chaplain Bartlett of MAG-16. He reported:

This period of the first few months was a very busy time from the religious point of view. There was an overall shortage of chaplains and we were travelling quite a bit. I was handling services at MAG-16, covering the hospital, having services at Camp Tien Sha and "B" Battery LAAMS on

*Chaplain Earl L. Bovette serves Communion to men of the 7th Marines during 1969.*

Photo courtesy of Chaplain Earl L. Bovette





Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A191358

*Chaplain Paul J. Antos holds Mass for men of 2d Battalion, 4th Marines during 1968.*

Monkey Mountain. Gradually as more chaplains arrived in the area these outside duties were reduced. During the late spring and summer there was a series of services on Navy ships in the harbor to help out with coverage there. But, in general, from late spring on, I could confine my work to the rapidly growing aircraft group at Marble Mountain Air Facility.<sup>20</sup>

The sacrament of Holy Communion was the sacrament most offered to Marines as a strengthening factor of the faith, yet at times Holy Baptism was administered to the same purpose. Chaplain Bartlett remembered:

The location of our base on China Beach was ideal for services of baptism. In February I assisted Wing Chaplain Peter Bakker with the baptism of a man from my group. The same day he baptized many children from the Protestant orphanage. In March Chaplain Christmann used our beach for four baptisms. Later that month I baptised a

man at our beach. It was a somewhat unusual service in that just as we were about to begin the ritual we were both sent head over heels by a large wave that neither of us saw as our backs were towards it. A new Christian got a double baptism that day, both times by immersion.<sup>21</sup>

The first Sunday in April saw MAG-16 in new quarters for its services. Up to this time they had held forth in the messhall, which was most unsatisfactory. Now Chaplain Bartlett had permission to use the officers' shower building. It had been finished but inoperative since late 1965. Permission for its use had been previously denied. The chaplain and men from the group were able to fix the building into an attractive little chapel. Attendance increased quickly by 30 percent. A small lounge was set up in the back with devotional materials, floor lamps, and easy chairs. This and the chapel itself



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A185674

*A Marine from the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, is baptized by a 2d Battalion chaplain at the An Tan Bridge, Chu Lai. The Marine on guard is a member of the 1st Battalion.*

were both used and appreciated; many men used it as a quiet place to cut tapes to send home. Most important of all, there was now a place that was worship-suitable, for meditation and prayer at any time of the day or night, something that is very important in a combat situation.

Civic action activity represented an equally time-consuming function for chaplains of the wing. Their efforts were a study in coordination. Chaplain Daly (MAG-36) accompanied one of his squadron flight surgeons to the island of Cu Lao Re, 20 miles southeast of Chu Lai to investigate the needs of the 8,000 Vietnamese there. Assistance in the form of medical care, food to vary the diet of the isolated people, and materials for agricultural advancement was given by the group and subsequent Chu Lai military units. Chaplain Rieter (MAG-12) accompanied the MAG-12 MedCAP team to the village of

Tich Tay where he assisted in administering medications, while Chaplain Taylor held mass for the villagers of Ky Hoa, and Chaplain Richards visited the Evangelical Protestant Church of Hai Chau and the Sacred Heart Orphanage with an eye toward future civic action efforts. Chaplain Threadgill (MAG-11) subsequently delivered 660 pounds of frozen fish to the Sacred Heart Orphanage; 348 health kits, 6 boxes of clothing and sewing materials to the Christian Missionary Alliance Compound in Da Nang; and one load of scrap lumber to the compound for five Vietnamese retired pastors and families. He also visited the ARVN hospital with missionaries from Da Nang. Finally, Chaplains Bakker and Wright delivered 6 cases of candy, 3 boxes of clothing, 100 health kits, a box of yarn, and 80 bars of soap to the Tin Lanh Church in Da Nang.

During the week of 13 April, civic action was



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A188646

*Southern Baptist Chaplain Harry T. Jones of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines baptizes three Americans, two Marines, and an airman, in the Seng Bo Dien River in May 1967.*

sharply curtailed as I Corps erupted in Buddhist demonstrations against the central government. During this week Chaplain Hammerl reported only two chaplains as having any contact with the Vietnamese villages and even those were very limited. Civic action came to a virtual standstill.

### *The Buddhist Revolt*

A few weeks before Holy Week 1966, political unrest in the area created an explosive situation which resulted in the evacuation of civilian personnel from Da Nang and Hue and from the surrounding provincial countryside. Chaplain Wendler wrote:

It was while I was at Camp Tien Sha that Premier Ky ordered his Marines to enter Da Nang to stop a rebellion of the "Struggle Forces" which was composed primarily of Buddhist factions in support of General Thi. During Holy Week, Hue was evacuated and . . . civilian personnel were brought to Camp Tien Sha. This evacuation took place on Wednesday and included forty-two men, women, and children. On Saturday of the same week approximately 400-500 persons, military and civilian, were evacuated from Da Nang to Camp Tien Sha. This latter group was divided so that all married couples and single girls were

sent to the hospital for billeting. Camp Tien Sha had to take care of the original forty-two and an additional 300-500 civilian evacuees.

Adjustments which had to be made were many. Heads were blocked off for the use of the women; swings, teeter-totters and a swimming pool were constructed for the children to use. Military personnel returned to Da Nang within two weeks. However, because of the political situation in Hue, the missionaries stayed for approximately three to four weeks. By maintaining close contact with the CIC of the Camp, I was abreast of events and strategy at all times and was able to keep the missionaries informed.<sup>22</sup>

The evacuees were transported from Hue to MAG-16 by air and then moved by bus to Camp Tien Sha. Space was at a premium so Chaplains Bartlett and McGrogan of MAG-16 arranged to have about 30 persons housed in the temporary chapel. Concern about Easter Services was dispelled by the refugees themselves when they made everything ready for services early Easter morning. They then moved back in again after services were finished.

III MAF Chaplain Garrett played an important part in the drama of the Buddhist demonstrations at Da Nang. For four months he had made every effort to include Buddhist organizations among the civic

action projects undertaken in I Corps, and his efforts had not gone unnoticed by the Buddhist leader Thich Min Chieu. As a matter of fact Chaplain Garrett and the Venerable Thich Minh Chieu had become close acquaintances and a degree of trust had developed between them. In support of this developing trust, the story of the Que Bac Pagoda is a fine example. Sniper fire had been received from the Pagoda on Da Nang East and local Marines had proceeded to put a round of artillery directly through it, destroying portions of the walls and the statue of Buddha inside it. The Buddhist leader asked Chaplain Garrett what he could do about restoration of the Pagoda and the sculpted figure it housed. Chaplain Garrett remarked that a realistic way to deal with Christian-Buddhist relations had to be worked out in a hurry. Chapel funds on hand could not be used for the purchase of religious items not intended by the fund's donors. A special appeal for funds, for the purchase of a Buddha, to augment civic action funds which would be employed for restoration of the pagoda, was made with the result that \$600 was collected to meet the special need. A public presentation was arranged with the Mayor of Da Nang, the Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital, Chaplain Garrett, and local Buddhist leaders attending. The presentation was made, the pagoda was repaired and relations between Chaplain Garrett and the Venerable Thich Minh Chieu were further strengthened.

Two days before the "Struggle Forces" Buddhist demonstrations were to occur, Buddhist leader Chieu dispatched a messenger to Chaplain Garrett to inform him that the Venerable Chieu wished to see him. When Chaplain Garrett arrived at the Buddhist Headquarters in Da Nang, he remembered: "It looked like a large command post during a combat operation. Monks were scurrying in and out and a great deal of seemingly important activity was taking place."<sup>23</sup> Thich Minh Chieu dismissed everyone from the room and spoke privately with Chaplain Garrett. Chaplain Garrett later reported:

He told me that he had called me there as a friend to inform me what was soon to take place. He informed me that the Buddhists intended to raise their flag over Da Nang and Hue in two days and that he expected 80 percent of the First and Second ARVN Divisions to join the struggle forces against Premier Ky's administration. The rebellion was on. It was immediately obvious to me that while our relations had been exceptionally good, the Venerable Chieu was giving me this information as a

means of establishing a direct, but informal and unofficial, pipeline to General Walt. When the brief conference was concluded, I returned to the III MAF Headquarters and informed General Walt what had taken place. He asked me to put the incident in writing, which, with the assistance of his G-2 personnel, I was able to do.<sup>24</sup>

When the revolt came off as scheduled, rather than the expected 80 percent of the ARVN divisions supporting it, a minimal two percent responded with support. The result was a disaster for the "struggle forces."

Chaplains noted other incidents during the rebellion. Chaplain Witt, with 1st Battalion, 3d Marines on the northern perimeter of the Da Nang combat base, was involved in an incident involving a U.S. Marine and ARVN "Roughrider" truck convoy and a Buddhist demonstration on Highway 1 between Da Nang and Phu Bai. "Roughrider" was the most appropriate code name for convoys of American and Vietnamese vehicles traveling from Da Nang to Hue/Phu Bai or to Chu Lai. A U.S. Marine company rode "shotgun" for 40-50 ARVN supply trucks over the terribly rough roads. During the demonstrations Buddhist altars and tables were placed on the highway. The Marine vehicles leading the convoy carefully inched along through a maze of these altars. At one point the Marine vehicles were stopped by a line of altars that stretched across both lanes and shoulders of the highway. Despite the fact that the spot was a likely location for a VC ambush, the convoy halted. Suddenly from the rear, an ARVN vehicle came up at full speed, which is the only speed they seemed to have, and crashed into the altars, scattering wood and religious symbols to both sides of the road. Even a few careless or slow-footed Buddhist monks were up-ended into a roadside ditch. Once the altars were removed, the convoy proceeded, but the tension increased.

Chaplain Powell reported on a similar incident at Phu Bai. Between Phu Bai and Hue religious altars and demonstrating Vietnamese were posted all along the road. He said:

Moving along that highway our convoy slowly inching its way along the border of the road, our tank treads and heavy truck wheels literally only inches away from the kneeling figures of young boys and girls who unflinchingly held their posts, was a sight that will long remain within me. They succeeded in stopping the operation-bound convoy by barricading the bridge in Hue, so we were forced to return to Phu Bai. But undaunted, as ever, the Marines soon solved that by the famous vertical envelopment tactic with helicopters.<sup>25</sup>

The demonstrations were to continue for several weeks, into June and early July, affecting the III MAF civic action program among the indigenous people. Chaplain Garrett wrote that he was very much concerned that the demonstrations should not so badly divide the people that all the work done to reduce intercultural suspicion and enhance American-Vietnamese relations in the three enclaves, would count for little or nothing.

This concern was felt elsewhere as well. In a memorandum from the Chief of Chaplains to the Chief of Naval Personnel on the subject of the political situation in Vietnam, the Chief of Chaplains reported one of his chaplains as saying:

When the heavy traffic stopped at Da Nang's only bridge where once the serviceman showered the children with candy, food, etc., there is now a complete lack of attention or even concern shown. There is a pronounced distrust toward the Vietnamese people in general and this distrust will continue at least until the political situation is stabilized. This is the situation in the city! I do not know the reaction of the men in Marine units outside the city, away from the demonstrations. Forced strikes, with threats of violence against those who do not participate, were the order of the day.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Easter and Passover in I Corps*

While the Easter story in I Corps neither began nor ended with the work of Chaplain Dunks of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, his story and that of the chaplains who cooperated with him to realize an inspirational Easter in his battalion, will convey something of the energy and enthusiasm with which all Navy chaplains in I Corps approached the festival in 1966. Chaplain Dunks reported:

Easter season was approaching and I was discussing plans for divine worship services with my Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel W. Taylor. He expressed the desire that we obtain the help of other chaplains and have an Easter Sunrise Service in each of the rifle companies for both Protestants and Catholics. These companies were scattered in strategic positions, far apart from the battalion command post and far apart from one another. At the time they were taking much of the brunt of enemy contact south of Marble Mountain. I conferred with Chaplain Frank Morton, and we began making arrangements to carry out a plan of comprehensive coverage. The crowded Easter schedules of all chaplains involved were considered, and we were given the benefit of helicopter transportation to expedite our mission. The project was named "Top Sacred Operation Sunrise." Before daybreak on Easter morning Chaplains Maguire, Beach, Glynn, Franklin, Lionberger, Saygers and Pepera came by helicopter and by

road to provide Easter Sunrise Services Protestant and Catholic in every rifle company of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. Every chaplain was back in Da Nang by 0800, ready to begin their own routines of worship service for Easter. The men of every company turned out enmasse. They were amazed that so much attention could be given the battalion and continued to respond with great enthusiasm to the religious program of the battalion through the remainder of my tour of duty. "Top Sacred Operation Sunrise" represented by far the most inspirational and significant event of the last half of my tour in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup>

Chaplain Morton referred to the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines Easter event as an experiment in saturation. At predawn Easter morning, Chaplains Morton, Maguire, Lionberger, Glynn, and Beach met at C Med and then went on to the 9th Marines to pick up Chaplain Franklin. The 'choppers' dropped off Chaplains Maguire and Beach at Company K; Chaplain Glynn at Company M, where he joined up with Chaplain Dunks who had gone to Company M late Saturday afternoon and remained overnight; and Chaplains Lionberger and Franklin at Company L. Chaplain Pepera came down the road later in the day to Company I to celebrate mass where Chaplain Saygers of MCB-11 held a Sunrise Service after spending the night there. Chaplain Dunks returned to the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines CP to conduct a service at 0930 and Chaplain Franklin made a return trip to that CP at 1330 to celebrate Mass. So the entire battalion received Protestant and Roman Catholic Divine Services on Easter Sunday.

The helicopters were essential in carrying out this operation since the roads in and out of the city of Da Nang were closed due to the political situation. It is possible that Top Sacred Operation Sunrise is a "first" in accomplishing a religious saturation of troops on the line.

Virtually every unit with a chaplain attached had a sunrise worship service in addition to the routine schedule of Sunday services on Easter 1966. Chaplain Bartlett, with MAG-16 wrote:

Easter Sunrise and regular services were never-to-be-forgotten experiences. The early service was held on the beach as I stood on a beached boat, with the people standing or sitting where they wanted. The dawn that morning was perfect. Late Easter afternoon many of us met on the beach again. Our purpose was a memorial service for one of our Corpsmen. He had many friends from many squadrons. The Easter message took on new depth that evening as the sun was setting on our group gathered on the beach.<sup>28</sup>

In a letter to FMFPac Force Chaplain Craven,

Chaplain Garrett summed up the events of Easter in Da Nang. He wrote:

You are aware of the tensions under which we have existed throughout Holy Week. They cannot be exaggerated. While we are not out of the woods yet by any means, there has been some lessening of these tensions within the past 48 hours. The effect of all this on our Easter plans you can very easily imagine. We decided right from the outset not to let our "big plans" disrupt our regular coverage. In fact these were intensified and as the large combined service became "on again-off again" the wisdom of this approach was verified. Actually, the combined service never was "off." General Walt requested that all VIP visits to III MAF be cancelled except Bishop Mueller's, and that's the way it worked out.<sup>29</sup>

The Buddhist Revolt was disruptive of all the events of Holy Week and the pressure to cancel the religious observances was reasonably strong. It would have been the logical and easy way out. Chaplain Garrett reported:

By Saturday all travel was long since stopped around Da Nang and I had concluded that even if we held the service out on Hill 327 as anticipated, it would necessarily be poorly attended. But we went right ahead. Bishop Mueller arrived at 0100 Easter Morning and the Service was at 1100. It was a most meaningful spiritual experience. To my genuine amazement we had a fine assembly of Marines. Estimates ranged between 800 and 1000. The 3d Marine Division Band played and one of our new doctors, LCDR Knapp, who has a magnificent baritone voice, sang "The Holy City." Then Bishop Mueller preached a very moving and powerful sermon. All who were present were greatly blessed and we have had many fine comments on the service.<sup>30</sup>

Equally as important a festival during this season of the year was the Jewish Passover. The Vietnam situation did not stop the Jewish chaplains' plans for a joyous celebration.

The observance of the Passover festival in Da Nang was celebrated in a most eventful manner and under rather unique conditions. A strange blend of joy and sadness surrounded the Seder celebrations—joy because of the opportunity to participate in the traditional Seders, and sadness because of the family separations. The Jewish participants and their guests celebrating the Seders, held at the 3d Marine Division Command Post mess hall in Da Nang, will long remember Passover 1966. It was memorable because it was celebrated in a war zone, in Vietnam, and in an atmosphere filled with ominous clouds of political unrest and turmoil.

With the tense situation caused by the demonstra-

tions and riots in the city of Da Nang the week prior to Passover, and transportation between the city of Da Nang and the U.S. installations in the area almost coming to a standstill, all 90 Seder participants were required to remain overnight in the 3d Marine Division Command Post area. This unexpected turn of events caught many of the men by surprise, and without bedding, clothing, and mess or shaving gear. The men from the Da Nang area had planned to return to their regular billeting areas after the Seder. Men in combat conditions, however, are flexible and learn how to improvise and are accustomed to roughing it. Folding cots were set up in tents and everyone was billeted for the night.

The ban on travel necessitated a change in locations of the Passover morning services which were scheduled in the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Area. The services were rescheduled in the Division CP Messhall where the Seder had been held the previous night. Chaplain Reiner remembered:

In a sense, it seemed as if the morning services were a continuation of the Passover Seder and that we were following the tradition which the Haggadah recounts about the rabbis at B'nai Brak telling about the departure from Egypt all night until their disciples came to them and said, "Master, the time has come to recite the Shema, the morning prayers."

In some ways the Passover in Da Nang was very similar to the Egyptian Passover; celebrated in a strange and hostile land. To the Jewish servicemen in Vietnam the message of the Passover had a special meaning: the basic struggle for liberty and freedom remained the same, only the time and place changed. To them, human suffering is real whether it be the Vietnamese people crying out against the oppression of the Viet Cong, or the followers of Moses crying to be free from the Egyptians.<sup>31</sup>

The mess sergeant and his staff were unsparing in their efforts to make the ceremonial Seder meals as tasty and as delectable as possible. They were able to prepare under field conditions, a sumptuous four-course meal, "as nice as one would find stateside working with permanent facilities."<sup>32</sup> The traditional delicacies of gefilte fish and matzo ball chicken soup were served as the first two courses. The entrees of the main course were turkey, chicken curry, and roast beef au jus. The hot vegetables of beets, string beans, and cauliflower added color to the buffet service tables. When the men approached the buffet tables they were pleasantly surprised to find an entree not listed on the Seder program menu. The mess sergeants had added T-Bone steaks as a special holiday treat. The dessert consisted of kosher (for

Passover) macaroons shipped from the states, sponge cake and tasty fresh fruit compote served in grapefruit shells.

The mess sergeant's fine aesthetic taste in banquet preparation transformed the rather austere mess hall into a banquet hall with a pleasing decor. Partitions divided the mess hall into three sections, the front lounge, the dining area, and the food preparation buffet service area. The partitions were adorned with colorful paintings of Vietnamese rural life. Decorative bomb shells served as the planters for the elephant plant shrubbery in the lounge area. The long picnic style tables and benches usually used in the mess hall were replaced with individual chairs and tables which seated four people. Each table was decorated with a vase of local flowers and greens. The vases were improvised corrugated no. 10 cans which were rather attractive due to their silver color and mirror-like effect which reflected the light. The mess sergeant demonstrated that even under field conditions with a minimum of manpower and equipment, one man with ingenuity and creativity can prepare a most delicious traditional Passover meal in a festive atmosphere.

The guests of honor at the Seder meal included Colonel Leo J. Dulacki, Chief of Staff, 3d Marine Division; Captain Francis L. Garrett, Force Chaplain, III Marine Amphibious Force; and Captain Frank R. Morton, Division Chaplain, 3d Marine Division. Major W. J. Speisel and Gunnery Sergeant Myron E. Goldstein were the senior ranking Jewish officer and SNCO present. General Walt had accepted an invitation to the Seder but due to the highly explosive political situation in downtown Da Nang, was unable to attend. Several unit commanders and executive officers were also present as well as a number of Protestant and Catholic chaplains, including several supervisory chaplains.

At the conclusion of the second Seder, matzos, gefilte fish, chicken dinners, kosher Passover candies, dried fruits, macaroons, personal comfort kits, and copies of the Holy Scriptures and *Jewish Sea Stories* were distributed. The canned kosher foods and matsos were provided by the National Jewish Welfare Board. The Ladies Auxiliary of the Pvt Edward L. Lipsky Post No. 764 of the Jewish War Veterans, Flushing, New York sent the personal comfort kits. The Samuel J. Goldfarb Foundation of Sarasota, Florida contributed the copies of *Jewish*

*Sea Stories*. The Atlantic Lodge of B'nai Brith, Brooklyn, New York sent packages of dried fruits. Several individuals as well as organizations sent kosher foods and matzos to be distributed.

As part of the ecumenical spirit of the age, the Father Owens Memorial Post No. 1187, Catholic War Veterans, of Newark, New Jersey, sent a large number of Happy Passover greeting cards to be distributed to the Jewish men. These were part of 1,884 cards which were sent by Catholic and Jewish children in Parochial and Jewish day schools in the Newark, New Jersey area. The letter from the Catholic War Veterans Post sent to the Catholic Chaplain read:

Enclosed you will find Easter and Passover Cards from school children. Please distribute the Passover cards to our Jewish brothers or to the Jewish Chaplains. The children sent these messages with love; the notes they wrote are from the heart. We send Passover greetings to our Jewish brothers on their holy day just as God sent his Son to earth; to show us how to live as brothers. The significance of both holy days show that all people should live in peace and freedom.<sup>33</sup>

Each of the Passover cards which the Catholic School children sent contained a short personal greeting and letter addressed to a soldier or friend in Vietnam. Many of the children asked that the soldiers write them. The students of the Hillel Academy, Passaic, New Jersey sent hand colored Passover cards. The back cover of the card interestingly read: "Three symbols (Pesach — Passover sacrifice, Matzoh — bread of affliction, Marror — bitter herbs) of man's endurance in the struggle to be free of affliction and oppression."<sup>34</sup> The rubber stamp imprint of the Father Owens Memorial Post 1187, Catholic War Veterans appeared below the explanation of the three symbols.

Chaplain Reiner summed up his perception of this experience by saying:

The Passover celebration in Da Nang was unique, historic, festive, and well attended. However, its primary importance was its religious and spiritual character and impact. The Passover festival provided the opportunity for the men to feel a part of the larger world Jewish community and its historical tradition. It was especially meaningful for them to be able to participate in the Passover festival when they are in a strange country, over 8,000 miles from home and families.<sup>35</sup>

Passover is one of the few opportunities in a combat zone in which Jewish servicemen can join in





Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A421523

*Holding candles, the children's choir of the Evangelical Protestant Church of Tam Ky and An Tan performs traditional Christmas carols for visiting 1st MAW Marines during dedication ceremonies for the Vietnamese church's new building on 22 December 1966.*

prayer and fellowship with a large Jewish congregation. For most Jewish servicemen who are often the only Jewish men in their unit, participation in the Seder celebration is a unique and deeply moving religious experience.

Passover in Vietnam will long be remembered by the chaplains as well as by the men. The presence of so many new faces was a reminder of the continual

challenge to meet and serve all the religious needs of personnel who were widely dispersed in the line and supporting units of the three Marine enclaves and in the many remote outposts in the I Corps area. To meet their spiritual and social needs by helping provide the opportunities for men to identify with their spiritual heritage and community is the essence of the chaplaincy.

## CHAPTER 7

# Teaching and Preaching (June - September 1966)

*Hearts and Minds: The Personal Response Project—Meeting the Needs of Worship*

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With the expansion of the Vietnam War, the chaplains' role by mid-1966 was also expanded and took on new missions beyond the traditional role of serving the spiritual needs of their assigned units. Chaplains had always preached to the troops from the tenets of the faith they espoused. They also looked beyond the immediate message they were charged with bringing to the service community, to the implications for the social impact it should encourage. Humanitarian activity in the form of assistance to orphanages, hospitals, needy villages, and refugee camps was an obvious and continuous result. Other results were less obvious but perhaps more far-reaching. They involved establishing unique ministries. Chaplains were involved in instructing Marines in the area of drug education as well as moral behavior while away from the command on rest and recreation trips, and they fell very naturally into the role of teacher when consideration of the need to respect the customs and culture of Vietnamese people arose.

The Chaplain Corps of the armed services generally have not undertaken unique ministries. They have usually, and altogether rightfully, reflected the approaches of the civilian community as regards innovation. The pluralistic character of the Chaplain Corps also imposes a caution in beginning unique ministerial efforts. This is generally viewed as a healthy condition but it contributes to a conservative approach to most opportunities. The cross-cultural efforts of the Navy Chaplains Corps in coordination with the Marine Corps in Vietnam runs counter to this tendency. The concentrated study of the Marines' cross-cultural impact undertaken in Vietnam was an experimental ministry and as such was not without its problems. And, although it did not continue past the Vietnam years in the same form, the understanding that the religious message has a broader application than personal soul-saving and life-stabilizing was firmly established in Vietnam

and thereafter vigorously pursued. Programs Navy-wide and uniquely involving the Chaplain Corps a decade later would look to these experimental efforts for their philosophical base and inspiration.

*Hearts and Minds: The Personal Response Project*

In Vietnam the American military had to recognize a factor in counter-insurgency warfare with which they did not have to cope in more traditional warfare. They had to consider the loyalty of the indigenous population to their government and this meant an understanding of the people's culture, society, and policies. In a word, to succeed they had to help win the people's hearts and minds to the government's cause.

In recent history U.S. forces had either to act as occupying forces, as in Germany after the cessation of hostilities in World War II, or as a peacekeeping force in temporary residence in a host country, such as Korea. And although American troops have traditionally respected the integrity of another culture's values, such sensitivity had been regulated by command as well as courtesy. In those instances the fighting had ceased and attempts to encourage good behavior were not linked to a recognition of its importance in a military situation. American servicemen were asked to be good ambassadors; they had no reason to fear anything more than command dissatisfaction and possible reprisal if their conduct was anything other than impeccable. In Vietnam, however, American military forces faced a situation completely unlike anything they had experienced in their past. There, the references upon which value judgements were made and which in many instances determined behavioral reaction, moved outside the boundaries with which many Americans were familiar. All too often innocent gestures, facial expressions, or outbursts of emotion were misinterpreted. Under circumstances such as these, when un-

conscious behavior resulted in indignation on the part of the Vietnamese because the offender had unknowingly violated a cultural or religious custom, a security threat existed.

The initiative for the development of a unique and important Personal Response project was generated by the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific in 1964, prior to Marine amphibious landings in the Republic of Vietnam. Even before active United States participation in the war, General Krulak recognized that in order to undermine Communism, the confidence of the people was essential. It is to his credit that General Krulak recognized this as the central issue for non-communist forces in South Vietnam:

Much has been said and written about the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the people in Vietnam if we are to be successful in carrying out our mission in that war-torn country. Victory will come as the people want to help themselves. We can win everything in Vietnam but the people, and suffer an abysmal defeat. We must start by knowing them as they are and building from there. It is self-defeating to be willing to do everything for the Vietnamese except understand them as persons.<sup>1</sup>

The idea to begin research into the situation that existed in Vietnam, its mores and culture, to determine in essence feasibility of such a study as a pilot project, evolved during a Marine exercise (Operation Silver Lance), which was held on the west coast of the United States in March 1965. Prior to this time Chaplain Craven attempted to locate material which would assist the combat Marine in understanding local peoples. *The Army Area Handbook* was initially adopted for this purpose, along with Army religious studies, both of which had been field-tested in Vietnam. It was felt, however, that more specific data was essential to the Marine effort. This was confirmed as a consequence of experience gained in Operation Silver Lance, in which there were extensive simulations of problems that arise when military personnel are not adequately informed about, or capable of appreciating, the value systems of a society other than their own. Silver Lance convincingly demonstrated that the lack of such information could alienate local peoples, cause a decrease in security, a potential increase in casualties, and affect the extension of time necessary for successful pacification and redevelopment of strife-torn societies.

Prior to this period the United States Army had staffed a study very similar to the Marine project, en-

titled "The Impact of Indigenous Religions Upon U.S. Military Operations Under All Conditions." This study agreed that existing sources of information were inadequate to prepare the American servicemen for adjustment to a foreign culture.

After the information from Silver Lance had been digested, General Krulak and his staff chaplain, Captain Craven, decided to request the Chief of Chaplains to send an investigator to Vietnam to study how these beliefs affected behavior. They assigned initial priority to religion on the assumption that it largely determined ethical systems and cultural habits. Consistent with this determination, Commander Robert L. Mole (Seventh Day Adventist) was ordered to undertake such a study, and proceeded to do so immediately. The project was expected to take about six months.<sup>2</sup>

American Marines and naval personnel in Vietnam had always received basic indoctrination in the religious customs, practices, and taboos of the people. Shortly after U.S. Marines of MAG-16's Medium Helicopter Squadron-163, engaged on Operation Shufly, moved north from Soc Trang to Da Nang in September 1962, local missionaries were employed in troop indoctrination. While in 1963 and 1964 the indoctrination program at Da Nang became increasingly more sophisticated and effective, its effectiveness depended upon the talents of a single missionary and the chaplain assisting him. With the arrival of Marine combat units in Da Nang in March of 1965, it became readily apparent that an extensive program of lecture and discussions on the influence of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and other indigenous religions on the life of the people was necessary. While there was no specific connection between these events and the conversation between General Krulak and Chaplain Craven, the motivation behind both merged into the directive given Chaplain Mole which resulted in implementation of the "Southeast Asia Religious Research Project." Since the perception in Vietnam was already in this direction, the need for such materials as Chaplain Mole was responsible for producing was recognized by those in the field, and the result was a broad acceptance of and appreciation for his work.

During his several trips to Vietnam Chaplain Mole discussed his progress with III MAF Chaplain Garrett. Then, as Chaplain Mole neared the completion of research, Chaplain Craven urged preparation of

materials for the immediate use of chaplains, and Chaplain Garrett offered to assist him in the preparation of two lectures, with illustrative flip-charts, for general use by all chaplains in I Corps.

The lectures were prepared, the flip-charts were completed, and Chaplains McLean and Radasky of 3d Marine Division Headquarters presented the lectures to chaplains assembled for the purpose of evaluating them. Acceptance was immediate; chaplains were trained to present the materials. Two lectures on "Religions of Vietnam" and "Religiously Based Customs of Vietnam" were thereafter presented to newly arriving troops in all commands in III MAF.

Chaplain Mole continued to refine his materials and to add to them throughout the remainder of his one-year tour of duty with Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. He had reported for duty in August of 1965 and was relieved in July 1966. Phase One of the project, the research, preparation, and production of indoctrination materials suitable for use in orienting Navy and Marine Corps personnel in Vietnam was successfully completed by Chaplain Mole before his scheduled departure.

Chaplain Mole was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Richard A. McGonigal (United Presbyterian) as the Project Officer for the FMFPac-sponsored "Southeast Asia Religious Research Project." Since the research phase of the project had been completed and the emphasis now was to be implementation, the Chief of Chaplains directed that the term "research" be dropped from the project title.

Paragraph 1 of Chaplain McGonigal's charter letter reflected the change:

During the past year he (Chaplain Mole) has gathered a vast amount of information and materials on the religious dynamics, customs and traditions of the Vietnamese. From this material lecture presentations have been prepared and used by Chaplain Mole and by other chaplains of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. With the completion of this preliminary task the emphasis now shifts from research to the revision and refinement of materials and methods of presentation. This must also be a concern for the personal response of our military personnel as they work with the Vietnamese people in achieving victory over the enemy and in establishing a strong and stable government for themselves. To accomplish this second phase of the project a relief was requested for Chaplain Mole and the Chief of Chaplains has assigned Lieutenant Commander Richard A. McGonigal, CHC, USN as the project officer for this purpose. As in the case of Chaplain Mole he is assigned to

the Staff of the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific/I Marine Amphibious Corps [Forward], who will furnish administrative and logistical support.<sup>3</sup>

In the same charter-letter Chaplain McGonigal's duties were set forth. He was to provide presentations, background information, and training aids for chaplains and others attempting to help our personnel in developing a more wholesome response and better attitude toward the local people; conduct training sessions for chaplains and other personnel who will be making presentations; assemble and evaluate information pertaining to the religious beliefs and value systems of indigenous people; prepare mass media inserts and other techniques for stimulating interest and discussion among the men; and solicit and evaluate feedback from all who conducted presentations and others involved in day-by-day relations with the people. Chaplain Craven was to provide overall field supervision and technical guidance and Chaplain Garrett was to exercise supervision while Chaplain McGonigal was working in I Corps Tactical Zone.

Phase two of the Religions of Southeast Asia Project was a natural extension of the research, preparation, and indoctrination phase. It was required to hold the behavioral, attitudinal beachhead established in the orientation lectures. Revised materials were made available to commands for presentation to Vietnam-bound troops still in the United States. In Vietnam it was noted that combat itself, with the hazards naturally associated with counterinsurgency warfare, and problems arising from joint military efforts, had a way of shaping unfavorable attitudes. Chaplain McGonigal therefore addressed himself to the matters of attitude changing and more effective communications.

The name for the project was changed to signify the new emphasis. Two words from Chaplain McGonigal's charter illustrated the shift in emphasis and became the official title of the effort. They were "Personal Response" and the official title became the "Personal Response Project."

Chaplain McGonigal's work was well received in Vietnam. Throughout the remainder of 1966 he continued to gather scientific samplings of attitudes and addressed himself to the matters of improved communications and attitude changing. In his December issue of the "Force Chaplain's Newsletter," Chaplain Craven said:

There is a growing awareness that the key to our pacification or Revolutionary Development Program in Vietnam, is the individual Marine himself. It is not enough to give things to people or to do things for people without relating to them as persons. During my November visit to Vietnam I found a great deal more interest in, and discussion of, the Personal Response Project. Major General Robertshaw invited me to speak about the project to the members of his mess when I was there as his guest for dinner. I described the background of the project and why the Commanding General FMFPAC requested the assignment of Chaplain Mole, who was relieved by Chaplain McGonigal. I also told how the Chief of Navy Chaplains had established it as a special project of the Chaplain Corps Planning Group under the direction of the Commanding General, FMFPAC. I emphasized that it was not a chaplains' program, but was designed to assist commands in carrying out their people-to-people and Civic Action programs. This is not "McGonigal's project" or a "Chaplain's project," for the matter of building better relationships with the Vietnamese is a command responsibility. By the nature of their training and calling, however, Chaplains do feel that they play a vital role in this endeavor.<sup>4</sup>

Chaplain Craven's remarks pointed up two interesting matters with regard to Personal Response in Vietnam. First, he voiced a growing sentiment that Personal Response was of such importance and magnitude that chaplains could no longer pursue its objective alone. It was developing into a command-wide effort on a level with civic action, as indeed it had been envisioned initially by General Krulak, Chaplain Craven, and Chaplain Mole. Second, his remarks pointed to the need, which chaplains felt, to subject their involvement in the program to careful theological scrutiny, and to distinguish their religious motivation from that of pacification or "Revolutionary Development."

What the Personal Response Program called into question was the traditional interpretation of the function of the military chaplain. The initial rationale employed to justify chaplains' involvement in this type of effort evolved from the recognition or belief, that much of the daily activity as well as the cultural manners of a people derived from religiously based foundations. To this was added the primary duty traditionally required of the chaplain that he advise his command on "the religious customs and institutions which members of the command should respect during visits to foreign countries."<sup>5</sup> On these grounds, then, with the thought that the primary motive of the project was to provide data on religious customs, Chaplain Mole had been originally dispatched to Vietnam for the purpose, as he conceived of

it, of data collection. The results of his intensive efforts, titled "The Religions of South Vietnam in Faith and Fact," was compiled from many shorter releases, all authored and researched by Chaplain Mole, with the cooperation of Lieutenant Commander W. Warren Newman (Disciples of Christ), extraordinary writer and member of the Chaplain Corps Planning Group, whose principal mission was to oversee the project.

This manual assisted the Marines in the field by making them aware of local taboos and religious customs. But familiarity with Vietnamese religions turned out not to be the final answer to the problem of cross-cultural interaction and response to foreign cultures that Operation Silver Lance had illuminated. Under the impact of a developing awareness of the behavioral sciences which occurred while Chaplain Mole was serving in-country in Vietnam, a conceptual shift developed in the Planning Group that eventually changed the focus of the program and its research-oriented first phase. That this transition affected the ideology that supported the project was partially seen in the decision in June 1966 to change the name of the project to Personal Response in order to have it reflect the new direction. The new name more accurately presented the goals and priorities of the program which had slowly emerged and were defined as the result of the testing of the material fed it by the Southeast Asia Religious Project. The Planning Group felt that the presence or absence of religious information had little to do with cultural relationships, at least insofar as American experience in Vietnam was concerned. Chaplain Mole's religious data, while of distinct value as such, did not touch the real problem area of the relationship with indigenous peoples. It was discovered, in fact, that in certain instances the existence of specific religious information about an alien culture provided an individual with more to be contemptuous of in his regard for a society unfamiliar to him.

When Lieutenant Commander McGonigal departed for Vietnam in June 1966 to relieve Chaplain Mole, he went committed to a newer concept, more encompassing and subjective than the religious-ethical approach. The new philosophy of Personal Response transcended ideas which had preceded it and was more intellectually based. The 1966 concept of Personal Response focused on the recognition of value systems; it was based on the



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187119

*Chaplain Willard W. Bartlett gives a lecture on native religions to MAG-15 Marines.*

awareness that Americans share with each other a common and distinctive value system, viewpoints, and patterns of communication and behaviorisms uniquely different from the value-belief-behavior systems of Vietnam. It was found that when these basic differences find no common point of understanding alienation often results, sometimes as the product of an unintentional violation of a value. Personal Response was officially defined in the following terms:

The Personal Response Project in Vietnam is a systematic effort to:

- a. Understand the Vietnamese culture by learning about its people, why they believe and act as they do, their religious principles and ethical value systems, in order to,
- b. Modify and eventually eliminate unfavorable attitudes and offensive behavior patterns toward indigenous citizens,

- c. Promote constructive relationships and appropriate mutual assistance between military personnel and the Vietnamese, and

- d. Increase in some degree trust and confidence between American military personnel and indigenous citizens.<sup>6</sup>

The importance of religion in this newly expanded philosophy was diminished. It no longer provided a rationale for the entire research project, but it still held a significant position in the foundational structure of the project and seemed to justify the continuing involvement of Navy chaplains. But religion as such was clearly no longer the controlling variable in the approach of Personal Response. Chaplain Warren Newman defined the parameters of the new project in more generalized terms: "This project grew out of the realization that the behavioral patterns and attitudes of people are a natural consequence of

their religious, cultural and ethical convictions and value systems and that greater understanding of people could result from increased awareness of these convictions and systems.”<sup>7</sup>

Surveys of chaplains' attitudes showed that some believed that this conceptual shift from purely religious criteria to areas which involved attitude and behavior analysis removed the chaplain from his primary duty, the spiritual ministry to American servicemen. There arose a division of opinion surrounding this aspect of the program and some chaplains felt that such a future-oriented and largely untested program fell outside a chaplain's responsibilities. The Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, however, recognized Personal Response, as then conceived, as pastorally legitimate but secondary to religious and pastoral counseling functions. Among other chaplains Personal Response and its philosophy attracted many supporters who believed that its attempt to teach people to respect other cultural values in an effort to change attitudes was consistent with the chaplain's purpose in the fundamental business of attempting to effect a reconciliation of man to man.

In any case, opinion relating to the project differed. There were those who clearly thought chaplains were being drawn away from their primary mission and there were those who believed that the chaplain's responsibilities extended beyond the sacramental ministry and fell within the concept of Personal Response as outlined by its new philosophy.

The adverse reactions, developed from considered reflection on the part of concerned clergymen over the emerging idea of the Personal Response Project, were perhaps in response to the possible implication of the Chaplain Corps in a church-state controversy. In addition, many of the negative feelings toward the project may have been fueled by the nagging doubt that it could accomplish its purpose, which was admittedly highly idealistic. This, plus a doubt that chaplains were the ones who should have the responsibility for making such a program operate, contributed to a considerable amount of apprehensive reluctance.

By June of 1966, however, Personal Response had matured as a distinct philosophy, but it remained to be proven whether this philosophy was realistic, and whether it could answer the many questions associated with the culture shock felt by the Marine and actually prevent the development of a negative

attitude toward the Vietnamese, given the realities of war. Could the Personal Response Project satisfactorily resolve the very real problems caused by the counter-insurgency situation, on the one hand, and the hypothetical theological difficulties seen by its critics within the Chaplain Corps? Could Personal Response reconcile man to man? Before these long-term questions could be answered more concrete information was needed concerning the attitudes of personnel stationed in-country. An index was essential before action could be taken to correct problem areas. In short, the level of discomfort with the project, and its extent, needed to be determined before anything could be done in the way of correcting it.

Chaplain McGonigal had this in mind when he relieved Chaplain Mole, who would be returning to the United States for further graduate study. When Chaplain McGonigal arrived, he was prepared to implement the new philosophy of Personal Response with a new methodology. Primary among his initial objectives was the administration of an attitude survey among the Marines in I Corps. This survey, it was hoped, would provide a reference point by which the entire project could be evaluated. It was both designed to show how the Vietnamese look at us and we at them. The initial results were somewhat disturbing; it turned out that of the Marine personnel, 44 percent liked while 37 percent disliked the Vietnamese. And while 72 percent of the Vietnamese surveyed liked Americans, 46 percent already felt that we did not like them. Past experience of the Army in Korea indicated that this was a potentially dangerous balance of opinion and that corrective action was necessary before these attitudes became fixed. The most critical opinion group was found to be the platoon sergeant or E-5 level, and the junior officer level. These groups had the most direct contact with the Vietnamese.

As soon as this information became known III MAF initiated a program designed to correct, or at least bridge the problem areas. Chaplain McGonigal, who directed this effort in the field, prepared the *III MAF Platoon Leaders Personal Response Notebook*. The motivating thought was that attitudes toward peoples of other cultures are learned behavior and therefore can be unlearned to some degree. This publication therefore attempted to use a teaching method which would allow the student to experience cultural differences and deal with them in a positive and healthy way. The instrument



used was called the "critical incident technique" which consisted of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles. The technique was formally developed and given its name by the American Institute of Research (AIR) and relies upon extraordinary examples of cross-cultural encounters which were observably effective or ineffective, rather than attempting massive data accumulation and related indoctrination that might or might not have been related to interaction success or failure. The "critical incident" explored the potential for the isolation of the critical factors involved in the success or failure of intercultural contacts and helped to establish the critical requirement for effective cross-cultural interaction. The technique was designed to eliminate the collection and dissemination of opinions and provide the student with access to a record of specific behavior characteristics which could be carefully

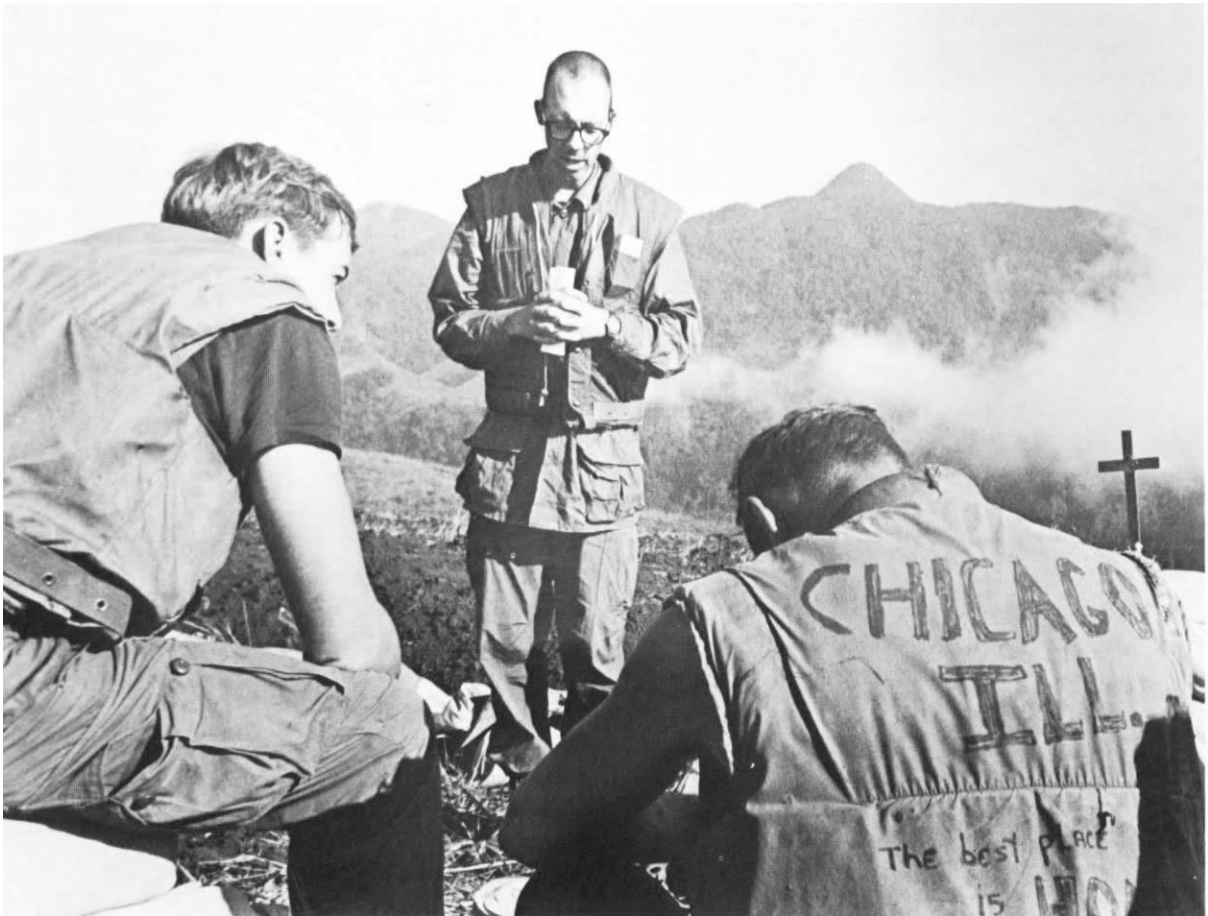
studied as a means of isolating the factors which either antagonize or facilitate understanding and cooperation across cultural barriers.

The *Platoon Leader's Personal Response Notebook* was initially roughed out for use without the critical-incident technique included in the format. It contained twenty-four briefings for squad-sized groups and was constructed around successful and unsuccessful interaction experiences. The publication of this *Notebook* coincided with the formalization of an educational structure which involved lecture, discussion, illustrated message posters, human interest news releases, and role-playing in village-simulation settings at the NCO Leadership School in Okinawa, and the installation of a heavy emphasis in the Orientation School for combined action units. Since General Krulak demanded a product that was educationally sound as well as practical, Chaplain Newman came from Washington to meet Chaplain McGonigal and Chaplain Craven in Hawaii where they spent an intensive day adding the critical-

*Religious services during Operation Medina (1967) were held frequently for the 1st Marines, moving in convoy towards Quang Tri, by regimental Chaplain Carl A. Auel.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A370462





Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A190294

*Chaplain (Lieutenant Commander) Ray W. Stubbe leads Marines of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, in worship services during the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.*

incident technique to the *Notebook*. The result was a new publication entitled *Unit Leader's Personal Response Handbook*.

Within III MAF itself the command implemented the project through the information of Personal Response Councils. They were established in the 3d Marine Division, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and the Force Logistics Command. In January 1967, Major General Wood B. Kyle, commanding the 3d Marine Division, directed that a Personal Response Council be established and a project officer be assigned to assess the attitudes of Marines toward the Vietnamese people and to promote better relations at the lowest possible echelon. This council, of which the division chaplain was a member and to meetings of which the assistant division chaplain was invited, met once a month to discuss methods and procedures for troop indoctrination and to develop methods for fostering respect between Marines and

Vietnamese. Participation in the project also occurred at a less intense level in the 1st Marine Division, 1st MP Battalion, 9th Amphibious Brigade, and the Naval Support Activity at Da Nang.

The most active support developed in the field, perhaps because it was there, where contact with both the enemy and the people was constant, that the working results of Personal Response were most clearly seen. Within the tactical area of responsibility of the 3d Marine Division a great many life-saving incidents were reported whose origin lay in the success of Personal Response in promoting intercultural attitude improvement. The rate of life-saving incidents was considerably lower in areas where Personal Response was less vigorously pursued. Throughout its history in Vietnam, Personal Response was found to be a valuable aid to Marines in the field, and more and more military minds began to support the intention of the program when



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A369480

*Jewish Yom Kippur service is held in the 1st Marine Division chapel in September 1966. Individuals participating in the rituals are: (from left) Chaplain Robert L. Reiner; EAD3 Allan Schwartz; HM3 Bruce Potolofsky (cantor); and Chaplain David B. Saltzman.*

it could be proved that it paid off in lives saved. The fact remained that it was easier to patrol when the people liked you.

Chaplain McGonigal was relieved by Commander Otto Schneider (United Church of Christ) who proceeded to take over the formal structure of Personal Response, while Chaplain McGonigal served a six-month extension to conduct further attitude surveys. Chaplain Schneider managed the program and the growing administration established in conjunction with it in I Corps with great efficiency and in July 1968 he was relieved in turn by Commander Neil M. Stevenson (United Presbyterian).

Phase II of Personal Response had begun with the promulgation of Annex H to III MAF Operations Order 201. This order established Personal Response councils as part of each major command and an

ongoing training program. It superseded III MAF Force Order 1730.3A which *suggested* that, on a trial basis, commands appoint PR councils. This assured Personal Response a broader acceptance in the operational considerations of the force. Up to this time Personal Response had been supported and strongly endorsed by III MAF, but it did not have the stature of an operational program. It remained an ideal whose significance often went unrecognized. Many officers persisted in interpreting Vietnam as a conventional war, and for them Personal Response seemed an unnecessary administrative burden, and part of the chaplain's program. Some field commanders, however, who began to understand the implications and political significance of the ideological war for the hearts and minds of the people, recognized Personal Response as an essential bridge between the U.S. military presence and



Department of Defense (USN) Photo 1120683  
*Greek Orthodox Chaplain Boris T. Geeza officiates  
 in a 1967 service for the 4th Marines at Dong Ha.*

positive cultural adjustment with local populations.

#### *Meeting the Needs of Worship*

While various chaplains were engaged in strategically important teaching ministries the vast majority were continuing to serve the religious needs of Marines in the uniqueness of the preaching service and with the sacraments.

In the 9th Marines, Lieutenant Commander Thomas J. McDermott (Roman Catholic) relieved Chaplain Dowd with the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines in August 1966. When McDermott reported, the battalion was located south of Da Nang between Highway 1 and Hill 55. Since two line company command posts were located in perimeter areas accessible only by helicopter, to provide religious coverage it was necessary for Chaplain McDermott to coordinate his trips with resupply runs. The companies were resupplied daily, so there was no difficulty in returning the following day. This over-

night visit became the key to a successful ministry within the battalion. He remembered:

I now began to experience the hardships and the dangers which are part and parcel of a line company. This is the common denominator or the great equalizer in the mind of a field Marine. Sharing his miserable existence, eating the same C-rations, sleeping alongside a newly dug hole in case of a mortar attack, surviving the intolerable weather, and establishing the rapport so essential in our ministry.<sup>8</sup>

Coverage within the separated companies posed a problem. Beside the company CP there were two other platoon positions from which patrols and ambushes were executed. Transportation was arranged by the company commander, usually in conjunction with the resupply run on a tank or amtrack.

*Chaplain Henry T. Lavin celebrates Mass in a hamlet church south of Phu Bai on Easter Sunday 1967 for Marines of a combined action company and Vietnamese villagers. Just after this picture was taken, a Viet Cong sniper fired on the congregation and worship was disrupted while he was being flushed out.*

Photo courtesy of Chaplain Henry T. Lavin





Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187979

*Religious services are held for Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, with men at their position near Rock Pile. Note the use of C-ration cases for the improvised altar.*

Sometimes it was necessary to go on foot and then always with a fire team. The fire team was required as a precaution should an occasion arise that was just too much for the chaplain's assistant to handle. Chaplain McDermott had reason to be grateful for the practice on one occasion after he had held Mass on Hill 22. He reported: "On my return, my assistant and I walked into an ambush. Crossing rice paddies at the foot of the hill, automatic weapons opened up on us, wounding my assistant. It was probably no more than two VC who paid close attention to my schedule."<sup>9</sup>

Just after Chaplain McDermott's arrival at the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, Lieutenant John T. Collins (Southern Baptist) relieved Chaplain Cory in 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. Chaplain Collins wryly wrote:

On Hill 55, I lived underground. From the Command Post I gave religious coverage to the forward companies,

moving about by chopper, amtrack, tank, mighty-mite and by foot. During my very first service out forward with Delta Company, I received a lesson in humility. As the men gathered for services they spaced themselves and sat low in a dry rice paddy. I stood up on the dyke to preach. About half-way through the service, 10 rounds from a VC weapon whizzed by my ear. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons and six companies took care of the disturbance. Needless to say, I completed the service down in the rice paddy, on a level with the laity.<sup>10</sup>

Preaching in the combat environment was not only difficult from the point of view of individual safety. What the chaplain came to say also occasioned long hours of personal soul searching. Since speaking forthrightly about eternal truth always takes the listeners current situation into account, preaching in the context of the Vietnamese conflict had a particular agony, and could not be tossed off lightly with traditional phrases. Chaplain Collins stated:

The closer we got to the front lines the more responsive were Marines to the chaplain's presence and to the worship services. Foxhole religion for the most part stands open to much criticism, but the shallow experience can sometimes act as the catalyst for a deeper religious experience. In the "grunt" I saw a lot of boys grow into men, and a lot of men grow spiritually in the chaos of war. I discovered that the chaplain must have some answers as regards war and the taking of a human life. The presence and message of the chaplain should remind them that we can never kill indiscriminately. The battle to resist the threat of becoming bestial in this kind of conflict is always present.<sup>11</sup>

During this period Protestant coverage of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines was given by Chaplain Lionberger, who followed a vigorous but not unique, worship schedule. On Mondays he traveled by vehicle out about five miles to conduct a service for a combined action company unit at 0900. At 1030 a few miles farther out a service was held at Company B. Moving to another company position on a nearby hill, Company D was covered at 1400 in its messhall. On Thursdays a resupply helicopter took him to the top of Dong Den Hill north of Da Nang, altitude 2,500 feet, with a small helo platform scraped off a narrow peak where previously three helos had crashed. An artillery observation team of 12 men inhabited the top of Dong Den, a strip of ground about 15 feet wide by 300 feet long, with cliffs and jungle on every side. A service on Dong Den was usually a "rush job." It was necessary to complete the service by the time the choppers finished the resupply. Flying down then from Dong Den he would land on Hill 124 where there was a platoon of Company B where the preaching was complicated by, he reported, "the hooting of monkeys and the songs of wild birds continuously filling the air."<sup>12</sup>

On Fridays he flew by chopper to Hill 364 above the regimental command post where radio relay and artillery observation teams were located. Saturday was nearly the busiest day of the week when he covered Company C. The first stop was the Company CP, located at the Plant about 10 miles away for services at 0900. From there he began the climb toward Hai Van Pass, stopping at Hill 358 to conduct a service at 1030. "The scenery was beautiful," he reported, "and reaching Hai Van Pass, the view of the Da Nang harbor was breath-taking."<sup>13</sup> Sunday services at the 3d Marines CP began the Sabbath and three Lutheran services in the afternoon finished an arduous week of 14 services. Chaplain Lionberger further commented:



Photo courtesy of III MAF  
*Ammunition boxes serve as a makeshift altar as Chaplain William L. Childers, 9th Marines, conducts services on a jungle hilltop south of Khe Sanh.*

One of the lessons learned during this ministry was that the chaplain not only had the opportunity to serve the men spiritually, but that any other favors performed for the men resulted in a more favorable response to his ministry. I collected hundreds of paperback books from the Division Chaplain office for distribution to the companies of 1st Battalion, 3d Marines and on one occasion carried a refreshment cooler to the men on Dong Den Mountain.<sup>14</sup>

Dong Den Mountain was the "high point" to which Division Chaplain Morton later referred when he quoted Catholic Chaplain Witt as claiming he had the "Highest Masses" in all of Da Nang.

Conducting the preaching and sacramental ministry at the field hospitals presented a continual and special challenge. Chaplain Scanlon reported from 1st Battalion, 1st Marines as a relief for Chaplain Glynn, at the C Med Field Hospital.

Chaplain Scanlon who joined his old friend

Chaplain Kary at C Med, reflected later on the transfer from a line battalion to hospital ministry:

It is quieter here from the point of view of noise. The big guns aren't always fighting and there is little fear of imminent attack as there always was in the Battalion. But here there is a different kind of draining. Here the results of enemy cunning and barbarity and the results of our own human mistakes in battle and strategy are brought. The dead and dismembered, the seriously wounded and the slightly wounded, the neuro-psychiatric cases—dismembered emotionally and mentally, the inevitable product of violent killing—those afflicted by diseases native to this country, all these as well as the doctors and corpsmen, form the congregation of the Field Hospital Chaplain. While the strain of imminent battle is not close, the strain of absorbing so much human hurt has sent me away from our A & S tent many times with tears on my cheeks. Those at home who may wonder can be sure that every effort was made, some indeed heroic, when our doctors and corpsmen have worked on the patients without counting the hours or days, without rest and meals.<sup>15</sup>

But perhaps there are no more dramatic memories of worship services and preaching opportunities by

chaplains than those held while on combat operations. Worship services on operations were continuously unique, demanding inventiveness from the chaplain.

Operations on the southern perimeter of the Da Nang Combat Base had been occurring in increasing numbers since the massive Harvest Moon operation the previous December. From their end-of-tour narratives, it was apparent that for many chaplains one operation ran into another. Accounts of one or another period of combat were often omitted, a combat ministry having become the norm or standard rather than the exception. A sensitive observation and record was made by one chaplain while on Operation Liberty, which was a division-wide scrubbing action in the Da Nang TAOR that extended the Marine "front lines" to the Ky Lam River. Lieutenant Delbert J. Cory (Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints) reported:

I rode a circuit, holding services for each company and platoon and spending the night with the men where

*Worship service held in the field in 1968 by Company K, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines of the 3d Marine Division. Note the use of the helmet and cross on the improvised altar.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A190846





Department of Defense (USN) Photo

*Chaplain William L. Childers conducts services on a jungle hilltop south of Khe Sanh.  
Chaplain Childers was serving as a battalion chaplain with the 9th Marines.*

nightfall would catch me. In addition to 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, I held services for 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, First Marines CP and for the MAAG at Hoi An. Assistance for Catholic coverage was given by Chaplains Roy and Kenny. On Operation Liberty the troops swept south to Hoi An on a line and I was able to walk the line from the beach to Highway 1 holding services as I went. I usually covered the 8 miles in 3 or 4 days. However, one day I began at daybreak with a service and covered six platoons with a service for each. Each of the platoons' CPs was about a mile from the other, over hot sand dunes. It was a hard, hot day as my last service was completed right at dark. Visual contact was maintained with the troops along the line since I was traveling with only my clerk as escort. No trouble was encountered but I had a few anxious moments when I crossed a wide rice paddy and failed to find the position along the line at the time I reached the tree line on the other side. After a hasty retreat across the paddy I found I had been given wrong directions and had been about 700 yards ahead of the line. After that, I carried my own map to double check the directions I received. Such "circuit riding" required a new fox hole each night so my hands became calloused with digging and I usually returned from the field after 4 or 5 days filthy dirty."

Regimental Chaplain Lemieux later had this comment about Chaplain Cory, "he was among the bravest chaplains I have ever known."<sup>16</sup>

Professional developments in the 1st Marine Divi-

sion religious coverage in the Chu Lai Combat Base was coordinated by 1st Marine Division Chaplain John Wissing from his arrival on 27 March 1966 to his relief on 25 August and detachment the following day. Weekly meetings of all chaplains in the enclave were held and topics of professional interest were presented and discussed. Such subjects as "Increasing Church Attendance", "American Red Cross Briefings", and "Religious Coverage in the First Marine Division, First Marine Aircraft Wing and Seabees", were discussed. Special presentations were made by Chaplains Capodanno and McGonigal. Chaplain Capodanno, having been a Maryknoll missionary to the Far East before making application for the Navy Chaplain Corps, was especially equipped to present the subject, "Psychology of the Oriental Mind." He was invited to make the presentation to General Fields and his division staff, and to other groups concerned with understanding the minds of the Vietnamese people. Chaplain McGonigal spoke on the "Personal Response Project" and described the data collection process in which he was then engaged.

At monthly intervals, III MAF Chaplain Garrett made special presentations of professional interest to





Department of Defense (USN) Photo 36197  
*A chaplain celebrates Catholic Mass in the regimental chapel of the 4th Marines at Dong Ha (1967).*

chaplains in the three enclaves. His intention was to keep III MAF chaplains fully informed on development in the Chaplain Corps, policies relating to the Chaplain Corps ministry in Vietnam, and organizational and administrative procedures as they affected the chaplain's work in I Corps Tactical Zone. Chaplain Garrett discussed "Fitness Reports," "The Field Hospital Ministry," "Memorial Services," "Chaplain Corps Civic Action," and "The Chaplain's Role in Personal Affairs."

In the last report of his tenure as division chaplain, Chaplain Wissing indicated to the Chief of Chaplains that, "Seven chapels were constructed. Every unit having a chaplain now has a chapel. Extraordinary civic affairs projects include the construction of one Protestant church and two Catholic churches in local communities. Assistance was also given from chapel funds to orphanages, schools, seminaries, etc."<sup>17</sup>

When Captain David J. Casazza (Roman Catholic) reported for duty as relief for Chaplain Wissing, 1st Marine Division chaplain, on 24 August, 18 chaplains were assigned to the division. His T/O strength was officially established at 23. Four of his chaplains were in Da Nang with the 1st

Marines; 14 were in Chu Lai. In the one full day spent together Chaplains Wissing and Casazza conferred at length about the personnel situation, noting that by the end of October with new chaplains arriving, the situation should be stabilized.

Chaplain Casazza adopted the policy, then in effect in the 3d Marine Division, of rotating chaplains at six-month intervals between line and support battalions. Although he too endorsed the policy as a sound one, Chaplain Wissing had never had sufficient personnel to do more than establish a pattern of minimal coverage. Changing chaplains was not as easy as it appears. All changes had to be cleared with both regimental and battalion commanding officers, and of course, the chaplain had to be consulted as well. Often and very naturally, the infantry battalion chaplains did not want to be changed. The commanding officers did not want to lose their chaplains. Chaplain Casazza reported:

In one case the Regimental Commander didn't want one of his battalion chaplains changed. He didn't even remember the chaplain's name, but he didn't want him changed. I argued that the chaplain was tired and needed a rest. He finally agreed to let the chaplain go but only after the next operation. The chaplain was wounded on the operation. After this, I wavered no more.<sup>18</sup>

Some units presented unusually difficult rotational problems. When Lieutenant Edward R. Toner (Roman Catholic) arrived for duty as assistant regimental chaplain of the 11th Marines, he noted that coverage of the artillery unit was no easy task since it consisted of regimental headquarters plus four battalions with four batteries to each battalion. He reported:

After I was settled a bit, Chaplain Barcus and I took turns spending a night with each battery of the various battalions. While visiting, we held religious services, gave lectures on Vietnam and its religions, and tried in general to speak to as many persons as possible. This continued until 1 December when I was transferred, to the Second Battalion, because Regimental Headquarters had moved to Da Nang.<sup>19</sup>

Chaplain Toner had reported one week after regimental chaplain Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Barcus (American Baptist) was reassigned from 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. Chaplain Barcus confirmed what Chaplain Toner said about the widely dispersed units of the regiment and what Chaplains Malliett and Blank, their predecessors in



Department of Defense (USN) Photo K-36219

*Chaplain greets worshippers leaving the chapel of the 1st Marines at Da Nang (1967).*

the regiment, had found in earlier months. One of his first observations was that artillery was so spread out that it was an impossible task to give all the units the kind of coverage he would like. In the Chu Lai TAOR alone it spread north to south from Hill 54 to Quang Ngai and to the Special Forces Camp at Tien Phuoc to the west.

Chaplain Barcus remembered:

Fortunately much of the artillery is close enough to infantry units so that coverages for services is not an impossibility. However, one of my first steps was to take as many services, that had been previously handled by other chaplains, as I could. I averaged three services per Sunday with two or three more during the week. Visitations were likewise difficult. I developed a schedule which put me out in the batteries three nights of every week. In this way each battery could be visited overnight in a month and a half. The artillery supports all of the combat operations in the area and I make an effort to visit the batteries who moved

into the operation area. Services with the men in the field is the most satisfying part of the artillery chaplain's ministry.

The person to person ministry was emphasized and the chaplains were urged to go out to the men in all their working areas. To my observations, the chaplains did a splendid job in reaching their men and providing for their religious needs. I de-emphasized the notion that Sunday was all-sacred and encouraged the provision of services throughout the week. Only in this way could everyone be reached.<sup>20</sup>

Wing chaplains during this period, were heavily involved in Civic Action. Lieutenant Cecil R. Threadgill (Southern Baptist) of MAG-11 said:

One of the wonderful things about my tour here had been in the thrilling way that my fellow Americans have responded in helping the people here. As the needs of the Tin Lanh School have been revealed through newspaper articles and letters, individuals and churches all across the



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187833

*Men of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, in the field near the Demilitarized Zone on 16 September 1966, hear Mass celebrated by Chaplain Lt Harris White. Engaged in Operation Prairie, Marines keep a low profile in the surrounding plains covered by tall grass.*

United States have rallied to the call. Consequently it has been my blessed privilege to be the recipient and thus distributor of literally tons of clothing, school supplies, health supplies, food and toys, plus hundreds of dollars. I have never seen people respond with more gratitude than the fold at the church and school as many of their needs have been met. I have been most wonderfully and unusually blessed to have been in this position.<sup>21</sup>

Other significant Civic Action Projects were undertaken by MAG-16 chaplains in the summer of 1966. Lieutenant Donald T. McGrogan (Roman Catholic) began working on what was later to be called "Boy's Town" on Da Nang East and Chaplain Bartlett began working on the III MAF Vietnamese Education Scholarship Fund. "Boys Town" was to be a Catholic home for orphaned boys, operated by Father Bernard Phu Van Hoang and situated on Da Nang East. Initial cost of the home was estimated at \$12,000 for which Chaplain McGrogan, with III MAF Chaplain Garrett, began to plan. The III MAF Vietnamese Education Scholarship Fund was to consist of a board drawn from all religious groups in the Da Nang area who would select able and deserving students for whom the necessary financial assistance for a complete high school education would be provided. So successful were these significant civic action projects that they were to persist through following years, meeting specific needs among the Vietnamese people, generating great humanitarian interest on the part of American Marines and Navy personnel, and cementing Vietnamese-American relations in the area.

Lieutenant David B. Saltzman (Jewish) was the first Jewish chaplain to be assigned to a wing unit in Vietnam. He arrived in Da Nang after a delay enroute on Taiwan, to lead Jewish High Holy Days observances for naval personnel there. He found an agreeable reception, and remembered:

Chaplain Hammerl and Chaplain Wright were so cooperative and efficient, that within an hour of arriving in

Da Nang I was dressed in proper uniform and headed for Chu Lai on another C-130. There I met Chaplain Reiner who was conducting a "delayed" Yom Kippur service for those men who could not attend service in Da Nang. Throughout my tour, I have been on the move. I have found chaplains happy to be able to help in furthering my program and desirous of making my task as successful as possible.<sup>22</sup>

The story of Chaplain Saltzman's tour of duty with the wing was one of continuous travel. He was constantly on the move to Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Dong Ha, and Quang Tri. The spiritual satisfaction, he said, "granted to me, the Jewish men, and the people who went out of their way to help, will always be a spring from which to bring forth strength to live by the motto, 'cooperation without compromise.'"<sup>23</sup>

Lieutenant John F. Weaver (Lutheran), who spent his entire tour in the Far East with MWSG-17, found great satisfaction developing his ministry within it. His contribution in the field of education warrants attention. Twenty-two Character Guidance and Religions in Vietnam presentations were given to personnel within the command during this year, while 31 English classes were taught for Japanese while he was at Iwakuni. He outlined his thinking about teaching and preaching in his end of tour report:

The compassionate ideal of the Christian ministry makes the chaplain something of a natural for working with indigenous population while in a land other than his own. However he must exercise caution in the amount of time and effort expended in this type of work in relationship to his primary mission as a pastor, priest or rabbi. The experience gleaned while serving as Acting Group Civil Affairs Officer of MSWG-17 for a period of three months, upon first arriving in RVN, is to be cherished and appreciated. As the civil affairs work, and the chaplain's religious duties, multiplied, it became necessary to relinquish coordination of the general civic action program. I have, however, continued to be involved in religious civil affairs functions since that time.<sup>24</sup>

## CHAPTER 8

# Risking and Reaching (June-December 1966)

*Operation Prairie – Arrivals: New and Old – More Growing Pains – 1st Marine Division Chaplains – Seabees  
Chaplains in I Corps, October-December 1966 – Christmas 1966*

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During May and June of 1966 intelligence sources had indicated a general buildup of North Vietnamese Army units was taking place south of the Demilitarized Zone near the northernmost boundary of I Corps Tactical Zone. It was suspected that two NVA divisions had infiltrated through the Demilitarized Zone and were preparing an extensive network of fortifications and tunnels in preparation for a more conventional invasion of South Vietnam. The NVA had recently suffered a succession of reverses in its attempt to skirt Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces to enter South Vietnam through Saravane and Attopeu Provinces of Laos. Since this attempt to be absorbed in what appeared to be Viet Cong units, and thus maintain the fiction that the conflict was purely an internal one was a failure, the North Vietnamese decided to abandon their already compromised disguise and make a frontal assault. Such an assault would relieve pressures on insurgent guerrilla forces of General Walt, and force an abandonment of the successful enclave concept. To lure thinly spread American Marine units into position for another Dien Bien Phu would also provide the propaganda victory badly needed by the North Vietnamese.

In the two-week period from 1-15 July a succession of 18 3d Marine Division reconnaissance teams were inserted in Quang Tri Province and along the DMZ. Seventeen of these teams made contact with the North Vietnamese. The presence of the enemy was confirmed. On 15 July Brigadier General Lowell E. English's Task Force Delta was committed to a massive search and destroy operation in Quang Tri Province extending all the way to the DMZ. Contact with the North Vietnamese Army's *324B Division* was established at once. American and South Vietnamese forces consisted of eight battalions of U.S. Marines and an ARVN force of infantry, rangers, and airborne units.

Lieutenant Randall S. Harris (Episcopal) was with the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines and Lieutenant

George R. McHorse (Southern Baptist) with the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. Their battalions were inserted in a blocking position astride an infiltration and escape route near Cam Lo. Lieutenant Thomas B. Handley (United Presbyterian) was with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, which began to drive north, and Lieutenant Commander Frank B. Baggot (Southern Baptist) was with the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines which had been operating as the Special Landing Force when it landed by helicopter near Pho Hai on 16 July. From Pho Hai the battalion drove west to link up with 3d Marine Division units two days later. The operation was called Hastings.

For nine days the fighting continued furiously. North Vietnamese tactics remained unchanged from previous encounters: probe attack with mortars and automatic weapons and withdraw into the jungle. But the tactic became more difficult to implement as the vice closed from three directions. Dong Ha was extraordinarily busy. Commander James A. Powell (Roman Catholic), 4th Marines Regimental Chaplain wrote:

Dong Ha has been described as "a cloud of red dust surrounding an airstrip which had the dimensions of a band aid." Soon there were clouds of red dust climbing 20 feet into the air as the huge C-130's coming into the field every few minutes, reversing their props to bring them to a halt, cast solid sheets of dust skyward as far as one could see.<sup>1</sup>

The regimental aid station was quickly set up in an old abandoned French fort. It had been determined that all the wounded were to be evacuated to this casualty and clearing station. Chaplain Powell's station was to be there. Lieutenant Commander Floyd E. Sims (Southern Baptist) was just reporting to the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines to replace Chaplain Harris who had been medically evacuated to the United States. His battalion was at the moment engaged in intense combat so, unable to get to it, he took care of the Protestant ministry at the aid station. The two chaplains had their work cut out for them. Besides the many, many casualties that began

to flow in, they went to the airstrip and the bivouac areas, telling the men to separate into Catholic and Protestant groups for divine services. Chaplain Powell wrote:

I was able to offer 23 Masses in three days. For me, certainly a record. As things quieted down a bit, Floyd was able to get to his battalion, and I, by helo, was able to get to many of the battalions desiring the services of a Catholic chaplain. So, by helo, mite, by mule and by good old "shanks mare," I became familiar with names like "Helicopter Valley," "The Rockpile" and others, and the outcome, although expensive, was never in doubt. At "D" Med for the first time in my life I saw the ravages of war with young men killed and wounded. There were some memorable incidents with the wounded. I shall never forget the appreciation of giving a cup of water to those that were permitted water or a wet 4x4 gauze pad to those not allowed water. Prayer was greatly appreciated by the wounded, especially a prayer of thanksgiving that their lives had been spared. Many would request that I visit a buddy and have prayer with him first and then return for prayer with them. I shall never forget one critically wounded man that I had prayer with. After the prayer he asked me to stay with him while the doctors did a tracheotomy. In spite of the pain he was most brave. I was grateful when I could report to 2d Battalion, 4th Marines in the field. I do not believe any duty can be as trying emotionally as seeing wounded and killed day after day. Every hospital chaplain deserves the respect and admiration of all.<sup>2</sup>

On 18 July two more Da Nang battalions were committed to the operation. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines and 1st Battalion, 3d Marines were lifted to Dong Ha by C-130. Chaplain Cory, with 1st Battalion, 1st Marines reported:

We were only a few miles from the DMZ northwest of Dong Ha. It was impossible to reach one company by helicopter because of the rugged terrain and jungle and an escort could not be spared to go on foot. It would have been an extended trip of two or three days. Even moving between platoons required considerable effort. In some places; it was so steep that steps had to be cut with an entrenching tool. In one place, elephant grass was trampled down to make a place large enough for a service and in another place, part of the jungle had to be cleared out to get even a dozen troops together.<sup>3</sup>

Two weeks of heavy fighting, which extended from Dong Ha to the Demilitarized Zone, resulted in nearly 900 enemy troops killed and enemy forces in the area being widely dispersed. Scattered enemy units retreated hastily through the jungle undergrowth and across the mountains, avoiding as best they could the blocked infiltration routes, to sanctuary within and above the DMZ. Recon-

naissance patrols discovered hastily dug graves, weapons, and stores of food and ammunition left behind by retreating North Vietnamese forces. Occasionally an enemy unit would show some signs of fight. When a group of stragglers revealed its position by imprudently firing on two patrolling companies of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, the response was prompt. A four-hour artillery and 81mm mortar barrage scattered the force, which left behind 14 dead. Operation Hastings was concluded on 2 August, but not before Chaplain McHorse was wounded in the face by shrapnel from enemy mortars while attempting to rescue personnel from a downed helicopter. Chaplain McHorse and several other chaplains were decorated for their conduct during Hastings.

Before the Marines could even dream of their hardback tents at Phu Bai, Operation Prairie I began to heat up in earnest and the regiment was back in business again at its old stand in Dong Ha. The plans for Dong Ha began to take on a long range look. Huge Army artillery pieces arrived, Force Logistic Command (FLC) set up its stores, and more battalions arrived. New names were heard. The Artillery Plateau was at that time a beautifully grassy hill overlooking the DMZ. It was later to be named for a heroic Marine and called Camp Carroll. Khe Sanh was a nice spot far to the west near Laos where the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines was to guard a Special Forces Camp and a vital airstrip. And there was Mutter's Ridge where the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines added to its reputation under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Masterpool. Then, too, there was Con Thien, a barren village, leveled but by no means dead, and Gio Linh which was under the very noses of the North Vietnamese Army. All these names and places became familiar to chaplains as they rode their circuit, sometimes in good weather, sometimes in the cold, rainy, muddy monsoon; sometimes in peace and quiet, sometimes in extreme peril.

As Hastings ended and Operation Prairie began Lieutenant Stanley J. Beach (General Association of Regular Baptists) relieved Chaplain McHorse in the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. Chaplain Beach had prevailed upon division Chaplain Morton for the assignment, wanting to serve an infantry battalion since his arrival.

When Operation Prairie I commenced, all three battalions of the 4th Marines were committed. To augment Task Force Delta's three battalions, fresh

troops from the 5th and 7th Marines at Chu Lai were brought to northern I Corps and the Da Nang battalions were permitted to remain in their cantonments for the time being. In addition, one battalion of the 26th Marines, recently deployed from the reactivated 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, joined the action in late August.

### *Operation Prairie*

Following closely upon the heels of Operation Hastings, Prairie began at a comparatively slow pace, but would continue, in four phases, until 31 May 1967. It was apparent that the North Vietnamese intended to move across the Demilitarized Zone and that Hastings had only temporarily discouraged their attempts to capture and hold the cities of Quang Tri and Dong Ha. The degree of sanctuary which they enjoyed in and above the Demilitarized Zone represented an advantage too significant to ignore. Enemy artillery regiments, mortar and rocket units were moved into position in the DMZ and began firing at Vietnamese villages and American troop concentrations, supply centers, and air strips now being established in the area. For the first time, across the DMZ, the war appeared to be assuming the proportions of conventional combat.

In September several additional battalions, this time from the 1st Marine Division at Chu Lai, were air lifted into the operation. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was first to be committed. Due to the medical evacuation of Chaplain Pearson, the battalion had no chaplain attached until Lieutenant William C. L. Asher (American Baptist) was assigned temporarily from the 1st Motor Transport Battalion on 29 August. Chaplain Asher joined the battalion as it engaged in increasingly heavier fighting near Dong Ha. Chaplain Asher was subsequently assigned permanently to the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. He later recalled:

During Operation Prairie, I learned how to dig fox holes, conduct services in the field, build poncho shelters, pray with my eyes open, walk through rivers, eat C rations, and talk to a wounded [man] without flinching. I didn't have to learn fear, but I honed the sense to a fine edge. On the other hand, my reception into 2d Battalion, 7th Marines had been such that I was more a part of it than I have ever been in a unit before. My fears were unjustified, and my feeling of unity with the Battalion has never wavered.<sup>4</sup>

The next battalion from Chu Lai to be committed



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A188450

*PFC Richard E. Ferris is shown reading his Bible on a five-minute break after hiking for three hours during Operation Prairie near the Demilitarized Zone.*

to Operation Prairie also came from the 7th Marines. With Lieutenant Lawrence L. Clover (United Presbyterian) as its chaplain, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines augmented Task Force Delta's battalions by relieving a much battered 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. It camped for 10 days on a plateau, later named Camp Carroll, about 10 miles west of the airfield at Dong Ha, providing perimeter security for a reinforced battalion of artillery concentrated there. Another Chu Lai-based 1st Marine Division chaplain to participate in Operation Prairie was Lieutenant Edward F. Kane (Roman Catholic) of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. Chaplain Kane's battalion engaged in two months of search and destroy activities near the coast, north and west of Quang Tri City.

In early September two Da Nang battalions were alerted for a move northward. Chaplain Witt with 1st Battalion, 3d Marines was the first of his regiment's chaplains to move north. "In the midst of an exciting movie on September 2d," he said, "the word was passed to return to our tents and prepare for a permanent move the following day. Short-timers wept openly, and sick-call was suddenly crowded. I am confident that the walls of Jericho col-

lapsed amid less confusion, but we made it.”<sup>5</sup> Huge C-130s took the battalion north, but this time to a place called Khe Sanh and a Special Forces Camp nearby. The camp was located on a plateau high in the central mountain range, but was actually only a few miles from Laos, and south of the DMZ only 10 miles. This was a beautiful, if primitive spot inhabited mostly by Montagnard tribesmen, their elephants, assorted snakes, and scorpions. Steep cliffs bordered the plateau and beautiful waterfalls graced the scenery on every side. Chaplain Witt remarked, “It is difficult to say who looked more dejected, the Marines or the poor Special Forces we came to protect. We were part of Operation Prairie but we were so far west that the only thing we knew of the operation was what we read in the *Stars and Stripes*.”<sup>6</sup> At Khe Sanh the battalion was dispersed throughout the extensive coffee groves which were unique to the area and for reasons of security, every man moved his hootch and fox-hole every few days. Meanwhile the 9th Marines were shifting both chaplains and location.

A few days after Chaplain Collins became the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines chaplain in an exchange with Chaplain McDermott who went to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, he moved with his battalion to Phu Bai where it took over perimeter defense responsibilities. After a few weeks at Phu Bai the battalion was ordered to Dong Ha and finally to the base of the Rock Pile. While living at the Rock Pile, the concentration of troops was such that it was possible for the chaplain to walk in any one of three directions and as many as 40 to 50 men could come together for worship services. “It was at this point,” Chaplain Collins wrote, “concentrated as we were, that I really got to know my Marines as I lived out forward with them every day. While in the Rock Pile area I baptized seven Marines in a stream at the base of the hill.”<sup>7</sup>

Leaving the Rock Pile some weeks later, the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines made a battalion sweep through the mountains to the west. The men marched all day and slept in the rain at night. They traveled along a VC infiltration trail. On the third day contact was made with the enemy. Four men were killed and 12 wounded. Because of heavy cover from the trees and because of fog they were unable to get the dead and wounded out. It was therefore a fortunate thing that the doctor and chaplain were along to give comfort and aid to the wounded throughout the night. The engineers blew away a landing zone

and about 1200 the next day the helicopters came, and evacuation was accomplished.

Meanwhile, at Camp Pendleton, in 1966, the 5th Marine Division was reactivated for the first time since the end of World War II. Among the newly formed regiments were the 26th and 27th Marines, both of whom were to play important roles in Vietnam in the years ahead. At this point, it is the 26th Marines who enter the story. Three chaplains were attached, respectively, to 1st Battalion, 2d Battalion, and 3d Battalion, 26th Marines. They were Lieutenant Commander David L. Meschke (Independent Fundamental Churches of America), Lieutenant Commander Herbert W. Bolles (Episcopal), and Lieutenant Bede Wattigny (Roman Catholic). In July, Chaplains Meschke and Bolles deployed to the Far East with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines becoming the Special Landing Force, relieving the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines on board the Amphibious Ready Group. After participating in two operations in the Deckhouse series near Saigon, the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines with Chaplain Meschke landed at Dong Ha for participation in Operation Deckhouse IV.

Operation Deckhouse IV was developed to present the North Vietnamese, engaged in aggression across the DMZ, with a threat of amphibious action from the sea, thus dividing the enemy's attention and his offensive forces. The 1st Battalion, 26th Marines swept coastal plain rice paddies and swampy marshland just below the DMZ and moved inland capturing and destroying enemy personnel and material. On 26 September the battalion withdrew and took up permanent positions at Hill 55 south of Da Nang.

Throughout the first two months of Operation Prairie, battalions of the 4th Marines at Phu Bai were in and out of the combat area. While one was engaged in furious combat near the DMZ, another was engaged in an operation with an entirely different code name, and another was returned to temporary reserve. Lieutenant Commander Floyd E. Sims (Southern Baptist) was with 2d Battalion, 4th Marines on Operation Prairie following his earlier duty at the Dong Ha battalion aid station. He reported:

I was most grateful when a Protestant Chaplain arrived to work with Chaplain Powell at the aid station and I could go to the field with 2d Battalion, 4th Marines. However, Operation Prairie soon developed and I again had much



the same duty, but more Protestant Chaplains were in the area so I spent more time in the field and less with the medical unit. I do not believe any duty can be as difficult emotionally for the chaplain as seeing the wounded and dead day after day.<sup>8</sup>

Chaplain Sims also commented on the fact that due to the operation a battalion chaplain may find that he is unable to conduct services in the field even on Sunday. There were times when services simply could not be conducted. Even though it was impossible to have formal worship, he reported, a chaplain could get better acquainted personally with the men when he was "humping it" with them in the field. The word spreads that "their" chaplain thinks enough of them to share their life. "I would never recommend a chaplain go on an operation and leave the medical facility without coverage," he wrote, "but nothing opens avenues of response quite like 'hoofing it' with the 'grunts.'"<sup>9</sup> Chaplain Sims was moved to reflect upon the tragedy of war as he saw it on Operation Prairie. He was also a sensitive observer of state-side criticisms of the war. He said:

It is a shame that man cannot live in peace. War in Vietnam has resulted in many refugee villages. Some Vietnamese have fled their homes because they were no longer safe. Others have been evacuated by the government so that they would not be killed or wounded as the area is cleared of V.C. The tragedies of war are not as bad, however, as the tragedies that happen to those who dare to disregard the V.C. It appears that many religious leaders in the United States are either not aware of V.C. tactics to accomplish their goals or else they have closed their minds to such tactics. In Phong Dien the V.C. mortared the Buddhist school, the Catholic Church and the Catholic refugee village. The priest, Father Matthew, died as a result of wounds received. One child, about two, was brought to the Regimental Aid Station with brain damage and was further transferred to a military hospital for brain surgery. A middle aged woman was also seriously injured and further evacuated for treatment. Countless others were wounded, but not seriously enough to be evacuated. This was the price they had to pay for not cooperating with the V.C. I cannot see how we as Christians can afford to pass by on the other side while the enemy leaves people on the roadside to die because they believed in a different way of life.<sup>10</sup>

Chaplain Beach with the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines was involved in Operation Prairie in early and mid-August, and in Operation Pawnee I, II, and III in late August and September. He, along with all line battalion chaplains, shared the combat risks of the infantry. Mostly chaplains escaped injury, but serious injury was perhaps inevitable. It

came to Chaplain Beach while ministering to his troops on Prairie on 28 September, during an assault on Mutter's Ridge. Incoming mortar fire made a direct hit on the communication CP tent where he had taken temporary cover. He sustained serious injuries to a leg and arm and took shrapnel in the head and shoulders. He was evacuated, in serious condition, to the USS *Repose* for surgery and post-operative intensive care. Being visited on the hospital ship by Division Chaplain Morton he dictated a tape recording to the Chief of Chaplains and Chaplain Morton marvelled at the wounded chaplain's cheerfulness and the spirit in which he accepted the prospect of permanently disabling injuries. Chaplain Beach told of a hospital corpsman attending him during the mortar barrage shielding him with his body and himself being severely wounded while protecting the chaplain from flying shrapnel. Chaplain Beach said, "Every year of my ministry has been better than the one before. I guess a chaplain leaves a part of himself, sometimes physical but always spiritual, at every duty station."<sup>11</sup>

In an official report to the Chief of Chaplains on Chaplain Beach's wound, III MAF Chaplain Garrett said:

Stan was with H&S Co. of his battalion when they encountered a strong enemy position on Hill 400 up near the DMZ. The Marines proceeded to assault the hill and I have heard from several sources now that Stan distinguished himself in providing a constant ministry to the wounded as they fell. One news correspondent, in his story in the *Stars and Stripes*, stated that he himself was out of food and water by the second day of the operation and "the Chaplain" came by and gave him a small can of apricots, which was all the food he had.

It was very shortly after this that a mortar round exploded about six feet from Stan. He received several flesh wounds but the major injury was to his left leg. The entire leg was laid open and the knee cap completely carried away with extensive bone damage, loss of considerable muscle and tissue. He was evacuated very quickly out to the *Repose*. It was evidently touch and go for a while as to whether they would have to amputate the leg. The last report received indicated that he was getting some movement back into the foot and that the leg would probably be saved provided no infection developed.

He was evacuated to Clark AFB on 30 September and as soon as he is able will be further evacuated.<sup>12</sup>

Two months later, in the 1 December issue of the FMFPac Force Chaplain's Newsletter, Chaplain John H. Craven provided an up-to-date report on Chaplain Beach's condition.

After being wounded in action on 28 September Chaplain Stan Beach was eventually medically evacuated to Tripler General Hospital in Hawaii where he is a patient at the present time. He has undergone several surgical procedures involving skin graft and is scheduled for transfer to the Naval Hospital at Great Lakes for further orthopedic treatment. Stan enjoyed a wonderful morale boost when his lovely wife was able to visit him for a few days shortly after his arrival at Tripler. Stan's spirit is indomitable and he is looking forward to the day in the near future when he can be on crutches to try out the left leg that was so badly banged up. He is using his convalescent time to good advantage. Stan shows that he was thoroughly initiated into that great fellowship of suffering which can never be fully explained; it can only be experienced.<sup>13</sup>

As Operation Prairie continued to increase in intensity it became apparent that more strength would be concentrated in the Quang Tri-Dong Ha-Khe Sanh areas in the months to come. In anticipation of the eventual establishment of major combat bases at Quang Tri and Dong Ha, in early October, Major General Wood B. Kyle, the 3d Marine Division Commander, began to move his command post northwards. The division headquarters moved to Phu Bai with a division forward command post being located at Dong Ha.

As 3d Marine Division units moved toward the DMZ it became apparent that the 1st Marine Division would be moved northward. In October, the 1st Marine Division Commander, Major General Herman Nickerson, Jr., moved his headquarters to Da Nang and assumed responsibility for the TAOR so long occupied by the 3d Marine Division. It was in October, then, that the 1st Marine Division assumed responsibility for Da Nang in addition to Chu Lai and the 3d Marine Division assumed military responsibility for Dong Ha in addition to the Phu Bai enclave.

On 26 October, on Operation Prairie, the chaplain to be most seriously wounded of all chaplains thus far in the war in Vietnam, took a sniper's bullet. Lieutenant Edward F. Kane (Roman Catholic) with the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines near the DMZ, was shot in the spine by a North Vietnamese sniper. Chaplain Kane's unit was conducting a search and destroy mission when it was ambushed by North Vietnamese forces. The point Marine was killed instantly. With disregard for his own safety, Chaplain Kane moved from his covered position, and under heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire, he evacuated the Marine and administered the last rites of the Catholic church. Later near Phu An

village he was moving with Kilo Company of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines when the unit came under attack from a large unit of North Vietnamese Army forces using machine gun, automatic weapons, and small arms fire. Several Marines were wounded in the initial burst of fire and were in positions exposed to continuing hostile fire. Again, disregarding danger, the chaplain moved the wounded, rendering aid and comfort. It was while he was attending to the removal of these wounded from exposed positions that he was wounded. Chaplain John H. Craven's report to the chaplains of FMFPac said:

Chaplain Ed Kane, the victim of a sniper's bullet on 26 October, is currently a patient at the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. Ed's injury involved severe damage to the spinal cord, but in spite of the seriousness of his injury and the discomfort of being presently confined to a Stryker frame, reports reaching us indicate that the sniper's bullet missed Ed's great strong spirit.<sup>14</sup>

On 26 April 1967 Chaplain Kane was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for his heroic achievements. As a consequence of his injury, Chaplain Kane has become permanently disabled and was medically retired from the Chaplain Corps in February 1968.

Operation Prairie, one of the longest major operations of the war in Vietnam, was to continue through the remainder of 1966. Battalions from Phu Bai and Da Nang moved in and out of the combat zone with such frequency that these chaplains came to consider Prairie to be synonymous with the war in Northern I Corps. Smaller operations were conducted concurrently with Prairie in TAORs of all three coastal enclaves, but Prairie, in actuality, represented in a major way the shift in combat activity toward the Demilitarized Zone.

#### *Arrivals: New and Old*

During this period many of the replacement chaplains were those who had responded to the call to the nation's churches for pastors, priests, and rabbis to join the chaplaincy at a time of initial personnel needs. When they assumed the call they were, in many cases, faced with the shock of Vietnam almost immediately.

Lieutenant Lisle E. Stewart (United Methodist) was commissioned on 10 February 1966 and his first duty was with the 3d Marine Division as the Protestant chaplain at Company C, 3d Medical Battalion.

Remembering the demands of those first weeks he said:

I found that my daily routine during my first two months at Third Medical Battalion was routine only in the fact that we were on call 24 hours a day. My first day aboard, the first wounded man brought in died before my eyes. He had consanguinated. This initial introduction to my role as a field hospital chaplain left an indelible impression in my emotional fiber and it took several days to recover from the shock. This was rude awakening to this peace loving, and for the most part, sheltered pastor who had just come on active duty. Each day brought its endless line of tragedy. The heartache of it never changed, but I began to accept the fact of its reality, taking each day in stride.<sup>15</sup>

The records of the civilian clergymen now in uniform and in Vietnam were testimonies to their adaptability and dedication to reaching the Marines whatever the risk of physical or emotional vitality. Chaplain Stewart also pointed to this quality implicitly in his report:

I remember one man in particular whose right hand had been blown off. When he was first admitted, he was asked whether he was right or left handed. He replied matter of factly, "Yesterday I was righthanded". Later in the ward, I noticed that he seemed to be in great contemplation, so I asked him if I could be of any help. He calmly announced, "Oh, I was just thinking which I wanted, a clamp or a hook. I think I'll get a hook with a pearl rim." Such acceptance was more typical than not. I have never seen greater courage and more rugged constitutions than these youths displayed. Mine has been the gain in their ministry to me.<sup>16</sup>

Many times the medical company chaplains would assist in carrying litters, getting supplies, or help as requested. When KIAs were brought in, the chaplains were notified and would give the last rites or speak words of commendation. At times they were faced with explosions from the sometimes mutilated Marines such as: "Is it worth it, Chaplain? Is it worth it?" and "Tell them to stop Chaplain. Tell them to stop." Remarks such as these haunted them but challenged them to have the right words of comfort.

In early August, Assistant Division Chaplain Maguire was due to return to the United States. His reflection on his duty in Vietnam included a testimony to the skill and sensitivity of the American youth committed to combat, and the deep emotional involvement experienced by the chaplain with his Marines. "I have always felt, when I have seen their torn bodies," he wrote, "that something more is demanded than the excellent care of doctors and

Corpsmen. I have felt that a trumpeting of gratitude and praise is called for as a fitting human response. When the chips are down, they are amazingly selfless."<sup>17</sup> Chaplain Maguire then reflected the struggle of his pastoral heart when he reported:

Vietnam is a beautiful but sad land. The sickness and poverty and the sufferings cause us grief. One leaves here too, with sad memories of men we know well who died here. I would like to repeat again the prayer from the III MAF Memorial Day Service at FLSG, 1966.

"Guide us, O Lord, in our proceedings this morning as we seek to render due honor to those who gave their lives for our country. Help us to hallow in memory those who by right are unforgettable. May we of whom less has been asked be inspired by their sacrifice to dedicate more of our heart and hand to the service of our country and our fellow man. Amen."<sup>18</sup>

A June arrival, Lieutenant Commander Michael A. Ondo (Roman Catholic), recorded similar reactions. He served as a sometimes circuit-riding chaplain with MAG-11; 2d Battalion, 5th Marines; 1st Battalion, 3d Marines; and A Medical Company, where he exercised his longest ministry. He remembered: "We chaplains had our hands full. To administer the Sacraments of the Church, to pray, and to console became a routine expectation. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of such service."<sup>19</sup> It was during this time that he reached out to his Marines in ministry, especially those often forgotten. He wrote:

My heart goes out to all these great Marines who work in Graves Registration. Honestly, they have a thankless job. To me they exemplify the corporal works of mercy with utmost distinction. We became fast friends. It was obvious, as they exercised meticulous care of their fallen comrades, that they cared very much. Heroes they are without exception. They are God's sentries in the Halls of Heaven.<sup>20</sup>

Lieutenant Robert M. Radasky (Russian Orthodox), who was detached in August, after providing an Orthodox ministry for I Corps personnel, had served his entire tour as administrative assistant to Force Chaplain Garrett. He extended his ministry in still another unique way by reaching significantly into the relationship of Marines and Vietnamese. He felt strongly that the "new kind of war" included a new and profound element of unique personal importance. Marines could live next door to the population of Da Nang and a large number of Vietnamese neighbors would work in and around their compound; American/Vietnamese contacts would be frequent and at the "eyeball to eyeball" level.

Yet, linguistic and cultural barriers created an expected coolness. More a cause of this was the element of suspicion. Rumors of infiltration were common and one really could not distinguish between the friendly Vietnamese from the Viet Cong. Chaplain Radasky strove to understand the Vietnamese people and transferred his knowledge to the troops most effectively. He remembered:

As the chaplain becomes the unit resource for information on behavior patterns of the Vietnamese, he finds frequent opportunity to pass on knowledge. It appeared to me that after chaplains took steps to learn the culture, they were able to reflect an assurance about the situation which in effect counteracted casual rumor. For example, a great deal of tension was created by uncertainty about the course of the war. Were the Vietnamese really interested? Was the concept "freedom" in our heads only? Would we be left to do the dirty work for them? Questions like these were answered when the chaplain was able to provide an overview of the Vietnamese history and culture.<sup>21</sup>

Casual observation of Vietnamese life created bewilderment. But the Vietnamese became people, human beings, when their lives were analyzed and explained. It was really apparent in Vietnam that the troops had a "need to know" about the people they were involved with. Especially when many were so involved day to day. They had to learn, for example, to show concern for the people who appeared unconcerned. They could do it better if they knew why the people appeared that way.

Chaplain Radasky's comments on the Personal Response Project in which he had been involved reflect the purpose of many Marines in late 1966:

In spite of culture and linguistic barriers, I felt the Marines made real progress in one year to overcome the "strangeness" of fighting a war well past the beaches and smack in the middle of a local population. Looking back over the year I think American-Vietnamese relations improved for Marines in three steps: (1) acceptance of the fact that we would remain well beyond the beach, (2) recognition of the "new kind of war" and what it implied when weapons were not firing, and (3) response to the official decision that we had some need to know about the place, the situation, and the people. It was in the last step that chaplains were called forth in a special way to provide a "new ministry." Because so much of Vietnamese culture is founded on religious conceptualizations, the chaplain was looked toward as a resource even before official action provided him with the tools.<sup>22</sup>

In mid-August MCB-9 arrived in Vietnam for its second deployment. Chaplain Robert S. Collins

(Lutheran) who had been with the battalion on Da Nang East from late October 1965 to February 1966, returned with MCB-9 for his second deployment to Vietnam. During this tour he had difficulty physically reaching his men. His battalion was based just north of Da Nang but operated a rock crushing operation, road building unit, and a bridge building effort at Ba To, Min Long, and Thuong Duc. MCB-9 also built structures for three Special Forces camps, an Army camp in the Delta, and for the Marine units at Hue-Phu Bai. He reported:

On deployment the men of the battalion are so spread out, doing so many different kinds of construction projects it is almost a full time job just keeping track of everyone. With the men of the battalion spread out so far, much of the chaplain's time was spent trying to see each man as often as possible. For our men at the main camp and at the Rock Crusher, Sunday services were always available. For the men serving with the Special Forces, I would plan on visiting them every other week. Interestingly enough, I'd always find that the further I got away from the base camp, and the more likely we were to encounter enemy activity, the greater the attendance would be at our mid-week worship service. These visits with the men, out on the job, are really the most fruitful person to person type ministry I can imagine. Sometimes it is merely a chance to shoot the breeze, yet for many of the men, the chaplain's visit is an opportunity to open their hearts to the meaning of the word of God in their lives today. It is truly a fascinating ministry, and a very necessary one, helping those construction men of the Seabees build a solid and lasting faith.<sup>23</sup>

#### *More Growing Pains*

Three factors influenced the assignment of newly arriving 3d Marine Division chaplains from mid-September through the end of 1966. First was the need to relieve those being detached on permanent change of station orders for new duty in the United States. Second, the move northward to an unsettled and developing structural-operational environment gave rise to new demands upon the Chaplain Corps ministry and necessitated the reassignment of chaplains and the assignment of newly reporting chaplains to billets recently established to meet specific needs. Third, and closely related to the first, was the turnover of chaplain leadership of the division and III MAF into new hands.

In September the first of four new chaplains to report for duty, Lieutenant Commander Boris Geeza (Eastern Orthodox), represented the denominational relief for Chaplain Radasky who had been detached on orders the previous month. Arriving on 16

September, Chaplain Geeza was assigned duty as administrative assistant to the division chaplain to meet the need for a chaplain in that billet which was vacated a week before by the medical evacuation of Chaplain Moody. For all practical purposes Chaplain Geeza's denominational coverage of Far East Marines was delayed until the urgent need for an administrative assistant could be met through other means.

The second September arrival, Commander Marlin D. Seiders (United Methodist) was slated as the relief for Assistant Division Chaplain Maguire who also had been detached on orders in August. Chaplain Seiders moved immediately into his new duties as assistant division chaplain and made preparations for the move north.

Because Chaplain Beach was wounded at Mutter's Ridge on 28 September, an urgent and immediate requirement for a replacement in the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines was imposed upon Division Chaplain Morton. He discussed the matter with Lieutenant Ronald L. Hedwall (Lutheran) of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, who had provided religious coverage for the separate and supporting-arms battalions.

Chaplain Hedwall's relief in the supporting arms battalions at Da Nang was Lieutenant Commander Robert S. Borden (United Presbyterian) who arrived on 28 September to begin his tour of duty in Vietnam. He was to remain with the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion until the middle of the following year. Chaplain Borden inherited a chapel complex of two buildings in the camp, one a chapel seating approximately 100 persons, the other an office building with two offices, a library, and a smaller chapel. Over the next several months a public address system was added, and thanks to the generosity of the III MAF chaplain, a Hammond electronic organ.

The final change to take place in late September occurred when Lieutenant James E. Ammons (American Baptist) arrived on 28 September to relieve Chaplain Dunks with the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines on the southern perimeter of Da Nang. As it had been for nearly a year, the battalion was spread from the Thu Bon River south to the industrial complex at An Hoa. There were six major locations along Liberty Road with the command group at An Hoa. Patrols fanned from each of these positions in road sweeps, ambushes, and continuous sweeps through

the rice fields and surrounding hills. Chaplain Ammons wrote:

To cover the units adequately, I found it best to catch resupply runs, start at the farthestmost position, have a service at 1800 when most of the men were in from patrols, stay over night and catch a road sweep or patrol to the next position in the morning. Having services at this time allowed for maximum participation, as well as giving me the time to get closer to the men, by sharing the hardships they were enduring. This became my regular schedule, broken only by Operations Macon, Kern, and Mississippi, during which I accompanied the Command Group. The miraculously lucky Father Tom Kenny unflinchingly ran this gamut once each week for Catholic coverage.

Chaplain Ammon's battalion remained south of Da Nang until relieved by the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines of the 1st Marine Division, at which time the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines moved north of Da Nang to positions previously occupied by the 3d Marines, now near the DMZ. The battalion TAOR north of Da Nang extended to the top of the mountain above Hai Van Pass, then west into the jungles, and south to "Happy Valley." "We were spread," Chaplain Ammons said, "into nine fixed positions which I covered each week, plus five CAC units. Again, Father Tom Kenny, our Regimental Chaplain, tried to do in one day what I was attempting to do in a week."<sup>26</sup>

October brought four additional chaplains to the 3d Marine Division and set off a chain of moves related to changing needs near the 4th Marines and the movement of the 3d Division northward. It became apparent that the load on Chaplain Powell with Task Force Delta, attempting to coordinate the activities of chaplains in the 4th Marines as well, was more than a single chaplain could accomplish. It was decided that two shifts were required to meet the mounting needs. First the task force and regimental billets were to be divided. Chaplain Powell was assigned as Task Force Delta Chaplain to remain at Dong Ha to coordinate chaplain coverage from that point. Arriving in October, Lieutenant Preston C. Oliver (United Presbyterian) was assigned to assist Chaplain Powell, to become Assistant Task Force Chaplain, and to provide Protestant coverage at the Delta Medical Aid Station.

In the 4th Marines, Chaplain Sims of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines was reassigned as regimental chaplain and was relieved by newly arriving Lieutenant Commander Eugene B. Davis (Presbyterian



Department of Defense (USN) Photo K-43358

*The church pennant flies from the bamboo flagpole of the 4th Marines Chapel at Camp Evans, during the 1967 Christmas visit by Navy Chief of Chaplains James W. Kelly.*

Church of the United States). Chaplain Davis reported:

2d Battalion, 4th Marines turned me loose to roam the hills to hit the outlying platoon and company positions around Phu Bai, and to ride the ridge to eight Combined Action Platoons to the north and south of Phu Bai. Our men were scattered everywhere, and getting to them was my daily duty. With God's sustaining power, some poor shooting on Charley's part, and some near misses from mines, etc., we reached the men. Thanks for the good help and work of roving and accompanying Catholic padres, services of all types were provided on a continuing basis. The command was great and supported our efforts in a maximum manner.<sup>27</sup>

The 4th Marines Regimental Chapel was to be refurbished and become the new 3d Marine Division Chapel. Many other changes were to become

necessary before the enclave was to become adequate to house the division headquarters. Chaplain Hubble had remained behind in Da Nang for liaison with 1st Marine Division Chaplain, Captain David J. Casazza (Roman Catholic). Within a few weeks Task Force Delta was absorbed by the new command, 3d Marine Division (Forward) and Chaplain Seiders was assigned to Dong Ha for coordination of chaplains' activities in the area.

When the new 3d Marine Division Chaplain, Captain Henry T. Lavin (Roman Catholic), arrived in Da Nang on 16 October, he was informed that his long journey from the United States was not yet ended. The 3d Marine Division Chaplain's Office, which he was to occupy for the next year, was now in Phu Bai. Chaplain Lavin arrived at the division CP to be

met as he said by the energetic Frank Morton and the quiet "Smokey" Seiders. "The very next day," he remembered, "I took off on the first of my many trips north to the DMZ. At Dong Ha I met Chaplain Powell who, apparently, knew everyone at Dong Ha, Camp Carroll and Khe Sanh. I hardly knew where I was since we traveled by chopper, but my first views of the Rock Pile, the Razorback, and Mutter's Ridge will remain as lasting ones in my memory."<sup>28</sup>

Chaplain Morton remained in the area, briefing Chaplain Lavin and completing his turnover file, until 25 October. "Chaplain Lavin and his new team," said Chaplain Morton, "have the new situation and the monsoons. The TAORs are smaller; the units are concentrated; the chaplain requirements and assignments remain essentially the same. 'Stay loose' still holds as the appropriate word for those serving with the U.S. Marine Corps."<sup>29</sup>

That was appropriate advice. Chaplains generally move around a great deal in combat because of their widely dispersed units. But with the shipping of whole divisions in Vietnam, the movement was extreme. One chaplain summed it up:

In retrospect 1966 had indeed been quite a year. A quick capsule of events might be somewhat like this: Seven moves; six commanding officers; two chapels dedicated; one rebuilt; three-hundred-forty Divine Services conducted; experienced happiness, heartbreak, frustration, heat, cold, discomfort, comfort on R&R in Bangkok; survived what we referred to as the "Dai Loc Scrounge," the Ten-month Syndrome, when all that used to be done routinely with enthusiasm begins to take so much effort; have lost close acquaintances in battle, and gained friendships that will last for many years; and above all, became deeply conscious of the validity and relevance of the ministry to which I have been called.<sup>30</sup>

Lieutenant Commander Otto E. Kinzler (United Methodist) who arrived in December 1965, had been with the 12th Marines for the entire 12 months of his tour on deployment. He had been joined in the regiment by Lieutenant Roger K. Hansen (Lutheran) in February and from that time on the two chaplains had provided a religious ministry for the scattered batteries. In November Chaplain Hansen had been reassigned from 2d Battalion, 12th Marines to 3d Battalion, 12th Marines and relocated to Cam Lo in the Dong Ha area. "I marvelled," he said, "at how quickly men accept a new chaplain into their midst. The cooperation of this group was wonderful to experience. The attitude of the command, the interest of the troopers, plus I must add, the fact that we

were really 'exposed' made for a fertile ministry."<sup>31</sup> Chaplain Kinzler remained in Da Nang until the regimental headquarters itself moved to the Artillery Plateau.

On 7 September Commander John R. Hershberger (Lutheran) reported to III MAF as assistant force chaplain. Unlike Chaplain Radasky for whom he was the functional relief, Chaplain Hershberger was assigned to a newly established billet on the MAF staff. The assistant force chaplain was directly responsible to the force chaplain and was to assist him in any area deemed necessary by the force chaplain. His concerns were to be those of the force chaplain and his daily activities in direct support of his many and varied duties and responsibilities.

Chaplain Hershberger was well oriented to the work of the force chaplain by the second week of October when Captain Earle V. Lyons Jr. (United Presbyterian) reported to relieve Chaplain Garrett. Chaplain Garrett's turnover was comprehensive and thorough as he had planned and, as a result of Chaplain Lyons' understanding of the Marine Corps and enthusiasm for rapid adjustment to the new job, was most successful. By the time Chaplain Garrett was detached on 15 October, Chaplain Lyons was well prepared for both the possibilities and the problems of the new assignment.

Immediate concerns for Chaplain Lyons were those of geographical orientation, establishing his own working relationship within the MAF Headquarters where he had been graciously welcomed, and familiarization with the requirements of the changing combat ministry. He was faced with relocation of his offices to Da Nang East which was accomplished on 21 November, and the myriad administrative details connected with the activities of chaplains within the MAF.

Chaplain Lyons envisioned the responsibilities of the billet as Chaplain Garrett had seen them. Matters transcending division, wing, and Force Logistic Command (FLC) authority, or crossing command lines came under his cognizance. MAF-wide programs in which chaplains of all commands participated, he coordinated. Contacts with FMFPac, Headquarters Marine Corps, and Chief of Chaplains were also the responsibility of the MAF Chaplain.

One of the first problem areas to which Chaplain Lyons turned his attention was that of unusual delays in chaplain reporting dates resulting from the requirement that they undergo Field Medical Training

at Camp Pendleton, enroute to duty in Vietnam. Chaplain Garrett had addressed himself to the problem in July 1966 but it remained unresolved. Chaplains were at times required to wait a week or 10 days for a class to convene at Camp Pendleton, then assimilate two weeks of training which was considered by some to be of questionable specific value for the chaplain. Chaplain Lyons was concerned that undue delays in chaplain reporting continued to require division and wing chaplains to leave billets temporarily vacant while waiting reliefs. He suggested that an indoctrination course could be established in Vietnam as a viable substitute for the training at Camp Pendleton. While the issue of pre-Vietnam chaplain training was not to be resolved until Chaplain Lyons was more than halfway through his tour, that and other personnel matters, such as the adequate number of chaplains for the Force Logistic Command were those which occupied his immediate attention upon arrival in III MAF.

#### *1st Marine Division Chaplains*

The months of September and October 1966 brought a significant improvement in Chaplain Casazza's 1st Marine Division roster of chaplains. Seven chaplains arrived and three were detached. The net result was a gain of four badly needed chaplains.

On 5 September Lieutenant Robert R. Cunningham (United Presbyterian) reported and was assigned to the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion in anticipation of Chaplain Flanagan's detachment on 26 September.

Chaplain Cunningham was to enjoy his service to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. He remembered:

I became deeply attached to the Recon men, as they carried out their hazardous duty deep in hostile territory and away from the safety of any perimeter. Individual names and faces as well as the platoon call-signs became well known to me. These small bands of brave and proud Marines daily pitted their lives against insurmountable odds in order to carry out their primary mission of observing enemy activity and troop movements. In order to familiarize myself both with the mission and personnel of Recon, I took advantage of every opportunity to go on reconnaissance flights and, on occasion, also accompanied patrols as far as their destination in the jungle and then returned. These flights always evoked appreciation and admiration for the Recon Marines and the hardships they endured in the hostile jungle.<sup>32</sup>

With characteristic dedication, Chaplain Cunningham exemplified the willingness of chaplains to

recognize new patterns of ministry and adjust their personal approaches to meet them. One aspect of his ministry during these days was valued highly. It was the informal gathering with each outgoing patrol at the edge of the helo pad. Usually following the last-minute briefing by the patrol commander the chaplain was invited to hold brief devotions. Chaplain Flanagan had begun the practice. Chaplain Cunningham wrote:

It was a moving experience to stand among these young men, their faces obscured by camouflage paint, their backs bent under the weight of heavy packs, and reassure them of the abiding presence of God. These informal moments always closed with the Lord's Prayer in unison. An even more diligent effort was made to be present at the helo pad whenever the weary and worn-out men returned at the end of their patrols. Not uncommon were the occasions when helos were heard in the middle of the night and everyone knew instinctively that a patrol had encountered difficulty and had had to be emergency extracted. I made it a habit to be present whenever the emergency extractions occurred and especially when casualties were brought in.<sup>33</sup>

Reconnaissance battalion chaplains regularly commented on the inspirational nature of the pride of the platoons and the high spirits of the men exhibited during the most distressing circumstances. They repeatedly witnessed the men returning with four day's growth of beard masking the fatigue of their faces; their clothing blotched with blood where numerous jungle leeches had feasted; their hands, fingers, and feet grotesquely wrinkled by continuous exposure to the monsoon rains, and yet they noted the genuine joy and exuberance which marked their reunion with buddies who were at the helo pad awaiting their return. It was easy to sense the common bond which united these men, a bond forged by mutual participation in a demanding and perilous task.

Possessed of a remarkable sense of humor himself, Chaplain Cunningham recognized the grim humor of the reconnaissance Marine and supplied the account of the following incident:

Soon after a patrol had been inserted in the jungle it became apparent to the Operations Office in the Battalion that whoever was sending the "sit-reps" was misreading the map and was not aware of it. As additional reports were received it was evident that according to their information the patrol's position was down in a wide valley where no right-thinking recon patrol should be. Consequently the Operations Officer sent out the following message, "What are you doing out there?" After a few moments delay, back





Photo courtesy of Chaplain Hugh F. Lecky, Jr.

*Chaplain John J. O'Connor converses with the Bishop of Hue and Bishop of Da Nang.*

came the startling reply, "Saving the world for Democracy of course!"<sup>34</sup>

With a battalions such as Recon and Amtracs, additional services were scheduled during the week in order to reach those personnel who were in the field over the weekend. Both a weekly Communion service and a Bible study class were held with moderate success. But just as the religious program began to gain impetus, elements of both the Recon and Amtracs were shifted to Da Nang to occupy part of the area vacated by the 3d Marine Division as it moved to Phu Bai and Dong Ha. This set-back was only temporary, however, for soon elements from both 1st and 3d Reconnaissance Battalions arrived to reinforce and operate without their complete units.

Chaplain Cunningham reported: "Not only did these men integrate well but also gave all religious services their loyal interest and support."<sup>35</sup>

On 4 October Lieutenant Robert M. Weeks (Lutheran) arrived at the 1st Marine Division and was immediately pressed into duty as administrative assistant to the division chaplain. His major task was the movement of the office to Da Nang. He vividly recalled:

"Mount Out" was the word given on 10 October 1966, because the First Marine Division Headquarters were being moved to Da Nang to replace the Third Marine Division Headquarters. The Division Chaplain's Office had to be put into full operation within twenty-four hours. Correspondence became a major concern, and a very careful



Photo 1st MarDiv

*Chaplain Robert A. Flanagan offers Mass in a village near Chu Lai. There was no priest and no church. Mass is said in a villager's hut. Women are on the other side of the altar.*

use of the thirty-day quantity of mount out supplies was necessary. Chaplain Casazza was a great teacher and I learned the value of accurate correspondence and correct decisions as an Administrative Assistant. It was a great privilege to have served with Chaplain Casazza as his Administrative Assistant.<sup>36</sup>

One of Chaplain Weeks' duties was to conduct worship services as assigned by the division chaplain. This gave him the opportunity to make trips into the field. For three months he supplied Protestant coverage for the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines which involved flying to the battalion CP, 30 miles south of Da Nang. On one occasion while talking to a Marine he asked the young man to move to a closer seat. Hardly had he moved when a round was fired through the seat vacated by the Marine. On another occasion the helicopter which had dropped him off at the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines crashed shortly after taking off for a return trip. "Christmas Eve," he wrote, "was spent in a bunker full of water that had an oversupply of mosquitos. That was a great

Christmas because of the fellowship with the field Marines. Three weeks later I was to hold a Memorial Service for seventy-one men, with many of whom I had spent Christmas."<sup>37</sup> Chaplain Weeks was often accompanied on these trips by Lieutenant Conon J. Meehan (Roman Catholic) who held mass at the same time as the Protestant service.

Just after the move north, Chaplain Casazza reassigned Chaplain Lemieux to the 7th Marines as a relief for Regimental Chaplain Lieutenant Commander Roy A. Baxter (Southern Baptist) who was to be detached on 15 October. Chaplain Baxter, who had served the regiment since May, had participated in Operations Oakland and Jackson and a number of battalion-sized combat sweeps. During the final month of his duty with the regiment Chaplain Baxter, with the assistance of Chaplains Capodanno and Glover and the regimental commander, had organized the eminently successful 7th Marines Lay Leader Conference on 10 September. In his final report, Chaplain Baxter wrote:

The spiritual concern of our Regimental Commander, Colonel L. F. Snoddy, Jr., and his predecessor, Colonel E. H. Haffey, was demonstrated by their concern for the needs of personnel. The few minutes spent at divine services is a decided asset in the performance of military duties. If God is put first everything else will take its proper place. The Regimental Commander believed this firmly, and he directed that a Regimental Lay Leader Conference be conducted on 10 September.<sup>38</sup>

One of the highlights of the program was Colonel Snoddy's opening speech. In it he said:

I want to impress upon you the importance which I as Regimental Commander, attach to the Lay Leader Program. Fundamentally, the Regimental Commander is responsible for everything the men of his Regiment do. Likewise, he is responsible for the things which his men do not do, which they should do. I cannot pass the responsibilities on to anyone; they are mine for better or for worse. I accept these responsibilities willingly, however, because I have immediately available some important help. There is already established a system of organization which we call the Chain of Command. Then too, there are people of various ranks and skills to make the system work effectively. . . . Where spiritual matters are concerned, the chaplain is the Commander's principal helper, but the spiritual welfare of a command requires more individual effort than the Commander and his chaplains together can generate. This is particularly true in combat. . . . It is difficult for chaplains to be in all the places where they are needed or where they would like to be. Thus there is the need for the Lay Leader.<sup>39</sup>

The incoming Regimental Chaplain, Chaplain Lemieux, also noted that the attitude of the command was inspirational and challenging, and the leadership exciting. He wrote:

Colonel Snoddy was one who held "court" in his "domain." At mess the staff was seated at a "round table" and Colonel Snoddy was the presiding figure. Likewise, in religious matters, matters of morals, the colonel was also the presiding figure and his actions were more than merely following what a chaplain might recommend. Rather, he had his own moral standards and was perfectly capable of functioning and exercising command interest in this regard, with or without the concurrence of the chaplain. Colonel Snoddy's moral integrity was obvious to all who came into contact with him, and his chapel interest was consistent with his convictions.<sup>40</sup>

The combat situation of the 7th Marines was quite a bit different from that of the 1st Marines. The terrain was not quite so severe and the Marines tended to operate more closely with ARVN forces and ROK Marines. As a consequence they were able to keep the rear areas quite secure. "One could drive on the road into the Division at night with the lights on."<sup>41</sup>

However, more operations were conducted when the 1st Marines and the 7th Marines pressed the enemy in the forward areas, driving them to the foothills and thereby reducing their infiltration capability. The enemy in and around Chu Lai appeared to be less sophisticated than those at Da Nang even though there also seemed to be more contact with larger units.

Although the contact was relatively light, it was present with the fear and risk that combat always involved. Chaplains in this area uniformly regarded the risk as worth it for the opportunity to reach out to the Marine. One chaplain expressed it beautifully:

Although I joined the Battalion with an anxious heart and mind, the anxiety was soon relieved. The more I entered into my work, the less anxious I became. Life in the battalion was real fine. It is true, there were many things that could have made life more enjoyable. Yet in all honesty, I would not trade my experience with the infantry for anything.

For me there were many avenues of ministry. Some of my most cherished moments were spent around the Lord's Table as we experienced the fellowship of God's grace and love. Grace and love are theological terms, but over here they seem to take on much meaning. Whether it was a worship service or just an informal chat with a trooper, the reality of God's love and plan for men became quite pronounced. God was real. He was alive and extremely active in the lives of the men of the battalion.<sup>42</sup>

This attitude of Marines was noted also by Chaplain Meehan now with the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in replacement of the seriously wounded Chaplain Kane. Chaplain Meehan was tremendously impressed by the men of the battalion. After referring to the fine qualities in the battalion's leadership, he said:

By far the finest examples of humans were this "lost generation." I still find it difficult to speak about these men without becoming emotional. Having spent nearly ten months and making nearly 13 odd operations with these men, I have a deep respect and love for them. Recently, a corporal whom I visited in the First Medical Battalion, moaned over the "young kids sent out here by the Marine Corps." This leader felt that these young Marines were too new and inexperienced. I asked him how old he was. His reply was, "nineteen." His concern was ordinary. The "lost generation" were concerned about the people they lived with, the enemy they fought, and the people who suffered.<sup>43</sup>

*Seabees Chaplains in I Corps,  
October-December 1966*

Four Seabee battalions arrived during the final



*Photo taken at the dedication of 1st LAAM's Chapel, 1 October 1966. Chaplains (from left to right): J. F. Weaver; W. C. Davis; K. A. Mitchell; J. R. Hersbberger; R. F. Wood; W. F. Wright; J. C. Brown; D. B. Saltzman; M. D. Seiders; P. C. Hammerl; and R. W. Fullilove. Vietnamese church leaders (on the left): Father Socks from Hoa Khanh Catholic Village and Tich Thinh Gias from Phun Tuong Buddhist Village. The white-clad sisters and students are from the Sacred Heart Catholic School in Da Nang.*

quarter of 1966, two each in October and December. Lieutenant Commander Robert E. Blade (United Presbyterian) with MCB-58 arrived with his battalion which relieved MCB-1 at Da Nang's Camp Haskins in late October.

Camp Haskins also housed the 30th Naval Construction Regiment which exercised operational control of all Vietnam-based construction battalions. MCB-58 was the second of nine newly commissioned battalions to be organized specifically for service in Vietnam, MCB-40 at Chu Lai being the first. Camp Haskins, also called Red Beach, was six miles north of Da Nang located near FLC and along the Da Nang Bay.

The men of MCB-58 were engaged in such projects as road building, cantonment construction,

well-drilling, minor airbase construction, and quarry operation. One site was south of them at the 1st Marines command post where they upgraded roads and built huts for a Marine LAAM battery.

Chaplain Blade's duties included a major Civic Action project. "On 24 December 1966," he wrote, "a Flying Tiger cargo plane crashed on the hamlet of Bien Tai killing 115 people. It was the worst crash in Vietnam history. We rebuilt some 32 homes for the families of the hamlet. Other projects continued through June of 1967 when the battalion was relieved."<sup>44</sup>

The second Seabee chaplain to arrive in October was Lieutenant E. Blant Ferguson (Cumberland Presbyterian) of MCB-5. Chaplain Ferguson had relieved Commander Everett B. Nelson (American

Baptist) in March while the battalion was at Camp Hoover and had returned to the United States for the period of May to October. One of Chaplain Nelson's turnover practices indicates another area of chaplain outreach while in foreign lands. During the initial turnover in March 1966, Chaplain Nelson had introduced his relief to Da Nang area missionaries. Chaplain Ferguson wrote:

While in Da Nang I had a good working relationship with the Protestant and Catholic pastors and missionaries stationed in this northern city. Chaplain Nelson acquainted me with the city of Da Nang and with missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Worldwide Evangelization Crusade. I highly recommend this procedure as a means of establishing contact with local clergy.<sup>45</sup>

Heavily engaged in civic action, Chaplain Ferguson produced a successful program. During one eight-month deployment more than \$1,300 was contributed from the MCB-5 Chapel Funds to various missionary enterprises in Da Nang East. Missionaries were invited to speak to the men during divine worship services, where they told of unusual experiences and showed slides and movies of personal endeavor to relate the Christian Gospel to the Vietnamese. Chaplain Ferguson completed the March-May 1966 deployment, a following one at Da Nang, and one deployment at Dong Ha during his two-year tenure of duty.

The only Seabee Chaplain during the period to arrive as the relief for a chaplain already in country with his battalion was Lieutenant Richard D. Delleney (Southern Baptist) who arrived on 10 November as the relief for Chaplain Sheldon on his second deployment with MCB-10. Chaplain Delleney completed the final three months of the battalion's deployment at Camp Hoover in Da Nang and was to return again in 1967.

Two Seabee Chaplains arrived in December. Lieutenant Carl W. Erickson (Lutheran) with MCB-62, which relieved MCB-7 at Camp Campbell, Phu Bai and Chaplain J. F. Harris' MCB-8 relieved MCB-3 at Rosemary Point, Camp Miller, Chu Lai.

#### *Christmas 1966*

In a letter of 6 August to the Chief of Chaplains, General Walt had invited Chaplain Kelly to return

to Vietnam for a second Christmas visit. He wrote:

If you find it possible, we would be most happy to have you visit us again this year. I recall with gratitude the fine contribution which you made to our religious emphasis of Christmas and I have heard many comments since that visit as to the morale effect of your visit among my chaplains. They continue to do an outstanding job among our men and I am certain that another visit from you would accomplish the same effect among the entirely new "generation" of Chaplains who will be here on next Christmas. If you can come, please plan to be with us for a week preceding Christmas so we will not have to keep you going at the same tremendous pace that you kept last time.<sup>46</sup>

In the midst of the move from old offices to the new ones in the III MAF Headquarters compound at Da Nang East, Chaplains Lyons and Hershberger prepared the itinerary for Chaplain Kelly's forthcoming Christmas visit. This year, as the last, he would be accompanied by a Roman Catholic chaplain from the Chaplain's Division of the Bureau of Naval Personnel. Captain Edward A. Slattery (Roman Catholic) was to accompany him, partly to take care of many procedural details of the trip, and also to provide Roman Catholic Masses in areas where Chaplain Kelly was visiting and preaching. Chaplain Lyons' proposal for Chaplain Kelly's itinerary was detailed and as the Chief of Chaplains had directed, made it possible to visit as large a number of commands, chaplains, hospitals, and chapels as possible within the limits of a five-day visit.

Perhaps typical of the activity and joy of the Christmas season was the experience of Chaplain Meehan who extended his ministry beyond the Marine opportunities to the concerns of Vietnamese.

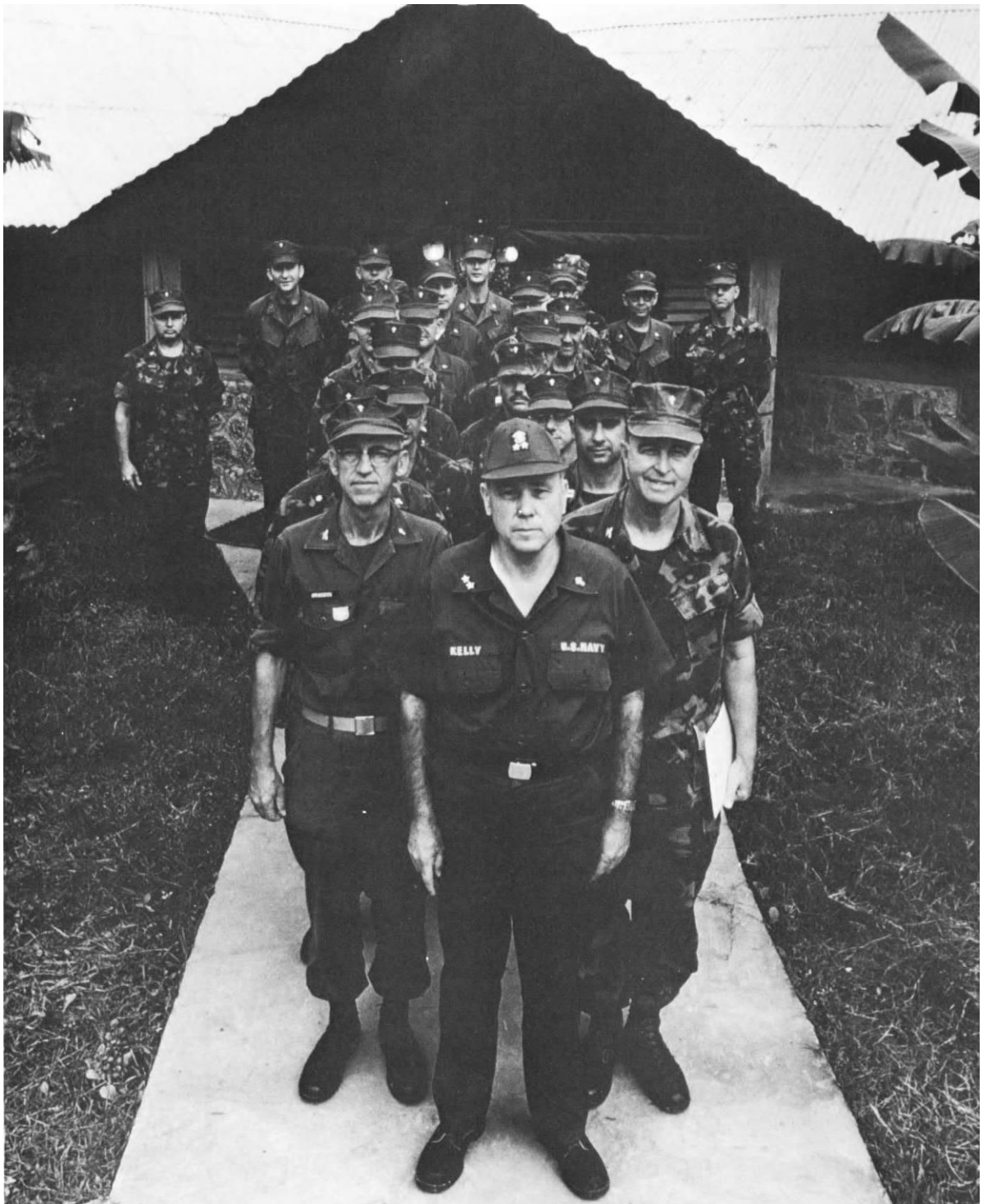
At Christmas he said Mass for almost 450 Vietnamese. He had been saying Mass for the Vietnamese people and their children for some time. At first, attendance had been poor. As the word spread, he started to have about 80 to 90 people attend every Sunday. When Christmas came the people were urged to get one of their own priests from Da Nang. This they did. On Christmas Eve, the weather became so bad that the priest could not come to An Hoa. Frantically rearranging his own schedule and bringing down his own Marines to sing, Chaplain Meehan set up Mass for the Vietnamese at ten o'clock at night. The Vietnamese had been given permission to have Mass in a huge Butler Building. When he arrived the place had been decorated into a beautiful chapel. The people had put up decorations

and built an altar. The children were dressed as well as they could. He remembered:

When the Mass began the Vietnamese sang the Mass, my own men sang Christmas carols both before and after the Mass. Also participating in the singing were the German Peace Corps representatives. These dedicated men and women of Germany and Austria sang in their own native language. The startling moment of the whole night came at the Consecration of the Mass. As I started to say

the words of Consecration, the Vietnamese began to beat out a rhythm on their drums. It kept getting faster and faster as I approached the time for adoration. The drums conveyed a great expectancy and an overpowering note of dignity. Abruptly, after the Consecration, the drums ceased, and Christ was on the altar. It was one of the most moving experiences of all my dealings with the Vietnamese people. It seemed even to my men that at that moment Vietnamese, American and German were united as one in thanksgiving for the Birth of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

PART IV  
THE HEIGHTS AND THE DEPTHS



Department of Defense (USN) Photo K-80351

*RAdm James W. Kelly, Chief of Chaplains, poses with 1st Marine Division chaplains in front of the division chapel at Da Nang during the Christmas 1969 holiday period. The occasion marked Adm Kelly's fifth Christmas season tour of Marine units in Vietnam.*



## CHAPTER 9

# Encouraging and Giving (January-December 1967)

*Combat Ministry-Early 1967—The Chaplain Civic Action Program—Easter—Summer Combat—“Greater Love Hath No Man...”—I Corps Pacification Efforts—Changes and Administration*

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The year 1967 found both U.S. forces and casualties in Vietnam rising sharply. Opposition to the war was growing at home and the reports of riot and protest were causing some early reactions by chaplains. In August, President Johnson announced a new ceiling on U.S. troops for the war zone at 525,000. By mid-year the total already stood at 463,000. At the end of the year the casualty figure since 1961 would total 15,812 killed and 99,305 wounded. In the mid-summer Marine casualties exceeded those sustained in the Korean War;<sup>1</sup> Vietnam had become the second largest war for the Marine Corps in terms of combat deaths, and would become its largest in terms of those wounded.<sup>2</sup> The total Marine wounded figure for Vietnam would stand at 88,542; 21,335 more than those listed as wounded in World War II, a figure that reflects in part that Vietnam was America's longest foreign war.

Bombing raids on the north were intensified and U.S. and North Vietnamese forces entered the demilitarized zone (DMZ) for the first time. President Johnson repeatedly offered peace negotiations only to have them consistently turned down.<sup>3</sup>

While demonstrations at home continued to display the skepticism of some Americans, military leaders were surprisingly optimistic about the progress of the war. General Westmoreland said that he had “never been more encouraged in my four years in Vietnam.”<sup>4</sup> Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson maintained, “We are definitely winning in Vietnam. . . . If my observations are borne out—I recently returned from my eighth visit to Vietnam—then I believe we will see more real evidence of progress in the next few months.”<sup>5</sup>

For chaplains with Marines, such optimism was not so clear. They found their ministry of encouragement was strongly needed in 1967 and the giving of the ministry also meant the giving of themselves.

### *Combat Ministry-Early 1967*

For awhile during early 1967 all that appeared to

Navy chaplains committed to combat with Marine units near Vietnam's DMZ, was that the face of the war had changed. Massed within the demilitarized zone itself and occupying strategic high ground just south of its western extremity, North Vietnamese regulars appeared to be getting set to mount a full-scale frontal assault, an invasion of South Vietnam, across the six-mile strip of no man's land which divided the country. A mile to the south in Con Thien, dug in and ready, the U.S. 3d Marine Division anticipated that they would soon make the try.

Navy chaplains with their battalions at Khe Sanh, Con Thien, and Dong Ha noted that the prospect of such an encounter was reminiscent of the battles of World War II and Korea. Counterinsurgency warfare with which they had become intimately acquainted in Vietnam and to which they had successfully adapted their ministry, seemed at the moment to belong to another theater of operations or some other war.

The chaplains in the northernmost defense perimeter were reminded that the shape of their ministry had changed considerably in response to the requirements of guerrilla warfare. They had not been accustomed to fixed positions, or as in Korea, to trooping the line from fighting pit to foxhole tending the wounded and dying, and offering encouragement to their people. No longer were they oriented to the battalion aid station as the central collection and clearing point for the wounded and the KIAs. Nevertheless the configuration of things along the DMZ indicated that this was to be a fight for real estate, with fixed positions to be defended, and the effectiveness of their ministry depended upon the facility with which they could adapt themselves to the traditional battleline situation.

During the early days in May 1967, artillery, rocket, and mortar exchanges, both in number and intensity, increased all along the DMZ. It became clear that to neutralize the enemy's offensive capability in the area, the Communist forces would

have to be routed from their sturdy, well-concealed bunkers, removed from the high ground on Hills 881 North and South, and 861 near Khe Sanh, and driven from their positions below and in the DMZ.

In the early morning of 8 May, a Communist assault force, driving south, attacked the Marine garrison at Con Thien. Casualties mounted. In a letter to the Chief of Chaplains, describing the ministry of Navy chaplains in the sector, the Division Chaplain, 3d Marine Division stated that when he arrived at D Med, Dong Ha:

. . . Everywhere you looked there were wounded and dead being tended. Many of the walking wounded had shrapnel in two, three or as many as five places on their bodies. The seriously wounded were given immediate attention and in two or three cases I saw men who were to all appearances dead, brought back to life by dedicated doctors and corpsmen who worked smoothly and efficiently amid what appeared to the layman to be absolute chaos.<sup>6</sup>

The chaplains responded also. Both with their units on the line and D Med, they moved among the casualties consoling, encouraging, offering prayer, or giving the last rites of the church. The dead were removed to the morgue, half a block away from the hospital where the ritual of the last rite continued.

When the furious pace of the day was at length over in Dong Ha, the division chaplain moved west to the Khe Sanh sector where for several days men of the 3d Marines had laid siege to Communist-held Hills 881N and S and 861, finally wresting them from NVA control. Chaplain Oliver, 3d Marines regimental chaplain, and Chaplain Urbano with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines ministered to the assault troops. Chaplain Lavin stated: "What a job these two had done! They were everywhere, consoling the wounded and ministering to the dead. The toll of dead and wounded exacted to take these hills was terribly high, but true to Marine Corps tradition, it had been done."<sup>7</sup>

Recounting his participation in the effort to drive the Communist troops from the strategic high ground, Chaplain Urbano attached to the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines at Khe Sanh, said:

Arriving in country and joining the Third Battalion, Third Marines less than two weeks before the battle at Khe Sanh was the most electrifying experience of my life. The Colonel invited me to go with him from our CP at the "Rockpile" on a visit to Khe Sanh. Less than twenty four hours later we were back again when our Kilo Company and the Command Group were committed to a battle the

likes of which I could never have imagined. The days that followed turned the beautifully landscaped, jungle covered mountains into a barren wasteland with pock-mark scars everywhere.<sup>8</sup>

Following the victory at Khe Sanh, chaplains held both Protestant and Roman Catholic memorial services atop the recently taken hills. It was fitting that they should pray for the dead at the place where they actually died. Services were conducted in bomb craters large enough to hold sixty men with little difficulty.

The 3d Battalion, 3d Marines chaplain reported that following the battle, near the battalion CP at the "Rockpile," men of the unit built a chapel in memory of their fallen comrades. The chapel was constructed not with appropriated funds, he noted, but with appropriated materials. Native materials appropriated from the surrounding jungles were employed to build a tropical, one-hundred seat structure with two office spaces in the rear.

Pursuing the retreating Communists into the southern half of the DMZ, in the days that followed, the Marines drove the NVA troops north of the demarkation line at the 17th Parallel. Chaplain Lavin indicated that mortar and artillery exchanges continued, but "thanks to very vigilant Marines on the night scopes, the NVA and VC get far more than they give."<sup>9</sup>

The overall impression indicated by Navy chaplains participating in I Corps combat in May was that circumstances within which they pursued their mission, the intensified and altered structure of the combat situation, had no appreciable effect upon the essence of their ministry. The exhausted, the fearful, the wounded, and the dying needed the consolation, the encouragement, the absolution, the reassurance, the prayers which they provided, irrespective of the configuration of circumstances surrounding them. To bring God to man and man to God, and to apply God's divine resources to the individual, precisely at the point of his deepest need, remained the essence of their mission.

The going was as rough near the DMZ in early 1967 as it was anywhere and anytime in Vietnam. As the units of the 3d Marine Division had moved north they noticed the change in weather as well as terrain. One chaplain remembered, "It was cold, wet and muddy, spelled with a capital M."<sup>10</sup> And other rude awakenings were waiting. Lieutenant John J. Wilson

(Southern Baptist) remembered his introduction to the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines:

Chaplain Lavin said, "Jack, I hope you are familiar with the field!" I replied, "Yes, sir, a little," my reply being based on thoughts of the fields I had plowed as a boy and experienced during eight summer camps with the National Guard . . . . Though I made jokes about Camp Carroll when we got there I was happy to be with a battalion in the field.<sup>11</sup>

The Assistant Division Chaplain, Chaplain Seiders, took the new 2d Battalion, 3d Marines Chaplain to meet the 3d Division (Forward) Chaplain, Captain Joseph Ryan (Roman Catholic), and also his battalion commanding officer. Shortly thereafter word was received that Golf Company of his battalion had made contact with the enemy and the entire battalion command post moved northeast of Camp Carroll on a one-day sweep to assist. Chaplain Wilson remembered:

We arrived where the fighting had been going on to find the wounded and dead, at which time I began to realize I was in "the field." We did what we could and Med Evac's soon carried all the wounded and dead out. As we moved to link up with Golf Company everything was going fine until we found ourselves in the middle of an ambush which had bullets flying through the air and mortar shells popping like pop corn.<sup>12</sup>

The chaplain participated in carrying the wounded and dead back to the landing zone for Med Evac but found the LZ so blanketed with automatic weapons fire and mortars that the helicopters could not land. During the night the commanding officer and the sergeant major of the battalion died along with others who had been wounded earlier in the day. Those who remained alive listened to the constant mortar barrage throughout the night. Chaplain Wilson recorded two grim facts that he derived from his experience:

I became fully aware of what Chaplain Lavin had said as opposed to what I had heard. There is "the field" and there is "the field." The other fact came in the realization that not only had the battalion had 14 killed and 124 wounded, but "I" had lost 14 of "my" men and 124 of "my" men had been wounded. There is a difference.<sup>13</sup>

The difficulties of the northern I Corps in early 1967 had the effect of drawing Marines and their chaplains close together, which proved to be a blessing but also a painful situation in the face of the loss

of close comrades. The 2d Battalion, 3d Marines lost 77 men dead and hundreds wounded fighting for Hills 881 and 861 near Khe Sanh. The battalion chaplain reflected, "I wanted to quit and leave, just as other combat chaplains must have felt, but we were given the strength to stay through prayer and the knowledge that someone else would have to do my part and his too if I didn't."<sup>14</sup> Another chaplain stated: "I shall miss them, the living and the dead . . . . These men were the only true and real values in this war for me."<sup>15</sup>

Lieutenant Clark A. Tea, Jr. (Episcopal) found the same tie developing with the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines. The battalion was stretched out along Route 9 from Landing Zone Stud, at Ca Lu, to Khe Sanh, and Chaplain Tea was obliged to "travel the route" constantly in order to hold services. Once a Marine came up to him after the service and said, "Chaplain, we were talking last night and wondered if you would be around for services today."<sup>16</sup> Chaplain Tea reported, "That sort of got to me; It's little things like that that make it all worthwhile."<sup>17</sup>

Chaplain Tea was typical of most chaplains in that he spent time with a line battalion and then later was assigned to a rear unit, in his case the 3d Medical Battalion. Ever since chaplain routines had stabilized in early 1966, the rotation pattern that was attempted for each chaplain included an approximately six-month stint with a forward unit, and the rest of the tour spent with a unit thought to be in the rear. This was often a myth, however, since the conflict rarely could draw rear lines with safety in northern I Corps, given the mortar and rocket barrages from the DMZ and the unpredictability and infiltration capability of the enemy.

Some of the most rewarding rearward duty was with the medical aid station, even though it was also some of the most exhausting. Lieutenant Lester L. Westling, Jr. (Episcopal) was a chaplain at the 3d Medical Battalion at Phu Bai in 1967, serving there for seven months. He recorded an important factor in the hospital crisis ministry when he remarked that a line battalion chaplain has six months or more to get to know most of his men, whereas with patients in a medical battalion there are but a matter of hours or days in which to build a relationship of trust strong enough that a man can open his soul to God in the chaplain's presence if he needs to. And yet, this was possible to do. Chaplain Westling remembered:

One of the greatest rewards of this service often came to me after I had spent a number of months with the Medical Battalion when a man would come in from the field for a second and third Purple Heart and fondly remember "his chaplain." I recall particularly once amidst the frenzy in the fringe area when Chinook helicopters were unloading mass casualties, how a man with a bleeding leg and a wounded arm hopped through the door and threw his good arm around me and gave me a big "bear hug" and said *joyfully*: "Chaplain, I'm back again!"<sup>18</sup>

It would be erroneous to state that all the experiences of chaplains were rewarding and relationships were uniformly excellent. When the tension of the war and its duration continued to expand, the pressures on commands and chaplains also mounted, and some chaplains' reports complained of lack of command support for their ministry. But by far the majority reported excellent relationships and some, exceptional cooperation. Chaplain Westling, who joined 1st Battalion, 9th Marines at Camp Carroll after his tour with the 3d Medical Battalion, remembered the hazards and the marches during the summer offensives in 1967 and reported:

My greatest encouragement came from being blessed with a Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, Protestant and Catholic respectively, who took it very seriously that providing a religious program for the battalion was a command function. To my knowledge, few chaplains have served Commanding Officers who have called for prayers each morning on operations before the decisions were made. "No amount of military education can completely prepare a man for the responsibility of taking 1000 men into combat. Supporting Arms are not enough without God's help and guidance," he once told me. It is a humbling experience to serve such a man.<sup>19</sup>

#### *The Chaplain Civic Action Program*

During the month of January 1967 the chaplain civic action story in RVN centered upon the northernmost provinces of I CTZ. Elsewhere in Vietnam chaplains attached to Navy and Marine Corps activities routinely continued their impressive program of assistance to institutions of human welfare operated by indigenous religious organizations.

Further chaplain civil action efforts were focused on the extreme north for obvious reasons. Following the redeployment of the 3d Marine Division CP and combat redeployment north from Da Nang to the Phu Bai and Dong Ha defense perimeters in mid-October 1966, the civic action program was begun afresh in undeveloped territory. The program

reentered Phase I of the tested and now sophisticated formula of humanitarian assistance. Chaplains of the 3d Marine Division reported a variety of activities during the month. Distribution of food, clothing, and school supplies; financial and material assistance to indigenous churches, orphanages, and hospitals; and heavy involvement in the Marine village Medical Care Program (MEDCAP) led chaplain civic action projects numerically and in man hours and dollars expended.

The 3d Marine Division's Protestant Chapel Fund made a substantial contribution to the Christian and Missionary Alliance mission to ARVN personnel and their dependents at the Dong Ha basic training camp near the Division CP. The same fund donated 24,000 piastres to the Catholic Archdiocese of Hue for support of religious orphanages and schools. The Catholic Chapel Fund of the 3d Marine Division gave 4,500 piastres and 1,200 pounds of food, medicine, and clothing from American donors to the Reverend Tho in Hue for distribution among Catholics of the ancient provincial capital.<sup>20</sup>

Early in the war it became clear that pacification of the countryside required that Vietnamese villagers be given the means and the incentive necessary for a successful self-help program of social and economic betterment. Humanitarian projects for the first time in history assumed a position of importance and priority equal to that of active combat. Winning the war in Vietnam required both military protection and social and economic reconstruction from the grass roots hamlet through the village, province, district, and nation, and the civic action program provided the best means for meeting the requirements.

The first project noted in 1967 was an 11th Marines chaplain's project in which indigenous leaders were being encouraged to establish Chu Lai Youth Centers, equipped with small hobby shops where young people of the villages could learn the rudiments of selected mechanical and technical skills under the guidance of Marine instructors.

The III MAF Chaplain of the previous year had predicted the progress of the program as he saw it. He said:

I would expect that this program will "peak" within the next year. Once contacts are complete and the surge of projects is past I would expect this program to diminish to the point where it is concerned more with specific, short-termed projects as opposed to the larger and costlier construction-type projects in which we are now engaged.



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187207  
*LCpl Gary L. Frame of the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division puts a new pair of shoes on a Vietnamese girl at the Sacred Heart Orphanage in Da Nang in 1966. The shoes were sent to Frame by members of the Veterans Administration Hospital in his hometown of Muskogee, Oklahoma.*

Ideally, the program should taper off so that when U.S. Forces are ultimately withdrawn from Vietnam, these religious institutions will be virtually independent of our support.<sup>24</sup>

By 1967, the ideal was still being pursued. The new *Standing Operating Procedure for Chaplain Service* was then in the final stages of preparation by the Commanding General, III MAF. Section IV, entitled "Chaplains Civic Action Program" placed in official form both the structure and the philosophy for the program of the future.

During 1967 chaplains reporting on civic action projects, while recognizing the difficulty of accurate measurement, consistently attributed the stable, high-level morale among young sailors and Marines in Vietnam to some degree to the healthful emotional outlet provided them by regular involvement in humanitarian projects among the Vietnamese people.

Upon his return from a visit to RVN in early 1967, Methodist Bishop W. Angie Smith reported that he

had seen less hatred among combat troops in Vietnam than anywhere else he had observed or in which he had participated. He praised American Armed Forces personnel for their liberal giving to the people's needs, for their high morale, and for the commendable state of morality among them.<sup>25</sup>

In a sense the Chaplains Civic Action Program did peak in 1967, since the remaining years of Marine involvement in Vietnam centered strongly around forced combat and planning for disengagement.

### *Easter*

March 1967 marked the fifth year in which Easter was celebrated by Navy chaplains in Vietnam. All previous attendance records were broken when the largest participation ever was recorded. While individual response and program impact were difficult to measure, chaplains reporting on their holy day activities expressed a sense of satisfaction with the im-

*Chaplain Francis L. Garrett, III Marine Amphibious Force, gives 100,000 piasters (about \$8,500) to the Venerable Thich Minh Chieu, senior Buddhist priest of Da Nang. The money, raised through the Chaplain's Civic Action Program from Marines, will be applied toward the building of an orphanage.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187010





*The distribution of 2,700 bars of soap to the residents of Quang Xuyen in the Rung Sat Special Zone south of Saigon was a present of the United Church Women of Hawaii. The presentation took place 31 March 1966 during Operation Jackstay. The chaplains pictured are Richard E. Barcus of BLT 1/5 and John Pegnam of the SLF staff.*

pact of the Easter program upon Navy and Marine Corps personnel ashore in the I Corps Tactical Zone.

Four Navy Chaplains were in Vietnam on Easter 1965, two with the first two battalions of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade then arriving in the I Corps area as the first units of the American defensive buildup, and one each with Shufly and Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon. At this time news coverage of American military personnel and their activities in Vietnam had assumed worldwide significance and an urgent priority. In Japanese and American newspapers United Press International published photographs of the sunrise service provided by the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines Chaplain at the Hawk missile emplacement atop Hill 327 on the Da Nang defensive perimeter.

On Easter, 26 March 1967, a number of sunrise services were held by unit chaplains in their individual units in Chu Lai, Phu Bai, and Da Nang TAORs. Because of unsafe conditions of the roads in the early, pre-dawn hours, the decision was made by the division chaplain not to have large, centrally located services. Chaplains were encouraged to hold area services where men of several contiguous units could assemble for local early morning worship. III MAF Chaplain Lyons concurred and issued this advice to the Chaplain Corps. In a report on the season to the Chief of Chaplains he further reported:

The combined III MAF and Da Nang Air Base choirs presented a concert of sacred music on Good Friday at the Air Base Chapel and on Easter Sunday evening in the III MAF chapel. The choir was composed of Navy, Marine,



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A187196

*HM3 Ronald L. Williams, 1st Hospital Company, 1st Marine Division, is surrounded by his patients, children from the village of An Tan, as he treats a child's infected leg.*

Army and Air Force personnel stationed in the Da Nang area.<sup>26</sup>

During March, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish personnel made preparation for their Easter and Passover observances, respectively, to occur the following month. Both made their usual, faithful, albeit small, contribution to divine worship attendance figures for March. For April it was noted with both groups, participation in their High Holy Days celebrations set new attendance records in Vietnam.

Largely as a result of record participation in Corps Lenten and Easter religious activities, statistics for the month of March 1967 showed a marked increase in attendance at worship. During the month a total of 57,638 persons attended 2,139 worship services

provided by 90 Navy Chaplains in the I Corps area.

#### *Summer Combat*

The month of July 1967 produced two important firsts for Navy chaplains assigned to duty ashore in Vietnam. One of these related to an important Chaplain Corps objective, the extension of the Corps' ministry to every sailor, Seabee, and Marine deployed to the combat area.

Since mid-1966 more Navy chaplains had been assigned to combat units ashore in a single geographical area than ever before in the history of naval warfare. Coupled with circuit riding and cross-organizational concepts of multi-unit religious coverage, assignment of chaplains ashore in such



Photo courtesy of Chaplain William H. Gibson  
*Capt William H. Gibson (right), Civic Action Officer of the 1st Marine Division, presents clothing, books, and games to a nun at an orphanage near Da Nang. Capt Gibson later became a Navy chaplain.*

numbers represented the most comprehensive religious coverage ever known in the Navy to that point. Progressively, in the months following July 1966, increases in in-country Chaplain Corps strength were recorded. In July 1967, the number exceeded 100 chaplains assigned to duty ashore.

The Chaplain Corps ministry to Navy and Marine Corps personnel in Vietnam increased both in breadth and in saturation. The most notable increase in breadth occurred in U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam chaplain assignments. Circuit riding chaplains of Naval Support Activity (NavSupAct), Saigon were assigned to four circuits, the geographical limits of which encompassed the II, III, and IV Corps administrative-tactical zones. The four circuits were geographically so situated that centers of naval population at Saigon, Cam Ranh Bay, Cat Lo, and Can Tho provided bases from which the 10 NavSupAct Saigon detachments, Coastal Surveillance Forces, and River Patrol Forces units were covered. Without exception Navy and Coast Guard units operating ashore and afloat from bases extending from the southwestern extremity of the Mekong Delta north to Vietnam's central panhandle were assured routine religious coverage. Personnel of the units were assured ready access to the ministry of a Navy chaplain.

The other first was not specifically related to Chaplain Corps coverage or to personnel statistics,

rather it was related to the mounting cost of the war to Corps personnel. Navy chaplains attached to the Marines in the I Corps Tactical Zone, and specifically in the Con Thien and Dong Ha sectors immediately below the DMZ, reported receiving intermittent but heavy mortar and rocket fire upon their positions during the entire month. For the first time during the war three Navy chaplains sustained wounds in a single month. The number of chaplains wounded in action, by the end of July, reached a total of 15.

A moving story was recorded by one of the three chaplains wounded. It was not so much his story as that of the Marine corporal who worked with him as a chaplain's assistant. The corporal had served the chaplain to whom he was assigned as yeoman, messenger, driver, and bodyguard. He had rigged for divine worship, served Mass, and generally made it possible for the chaplain, "to be in two places at one time." The chaplain had come to depend heavily upon his assistant and to know and appreciate him as a faithful Christian friend. The climate of those days were reflected in a letter to the Chief of Chaplains. The chaplain wrote:

On Monday morning, 3 July, at 0500 we were awakened by the scream of artillery shells. I raced to the door of my hut and started for my bunker when I was thrown into the air by the impact of a shell exploding across the street. I was hurled into the bunker head first, sustaining heavy lacerations on my legs, arms and back. The Ninth Marine Regiment Chaplain was also hurt in this attack which continued for about thirty minutes.<sup>27</sup>

The next day, 4 July, the chaplain, Joseph Ryan, went to the Dong Ha Memorial Chapel for his daily 1630 Mass. His clerk, Corporal George A. Pace, had rigged the altar, and made other required preparations while the chaplain heard confessions. He offered the Mass for "Peace in the World" and spoke for a few minutes about the meaning of our Declaration of Independence. Just after the Communion hymn, another artillery shell exploded near the chapel. He later remembered:

My clerk and I were both thrown to the ground. I turned him over in my arms, and he looked at me in amazement. He said, "I am hit", and lapsed into unconsciousness. Our congregation scattered into our area. George was hit right through the heart and was bleeding profusely. I realized that I had to take a chance and go out of the bunker if we were going to save him.<sup>28</sup>

One of the Marines raced out to a nearby jeep ambulance and rushed the chaplain's assistant to D





*Chaplain Fred Zobel, of MCB 5, presents \$180 to Mr. De of the Bo De Kahn School, for four scholarships for the boys on the left. They were donated in memory of EOCN John Gito of Company A, who was killed in an accident at the Hai Van Pass.*

Med. The doctors and corpsmen were still in their bunkers because they were on "red alert." But when the wounded assistant arrived, the needed people immediately came to his assistance and rushed him into surgery. They had him in the operating room from 1710 to 2000. At 2000 he was doing very well. His blood pressure was stabilized, his heart was beating steadily, and all conditions were favorable for recovery. Chaplain Ryan reported later, "It was in the hands of God, and we remained at his bedside imploring God to spare him. About 2100 George stopped breathing and once again the doctors did everything in their power to get his heart beating,

but God had called him home. . . ."29 Death was constant those days in Vietnam, but never common.

During July visible evidences of the effectiveness of the Navy chaplains' combat ministry continued to be shown in many ways. The mother of a wounded Marine wrote a grateful letter to General Walt, who had presented the Purple Heart to her son at the Naval Hospital in Da Nang. So inspired was she by a letter from her son, in which he referred to the ministry of Navy chaplains to him in the heat of combat and in the hospital, that she wrote a poem for publication in the Marine Corps Magazine *Leatherneck*. In the poem which was entitled, "The



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo  
*LtGen Lewis W. Walt, Commanding General, III MAF, congratulates Maj T. J. Brantley, USA, director of the combined III MAF and Da Nang Air Base Choirs, on its performance, Easter Sunday, 1967.*

Invisible Church,” and about which she wrote to General Walt, she expressed her conviction and gratitude that the Church was as really present and as meaningfully active through the ministry of chaplains half a world away in Vietnam, as in her own home community.<sup>30</sup>

Chaplains themselves continued to derive personal satisfaction and spiritual benefit from their respective combat ministries. One chaplain, writing about his ministry in the Khe Sanh sector, stated:

On Friday I suggested to the regimental commander and to the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines C.O. that Chaplain Urbano be left at the collection and clearing location on the airstrip to receive casualties, because that is where the services of a Catholic Priest could best be utilized. So Frank and I served together night and day during the next two weeks, helping the outstanding medical team in every way we could, and providing much needed spiritual aid and comfort. Our joint ministry to these young American dead, dying and wounded was a profoundly moving experience and a deeply personal one. One felt humbly grateful to be ordained and privileged for the opportunity of such service.<sup>31</sup>

During August 1967 much of the combat activity

in which chaplains were intimately involved in Vietnam continued to take place in Quang Tri Province immediately below the demilitarized zone. Reports from chaplains in that northernmost province of I Corps Tactical Zone focused upon their religious ministry during the defense of the key position at Con Thien and during artillery, rocket, and mortar barrages directed toward personnel of the 3d, 9th, and 12th Marines defending it. Noticeable and mounting pressures upon Marine units in the area began in March. Increased infiltration across the DMZ and massive artillery and troop concentrations building behind it gave evidence that an impressive artillery and troop confrontation, reminiscent of conventional battlegrounds of previous wars, was in the making.

The most significant victory for the Marine forces in early 1967 was still the victory at the “First Battle of Khe Sanh.” On 11 May, Companies M and K of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines assaulted Hill 861, with heavy casualties but without achieving their objectives. It was decided that the following day 861 would be hit extremely hard with air strikes and artillery. This was done, and by late afternoon the companies of 2d Battalion, 3d Marines had taken the hill without opposition.

Then came Hills 881 North and South. The enemy had previously prepared extensive and elaborate bunkers, fighting pits, and fortifications on well-chosen terrain locations. These hill positions were ingeniously and mutually supported and covered

*Chaplain Joseph E. Ryan, assisted by his Marine clerk Cpl George A. Pace, conducts Catholic services in the Dong Ha Memorial Chapel in summer 1967.*

Courtesy of Mrs. Edwin Pace





Courtesy of Mrs. Edwin Pace  
*Cpl George A. Pace, clerk of Chaplain Joseph E. Ryan, was fatally wounded at Dong Ha, 4 July 1967. This view depicts one side of a shelter where the two of them stayed during attacks. Pace had constructed a desk for Father Ryan and this one for himself.*

by other hill positions. The taking of Hills 881 North and South was costly in American casualties, but as almost the entire Khe Sanh battle took place within two to four miles of the airstrip, the wounded were quickly brought out by helicopter. Except when the tactical situation was such that the wounded could not be reached, the rapidity with which casualties reached the aid station was remarkable. There is no question that many lives were saved by the speed of helicopter evacuation in coordination with the skill of the medical teams on the airstrip waiting and ready to give emergency treatment. Subsequent evacuation of the wounded to hospitals for immediate surgery, while receiving plasma or whole blood enroute, was accomplished with equal speed and further reduced the number of deaths.

The Khe Sanh victory successfully thwarted NVA attempts to flank Con Thien with offensive positions

*The U. S. Navy and Marine Corps Memorial Chapel at Dong Ha was dedicated to those Marines and Navy corpsmen who lost their lives on Operations Hastings and Prairie.*

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A188248



to the west, and to impose pressures from two sides simultaneously.

During the following months it appeared as if the NVA frontal strategy, even without a firm flanking position to the west, remained unchanged and firm. Pressures on Con Thien increased. It became clear that the enemy was experiencing increasing difficulty with infiltration into the southern provinces of South Vietnam along traditional routes and had mounting logistic problems. Capitalizing upon the invasion-immune sanctuary north of the DMZ and in the Laotian province of Khammouanne, the NVA appeared to be counting upon a direct frontal assault upon Con Thien to produce their hope for significant, if transitory, tactical and propaganda victory.

Ground action in the southern I Corps and in the three other military-administrative zones of South Vietnam remained sporadic, attention being focused upon attacks near population centers well covered by world-wide news media. Chaplains riding Naval Support Activity Saigon circuits in the II, III, and IV Corps areas, reported that their activities with the River Patrol Force, and transportation from each of their scattered units to the others, was extremely hazardous. Occasional firefights were engaged and the danger of treacherous ambush remained constant. It remained clear, however, that the only sector of the war in which North Vietnamese regulars or insurgent Viet Cong guerrillas retained and continued to press a military initiative was along the DMZ.

During June and July action immediately south of the DMZ presented all the characteristics of a conventional frontline confrontation with fortified positions to be defended. Intelligence reports confirmed a continuing massive buildup of NVA forces in the northern half of the DMZ. Artillery, mortar, and rocket fire from within the DMZ increased in intensity in spite of all strikes directed against them, and in spite of a reported 10 rounds of 12th Marines' artillery fire delivered in response to each one received. Frontal assaults by reinforced NVA battalions, evidencing obvious attempts by North Vietnam to invade the southern republic, were systematically repulsed by American Marines.

Later in the year it became evident that increasing attempts were being made to infiltrate entire units of North Vietnamese regulars directly across the DMZ. The result was a curious combination of guerrilla and conventional tactics. Battalion-sized North Vietnamese units moved with stealth among the

dense jungles of Quang Tri Province preparing for an assault upon Con Thien in coordination with the expected frontal attack. To take the initiative away from the invaders, to keep them off balance, and to destroy them if firm contact could be established, Marine battalions in similar manner moved about the countryside.

One chaplain wrote to the Chief of Chaplains:

I just returned with my Battalion from forty days and nights out in the bush around Con Thien. We kept moving around in that general area to dissuade the enemy from attempting to overrun Con Thien. So far they have not been able to, but they have tried and will undoubtedly try again.<sup>33</sup>

Reports of the chaplains' ministry to Navy and Marine Corps personnel during August reflected the general military situation. In the rear at Dong Ha, seven miles to the south, regular worship was conducted as time permitted between sporadic mortar attacks. Chaplains continued to move among personnel of their units pursuing a combat ministry similar to that which they had provided in I CTZ since March 1965. Chaplain coverage of the combined action companies in the hamlets protected by Marine squads continued uninterrupted. From the Con Thien sector a chaplain wrote, "Whenever possible we have field services for our men, and always we go foxhole to foxhole for private or general prayers. Our chapel attendance when we are in a rear area is outstanding. The troops really feel close to God when their lives are at stake. The ministry here is a vital one for all troops, and I am proud to be a small part of it."<sup>34</sup> The mode of chaplain operation was necessarily movement. A Camp Carroll chaplain wrote:

The chaplain was constantly on the move in order to spend time with companies in the outlying areas, to visit the men and to hold services. When the command post itself moved out on operations the chaplain moved with it carrying his pack and prayerbook. It was a common thing for Marines to react with surprise and pleasure to find the chaplains with them sharing the hardships and hazards of the field. I would try to hold weekly services in each platoon while in the field, and found the attendance to be exceptionally high in such small group field services. Much foxhole counselling transpired as companies from Camp Carroll rotated to the field for security duty. Invariably the chaplain travelled as close as possible to the Battalion Aid Station in order to minister to casualties, to give last rites to the dead, and to assist with medical evacuations. Combat was getting less predictable and more costly.<sup>35</sup>

But this combat period was also more costly for the Chaplains Corps.

*"Greater Love Hath No Man..."*

At 0200 on 5 September 1967, this chaplain received an unofficial report that Lieutenant Vincent R. Capodanno, CHC, USN, had been killed in action late Monday, 4 September 1967. Colonel Sam Davis, Regimental Commander of the 5th Marines, confirmed this officially at 0730 this date.<sup>36</sup>

This statement from the division chaplain to the force chaplain concerning Chaplain Capodanno's death was the first to leave his command. The abrupt style resulted from the need to simply communicate information. A man had been killed and his death duly and officially noted. A preliminary report was forwarded up the chain of command. But the fact that the man was a chaplain was of more than passing interest and concern to many, for men of God were not routinely found in the casualty reports of combat actions. No Navy chaplain had as yet been killed in Vietnam.

As the story of this chaplain's last hours of life gradually emerged to fill the outline of spare facts first reported by the division chaplain, it became apparent that Chaplain Vincent Capodanno's actions on that day had been inspired by an inordinate devotion to his men and to God. For his ministry to Marines during a combat situation that ultimately cost him his life, Chaplain Capodanno was awarded the Medal of Honor on 7 January 1969. He was the fourth Navy man to receive the nation's highest honor for valor in the Vietnam war.

Chaplain Capodanno's action on that day symbolized an idea of the ministry to men in combat that transcended the immediacy of personal sacrifices and illuminated a concept of ministry which became unique to Vietnam, the ministry of adaptation that enabled the chaplain to be present as much as possible where needed.

Chaplain Capodanno was born in Richmond County, New York in 1929. He attended the Curtis High School on Staten Island, the Maryknoll Seminary College in Glen Ellyn, Illinois and the Maryknoll Seminaries in Bedford, Massachusetts and in New York City before his ordination in June 1957. Father Capodanno belonged to the Catholic Foreign Mission Society and was dedicated to serving in the Far East. He served as a missionary in Taiwan and in Hong Kong from 1958 until 1965. When the



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A369476  
*A field prayer service is held by Chaplain Vincent R. Capodanno for men of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, in the Muo Douc area of Vietnam.*

Vietnam conflict became a full-scale involvement for United States combat forces early in 1965, Father Capodanno volunteered to serve as a Navy chaplain and requested duty with the Marines in-country. He served with a Marine infantry battalion for 12 months and was thoroughly devoted to this kind of duty and to his men and requested a six-month extension. It was during the fourth month of this extension that he was killed in action in Quang Tin Province.

Chaplain Capodanno was compelled to be with his men according to the dictates of his conscience and an overwhelming desire to serve his "grunts." The priorities of ministry, as interpreted by him, did not allow another course of action. His conviction and dedication to a ministry, practically applied, cost him his life on the afternoon of 4 September 1967, yet both his life and his ministry were fulfilled by serving the Marines he loved. One chaplain confirmed this with a delightful anecdote. Lieutenant Conon J. Meehan (Roman Catholic) wrote:

With the death of Vincent Capodanno fresh in my mind, I am tempted to include a eulogy of him in this report. But it is not necessary because so many others, par-

ticularly the young men who came in contact with him, will eulogize him. A little known fact about Vince was the fact that when he applied for military service as a chaplain, he sought out the Marine Recruiting Office in Hong Kong. He wanted to serve with the Marines in Vietnam. It was not until he got to the west coast of the United States, did he find out that the Marines' chaplain was a Navy chaplain, and that he actually had joined the Navy.<sup>37</sup>

On the day of his death Chaplain Capodanno had been traveling with the command post of Company M, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein), which was moving to join other Marine companies reacting to enemy opposition developing in Operation Swift.<sup>38</sup> Observers' accounts noted that the 1st Platoon of the company had traversed the slope of a hill and had begun ascending an opposite hill when it was halted by sniper fire. At the onset of the action the command post situated itself in a crater slightly behind the crest of the hill, while the 2d Platoon occupied a blocking position across the brow of the hill and then moved forward to assist the 1st Platoon and clear out the snipers. As the two platoons began to advance up the hill, a hail of enemy mortar, machine gun, and heavy weapons fire halted their advance. What had initially been estimated as a small clearing operation evolved into a full-scale attack in an engagement with elements of a North Vietnamese Army force. The advancing Marines radioed to the command post that they were in danger of being overrun and wiped out. At this news Chaplain Capodanno left the command post and hurried to the positions of the 1st and 2d platoons; in the meantime an order was given for the engaged Marines to fall back to form a defensive perimeter on the hill.

Lance Corporal Lovejoy, a radio operator, remembered that he was lying in the dirt, having been forced down by a burst of automatic weapons fire when the chaplain ran down the hill, grabbed a strap of the radio, and helped him to pull it up the hill. Twice they had to hit the dirt as grazing automatic weapons fire traversed the hill in front of them. When they finally made it within the perimeter on top of the hill, Chaplain Capodanno began to minister to the wounded and dying. Lance Corporal Lovejoy reflected afterwards that he would never have made it up the hillside alive if it had not been for the chaplain's assistance.

Later during the firefight Chaplain Capodanno was giving the last rites to a dying Marine when riot control agents were employed to help blunt the

enemy fire. At the beginning of the engagement some of the Marines had dropped their gear, including their gas masks, at the bottom of the hill. The chaplain surrendered his mask to one of the riflemen, casually remarking, "you need this more than I do." and continued despite murderous fire, to assist the wounded.

After caring for about seven men, Chaplain Capodanno maneuvered forward in a crouching run to a position forward on the hill; as he ran, a mortar impacted about 20 meters from him. The explosion seemed to affect his arm for he carried it stiffly thereafter and spatters of blood were observed on his sleeve. But he did not break stride, and continued to the side of Sergeant Peters, who had just fallen. Chaplain Capodanno said the "Our Father" with him just before he died, and then tended to five or six other wounded men in that squad. He continued to move forward and found another Marine lying in a crisscross of fire between two enemy automatic weapons. Sergeant Manfra had already been hit five times and no longer knew where he was. Three other Marines were in a slight depression just off the knoll but because of the crossfire they had been unable to maneuver the wounded sergeant to cover. Chaplain Capodanno managed to reach the dazed man, calm him, and move him into the depression with his companions. As he was tending other wounded another of the Marines cried, "Chaplain, my rifle's jammed!" Chaplain Capodanno then made his way out into the fire again, retrieved the wounded sergeant's rifle, and handed it to the Marine. After bandaging Sergeant Manfra's wounds Father Capodanno departed with the words, "I have to go to others now." Today Sergeant Manfra has completely recovered from those wounds, which, miraculously, were not crippling or permanently disabling.<sup>39</sup>

Below the knoll, outside of the perimeter, Lance Corporal Tanke was holding the thigh artery of Hospital Corpsman Leal, who was in danger of bleeding to death. At this time the North Vietnamese changed their position; Tanke saw an enemy machine gunner set up his weapon about 15 meters away. He fired at the man but his weapon jammed. Tanke ran for cover. He looked to see Chaplain Capodanno, who heard the weapon and could probably see its position, come down from the perimeter, gather Leal into his arms, place his body between Leal and the enemy gunner, and begin to

bandage his thigh. The NVA gunner opened up and it was there, hours after the action, that Father Capodanno's body was recovered.

Chaplain Capodanno's ministry to his men on that day of crisis illuminated the very best attitude toward the chaplain's ministry. His was a ministry of love and personal concern, and his conduct on the field of battle was inspired by his belief that this type of service to man was temporarily and eternally profitable. Commander Carl Auel (Lutheran) clearly articulated the motive behind this attitude: "It might be said that that 'the ministry' has a chief concern with sainthood; it takes seriously the quiet statement that love is greater than either faith or hope and that to serve our Lord is not to serve him at all but others."<sup>40</sup>

Chaplain Capodanno was devoted to his Marines in a way that was extraordinary. Chaplain David J. Casazza noted in his memorial remarks at the dedication of Capodanno Memorial Chapel at the Naval Chaplains School in Newport, R.I., that Father Capodanno always wanted more time with his troops. "He was a hungry man. Hungry to be with his troops. Hungry for more time to seek out the lonely Marine, more time to sit with the scared boy, more time to explain things to the confused platoon leader."<sup>41</sup>

On the day following his death, a letter from Chaplain Capodanno was delivered to the regimental commander. It said, "I am due to go home in late November or early December. I humbly request that I stay over Christmas and New Year's with my men. I am willing to relinquish my thirty days leave. . . ."<sup>42</sup>

All who knew this priest were familiar with the selflessness he made the core of his ministry, a selflessness that was to promote the actions which placed his life in jeopardy. Under critical analysis the reasoning behind this kind of human behavior, behavior that led in Chaplain Capodanno's instance to the giving up of his life, appears complex and not easily understood. But in the case of this sacrifice there also lies simplicity of purpose—Chaplain Capodanno knew where he had to be and why. Lieutenant Commander Eli Takesian (United Presbyterian), who knew Chaplain Capodanno well, had only this brief answer to explain Chaplain Capodanno's actions; it is perhaps the most deeply moving and eloquent tribute to that man of God: "He just wanted to be with the 'grunts'. He was more a Marine than anything else. . . ."<sup>43</sup>

### *I Corps Pacification Efforts*

During the latter months of 1967, Navy chaplains serving U.S. Marine Corps units in South Vietnam's I Corps area observed a number of subtle but significant evolutions occurring in established patterns of pacification.

With regard to the civic action program chaplains confirmed predictions which their predecessors made a year earlier. In September 1966 it appeared inevitable that the more urgent, essential-to-life needs of the beleaguered Vietnamese civilians in I Corps would eventually be identified. Humanitarian projects designed to provide food, clothing, medical aid, elementary education, and care for orphans and the elderly were fully implemented, generously funded by voluntary donations, and capable of multiplication to meet newly identified requirements as they emerged into view. Channels for efficient distribution of Project Handclasp materials were established. It stood to reason that the incidence of new projects would subside to readily manageable proportions and when that degree of project saturation occurred the program, while continuing to be tremendously important, would be considered to be a routine operation.

Coupled with chaplains and S-5 successes in identifying the more urgent civic action requirements, and implementing organizational machinery to handle them, the geographical area to be covered diminished. NVA pressures upon units of the 3d Marine Division near the DMZ had increased steadily during the first eight months of 1967. To meet the quickened pace of combat activity, regiments of the 3d Marine Division consolidated their positions at Con Thien, Gio Linh, Khe Sanh, and Dong Ha while the 1st Marine Division gradually moved northward for reinforcement. A huge new base complex, already under construction by Seabees and Marine Corps engineers at Quang Tri, was to become the enclave's nerve and materiel center. Plans were made to turn the Chu Lai TAOR in southern Quang Tin Province over the U.S. Army units operating from II Corps bases, and while retaining the Marine Corps airstrip there, to move the bulk of Marine forces in the area to the north, to Da Nang and beyond. This gradual northerly movement of forces in effect compressed the geographical area of III Marine Amphibious Force's civic action program and responsibility to that area encompassed within the three northernmost provinces of South Vietnam. The

influx of new Marine Corps units in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Provinces and the faster pace of military activity in Quang Tri Province considerably reduced the civic action load for each individual unit. The end results, as observed by Navy chaplains in South Vietnam's northern panhandle, was a manageable and efficient civic action program somewhat diminished in geographical scope.

During September 1967 Navy Chaplains noted that village relocation, precipitated by the desire to reduce the possibility of civilians being endangered by military activity, produced larger numbers of Vietnamese to be housed in government-sponsored temporary refugee centers. Efforts of the Government of Vietnam to provide the evacuees with the basic essentials for existence appeared to be generally inadequate and civic action program activity in the relocation centers increased with the need.

The most significant and promising evolution in Marine Corps pacification efforts appeared to be taking place in the Corps' Revolutionary Development program. Combined action platoons (CAPs), small detachments of Marines and Navy Hospital Corpsmen assigned to live for extended periods in or near remote villages in I Corps, appeared to be highly successful in relating to the villagers. Their mission included military security of the hamlets, medical treatment and instruction in personal hygiene, humanitarian assistance work projects, and instruction in rudimentary mechanical skills.

Organizational structure of the CAP normally included a carefully selected, mature, and morally responsible noncommissioned officer, from 12 to 20 Marines, a Corpsman and a detachment of South Vietnamese Popular Forces personnel. Americans and Vietnamese lived side by side, each learning from and supporting the other in a joint effort to reduce terrorism by Viet Cong marauders and to encourage the development of individual self-reliance and local leadership among the villagers. One chaplain described the CAPs as a realistic attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people naturally, by assisting with forms of humanitarian aid instead of forcing their allegiance and sympathy by threat of violence as was the case with the Viet Cong. The major role of CAP personnel lay in understanding the cultural patterns and human needs of the people. The program was designed to offset the years of indoctrination and patterns of fear established by the Viet Cong.

CAP personnel in remote hamlets depended heavily for their personal safety and that of the village upon information freely given them by local Vietnamese civilians. "Charlie's" presence in the area was routinely reported, enabling timely precautions to be taken. As vulnerable as CAP personnel were to being overrun and annihilated by hostile assault, through the end of September 1967 few of the nearly 80 detachments had been successfully overrun. Marine successes in occasional firefights were due both to timely intelligence reports and to the integrity and courage of Popular Force personnel fighting by their side.

CAP team skills in establishing cross-cultural communication and interpersonal relations with the PF and civilian Vietnamese counterparts were enhanced by Navy chaplains' periodic visits to the hamlets. As a rule the chaplain attached to the nearest battalion was assigned responsibility for religious coverage of the CAP team. On a weekly basis he visited the remote hamlets to conduct divine worship services and informal discussions on the culture and customs of Vietnam and to acquire first-hand knowledge of civic action materiel requirements of the village.

From his visits emerged an unnumbered succession of requests for mundane assistance, ranging from personal inquiries about mail and pay to general requests for literature, sports equipment, and miscellaneous material for use in humanitarian projects. The chaplain's counselling contacts multiplied and the scope of his religious ministry was significantly enlarged.

The chaplain discovered that CAP religious coverage, which produced small numerical-statistical rewards, was both professionally challenging and spiritually rewarding. Not unlike his work in a larger unit, the key to his personal effectiveness with CAP teams in remote villages was intimate, personal contact with individuals of the detachments. Both Protestant and Catholic chaplains reported increasing numbers of PF and civilian Vietnamese attending their services of worship. They appeared convinced that the spirit of camaraderie, friendship, and mutual trust existing between Americans and Vietnamese in the villages enhanced the inherent curiosity of the indigenous population concerning the American way of life and produced a desire to identify with the friendly and helpful foreigners.

By the end of year the results of the Marine Corps



Revolutionary Development Program were not ready for final evaluation. The crucial test to follow the withdrawal of CAP teams from individual villages would be the strength of residual loyalties and local self-reliance inculcated within the indigenous population. At the end of the year, however, chaplains noted that under the program several villages had progressed so favorably that they were expected to be ready for the crucial test before the end of 1968.

Evaluating reports of chaplains concerning Marine Corps pacification efforts in I Corps, the Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, stated:

The explanation for the phenomenally high morale of our combat troops in Vietnam is related to the fact that for the first time in the history of military combat humanitarian activity is considered to be of equal importance with tactical activity. The one balances the other in competition for the attention, the time and energy of the individual. If any war can be described as emotionally and spiritually healthier than any other war, it occurs to me that the curious balance of constructive and destructive activity in Vietnam had produced a healthier combat environment than existed in previous wars.<sup>44</sup>

#### *Changes and Administration*

On 29 September Captain Robert C. Fenning (Lutheran) arrived to become the 3d Division Chaplain relieving Chaplain Lavin from one of the most eventful and difficult years of his life, but one which as he stated in his final report, he "... wouldn't have missed it for the world."<sup>45</sup>

Chaplain Fenning came to the division job from Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Virginia and was well oriented both toward Marines and the war in Vietnam. Since Chaplain Seiders, the assistant division chaplain, had completed his tour in September and since it was known that a Protestant would become division chaplain, Chaplain Ryan had been brought from Dong Ha to function as assistant to Chaplain Fenning until November when Commander Bernard G. Filmeyer (Roman Catholic) came from the 4th Marines to relieve Chaplain Ryan whose tour was complete. Chaplains Fenning and Ryan immediately began to visit the 3d Division areas and program the chaplain needs of the next months and meet the available Marine commanders. Within a week of his arrival, Chaplain Fenning was hosted by III MAF Chaplain Lyons at the MAF Headquarters and received a comprehensive overview of the entire I Corps deployment of chaplains,

and participated in the planning for the Chief of Chaplains' Christmas visit. Chaplain Fenning served as an important link in this planning since by 1 November Chaplain Lyons was to be relieved by Captain Ralph W. Below (Southern Baptist) as III MAF Chaplain and Chaplain Hershberger, the assistant MAF chaplain, would be relieved by Commander Leon S. Darkowski (Roman Catholic). Chaplain Darkowski had recently been selected for captain and would relieve Chaplain Ferreri as Wing Chaplain, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing by the first of the year. Commander John T. McDonnell (Roman Catholic) would replace Chaplain Darkowski as assistant division chaplain on 1 January and the supervisory chaplain adjustments would be complete.

In the course of the next two weeks the division chaplain made as many trips as he was given opportunity to, in order to visit all the chaplains of the division now scattered, in the words of Chaplain Lavin, "... literally from Da Nang to the DMZ and from the Sea to the Laotian border."<sup>46</sup> Most of these trips were flown in the helicopter belonging to the 3d Division Commanding General, Major General Bruno A. Hochmuth, who, Chaplain Fenning wrote, "... was most accommodating in allowing me to accompany him so that I might be able to meet the chaplains of the Division."<sup>47</sup>

On 14 November Chaplain Fenning sent a memo to General Hochmuth requesting space on his helo for that day in order to attend a chapel dedication ceremony at Camp Carroll. He later wrote to the Force Chaplain, Captain Vincent J. Lonergan (Roman Catholic) at FMFPac in Hawaii:

My helmet and jacket was beside my desk and I was waiting for a staff sergeant to whom I had earlier given the memorandum. When I suddenly realized that the General's chopper was about to take off, I grabbed my gear and ran. But it was too late. The sergeant was standing beside my desk with an apology for having failed to get my memorandum to General Hochmuth. I then got on the helicopter that was to go north to pick up General Metzger at Dong Ha . . . . North of Hue I saw the explosion that brought the General's plane down and we hovered over it for twenty minutes. It was aflame and mostly submerged in a flooded rice paddy. It was a heartbreaking experience.<sup>48</sup>

General Hochmuth died in the crash of his UH-1E helicopter on 14 October, the first Marine general officer casualty of the conflict, and the Chaplain Corps had lost a friend.

Chaplain Fenning, in his message at the general's memorial service in Phu Bai on 16 November said:

General Hochmuth was obsessed with the justice and righteousness of the cause for which he and his forces fought. He would not yield one inch of Con Thien, Cam Lo or Khe Sanh to the enemy, nor could he hear the whimpering of those who would read inhumanity into his actions. He had no time to be concerned with his own public image; but he was gravely concerned about the image of Americans . . . As his Division Chaplain, we spent a considerable amount of time together in the past weeks, much of it aloft . . . He said, "Mary, my wife, said to me on a tape last night, 'I hope you don't spend too much time in helicopters.' She worries." But he implied it could never be otherwise. He had to be with his troops.<sup>49</sup>

General Hochmuth was replaced by Major General Rathvon McC. Tompkins as Commanding General, 3d Marine Division.

A continued pressing administration problem that now surfaced in the division centered on ecclesiastical supplies. When Chaplain Casazza, division chaplain of the 1st Division, arrived in Da Nang, taking over the spaces and area recently vacated by the 3d Division, in October 1966, he had complained:

Wine and hosts were in short supply. Getting over from Okinawa was always a problem. It took a long time to get here and very often when it did arrive it sat around in an open field at Force Logistic Command until someone spotted it and was decent enough to call and tell us about it being there. Much of my Christmas gear was ruined by the rain. Things are just a little better lately but there is room for improvement. A safer and more expeditious manner of shipping gear to us is needed.<sup>50</sup>

The problem was never solved to complete satisfaction, but not because tremendous efforts were lacking in the attempt. A capsuled look into the difficulties encountered by the Regimental Chaplain, 3d Force Service Regiment (FSR) in Okinawa during 1967 provides a framework to the challenges of supply processes for chaplains.

Lieutenant James D. Pfannenstiel (United Methodist) had joined the Chaplain Corps in 1962 and had duty with naval hospitals at Great Lakes, Illinois, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, as well as tours with the Military Sea Transport Service and the USS *LaSalle* before he landed at Okinawa in December 1966.

He was ordered to 3d FSR with the understanding that he was to be the junior of three or four chaplains. Due to Vietnam priorities and an unfortunate series of troubles in chaplain detailing, soon after arrival he was left alone with 3,700 Marines and no chaplain help for 10 months. He was located at an area then called Sukiran, but soon changed to

Camp Foster, named in honor of a World War II Medal of Honor winner.

Trying to be chaplain to 3,700 Marines was enough, but he also quickly discovered that 3d FSR, being primarily a logistic support unit, logically became the source of logistic support for all chaplains in Vietnam who numbered about 100 at the time.

His function became one of supply officer in that he had to procure, stock, and ship all chaplains' supplies needed in Vietnam. It was estimated that this was about a \$50,000 operation. He handled everything from consumables (wine, hosts, rosaries, bulletins, candles, etc.) to hardware like crosses, combat altar kits, and tape recorders, and was successful in getting his commanding officer to spend large amounts of money on typewriters. He also tried to develop a field organ that would not rot and mildew in Vietnam. Problems were multifold. He reported:

About two weeks after arrival, and at Christmas time I was receiving messages from the Division and Wing Chaplains in country that they were dangerously low on wine. It was quickly evident that the supply system was no good for shipping wine to Vietnam. Almost any kind of shipment labeled for a chaplain was broken into by hands along the way in hope of coming upon shipment of wine. My only solution was to get TAD orders and hand carry the wine into Vietnam.<sup>51</sup>

Chaplain Pfannenstiel's salvation in this impossible job came in the form of a young Marine, former pro baseball player and all-state football star, who found himself drafted for two years. He had just arrived on Okinawa about a month before. He was a recent convert to Catholicism and was very conscious of his religious commitment. He asked for a job in the chaplain's office and when the chaplain negotiated his transfer, really took charge. He managed the supply system like a professional. He took initiatives in setting up procedures for ordering and stocking and getting the gear to chaplains. Upon detachment he was put in for the Navy Achievement Medal. Chaplain Pfannenstiel reported, "His name was Corporal Charles M. Veddern. To my knowledge he received the only personal decoration in the Regiment in the year I was on Okinawa. But a lot of people did outstanding round-the-clock work in that unsung Regiment."<sup>52</sup>

Interestingly enough, two months after the chaplain departed Okinawa, 3d FSR had its full compliment of four chaplains. For almost a year the supply line was thin, but it did not snap.

## CHAPTER 10

# Agonizing and Reasoning (January-December 1968)

*Ministry Along the DMZ—The Tet Offensive—The Siege of Khe Sanh—The 27th Marines—The Ministry of Mercy—The 3d Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital—Ministry Grows at the Force Logistic Command—Dealing with Debate*

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As the year 1967 brought itself steadily to a close in Vietnam the situation was in a state of flux. After the hard fighting of the summer and early fall had produced satisfying results, the American command in Saigon looked forward to consolidating its gains and maintaining the security necessary to pursue an even more aggressive pacification program. The optimism with which the year began had not dissipated. Then, in the month of December, massive enemy troop movements forced a cancellation of status quo strategy, and caused a large-scale realignment of American troops. The Marines of the 3d Division were relieved of the task of protecting the approaches to Hue City from the west, and concentrated on the threat of invasion in northernmost Quang Tri province. This section was comprised of the area of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), Khe Sanh, Cam Lo, largely along the Cua Viet River, and along Route 9, which ran mostly east from Dong Ha almost to Laos. This move necessitated relocation north and west. Broadly speaking, the 1st Marine Division filled in behind the 3d Division, both divisions redeploying north from their previous positions. The United States Army and the Korean Blue Dragon Brigade then occupied the area vacated by the 1st Division with the Army's 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and the 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division being ordered to the ICTZ to accomplish the realignment. The Americal Division of the Army was already present in I Corps. By year's end the Marine Corps had 21 battalions of infantry and supporting troops totaling 81,249 serving in Vietnam. One Marine Historian wrote: "Proportionally, no other U.S. Service had anything approaching this investment in the war."<sup>2</sup>

This personal investment of Marines in Vietnam was also reflected by the Chaplain Corps statistics. On the first of January 1968 there were 1,082 Navy Chaplains serving Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine personnel and their families, afloat and ashore, all over the world. That

number of chaplains on duty was the largest since World War II when 2,800 men of the cloth brought the ministry of the American churches to men and women of the sea services. The peak strength of Navy Chaplains who served during the Korean conflict was 921.

At the start of the seventh year of the U.S. Marines presence in Vietnam, 203 chaplains were serving with Marine units worldwide and 110 were serving with Navy and Marine Corps units in Vietnam, and with the large-scale Marine relocation taking place, many of them were on the move. The situation was fluid.

Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, the Chief of Chaplains, encountered this ambivalent situation on his 1967 Christmas visit to Vietnam, his third such trip in as many years. Chaplain Kelly was most courteously received by the Commanding General, III MAF, Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman and his staff, particularly the staff chaplain, Captain Ralph W. Below, and was free to visit all chaplains and areas of his interest in the III MAF TAOR. On 22 December, the chaplain flew in General Cushman's personal helicopter to visit the troops in the field. He literally dropped in successively at Force Logistic Command, Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital, 1st Division Headquarters, 1st Medical Battalion, and the 7th Marine's Hill 55 complex southwest of Da Nang. In succeeding days Chief Kelly met with chaplains and men assigned to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Da Nang and Chu Lai when he also paid a call on Major General Samuel Koster, USA, Commanding General, Americal Division, and dedicated the MAG-13 Chapel. The additional points of contact desired by the Chief of Chaplains included a comprehensive tour of the Northern I Corps from Phu Bai to Dong Ha, A and D Medical Companies, and the hospital ship USS *Repose* (AH 16) off shore. His Christmas message was given aboard the USS *Valley Forge* (LPH 8) to some 700 sailors and Marines. Other Christmas visits

included the USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2), and the USS *Arlington* (AGMR 1).

The substance of the visit of the Chief of Chaplains to the combat zone was not measured only in terms of places visited and courtesies observed; his presence was uniformly accepted with joy. One chaplain remembered:

Chaplain Kelly's charismatic qualities were nowhere more clearly demonstrated than when visiting the wounded in the hospitals, medical companies and battalions, and in collecting stations. He has that unique quality of making each man feel for that moment of encounter that for the Chief, he is the person who supremely matters.<sup>3</sup>

Upon his return it was obvious the Chief of Chaplains had relished his Christmas ministry in Vietnam but also gave evidence of having noted an alteration in the tenor of the way in which the Vietnam question was being approached. Supportive and positive as he had been following his other Christmas visits, on this occasion Chief Kelly saw fit to sound a mildly guarded note in a 10 January press release dealing with protest and dissent. Citing the impact the Marines and sailors had upon him while in Vietnam Admiral Kelly said, "I resolved then and there to issue an appeal for united support for their gallant efforts, to the limits of my influence and as often as the occasion presents itself."<sup>4</sup>

Exhibiting deep pastoral feeling particularly for the fighting Marines, the Chief of Chaplains classified what he perceived as the major classes of persons engaging in dissent: the informed, the uninformed, the misinformed, and the deformed, and concluded: "These . . . attitudes and positions with regard to an involvement in Vietnam . . . have the inalienable right to be held. I only question the judgement and the propriety of their dissent which does detriment to those young Americans who in good faith responded to the requirements of their homeland. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

The Chief of Chaplains was constant in his leadership of the Corps of Navy Chaplains in his conviction that the ministry to the service member and his or her family must include the utmost in loyal support. He sensed the agony that would be called for in giving that support in a climate surrounding the Vietnam conflict that was growing increasingly skeptical at home. The events of 1968 in Vietnam did little to ease that agony. In fact, after almost three full years of large-scale troop commitment, some of the

hardest, most tragic fighting and painful national and personal soul-searching was still ahead for Americans at home and in Vietnam.

### *Ministry Along the DMZ*

The tactical area of responsibility of the 3d Marine Division in February 1968 was Quang Tri Province, bounded on the north by the DMZ, on the south by Thua Thien Province, on the east by the South China Sea, and on the west by Laos. The terrain of the area consisted of a flat, somewhat marshy coastal plain succeeded by a rolling piedmont section. The western half of the province was rugged mountains covered with thick jungle growth and elephant grass. The Cua Viet river intersected the province west to east and emptied into the sea approximately five miles south of the DMZ. It was used as a water-borne logistics route for bringing supplies to Dong Ha combat base, approximately eight miles south of the DMZ. Two main roads were used for overland transport of supplies and personnel: Highway 1, north and south on the eastern side of the province, roughly along the coast, and Highway 9 west from Highway 1, to Laos. This road west provided access to Camp Carroll, Elliott Combat Base (the Rockpile), Vandegrift Combat Base (Stud), and the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB).

The 3d Division Headquarters was split. The tactical headquarters was at Dong Ha Combat Base where the Commanding General, Chief of Staff, G-2, G-3, G-4, and Communications Officers were located. The administrative headquarters was at Quang Tri, five miles south of Dong Ha, where the Assistant Division Commander, G-1, G-5, Division Supply, Staff Judge Advocate, Division Surgeon, Division Dental Officer, Division Chaplain, and Headquarters Battalion were located. Infantry and artillery battalion rear personnel were at both places.

Chaplain Fenning of the 3d Division had 30 Chaplains under his supervision, scattered with units across the province largely along Route 9 and at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The division was soon to be committed to a mobile concept of operations utilizing small support bases strategically placed on mountain peaks in such a pattern that they would be mutually supporting, and would provide artillery cover over the entire area where infantry were operating. These small bases could be quickly closed or opened, in immediate response to the shifting combat situation. Mountain peaks were selected

primarily because they are more easily defended, having smaller perimeters and more difficult ground access, need fewer infantry troops to provide security, and, of course, have the elevation to afford greater effective range to the artillery. But this concept was not able to be implemented from the tactical point of view until after the battles of Tet and the siege of Khe Sanh. This tactical situation posed problems for the 3d Division chaplains which, if they were not exactly new problems, took on new degrees of intensity. From the spiritual point of view the ministry of comfort and reassurance was increasingly necessary and apparent. The major problem with isolated outposts was their vulnerability to rocket, mortar, and artillery attacks. If the enemy could not easily overrun them because of elevation and difficult accessibility, they at least knew where the Marines were and bombarded them both regularly and irregularly. The Marines were forced underground as much as possible and often during this period any movement outside of bunkers and reinforced gun positions was perilous. The potential climate of morale was understandably one of constant anxiety and fear, and a sense of isolation and abandonment was often strong. Lieutenant James H. Rutherford (Southern Baptist) reported it well: "Battle casualties could be Med-Evaced, but there was no relief readily available for concern over worried parents, a new-born child not yet seen, or a wife whose fidelity came to be doubted."<sup>6</sup> The Marines thus sought out their chaplains to ventilate their fears, frustrations, and sufferings. Many times the chaplain could do little or nothing about the situation. The agony was unspoken but the chaplain was there ministering in the same circumstances, and that was often as profound a message as was ever communicated in Vietnam.

Although infantry sweeps in the area of these isolated bases were regularly sent out, it seemed no amount of sweeping could capture or dislodge the shifting NVA forces that infested the DMZ and the area immediately to its south. While serving the outposts and the infantry near the DMZ one chaplain remembered, "Mass gathering for worship was impractical, but small prayer groups, often postured in the prone position, were feasible and supplied much balm to the anguished and hungry of spirit."<sup>7</sup>

In the current concept of operations the helicopter was indispensable not only to the combat effort but also to the solution of the other agonizing problem

chaplains faced: adequate religious coverage of the scattered bases. There was no other means of transporting personnel, equipment, and supplies to and from such inaccessible places. Chaplains attached to field units were dependent upon helicopter transportation to get to their men, and helicopters were always in short supply. Duplication of chaplain coverage had to be minimized and optimum Protestant/Catholic cross-coverage provided. This demanded cooperation and understanding of the highest sort among chaplains. Lieutenant Commander John W. McElroy (Roman Catholic) with the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines early in his tour, said:

My time was dominated covering all the units in the area. Hills 881, 861, 950, Lang Vei and CAP units in the Khe Sanh area left me with very little time on my hands . . . . "Coverage" is the "name of the game" in Vietnam. And it was my experience, as I am sure for so many other chaplains, that the cooperation between chaplains of all faiths has never been closer than here in Vietnam . . . . For their cooperation and companionship I shall be forever grateful."<sup>8</sup>

The problem of proper coverage was an ever-present one diligently worked at and worried over by division chaplain Fenning and his successor, Captain John E. Zoller (United Methodist), who arrived in September. Chaplain Zoller, who had served the Marines twice previously, implemented a unique coverage concept that bore fruit for him the following spring. In his final report he noted:

Each infantry regiment was "wedded" to an artillery battalion; each fire support base's infantry troops provided security for a battery (or more) of artillery. Thus, if each infantry battalion chaplain could be Protestant and each artillery battalion chaplain could be Roman Catholic, an automatic cross-coverage would be achieved as each chaplain made his rounds visiting his men. Then if each infantry regimental chaplain could be Roman Catholic and the artillery regimental chaplain could be Protestant they could provide cross-coverage in situations where the infantry-artillery combination did not exist. This became my goal and was finally accomplished . . . . It worked well.<sup>9</sup>

When Chaplain Zoller spoke about a chaplain "making his rounds visiting his men," he could well have been referring to Lieutenant Commander John F. Seibert (Lutheran) assigned for 10 months to the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines. Chaplain Seibert had experienced the fierce bombardment of Con Thien with his battalion and later continually visited the companies as they were spread all along Route 9 bet-

ween Cam Lo and the Rockpile. He commented in his final report:

My chapel consisted of a running, crawling flak jacket and helmet, with me inside carrying a small Bible. Daily I would try to go from hole-to-hole, Marine-to-Marine for scripture and prayer. In their moment of hell, many Marines would ask their maker, why me? Others would say, God must be dead, or he wouldn't allow this to happen to a snake! But most Marines would join me in praying to God, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.<sup>10</sup>

For the infantry chaplain, coverage also meant training lay leaders of the faith unrepresented by the chaplain. The results were often touching and always significant. Chaplain Seibert recalled:

Once our battalion worshipped in a beautiful but now gutted Catholic church along the DMZ. While the Catholics held a lay rosary service inside, the Protestants guarded all around outside; then the Catholics went outside to guard while I conducted a general Protestant worship inside.<sup>11</sup>

This ecumenical spirit enabled the efforts toward adequate and complete coverage to achieve success. Other coverage was not as convenient but was as comprehensive. Religious coverage of Jewish, Orthodox, Latter Day Saints, Christian Science, and Seventh Day Adventist religious preference had to be arranged, since the 3d Marine Division had no chaplains of these denominations. The Jewish chaplain on the staff of XXIV Corps (Army) visited the 3d Division TAOR and directed the I Corps Jewish Holy Days observances in Da Nang. Divine services for Orthodox personnel were conducted by an Orthodox chaplain (Army) from Phu Bai who visited the Quang Tri-Dong Ha area about twice a month. In addition periodic conferences were held in Da Nang for Christian Science and Seventh Day Adventist personnel.

### *The Tet Offensive*

The celebration of the Tet festival in Vietnam begins on the 29th or 30th day of the 12th lunar month. It is Vietnam's most important holiday. It includes gaiety and serious thought regarding the adequacy of the past and the projections for the future, and concern about the living and the dead. In practice it combines a family reunion, a spring festival, a national holiday, and everybody's birthday. Traditional foods are prepared, new clothes are

sewed, gifts of money are given, especially to children, and good times are planned in every family.

Tet has spiritual significance too. Since the basis of Vietnamese society is the family, including the living and the dead, the essential character of Tet is to lay stress upon that foundation by honoring one's ancestors and parents, receiving respect from one's children, and visiting and giving best wishes to one's relatives and friends. A further look into the nature of Tet can be had by noting a partial list of do's and don'ts published by the U.S. Navy Personal Response office in preparation for Tet 1968:

1. Don't refuse an invitation. Remember that visits are an important part of the Vietnamese Tet celebration. The superstition is that people pay an unusual amount of attention to what happens during the first three days of Tet.
2. Don't give gifts such as: medicines, sharp objects or anything used.
3. Don't engage in arguments, violent emotions or insults.
4. Do not discuss unpleasant things during Tet with the Vietnamese.
5. Do not display grief.
- ...
12. Do give children and unmarried people red envelopes with money placed inside.
13. Do pay taxi drivers double fare.
14. Do send greeting cards.<sup>12</sup>

From this sketch something of the special trauma produced by warfare during Tet can be understood. Perhaps that was why the NVA regularly chose to violate proclaimed truces during Tet in previous years, and determined to launch an all-out effort in February 1968. The enemy's need for a psychological victory was strong. And the effect of the shattering of a joyous and peaceful season of celebration was not lost on the Vietnamese. Chaplains heavily engaged in civic action had worked for weeks to assist their respective villages in Tet preparation, yet after the massive attacks on key villages and large population centers, many chaplains were not able to return to their villages until much later, when reasonable safety could be insured.

The confidence of American-South Vietnamese pacification efforts thus received a significant blow throughout the I Corps as did confidence at home in the United States in the wisdom of continuing the war. It seemed insufficient to point out that the Tet

offensive gained little for the North Vietnamese. By the middle of March the offensive across the DMZ was over; popular support for the invaders had not risen; they controlled no new territory and had lost an enormous number of men. “. . . in the I Corps alone [they] had used up the equivalent of three divisions. And the Marines were still firmly in place.”<sup>13</sup>

The Tet offensive began on 29 January with a mortar and rocket attack on the Marble Mountain Air Facility near Da Nang where MAG-16 was located and out of which it flew helicopters in support of the ground troops. Within the next few days enemy attacks were mounted against such province headquarters as Tam Ky and Quang Ngai. The major efforts of the offensive were directed at Da Nang and Hue City. Both of these were blunted; the enemy suffered over 1,000 casualties in the Da Nang area alone and no positions were ultimately lost.

However, Tet was not explainable only in terms of casualties and positions. One of the battalions singled out for special commendations by the 1st Marine Division Commander, Major General Donn J. Robertson, in his congratulatory message to his division was the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. Lieutenant John Lepore (Roman Catholic) was the battalion chaplain and had been decorated for both exemplary conduct and for personal wounds. His response to a questionnaire sent from the Chief of Chaplains office regarding the morale of the troops since the Tet offensive, while only one chaplain's perception, gives an insight into the effect of Tet beyond casualty figures and positions held. He reported:

I feel morale had worsened since Tet. The VC and NVA are known to be extremely dedicated. Tet merely proved it conclusively. They gave the world, especially in Hue, the image of themselves as modern day freedom-fighters. Life magazine's portrayal of the famed battle for the citadel

*Of Hue's 145,000 residents, 60,000, like the families shown here, became refugees during the 25-day Tet Offensive battle for control of the former Vietnamese capital city.*



assisted this. What morale exists among our troops is purchased at the price of Rest and Recreation, good food, comfortable base camps, movies, expensive weapons and sophisticated air support . . . not one of the above guarantees a dedicated soldier. I fear the will to see this through is just not present.<sup>14</sup>

Such an honest and disturbing appraisal was reflective of growing questions about the length of the war and the way it was being directed in Washington. President Johnson, facing the turmoil over the war and striving to take politics out of the appeals to end the fighting, announced both a bombing halt and his own retirement at the end of his term and further appealed for truce talks.

It is undoubtedly true that the battle of Hue had a significant impact upon attitudes toward the war out of proportion to the military objective itself. Hue City was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war. The enemy tactics were unique. With many enemy troops posing as civilians, they infiltrated the city and once the Tet mortar and rocket attacks began, they evidenced themselves and took control of almost all strategic points. It took the entire month of February to root them out. That was accomplished, however, and by 2 March the fighting was over with the enemy losing more than 1,000 dead.

Chaplains distinguished themselves in their own unique ways, and the memories of Tet includes some of the most exemplary ministry of the war. The reflection of the context and intensity of Hue, 1968, came from a chaplain who had spent the first half of his tour with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines and was due, at the time of Tet, for transfer to a "rear" unit. Lieutenant Commander Bobby W. Myatt (Southern Baptist) wrote:

The prospects for a "rest" period at "A" Med were welcomed. The second night at "A" Med, Phu Bai Combat Base was hit by a barrage of 122mm rockets and 82mm mortars. This was the start of the famous Tet offensive. It was my introduction to mass casualties. The first three weeks of "A" Med the Catholic chaplain and I received approximately four hours sleep out of each 24. We were constantly ministering to the wounded and killed and visiting in the wards.<sup>15</sup>

As the Marines had no garrison or base in Hue City and its control had swept so surprisingly fast into Communist hands, the retaking of the city had to be from outside, often involving house-to-house and street-to-street fighting such as was more common in

World War II. It was a difficult battle. An entrenched enemy is always in the stronger position than the attacker. In addition, the wet weather complicated movement and air cover. Even so the city was totally retaken within a month in large part by elements of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and South Vietnamese troops.

Lieutenant Richard M. Lyons (Roman Catholic) was the first Navy chaplain to move with a Marine unit into Hue after the battle in the city began. Attached to the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, Chaplain Lyons accompanied the command post group which commanded two companies of the battalion. The Commanding General, 1st ARVN Division, requested the assistance of the Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines was given the mission of relieving the pressure on the military advisors compound, and generally to engage the enemy east of the Perfume River. Resistance was heavy as the 1st Battalion fought its way into the city. Although elements of the CP group and one company crossed the Perfume River, they eventually moved back to positions east of the river, the area in which the battalion remained during the operation.

Chaplains Lyons distinguished himself in the heat of the battle by his efforts in evacuating wounded and dead Marines. The area in which he found himself was the scene of heavy fighting, and Chaplain Lyons and other officers and men were in the midst of their attempt to assist in casualty evacuation, when an explosive device, later assumed to be a grenade or an M-79 round, was thrown or launched into the group. Several officers and men were wounded, one of whom, the Battalion Operations Officer (S-3), died the next day. Chaplain Lyons received shrapnel wounds in the thigh and hand and was med-evaced to A Med in Phu Bai. After several weeks he was returned to duty and rejoined his battalion in Hue, just prior to the end of Operation Hue City. Chaplain Lyons was the only chaplain serving the Marines to receive the Silver Star for valor during the Vietnam conflict.

Lieutenant Charles R. Parker (Southern Baptist) was serving with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines at this time when he, too, was wounded. Shortly before the beginning of Operation Hue City, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines had been moved from the Da Nang area of operations to Phu Loc. Set in at the foot of a mountain range, Phu Loc experienced fre-



quent and heavy mortar attacks. During one such attack, debris from an enemy mortar shell struck Chaplain Parker in the head. Although it proved not to be serious, the wound was none the less extremely painful.

Since the combat was so heavy and close and also involved such great amounts of artillery rocket and mortar shellings, chaplains other than those with line units increasingly came under fire also, and that fact was reflected in the rising number of chaplains wounded. By April 1968, 27 chaplains had been wounded, and the total number of chaplains to wear the Purple Heart as a result of Vietnam combat would ultimately rest at 35 as compared to only 15 in the Korean conflict.

There was one chaplain death in connection with Operation Hue City. It was that of Army Major Aloysius P. McGonigal (Roman Catholic), who was serving voluntarily with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, which operated across the Perfumé River in the city proper. As one reporter mentioned, he “. . . really had no business being there. But the infantrymen he loved were being killed before the battlements of Hue’s imperial Citadel and the Rev. Aloysius P. McGonigal wanted to go. . . . He practically fought his way to the battlefield.”<sup>16</sup>

Volume V of the *The History of United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* states:

Chaplain McGonigal was a Roman Catholic Jesuit who held a graduate degree in physics and was working on his Ph.D when he entered the chaplaincy for the second time in 1966. He arrived in Vietnam in October 1967 and was actually assigned to Advisory Team No. 1 MACV, 1st Aviation Brigade. Apparently, however, in thorough harmony with the area coverage approach, he made a habit of wandering throughout the I Corps area to visit the men in the field. He was determined to be with those most in need rather than restricted to one unit. Precisely because of his dedication to that philosophy, he was killed at Hue on 17 February 1968, “with a unit that was not his own in a battle he could have missed.”<sup>17</sup>

The number of chaplains wounded during the first part of 1968 occasioned great concern in the office of the Chief of Chaplains, and the Chief sent a pastoral letter on 5 April pledging his continuing prayers for the combat chaplains, and encouraging them in their ministry. His concern was also indicated in separate communications in which the Chief of Chaplains questioned all chaplains specifically about the wounded chaplains and about post-Tet morale.

Regarding the wounded, one supervisory chaplain alertly responded:

I should like to add a comment about chaplains who were not wounded or killed . . . All chaplains . . . fulfilled their mission and carried out their duties often under heavy fire and in the midst of great personal danger, in an honorable and commendable manner. The fact that the laws of chance were such, that some were wounded and one killed, in no way should lead to the conclusion that they were more exposed. Every chaplain in Hue was for many days in the midst of heavy fighting. Each daily ministered to men in situations in which he was under small arms or mortar attack. And each gave of himself selflessly, along with the combat troops whom they served. Each was, indeed, a “faithful steward.”<sup>18</sup>

The inquiry about the morale of the troops after the Tet offensive reflected the growing disturbance in Washington occasioned by the war and the twists and turns it had taken. Hardly a more accurate and balanced answer to the Chief’s question could have been that of Commander Carl A. Auel (American Lutheran), chaplain on the staff of Commanding General, Task Force X-Ray:

To answer this question one must admit at the outset that the answer is commentary on one’s own “morale.” At best it is a reflection of exposure to relatively few men, when considered against the total force in-country. To speak meaningfully of “morale,” assuming that you might be interested in the “universal” and not the “specific”—that is, interest is in the group and not in my morale—would require a relatively complex socio-psychological study. These exposures were to truly limited numbers of men—and at that, men who were seen in moments of personal crisis. It is my impression, nothing more than that, that Marines in general came away from Hue City with the obvious belief that the people of the city had aided the enemy either actively or passively during what was a major preparatory period. If this is an accurate reflection, the effects of this, if any, are yet to be seen. Beyond this I could only speak to “morale” as observed on the basis of individual contact. “Morale” in that light is as varied as are individuals.<sup>19</sup>

By March, the Tet Offensive was over. Chaplains for years to come would remember it with a shudder. The Communists had captured Hue and held it for 26 days. Upon retaking Hue, Marines found evidence of mass assassinations and nearly a year later construction crews would find mass graves of hundreds of the city’s former citizens who had been ruthlessly destroyed during the brief occupation.

### *The Siege of Khe Sanh*

Khe Sanh had not attracted much attention since battalions fought on Hills 881 and 861 in April of 1967. Throughout December and January the pressure against Khe Sanh began to build again. By the middle of January the three battalions of the 26th Marines plus the regimental headquarters were positioned in defense of Khe Sanh. Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe (Lutheran) was with 1st Battalion, 26th Marines for eight months from July 1967 until February of 1968 and, with his battalion, experienced some of the worst shelling of the war. His memories of the siege are especially sensitive. Writing to a worried father of a Marine, wounded at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in February, he spoke about the quality of the Marines and concluded, "This bravery is something those who have not been to Khe Sanh under fire can perhaps never adequately comprehend or appreciate."<sup>20</sup>

The term "under fire" was certainly appropriate. The men on Hills 881, 861, and 950 literally lived both underground and under fire. The North Vietnamese were able to devastate the topography of the hills and surrounding defensive area with rockets, artillery, and mortar fire which could come in any time of day or night. The NVA weapons were especially hard to root out from their sanctuaries in Laos, and their accuracy was often very good.

Movement during the day required dodging the incoming rockets and shells, and the chaplain on his rounds of the base had to know the location of all the handy mortar pits, trenches, and protective holes so that he'd know where to run if the cry "incoming" was heard. At the height of the shelling on 23 February, 1,307 mortar and artillery rounds landed within the rather small perimeter of the combat base. Under some of the most intensely beleaguered conditions of that war, the chaplain became very close to his men, as the men often did to each other, and the conditions were rarely usual. Chaplain Stubbe wrote:

During the siege, the recon Marines were especially hurt—over 75 percent of the Company became casualties because of the incoming rounds. The Company was sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental headquarters—as well as being near the ammo dump. One night my bunker was so full of casualties that couldn't be evacuated, that I slept atop a 3'x3' field desk, the doctor slept on the deck inside with his feet outside the "door" and five Marines fell asleep sitting up on my rack . . .<sup>21</sup>

Living, as everyone was, under the threat of violent death from the skies, the level of spiritual discussion and activity was deep. Marines sought Baptism and the Eucharist. Chaplain Stubbe baptized a camouflaged Marine just before the siege and was to write touchingly about finding his body at graves registration a few weeks later. Lieutenant William R. Hampton (Lutheran) assigned to the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines baptized a young man after two weeks of daily instruction. Chaplain Hampton remembered, "The service took place to the accompaniment of a continual anthem of incoming rockets, mortars, and artillery strikes which shook the ground on which we stood after striking dangerously close."<sup>22</sup>

The incoming rounds and North Vietnamese attacks on the perimeter of the Marine defense exacted a painful toll. Lieutenant William D. Weaver (Disciples of Christ) attached to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, which guarded the southwest edge of the Khe Sanh defenses, reported that during the siege and shortly thereafter his unit had more than 165 of its men killed in action. This period found the agony of war at its height and called out the best from the unit chaplains. Chaplain Hampton left the base to bring his ministry to Hill 861 which had not seen a chaplain in recent weeks because of its isolation and the heavy bombardment. He had 10 consecutive services. When he finally returned to KSCB his executive officer asked him to go to Hill 881 immediately, but he couldn't because of his exhaustion. He went the next day, for both regular services and memorial service for the dead Marines.

Marines were not the only ones to render the "last full measure." Tragedy struck with blinding swiftness at Khe Sanh, and on 22 February 1968 the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps lost its second chaplain in Vietnam. Lieutenant Robert R. Brett (Roman Catholic) serving the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines was waiting to board a helicopter to return to the battalion headquarters from one of his frequent trips to the outposts. An enemy round landed in the trench in which Chaplain Brett was waiting and he received multiple shrapnel wounds to the chest, head, and arms, instantly killing him.

Lieutenant Commander Hollis H. Bond (Southern Baptist) was sent promptly to the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines as a replacement for Chaplain Brett and amplified the circumstances concerning his death. The 2d Battalion, 26th Marines occupied two

hills near the Khe Sanh Combat Base: Hill 558 and Hill 861-A. Chaplain Brett would alternate visits to these locations, serving not only his personnel but also other personnel present. On 18 February he went to Hill 861-A, where he remained four days. During this time he celebrated Mass almost continuously, both on Hill 861-A and on Hill 861, where personnel from 3d Battalion, 26th Marines were located. The distance between these two positions was perhaps one-half mile.

For three reasons it was not possible to hold any large services at these outposts. First, the outdoor congregating of any significant number of personnel invited enemy mortar or artillery fire. Second, there was no shelter large enough to accommodate more than 10 or a dozen personnel at once. Third, the essential employment of personnel was such that not more than a few could be spared at a time. Thus Chaplain Brett celebrated one Mass after another in the Company Aid Station on Hill 861-A until all who desired to attend Mass had done so. Then, escorted by two fire teams, he hiked up to Hill 861 where he followed the same procedure in the company command post. It was reported that he celebrated up to 10 Masses per day under these circumstances.

On 22 February Chaplain Brett rode a helicopter to Khe Sanh Combat Base where he and his clerk, Lance Corporal Alexander Chin, waited in a covered trench for a helicopter to go to Hill 558, and then return to his battalion headquarters. The trench was covered with a steel plate and two or three layers of sand bags. It was considered safe from mortar rounds, even a direct hit. Therefore, it is believed that the enemy round was armor piercing artillery with a delayed fuse, which penetrated the cover on the trench and exploded within a few feet of Chaplain Brett. Eight people were killed and 15 were wounded from that one round. Chaplain Brett's clerk was also among those killed.<sup>23</sup>

Chaplain Brett had been in Vietnam since September of 1967, and had been in a major combat chaplain role virtually his whole tour. The 32-year-old native of Pennsylvania received both a bachelor of arts and master of arts degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He attended the Marist College Theologate in Washington, D.C., and was ordained in 1962. He belonged to the Society of Mary.

The assignment to 2d Battalion, 26th Marines was

essentially Chaplain Brett's first. Prior to that, he had only attended Chaplain School and a brief training period at Camp Pendleton during the period between 29 June 1967 when he entered the Chaplain Corps as an active duty chaplain and his September arrival in Vietnam.

Although he died in a tragic and undramatic way, Chaplain Brett gave himself selflessly to his ministry, and was not forgotten by his Marines. Shortly after his death, a chapel was built at Camp Carroll. Chaplain Seibert, assigned to the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, explained:

The chapel was made from materials of an old mess hall. It was built by Marines for Marines. We were able to worship in it on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday to standing room only crowds. This chapel was recently dedicated in honor of Chaplain Brett, who was killed in action during the battle for Khe Sanh.<sup>24</sup>

Enlisted Marines assigned to the chaplains at Khe Sanh suffered great loss. In addition to PFC Alexander Chin who was killed along with Father Brett, Chaplain Hampton lost his clerk, and Chaplain Stubbe, without a clerk at the beginning of the battle, had PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer transferred to him, since the man had applied for conscientious objector status. Chaplain Stubbe had him work in the C Med area as a stretcher bearer, the area where both Chaplains Driscoll and Stubbe "lived" at night. Spicer, a mild-mannered and caring person, frequently threw himself over the bodies of casualties during incoming, and during one evacuation of wounded, was fatally wounded himself, dying several days later after having been evacuated. This Marine, although a conscientious objector, was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism.

In time it became obvious to the NVA that they were not going to overrun Khe Sanh Combat Base. C-123 and C-130 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters kept the base supplied and got the wounded out. Air Force and Marine tactical air strikes and B-52 bombing runs pounded the enemy in a ring around the base. One chaplain within the perimeter remarked that the explosion of B-52 ordinance was the sweetest sound he heard during the entire two months. This around-the-clock air support was credited as an enormous factor in breaking the siege. Between late January and the end of March, the B-52's dropped 75,000 tons of bombs and tactical aircraft expended 35,000 tons of bombs and rockets.

Marine artillery fired nearly 1,500 shells a day during the period and the Khe Sanh base and surround-

ding strategic outposts received almost as much NVA firepower. The strain of dodging the incoming rounds, evacuating the wounded, retrieving the helicopter-supply drops, and living underground was bound to tell on the personnel. Chaplain Rutherford reflected:

Can one ever forget the . . . pale bodies and ashen faces of the 26th Marines after the Khe Sanh siege? But there are those who begin to look at the meaning of life or death in a new light. "I've discovered that God wants the man here as well as hereafter," is the way one young sergeant expressed it.

It's ironic that so many leave "churchy" America with her temples and cathedrals, only to make Life's Greatest Discovery beside a paddie or on a bridge or in a bunker half a world away. But there's joy in heaven whenever and wherever it happens. And many find God in Vietnam.<sup>25</sup>

On 1 April, Operation Pegasus was launched which included the opening of land-supply routes and the relief of Khe Sanh, and by 12 April its success was complete. In the months following, additional operations were undertaken to secure the entire area and by late June the strategic value of Khe Sanh was minimal and the base was dismantled and evacuated. Whatever was not taken was blown up and bulldozed into the dusty red clay.

The sacrifices of the Marines at Khe Sanh were not forgotten, however. On Monday, 7 October 1968, Brigadier General Frank E. Garretson, Commanding General, Task Force Hotel, indicated to 3d Division Chaplain Zoller, that he wanted a memorial service at Khe Sanh in approximately 48 hours. This timing was to be shortly after the arrival of 4th Marines troops ending a major sweep operation into the area. This would be the first and probably the only occupation by Marine troops of the historic spot since the base was vacated and destroyed in July. The service would be in memory of 3d Marine Division and ARVN personnel and their supporting units who gave their lives there.

The sweep was being conducted primarily by the 4th Marines and the regimental chaplain, Commander Nilus W. Hubble was in the field with his men. Chaplain Hubble was one of nine chaplains in Vietnam for a second tour of duty. Lieutenant Commander Robert C. Franklin (Roman Catholic) Regimental Chaplain, 9th Marines at the time was another on his second tour. Both of these chaplains had served the same regiments two years earlier.

Chaplain Franklin was at Vandegrift Combat Base

and the assignment was given to him to prepare the requested memorial service. It was decided that the service would be conducted by three chaplains: Division, 4th, and 9th Marines. It would be a relatively small service in an out-of-the-way place, but of immense significance to Marines. Chaplain Zoller remembered the Wednesday morning, 9 October:

. . . I rode with band members in a CH-46 helo. What a beautiful morning: brilliant sunshine, azure blue sky, fleecy clouds, and breathtaking rugged landscape of mountains and valleys. As we approached Khe Sanh we circled. There was a flat plateau, scraped bare and scarred by the ravages of war and departing demolition. The area immediately adjacent in certain directions (of greatest enemy threat) was peppered, literally riddled with pock marks, bomb craters, where ARC Light and other aerial and artillery assault had rained devastation. Now all seemed bleak, deserted, and still.<sup>26</sup>

The units arrived and intermittent suppressive artillery fire began to discourage the enemy from attempting any interruption. Two flag poles were erected at the west end of what was the airstrip. When all was prepared, Chaplains Zoller, Hubble, and Franklin stood between the two flagpoles, just forward of them. To the right was a formation of about 40 Marines in combat jungle utilities and battle gear. To the left was a similar formation of ARVN troops. Ahead stood USMC and ARVN officers, perhaps 30 in number.

General Garretson made a few introductory remarks and traced the history of Khe Sanh. During the chaplains' conducting of the service, all stood as the flags were raised, and appropriate remarks in memorial were made, and taps was played. Chaplain Zoller remembered, "Once again, with surging emotion we all stood at salute as taps sounded. The service took only 15 minutes or so, but it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience."<sup>27</sup>

#### *The 27th Marines*

On the evening of 12 February 1968, Lieutenant Matlin E. Huebschman (United Church of Christ) assigned to the 2d Battalion, 27th Marines was on duty at Camp Pendleton, California when the phone rang. It was the assistant 5th Marine Division chaplain who asked Chaplain Huebschman to come to his office as early as possible the following morning. Approximately 96 hours later he was landing in Da Nang.

Lieutenant Michael P. O'Neil (Roman Catholic)

was assigned to the 3d Battalion, 27th Marines. He had been assigned to the battalion less than six weeks earlier as a chaplain returning from his Vietnam tour. He didn't have to go back, but he did. His explanation:

I was here again because if I had not signed a waiver, the regiment would not have had Roman Catholic coverage, as I was the only priest in the 27th Regiment. Besides, if so many of these 27th Marines could return, so would I.<sup>28</sup>

The Regimental Chaplain, Lieutenant Merrill C. Leonard (Southern Baptist) remembered the time of rapid readiness and departure as one of confusion and intense activity but recalled, "I had the utmost cooperation of the command in carrying out my duties."<sup>29</sup>

The rapid mobilization of the 27th Marines was made necessary by the need for reinforced efforts after the start of the Tet Offensive. When the 2d and 3d Battalions arrived in Vietnam, they were given the coastal section south of Marble Mountain to clear and protect; and assumed sole responsibility for the TAOR within a few days. They were joined by the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines near the end of February. Lieutenant Walter J. Brown (Episcopal) accompanied his battalion in combat operations south of Da Nang until late March at which time the 1st Battalion transferred to the Hue City area and participated in major operations before being released and sent home in September. Chaplain Leonard reported:

The regiment was involved in two major operations: The clearing of the area around Hue City and operation Allen Brooke, from June to August. Both operations were very successful . . . but the Regiment suffered a great number of casualties.<sup>30</sup>

Chaplain O'Neil also commented on the number of casualties, reporting that his battalion saw the fiercest of fighting, suffered the heaviest of casualties, and controlled the most difficult of the TAORs. Although the activity most publicized during the Tet Offensive was in and around Hue City, the comments of Chaplain O'Neil serve to indicate that the level of combat heightened at Tet throughout the country. In fact, because of the level of critical need for Catholic chaplain coverage in the 1st Marine Division, Chaplain McNeil volunteered to remain behind in Vietnam when his battalion was withdrawn although he had served there previously.

He was therefore assigned to the 1st Hospital Company and then to 1st Engineer Battalion until another 12-month tour was up. The remarkable record of this sensitive priest also qualified him to make an observation upon his departure concerning the morale of the troops which was a growing concern throughout the post-Tet period. He wrote:

I believe that I saw a definite drop in morale over these 12 months, and definitely down from my other 17 months in this theater of war; but not necessarily an alarming decrease. It seems to me to be in direct proportion to the men's realization of our civil government's policies and its decisions not to fight to win, but to fight to stay even and/or just not lose to Viet Cong infiltration or NVA open attack. Our military does not run our government, does not set national policies. It has only the bloody task of implementing the decisions of our civilian constitutional government. But when a "no-win policy" is formulated, how in the name of God can you expect individual men of the Armed Forces to feel great or even have decent morale? This policy of insufficient determination is totally alien to the generally accepted American Temperament. Moral Victories on the ball field are acceptable. Moral Victories in a war of suffering and death, however, do not give birth to strong morale.<sup>31</sup>

While Chaplain O'Neil was honest in his assessment of morale, he was also objective, and did not succumb to bitterness or anger which was sometimes expressed by returning veterans, and publicized by the media. On the contrary, Chaplain O'Neil concluded his final report by saying, "I have never felt more alive as a man of God, more necessary, better motivated, nor happier in my whole personal and ministerial life than I have the last 12 months. Thank God for this chance to serve Marines!"<sup>32</sup>

Chaplain O'Neil, at his choice, remained behind when the regiment returned to the states. He was not the only chaplain to do so. Chaplain Huebschman of the 2d Battalion also requested to remain and upon doing so served the 7th Communications Battalion; 1st Battalion, 11th Marines; 4th Battalion, 11th Marines; and 1st Tank Battalion. Most of these units were regarded as being "in the rear with the gear," and after seven months in as severe combat as any chaplain experienced, Chaplain Huebschman was looking forward to his new assignments when the 2d Battalion, 27th Marines left. His comments after the transfer was effected, reveal a common chaplain attitude about most such transfers:

. . . There is a sacrifice involved. The closeness of the personnel in the rear areas is not as evident as among the Marines in the field. I have often felt that men in danger are men much closer to God. In less vulnerable positions, men seem to drift back into complacency and this required some readjustment in my thinking and my ministry.<sup>33</sup>

The 27th Marines returned to Camp Pendleton in September having distinguished itself by a remarkable mount out\* to successful completion of heavy combat requirements. The chaplains of The 27th cherished their contribution to this unique moment in the history of the regiment.

### *The Ministry of Mercy*

In an interview just prior to his retirement on 1 February 1971, General Lewis W. Walt saw fit to single out the ministry of mercy supplied by Marines during their time in Vietnam as one of the finest hopes for the future. As proof he cited:

Medically, the Third Marine Division Memorial Hospital as turned over to the Vietnamese, and the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital, which was sponsored by the Force Logistic Command, continues in its mission under the supervision of trained Vietnamese doctors and nurses.<sup>34</sup>

This reference to hospitals created for and finally given to the Vietnamese people underscores that aspect of the U.S. Military that has always accompanied the movement of troops of the Judeo-Christian heritage, a ministry of mercy. It is not surprising to find large chaplain involvement in the effort.

In December 1965, a small group of Navy medical corpsmen, doctors, and the chaplain from the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines began a project which was concerned with the bitter tears, the sharp grief and pain, and the needs of some Vietnamese children in the Red Beach area just north of Da Nang. Their love and compassion and medical care were dispensed from a small first aid station in Hoa Khanh hamlet.

Treatment was varied at the station. In addition to dealing with common complaints and illnesses such as skin infection, broken bones, worms, malnutrition, colds, and trauma, the staff dealt regularly with cases of cancer, muscular dystrophy, and

plague. More than 100 operations a month were performed at the station to cure a variety of ailments including the prevalent cleft palates.

In 1966, the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines left the Red Beach area and turned over its expanding first aid station in Hoa Khanh hamlet to the Marines and medical personnel of Force Logistic Command (FLC). In March of 1967, Lieutenant Commander Anthony C. Volz (Roman Catholic) reported to Force Logistic Command and the further support of the station was never in doubt after that. There were many chaplains who took interest in the medical facility: notably the chaplains of the nearby Seabee units at Camp Haskins North and South, and chaplains attached to other Marine units in the area, but of them all, Chaplain Volz stands out.

Chaplain Volz, a 16-year veteran of the Chaplain Corps, threw himself immediately into the humanitarian work at Phuoc Thanh Orphanage and what was to become Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital. Although the demand for his ministry was great early in his tour due to the shortage of Catholic chaplains in the 1st Division, toward the end of 1967 he was better able to promote the causes that were close to his heart.

By April 1968, Chaplain Volz had extended his tour in Vietnam to see the hospital along as far as he could. In the 24 April 1968 edition of the newspaper, *The Observer*, published in Saigon by the Office of Information, MACV, he told a reporter: "Right now I am corresponding with 26 groups and dozens of individuals who have sent more than 500 boxes of needed articles to the refugees in the past year."<sup>35</sup> The efforts of Chaplain Volz toward the hospital were prodigious, but the needs of the hospital continued to expand and required even more American involvement.

The growing number of patients was matched by the growing concern of FLC Marines, chaplains, and medical personnel. A larger centralized facility was constructed within the Camp Jay K. Brooks headquarters compound. The wood and tin building was planned to accommodate 70 children but the daily in-patient count frequently reached the 125 mark. An average of 80 children were cared for daily at the out-patient "sick call."

The Vietnamese people initially were reluctant to take their children to the hospital for treatment. The Communists had said that Americans would kill and injure them and they branded the hospital as a

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\*The activities of the preparation of men and materials for shipment to another location.

“slaughterhouse” and its medical staff as “killers of innocent children.” The people rapidly realized that the hospital had been built to dry the tears of their children, and to take their sharp grief and pain from them. They soon overcame their reluctance and fears as word spread of the magnificent concern and seemingly miraculous cures. Since its doors first opened in 1966, until 1970, the hospital treated more than 6,000 in-patients and more than 15,000 out-patients.

It was this kind of acceptance that motivated the desire to provide a more permanent structure with resources to handle even the most critical medical needs. Fund drives raised tens of thousands of dollars. The bulk of the funds was donated by Leathernecks of the 1st Marine Division, Force Logistic Command, and III MAF, all in the Da Nang theater of operations. This was supplemented by the generosity of Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel and of many interested civilians and civic and business organizations.

The parents of one FLC Marine mailed a check for \$1,000 after learning of the hospital plan from their son; a woman’s club in the U.S. donated an air conditioner for the operating room; an elderly, retired school teacher made lightweight clothing for the children; an intermittent positive pressure breathing machine valued at several thousand dollars was donated by the widow of a U.S. Air Force officer killed in Vietnam. Allied servicemen continued to place donations into collection boxes located at base exchanges and transient facilities in the Da Nang area.

With this kind of support, the dream for a permanent structure with modern equipment became a reality. Actual construction was accomplished by Vietnamese craftsmen and workers under the supervision of Navy Seabees and Marine Corps engineers. Construction of the building began in the fall of 1967, and it was completed and dedicated in January 1969.

The main ward of the graceful building, valued at \$350,000, had 120 beds, nearly double the old facilities. The hospital also contained two operating rooms, an isolation room, three emergency rooms, pharmacy, laboratory, kitchen, cafeteria, nursery with incubators, an X-ray room, and a dental treatment room. White tile walls and floors and other features which facilitate cleanliness contributed to a sterile atmosphere and to the health and comfort of patients.

Major General Carl A. Youngdale, Deputy Commanding General of III Marine Amphibious Force, said in his dedicatory address:

I think the name of the hospital tells the story not only symbolically but realistically. It is the Hoa Khanh Children’s Hospital, not the III MAF Children’s Hospital, but the Hoa Khanh Children’s Hospital. . . a Vietnamese hospital for Vietnamese children, symbolic of the ties which our mutual efforts have woven and dedicated to a generation which we hope and pray may grow to maturity in freedom and peace.<sup>36</sup>

Brigadier General James A. Feeley, Jr., Commanding General, Force Logistic Command, in whose camp the hospital was located, commented on the profound effect of the American assistance through the hospital facility:

We see it in terms of young lives saved, of children’s bodies mended which would otherwise be crippled, and of first rate care for a wide variety of ailments. The heart warming appreciation on the part of the children is conveyed in smiles that bridge cultural and ideological differences, of small hands raised in greeting, and in many small gestures of friendship.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of diminished military involvement in Vietnam in the early 70s, there was no lessening of involvement of American servicemen in ministering to the needs of the children at the hospital. At least one delegation of servicemen representing their unit, stopped at the hospital daily with toys, clothing, or food sent in from the United States for distribution to the children.

Doctors and corpsmen from Marine medical units in Vietnam, Seabee battalions, and from U.S. Navy hospital ships volunteered their time and service to assist FLC doctors and eight enlisted Navy hospital corpsmen who made up the voluntary staff of U.S. military personnel.

#### *The 3d Marine Division Memorial Children’s Hospital*

The 3d Marine Division Memorial Children’s Hospital was constructed at Quang Tri Combat Base, Republic of Vietnam. This 68-bed hospital provided medical and surgical treatment for all types of children’s injuries and ailments with emphasis on Vietnamese children who were war casualties.

Pending completion of the hospital at Quang Tri, an interim Children’s Hospital was opened at Dong

Ha on 1 September 1968. Portions of the U.S. Navy D Med Facility were converted to temporary use as a children's hospital. This facility was called the 3rd Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital (Dong Ha Facility). The Commanding Officer, 2d ARVN Regiment co-sponsored the children's hospital. It was planned for 2d ARVN Regiment surgeons, corpsmen, and interpreters to assist at "sick call" for Vietnamese children.

There was no hospital for Vietnamese in northern Quang Tri Province to treat residents and refugees of the Cam Lo and Dong Ha areas. The only Vietnamese civilian hospital in the Province serving 303,000 Vietnamese was the 250-bed Provincial Hospital in Quang Tri City, some 10 miles from Dong Ha and over 18 miles from Cam Lo.

The Vietnamese nurses, aides, and technicians were under the supervision of Nguyen Thi Khang, the head nurse and a refugee from Hanoi who went by the name of Gwen. Gwen had an extensive background in the nursing profession and had been at the Hoa Khanh hospital from its beginning in early 1966.

Concern for the fate of the hospital after American forces left the Republic of Vietnam led to a co-sponsorship arrangement with the World Relief Commission (WRC), the overseas relief arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. It was hoped that through this organization the life, health, and happiness which American Marines, Navy, and other servicemen brought to thousands of Vietnamese children through the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital would continue into the future.

The concept of a children's hospital in the northern I Corps was the idea of Major General Raymond G. Davis, Commanding General, 3d Marine Division. General Davis also believed that the "Other War" could be more easily won in Vietnam with the closer identification of Marines with the Vietnamese people.

Numerous Vietnamese children had suffered severe injuries from the intense fighting in Quang Tri Province. Further, it would be the children of Vietnam who would benefit from U.S. efforts in this country. It thus seemed fitting to construct a children's hospital as a lasting memorial to fallen Marines and sailors, and to the benefit of Vietnam's future.

The children's hospital not only provided medical and surgical care but trained a Vietnamese staff,



*A typical tent chapel on the perimeter at Da Nang.*

which included 14 nurses, to care for Vietnamese children at the temporary hospital and to staff the children's hospital at Quang Tri, when construction was completed.

The children's hospital at Dong Ha was highly successful in providing badly needed medical and surgical care to Vietnamese children during the first month of its operation. In only a short period since the hospital initially opened, from 15 to 20 sick Vietnamese children per day had been given surgical and medical treatment as bed patients. It was anticipated that this number would double or triple as the hospital's capacity was increased. At the hospital's morning sick calls, during the month of September 1968, 1,247 Vietnamese children were treated. The success of the temporary hospital at Dong Ha underscored the urgent, vital need to construct the children's hospital at Quang Tri Combat Base.

By August of 1969, the dream of an adequate facility at Quang Tri was still not realized, although work had begun, but the ministry of mercy was still thriving. Division Chaplain Zoller reported:

In the first year of operation, the (Dong Ha) facility had treated approximately 20,000 children in its outpatient clinic and in-patient hospital. The modern new hospital of 128-bed and auxiliary services is under construction at Quang Tri Combat Base. The Board of Governors is presently working on arrangements for the hospital's continued operation after the division deploys elsewhere in the near future.<sup>38</sup>

The concern for the progress of the ministry of medical mercy in the I Corps increased as it became apparent the Marines were leaving the country. The fear was not warranted. III MAF affected a relation-





*The 12th Marines' Tun Tavern, which was also used as a chapel for religious services on Sunday mornings. The rooftop cross is hinged to drop out of sight on secular occasions.*

ship with the World Relief Commission which continued the work. In a statement referring to the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital written by Mrs. Everett Graffam, staff writer for the Commission, for the use of General Davis, it was stated:

As the Force Logistic Command phased out, the World Relief Commission, a civilian voluntary agency, phased in and took complete responsibility in June 1970. The Commission is acting as a bridge between the militarily-generated hospital and a future civilian facility operated by the Vietnamese themselves.

The 120-bed facility is filled most of the time. Sometimes more than one patient occupied a bed. About 1,400 out-patients per month were also served.

The physical plant is being expanded. Separate buildings store drugs and supplies and house the American staff members.

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Khang, known as "Gwen" to the Marines, is head nurse and the only continuing factor. She took the first sick little orphans from two Navy doctors and brought them back to health in performing functions that only doctors would do in America, such as tracheotomies, set fractures, and even skin grafts.

A Commission citation to the Marines as they left Vietnam stated:

The World Relief Commission wishes to recognize the tough Marines with tender hearts, in their humanitarian concern for the children of Vietnam. This hospital will stand as a living memorial to all our fighting men, especially those Marines who have given their lives. We pledge to continue the fine Marine tradition of loving hospital care, giving the children a chance for health and wholeness in a war situation.

Fighting men are being honored and remembered in a Book of Memory which rests in the lobby of the hospital. Their names are inscribed by monetary gifts of family or friends who support this facility which was so nobly begun.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Ministry Grows at the Force Logistic Command*

The development and growth of a complex such as FLC provides a framework of chaplain services that sounds almost like duty in a garrison situation where the growth was not so rapid and the complications of combat demands not so insistent.



*A native chapel erected in 1965 is dedicated as a memorial to the men of the 4th Marines, 3d Marine Division, who gave their lives in battle in Republic of Vietnam.*

In March 1967, there were two chaplains assigned directly to FLC, Commander Beryl L. Burr (American Baptist) and Lieutenant Fayette P. Grose (Episcopal). Lieutenant Preston Kearsley (Latter Day Saints) was assigned TAD from the 3d Division and was serving at Force Logistic Support Group (FLSG)-A in Phu Bai. Upon being relieved at Red Beach, Chaplain Grose was assigned to FLSG-B at Chu Lai. Two weeks later Lieutenant Commander Anthony C. Volz (Roman Catholic) reported and was assigned to Camp Brooks at Red Beach and served as the assistant command chaplain. In June the command was enlarged and an additional T/O (Table of Organization) for chaplains was requested. The T/O was increased to eight chaplains, and in June Lieutenant Charles G. Smith (Presbyterian) received orders transferring him from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to FLC and was assigned to FLSG-A at Phu Bai. Chaplain Kearsley also received orders transferring him from the 3d Marine Division to FLC and was assigned to the 5th Communications Battalion.

This provided him a greater opportunity to travel throughout I Corps in support of the LDS work and at the same time to serve as a battalion chaplain. By this time the command had increased to 8,000 personnel. In November Lieutenant Commander L. Wayne Rushing (Methodist) reported aboard and was assigned to the Maintenance Battalion in Da Nang. Three weeks later Lieutenant Louis Nichols (Roman Catholic) reported and was assigned to the 3d Military Police Battalion. This assignment included serving as brig chaplain at the III MAF Brig and supplied a much needed coverage in this area. At this time the command had grown to nearly 10,000 personnel, however, overall coverage was good. It must be noted at this point that the cooperation of all chaplains regardless of their commands made complete religious coverage possible. It was this cross-servicing that provided religious services for all men in I Corps.

With the expansion of the command and the growth of the chaplains' department, there developed the necessity of having more chapels. At



Department of Defense (USN) Photo 1120720

*The All Faiths Chapel of Force Logistic Support Group Bravo at Chu Lai, January 1967.*

Camp Brooks, Red Beach, the chapel consisted of a small Southeast Asia hut with a seating capacity of 70 people. It was entirely inadequate and plans were developed for a new permanent chapel to seat approximately three hundred people.

The plans were completed and approved, however, priority construction in a number of areas took precedence and the plans were shelved. To solve the problem another Southeast Asia hut was built onto the front of the existing chapel and the seating was increased to 160.

FLSG-B had a native-style bamboo and thatch chapel. It was condemned as a fire hazard and a new chapel was constructed and provided a welcome addition to the camp. The seating capacity of the chapel was 60. FLSG-A built a new chapel with a seating capacity of 158 people. It was completed in March 1968, and was a beautiful permanent place of worship. Again, the problems of priority building was faced and overcome. The 5th Communications Battalion built a new chapel with a seating capacity of 68 people. This was adequate for the smaller

camp. Offices were in the chapel and it was easily available to all personnel.

A new camp then was constructed at Dong Ha which was then the location of FLSG-B. Lieutenant David A. Mueller (Lutheran) was assigned to this activity, and within two weeks time a new chapel was completed and was fully equipped.

The 3d Military Police Battalion constructed a new chapel and completed it in early March. It was a fine, permanent building with a seating capacity of about 75 people, and was well equipped for all services.

The 7th Bulk Fuel Company and Ammunition Supply Point 1 had a chapel built by the men of the camp. It was literally a small church and a very imposing structure in the camp. The seating capacity was 50 people and quite adequate for a small complex.

The Maintenance Battalion was a good example of cross servicing. The chapel was used by MAG-17 and Maintenance Battalion. It was a good arrangement and an excellent cooperative enterprise. A new office



*The chapel of MAG-16, Marble Mountain Air Facility, Da Nang. Note the New England white steeple erected as an entrance to the tent worship area.*

had been constructed at the battalion and the chaplain could work very well in this inter-command enterprise.

All chaplains, with the exception of the command chaplain, conducted three to six services every Sunday. In the Da Nang area, at its peak, there were ten FLC camp units and all units were covered by the chaplains. In Phu Bai and Dong Ha there were three units each and the chaplains also conducted religious services at various CAP units near their camps. All chaplains continued their religious coverage with weekday services. Bible classes and discussion groups were an integral part of this ministry. The counseling ministry was of extreme importance and every chaplain spent many hours in this particular endeavor.

Civic action activities were also a part of each chaplain's ministry. This program was primarily a command program and was the direct responsibility of the G-5 or S-5 on either the command or bat-

talion level. The chaplains participated in assistance to churches and orphanages. Materials were purchased to build churches, money was presented to support the churches, altar gear was presented to alleviate the poverty of the people—especially in the refugee villages and hamlets. Money was also given to the III MAF Scholarship Fund to provide education to those qualified.

The Personal Response Program was, of course, also a command responsibility but the chaplains assisted whenever called upon. Lectures were presented on the subject of the Religions of Vietnam, Vietnamese culture, and moral leadership. This program hopefully helped the Marines to understand the Vietnamese people and thus treat the people with respect and courtesy.

Chaplain Burr reported:

I am very proud of the dedication and consecration of every chaplain serving in the Force Logistic Command.

*The Marine Task Force X-Ray Chapel at Chu Lai. Note the grass, flowers, and trees planted in front.*

Department of Defense (USN) Photo 1120675





Department of Defense (USN) Photo 1120711

*The stone and wood chapel of Marine Aircraft Group 36 along the shore at Chu Lai.*

They have served faithfully through monsoon rain, cold, and extreme summer heat.

They have huddled in bunkers as mortars and rockets pounded all around them. They have ministered to the wounded and dying. Memorial services have been conducted in every unit and the words of the chaplain have brought hope, courage, and faith to the men he has served.

I have . . . indicated a certain amount of frustration. There seemed to be a lack of time to accomplish all that needed to be done. In such an experience, one must learn patience and move with the elements. Heat, dust, sand, rain, mud, and cold all attempt to defeat and yet through all of this the ministry of God's love moves forward. Although anxious to get home one may say, "It has been good for us to be here."<sup>40</sup>

#### *Dealing with Debate*

Battlefield and political events during 1968 inevitably involved chaplains in discussing and reasoning about the war. As a non-combatant, a chaplain was legally detached from the personal agony of combat judgment and decision-making. But his deep involvement with his men and their basic con-

cerns forced him to struggle with their problems, and assist them in reasoning out a stable viewpoint.

It was not surprising that confusion and concern over the United States' role in Vietnam existed among the servicemen there. The finest political minds of the country were unable to reach a clear, unified statement of purpose and policy. Although newly elected President Richard M. Nixon had promised a draw-down and was to install Henry Cabot Lodge as chief negotiator in Paris at the peace talks, by March of the new year the Defense Department announced the U.S. Forces numbered 541,500, the peak level of all the years of U.S. involvement. Those forces were mostly made up of a generation of young people who appeared more socially conscious, and politically and philosophically concerned than any generation that had preceded them. Certainly one of the challenges of their chaplains was the participation with them in the struggle they perceived as significant.

So acutely did chaplains feel this demand on their ministry that the Chief of Chaplains felt constrained

upon returning from his fourth Christmas visit in December 1968 to respond to the needs of his chaplains by providing leadership in the current concern. As a result, he published a news release entitled "Should we be there?"

The Chief of Chaplains was forcefully aware of the gallant character of the U.S. Marine effort in Vietnam, he knew that by the end of 1968, 8,600 Marines had been killed in Vietnam and 37,000 hospitalized from wounds suffered there. Fully 28,000 Marines had been wounded but did not require hospitalization.

He knew that the 83,000 Marines in Vietnam comprised only 15 percent of the 533,500 U.S. military personnel there but that the Marines suffered 30 percent of the over 29,000 killed, and that 30 percent of the Vietnam Medals of Honor had been won by Marines. He said:

More than at any other time, when I step on Vietnamese soil, I become keenly aware of the war's cost of lives and the continuing drain upon our national resources. But

each trip persuades me even more strongly that the defensive effort in which we are engaged is essential to the survival of Vietnam and the free world and that the burden of our sacrifice, while terrible to consider, is justified by the need at this critical period in the life of the world.<sup>41</sup>

Reasoning that the American ideals of unity and brotherhood place weighty requirements especially upon those in whose capability it was to render help to others, he discussed the necessity for nations and peoples to periodically require assistance in the achievement of their highest potential and the equal necessity to oppose every political philosophy or social system which oppresses or degrades the human spirit.

He concluded:

Regrettably, but necessarily, there are times when aspiration toward the ideals of global unity and brotherhood of earth's peoples requires the employment of restrained and disciplined power as a defense against the unprincipled and undisciplined use of power. It is our prayer that it will not always be so, and no groups pray

*A Marine patient leaves the Medical Company C Memorial Chapel at Da Nang in 1967.*

Department of Defense (USN) Photo 1120682





*Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe gets a hand from a Marine as he climbs the steep slopes of rugged Crow's Nest Hill south of Da Nang for Christmas services, 25 December 1968.*

more frequently for enduring peace than our armed forces and their chaplains.<sup>42</sup>

While such a position did not satisfy everyone, the Chief of Chaplains substantially supported and reflected the views of his chaplains in the field.

The controversy continued over the question of whether the war in Vietnam was morally justified, and it is fair to say the debate was fired by many stateside church leaders. Chaplains often felt themselves placed in an awkward and uncomfortable position by those churches morally opposed to the war since, being in Vietnam itself, chaplains saw both the spiritual needs of the Marines and of the beleaguered South Vietnamese. Many chaplains were asked how they felt about being involved in a war which was considered so questionable by their

contemporaries in the states. One chaplain replied most articulately:

It is true that the war is considered at least morally ambiguous by many churchmen in the states. Both clergy and laity are wrong in thinking that the chaplains serving in Vietnam don't feel the ambiguity about this war. And rightly so; for if they really seek to serve God they must in the words of Thomas a Kempis, "mind and take care of this, that God be with you in everything you do." In other words, they must continually ask the anxious question, which admits ambiguity, "Am I on God's side?" As soon as they stop asking that question and forthrightly affirm, "God is on our side," they are no longer seeking to serve God but are concerned that God serve them.

Should the ambiguity of the war deter an involvement for the sake of the man? No. If I may point to the incarnation which we celebrate at Christmas; notice how God did not let the moral ambiguities of the world deter him entering our world in human flesh for our sakes. For the sake of

the men here, we must be involved as we are. Our absence would be harder to justify than our presence now is.<sup>43</sup>

The year 1968 drew to a close. Chaplains with Marines had experienced heights and depths of feeling, accomplishment, and anticipation even if concrete answers were often no clearer than before. Chaplains had rendered their spiritual service, agonized with Marines over external pain and

reasoned with them over internal anguish, and could move into the next year with the words of the Commandant of the Marine Corps ringing in their ears:

Your record of heroism and self-sacrifice is woven throughout the history of the Navy and Marine Corps and has earned for your distinguished Corps the pride, respect, and gratitude of all with whom you have served. On behalf of all Marines, I offer warm thanks and best wishes to all Navy Chaplains.<sup>44</sup>



## CHAPTER 11

# Sweating and Praying (1969-1972)

*Activity in the Field—Redeployment Begins—Personal Response Continuity—Civic Action and the CAP Ministry—New Concerns in Counseling—Chapel Construction—Reflections*

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The year 1969 was one of contrasts. Although by March the number of American servicemen in Vietnam reached the peak of 545,500, combat levels were relatively low. January marked the lowest combat level since December of 1967 and by November, with the onset of the monsoon, combat had declined to the lowest levels in nearly three years.

Still, for many troops on Operation Taylor Common, Bold Mariner, Dewey Canyon, and Virginia Ridge, the war was very much alive and every bit as menacing as it ever was. Although the 3d Marine Division in Quang Tri Province was spared a high level of combat activities during the first three months of the year, men of the 1st Division were in the field southwest of Da Nang attacking staging areas and securing the areas for the continued progress of pacification. One of the glad signs of such progress in security and pacification was the opening of Liberty Bridge across the Thu Bon River in Quang Nam Province which had been out since October 1967. The bridge, which had been repaired by the Seabees with constant Marine security, completed the roadway linkage of Da Nang and An Hoa, which was becoming an extremely sensitive area once again.

Although with the relatively low level of fighting rather few chaplains were sweating out their ministry in combat roles, circumstances arose in the areas of counseling that often caused more sweat and tears than combat, and challenged chaplains to new heights of contribution to their people. Counseling efforts in the area of race relations, drug abuse, and violence rose to high levels demanded by the circumstances and, in a measure, provided a beginning for programs in these areas that later proved very valuable.

In some ways the period was a hopeful one and the increased success of the Chieu Hoi\* program, the

variations of the civic action team approaches, and the seeming strength of the ARVN structure and in-

*Capt William H. Gibson (front center), Commanding Officer of Company D, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, leads five VC captives taken with their rifles in the valley of An Hoa, southwest of Da Nang on 6 January 1969. Capt Gibson is clearing one of the captured rifles. He later left active duty in the rank of major on 31 December 1969 and entered the Navy as a chaplain on 24 April 1974. He is one of many Navy chaplains who first served in other capacities in the Armed Services.*

Photo courtesy of Chaplain William H. Gibson



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\*A program of amnesty for Viet Cong surrendering to the RVN Government.

volvement all contributed to a spirit of optimism. President Nixon's promise of troop withdrawals seemed entirely consistent with the situation and this brought the anticipation of redeployment to the troops. Redeployment of Marine units did begin in September, and by mid-December nearly 20,000 Marines had been redeployed to Okinawa or the United States.

The fact that the Communists did not muster an all-out offensive during the year, and that even the season of Tet passed by without a serious offensive, seemed to indicate that the fierce fighting of the previous year had proven simply too much for the NVA to sustain. As fire-support bases were closed, positive projections for the immediate and long-range future were in the hearts of many who had endured much to enjoy these hopeful heights.

#### *Activity in the Field*

One of the camps whose closing typified the shift in strategic circumstances was Camp J. J. Carroll in Quang Tri Province. On 28 December 1968, Camp Carroll was disestablished having served its purpose as a combat/artillery base just south of the DMZ for more than two and one half years. It had been named in honor of Captain James J. Carroll, a company commander in the 4th Marines, who was killed by enemy shell fragments while leading his men in battle on "Mutters Ridge" in 1966. For this action he was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously. Camp Carroll was well known to all chaplains who served in the 3d Marine Division during the period of the camp's existence. At the closing ceremony Chaplain Zoller, the 3d Division Chaplain, conducted an appropriate memorial service.

The "Chapel of Hope" of the 3d Marines at Camp Carroll was then dismantled and transported to the District Headquarters at Cam Lo where it was reconstructed in early 1969 under the supervision, first of Lieutenant Commander William E. Beat (United Methodist), Battalion Chaplain, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines and completed under the supervision of Lieutenant Commander Lowell W. Van Tassel (Presbyterian Church in the United States), Battalion Chaplain, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. A Palm Sunday rededication was planned and carried out with the chapel being renamed the Carroll Memorial Chapel, thus perpetuating the memory of both Captain Carroll and Camp Carroll.

The last gift which Captain Carroll gave to his mother, Mrs. Mary Carroll, was a framed copy of the Marine's Prayer. Mrs. Carroll presented this to Camp Carroll where it was hung initially in the Chapel of Hope. Now it was hung in a place of honor in the Carroll Memorial Chapel. Chaplain Van Tassel wrote to Mrs. Carroll informing her of the rededication of the chapel in honor of her son and inviting her to make any comment she might wish to have spoken for her at the ceremony. Chaplain Zoller reported that she replied through her pastor, the Right Reverend Monsignor James J. Walsh. The reply was also read at the ceremony:

In answer to your request to know if she wished to add anything to the dedicating ceremony, let me say she would be most pleased if you would make known to the men the joy they have brought her in the knowledge that the son Jimmy is so well remembered by the men of the Marines. This continued devotion on the part of his buddies has brought her a great deal of consolation, and indeed has elevated the Marines considerably in the estimation of her many friends who have heard of it. She wants the men to know that they are all in her daily prayers, when she begs God to bless them and to return them safely to their homes and families.<sup>1</sup>

Although the tempo of combat had receded for some and some support bases were closed, for others the action merely shifted. The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 3d Marines and the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines had moved southwest of Da Nang and came under the control of the 1st Marine Division's Task Force Yankee in Operation Taylor Common. On 15 January Colonel Michael M. Sparks, Commanding Officer, 3d Marines, a man respected and admired by his chaplains, was killed when his command helicopter was shot down near An Hoa. Also killed with him were Lieutenant Colonel Emil L. Whisman, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines; Sergeant Major Ted E. McClintock, 3d Marines Regimental Sergeant Major; and Lance Corporal Frederick D. Kansik, Colonel Sparks' field radio operator. Memorial services were held at both An Hoa and Dong Ha, the 3d Marines rear base. The service at An Hoa was conducted there despite the booming of nearby artillery and the roar of combat aircraft overhead, because of the measure of respect in which the deceased were held.

In February the pace of combat field activity picked up somewhat. The Dewey Canyon operation on the Laotian border hit the enemy hard in an area that had been a sanctuary for him. The 9th Marines



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A192846

*Chaplain Frederick E. Whitaker, chaplain for the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, holds religious services for men of Company M on a mountainous ridgeline north of the Rockpile. The Marines were participating in a search and clear operation near the DMZ.*

cut his main supply route which ran inside Laos, then back into Vietnam at the northern end of the A Chau Valley, and from there east to Hue and/or south to Da Nang. The fighting was bitter in the rugged mountain and jungle with heavy casualties on both sides. The Marines prevailed, however, and by the 1st of March had broken the back of enemy resistance and captured immense caches of weapons, the largest of the war to that date. The 3d Division Chaplain reported that the chaplains involved in the operation were: Lieutenant Commander David F. Brock (Roman Catholic), Regimental Chaplain, 9th Marines; Lieutenant Commander William E. Bray, Battalion Chaplain, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines; Lieutenant Commander William L. Childers (United Methodist), Battalion Chaplain, 2nd Bat-

talion, 9th Marines; Lieutenant John D. Allen (Episcopal) and Lieutenant Commander Carroll R. Spencer (Church of God, Anderson, Indiana), consecutively Battalion Chaplain, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines; and Lieutenant Salvatore Rubino (Southern Baptist), Battalion Chaplain, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines. Chaplain Zoller said of these men: "These chaplains have humped the mountains with their men, sharing dangers, difficulties and discomforts, providing an enduring source of strength and solace. They are effectively carrying on the traditions of superb service which their predecessor chaplains have established in the 3d Marine Division."<sup>2</sup>

This sharing of sweat and prayer with the infantry Marine was often the prelude to terror. On Monday morning 17 February, before the sun rose, an enemy



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A370080

*Memorial service for casualties of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division on 29 March 1967. As the unit colors are dipped, Marines fire a volley in salute.*

force of unknown strength attacked Fire Support Base Cunningham, regimental command post for the 9th Marines. The first wave of attackers consisted of sappers dressed only in shorts and sandals carrying grenades and satchel charges. They infiltrated the perimeter wire and ran through the compound throwing their explosives. The situation was confused and hectic. Five Marines were killed and 47 wounded. When the melee was over 37 NVA bodies were found inside the perimeter. It was an unforgettable experience for Chaplain Brock. He later told the division chaplain that, during the early moments of the attack, an NVA soldier stuck his head into the tent where he and two others were rising, but fortunately, did not throw a grenade inside. A grenade was thrown into a small bunker a few feet away, killing two men. Chaplain Brock remembered:

The fire fight went until almost 0745 and during this time I stayed with the doctor in the Aid Station in order to administer last rites and to help with the wounded. For two hours, it looked as if the Aid Station would be made a last stand. During this fire fight various thoughts went through my mind, such as: Would we live through this? Will the men be able to hold out? How were the young men on the lines doing? I must admit I was scared but the feeling soon passed because we were too busy. The others were afraid too but not one of them showed his fear. As a matter of fact it warmed one's heart to see just how well these young men did in the face of death. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to be with the men during the fight because of the great spiritual experience and also the feeling of the need by the men for a chaplain to be with them during the time of danger and death.<sup>3</sup>

On Tuesday morning 25 February, about 0400, Fire Support Bases Russell and Neville, two small outposts south of the DMZ, were penetrated by

similar sappers. These NVA assault troops had the explosive satchel charges strapped to their bodies, and attacked in two 200-man waves.<sup>4</sup> When the smoke cleared the defending Marines counted 36 killed and 97 wounded. Fifty-six Communists were known dead, their bodies sprawled inside the perimeter wire. Chaplain Richard Crist of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines had tried the whole day before to get to FSB Russell but was unsuccessful. Now he met the first of his men at C Med Vandegrift Combat Base, where the early Med Evac helicopters stopped briefly, and accompanied them to the hospital chaplains, Lieutenant Commander Melville F. Willard (United Presbyterian) and Lieutenant Lawrence C. McAuliffe (Roman Catholic) who were just keeping up with the flow of casualties. The division chaplain, who was on the scene, reported:

Even so the triage was full most of the time. All six operating rooms were in continuous use and the wards could accommodate no more patients. . . . Graves registration was a grisly place. . . . Some Marines were killed while asleep or in the process of dressing. The ministry to the dead, always sobering, was especially grueling that day.<sup>5</sup>

Although the levels of combat were much lower the first months of 1969 than they were one year earlier, the enemy's return to the insidious sapper attacks and the constant possibility of being overrun at isolated outposts produced a special strain on the combat-involved troops. Chaplains strove to minister to that condition, adapting once again to the shift in combat circumstances. The chaplain had to be greatly mobile and when he arrived at an outpost his ministry had to be more than camaraderie. Appearing often in chaplains' reports of the period

*A 3d Marine Division memorial service at Dong Ha, 4 November 1968. Left to right: Chaplain John V. Boreczky, assistant division chaplain; Chaplain John E. Zoller, division chaplain; Marine color guard; MajGen Raymond G. Davis, division commander.*

Photo courtesy of Chaplain John Zoller



was evidence of the hunger among the men for Holy Communion. "That service," as one chaplain said, "is most meaningful to them because they have a deepened understanding of the term 'sacrifice' and because it communicates, above all, the concern of the Almighty for his creature, man."<sup>6</sup>

The very suddenness and ferocity of these attacks produced a unique strain on the Marines in the field, all the more so because of the general attitude of impending redeployment. Lieutenant Bryant R. Nobles, Jr. (Southern Baptist) was with the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines just prior to its redeployment in September 1969. He had arrived in Vietnam in late August and had been in the field for two weeks, walking, flagging helicopters, and riding jeeps to conduct services at all the companies he could reach. On 17 September the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines was stopped for the night near the Rockpile. He remembered:

Everything seemed to be going well until midnight, 17 September, when my faith in God met its supreme challenge. I was suddenly awakened by the sounds of AK-47 and M-16 rifle fire. I had dug a foxhole the night before, and I proceeded to use it. The next thing I knew, the Commanding Officer and his radio operator had retreated to my foxhole.<sup>7</sup>

For the next five hours the battle raged; 25 Marines were killed and 47 wounded. Chaplain Nobles moved among the men during the critical hours giving first aid, speaking words of encouragement and, in his words, "doing whatever I could while praying without ceasing."<sup>8</sup> By sun-up the enemy withdrew leaving 48 of their dead on the battlefield. Chaplain Nobles was decorated for his conduct that night with the battalion he had served for so short a time. But he recorded that ribbons and medals were not the real rewards of this ministry, the real reward took place the night after the attack. He wrote:

Just before turning in for the night the Commanding Officer requested that I pray with him. After the prayer, he grasped my hand and said, "Chaplain, I can't even remember your name, but I thank God you were with us last night." This reward far exceeded the medal I later received. The rewards are many for the chaplain who will give of himself for the spiritual needs of the men.<sup>9</sup>

### *Redeployment Begins*

In June President Nixon had begun to implement his campaign promise to conduct a slow withdrawal

of troops from Vietnam. This withdrawal policy affected the Marine Corps in an initial redeployment of the 9th Marines, some combat support units, and a part of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. By August more than 8,000 Marines had been redeployed. With the announcement of the second increment of troop withdrawal in September, the 3d and 4th Marines with accompanying support units and a share of the air wing prepared to redeploy. Headquarters, 3d Marine Division and the 4th Marines were to go to Okinawa and the 3d Marines to Camp Pendleton, California. The end of the year found nearly 18,500 more Marines having departed Vietnam.

These deployments necessarily affected chaplain presence in country. By January 1970 the number of chaplains ashore had already decreased from 110 to 92, with the decrease to be even more rapid during the coming year. In early 1970 the Chief of Chaplains, in a communication to the Corps, took note of the fact that just under 700 chaplains had served in Vietnam or off her shores. This comprised 70 percent of the Chaplain Corps strength. From this peak, the redeployments in 1970 left just 33 chaplains serving Marines by January 1971, with the final chaplains leaving country with the last of the Marine infantry units by May of 1971, and those with support units by mid-June of the same year.

The redeployment also affected the pattern of chaplain assignment. As chaplains leaving were not replaced, chaplains whose projected 12-13 months tour was as yet incomplete were shifted rapidly to cover the various remaining units. Lieutenant Bernard J. Grochowski (Roman Catholic) for instance, arrived in late June 1969 and served the 3d Marine Division with the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines (two months), and the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines (two months), and 1st Marine Division with the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines (four months); 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (three months); Headquarters Battalion (four months); and 2d Battalion, 5th Marines again (three months), completing an 18-month tour in January of 1971.

The lack of permanence to any of his assignments did not seem to affect Chaplain Grochowski's attitude toward his ministry with Marines. In his final report, he characterized his experience as a "Service of Joy," and elaborated:

A service of joy in receiving 11 into the church thru baptism. A joy communicated thru some 650 mass celebra-

tions, 10,500 in attendance, 9,900 communing. A joy in transforming hate, disgust, resentment into acceptance, understanding, love. A joy in provoking smiles and laughter thru humorous homilies and "Polish jokes." A joy thru maximum exposure, being where they were, humping with them, eating their "C"-rats, living in their hot and dry, wet and cold phases of weather. Down in the ranks, singing with them, hoping with them, suffering with them, laughing with them, praying with them, loving with them, and serving them.

A joy in sharing their precious moments of living by lending an ear and listening. A coveted joy in being dubbed their chaplain, their sky-six Rep, their 19-er actual . . . a distinct joy in leading the Marine Corps Hymn on Hill 381 in the Que Sons.<sup>10</sup>

The task of juggling unit needs and available chaplains occupied large amounts of the time of the 1st and 3d Division chaplains. Chaplain Zoller with the 3d Division completed his tour in September and was relieved by Captain Robert E. Brengartner (Roman Catholic), who redeployed with the final elements of the 3d Division within the next three months. In the 1st Division Captain Mark Sullivan (Roman Catholic) had relieved Captain James T. McDonnel (Roman Catholic) in January of 1967 and served during this period of extreme fluctuation until relieved in January 1970 by Captain Glen A. Rademacher (Roman Catholic) who also served as the III MAF chaplain in the last months before redeployment was complete.

#### *Personal Response Continuity*

With the relatively lower combat levels in late 1968 and thereafter there was opportunity to pay increased attention to the pacification efforts as focused in civic action programs and the continuing Personal Response Project.

By 1969 Personal Response was performing a distinct educational function, indoctrinating incoming troops efficiently and at relatively low cost, something that early critics of the project thought impossible. Early doubts were swept aside when it was found that large numbers of personnel could be trained at very low cost and in a very short time. The initial problem, how to change the negative consequences of culture shock, had to a great extent been resolved. But Personal Response continued to be a source of both ideological and military problems; chaplains working in close association with the project as well as line officers who were charged with the responsibility of maintaining and supporting the

project, often found themselves at cross purposes. This was largely due to the still highly subjective and idealistic philosophy of Personal Response, and the unfamiliarity of many line officers with such newly explored fields as the behavioral sciences. And to complicate things further many chaplains still suspected that their spiritual ministry was being diluted by involvement in the program they saw as essentially sociological.

Some of the later project officers, as well as chaplains assigned to in-country billets who had contact of a peripheral nature with the project, found great difficulty and frustration in attempting to administer the program. Several reasons existed which explain these difficulties, beginning with the old problem of interservice rivalry. Some chaplains found it difficult to operate within certain Marine commands, because their letter from the Bureau of Naval Personnel outlining their duties occasionally failed to carry weight with Marines. The major stumbling block, however, was the basic lack of structure of Personal Response. Chaplain Stevenson, the fourth chaplain assigned to III MAF as Personal Response Officer, felt constrained by the lack of any succinctly worded command directive which in essence supported his billet. While his frustration was alleviated in this area by the recently published Personal Response section to the Standing Operating Procedures for III MAF, this did not provide him with the solution to many of what he felt were major problems in the administration of Personal Response. Chaplain Stevenson's sensitivities concerning the morality of the program are important in that they reflect concerned opinion within the Chaplain Corps proper, especially since his frustrations were also shared by his successor, Lieutenant Commander Leroy E. Vogel (Lutheran).

Chaplain Stevenson reacted negatively to what he felt was the "non-structure" of Personal Response; he felt that more earnest command support was essential if the program was to accomplish its intended goals. The idealism and very abstract quality in the ideology of Personal Response was, it appears, easily misunderstood by officers who had had no previous contact with such policy, and who were wholly concerned with victory in purely military terms. Therefore many seemed to interpret the program as a form of ideological warfare, an apparatus which could be employed for intelligence-gathering purposes, rather than as a means of effecting a form of

cultural understanding. And in areas where this happened Chaplain Stevenson felt that the chaplain's participation placed him in acute jeopardy:

What is his (the chaplain's) mission, task, function? The non-structured organizational inertia contributes to the program becoming more and more involved with ideological warfare . . . than with human concerns or any form of reconciliation ministry. Commands will interpret Personal Response in relation to their pragmatic needs to exploit tactical situations. This is perfectly legitimate from a military standpoint, but questionable in ministry.<sup>11</sup>

Chaplain Stevenson went on to offer his tentative solution to this conflict in role: "The program meets national needs and military experiences but in order to be truly effective it must go through a process of purification in which chaplains come to play a very minor role . . . in its division of labor."<sup>12</sup> His comments mirrored the feelings of other chaplains as well, many of whom believed that Personal Response was not the proper area of concern for a chaplain to be directing his energies. It could have been, however, that these old criticisms of Personal Response were reactivated when the program was misinterpreted and its goals intentionally distorted by those who used and saw it as a vehicle for intelligence gathering.

When the program was understood in principle and concept and its philosophy accepted, it proved to be generally effective. The 3d Marine Division statistically proved the effectiveness of Personal Response as more and more booby traps were reported by local Vietnamese. Many lives were saved as a result of the rapport that was established with the local people through Personal Response education. And as more and more field commanders began to grasp the possible significance such indoctrination could have in cementing relations between Vietnamese and Americans, frustrations began to subside. Chaplain Vogel reported that by January 1970 the 1st Marine Division requested the assistance of Personal Response in an attempt to curb the high rate of casualties being inflicted by surprise-firing devices, and, in concert with the program, started Operation Save-a-Leg. Personal Response was never intended to serve intelligence gathering; it was legitimately aimed at effecting cooperation and mutual respect for the values of two different cultures. However, the problem exposed by Chaplain Stevenson was never completely eradicated within III MAF, and the recommendation that

chaplains' involvement in the management of Personal Response be reduced and that it be turned into a line function was being considered in Washington.

In November 1970, as, consistent with President Nixon's withdrawal policy, more Marines began to leave Vietnam, new problems in the history of Personal Response opened. Since the elements of III MAF were rapidly leaving I Corps, the program suffered. The chaplains involved were faced with the problem of reconciling the program with a policy of deescalation. The situation was complex and further complicated by the development of negative attitudes by Vietnamese, many of whom resented the American withdrawal. Early in 1971 Commander John T. Beck (Lutheran), who had relieved Chaplain Vogel, reported:

Our personal experiences and other sources seem to indicate that we are experiencing, and can expect to experience, increasing resentment from Vietnamese stemming from several sources. Some of them are: Reduction of employees and attendant hardships. Accumulation of grievances, real and imagined, of the past years. . . . While we retain considerable confidence in the responsibility and judgement of most Marines . . . a "going home soon—who cares?" attitude will certainly be an increasing problem. A second factor is that Marines realize that poor relations with Vietnamese can sometimes be the fault of the Vietnamese.<sup>13</sup>

The attitude that some responsibility belonged to the Vietnamese in the problem area of intercultural relations was not a new realization. Earlier Chaplain Lemieux had written on this subject at the end of his tour:

The third part of this same area of concern is the moral/ethical appeal to conscience which is implied in the Personal Response Program: the sense of "fair play," of "oughtness," appeals not only to our democratic traditions but also to our Judaic/Christian consciences. If the troops are to be instructed in the culture and religions of Vietnam, and if they are to learn that these "values" influence the behavior of the Vietnamese it should then logically follow that one ought not to see that moral/ethical obligations are the exclusive monopoly (responsibility) of Americans. There does not appear to be any parallel appeal to the moral, ethical values of the Vietnamese on behalf of the love and welfare of American troops . . . . Our troops need to know that there is some obligation being presented to the Vietnamese. If the obligation to sacrifice the self for the good of the many is not mutually binding certainly the obligation to "understand" is mutually binding.<sup>14</sup>

This was a problem that was not directly attacked until the latter phase of the war, and never very successfully.



The difficulties of maintaining the Personal Response Project during the days of the standdown were manifold, yet all of them were in some degree resolved. The primary question at this time was what to do with Personal Response once Vietnam was no longer an active American military concern. Where did it go from Southeast Asia? This was one of those questions easy to ask but extremely difficult to solve. For those who had maintained all along that chaplains should not be involved in this area the answer was self-evident—disengage completely and have done with it. But many chaplains believed that positive gains had been made in terms of knowledge acquired regarding foreign cultures and in the more general area of the behavioral sciences as they meaningfully related to the ministry. Some were beginning to see a great future for an expanded program of the same or a similar nature in the field of race relations. In February of 1971, however, the future of the program was unstable; although headway had been made in the attempt to decide who should have staff control of the program, the chaplains or the line, no permanent decisions were made. As early as November 1970 Chaplain Joseph Tubbs (United Methodist) had reported as head of the Chaplain Corps Planning Group and took the position that Personal Response as a line function was making progress, but by February 1971 had not been translated into policy. Chaplain Beck submitted the proposal that Personal Response be continued on Okinawa after the Marine withdrawal, but no billets were provided for this alternative possibility; instead it was decided to abandon the program. In a letter to the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain Beck remarked:

We have a feeling that the Personal Response Program made a unique and outstanding contribution in Vietnam and that the program should stop "smartly," not linger on after its usefulness and its opportunity are gone . . . . You may sense a feeling in this letter that I do not enjoy the prospect of shutting down the program. I do not. I am finding that the last watch must be the most unpleasant watch, because it is the last. But shutting down at this point seems a necessary and inevitable step.<sup>15</sup>

Personal Response was phased out of I Corps as the Marines departed, after having played a controversial but significant role there. Not always completely understood in either intention or aim, it nevertheless affected the attitudes and lives of many individuals. Personal Response did not, however, terminate completely with the Marine withdrawal;

too much had been invested and learned from the program. It would ultimately influence major command decisions in the shaping of the new Navy. It was to have a significant impact on the Navy's thinking with regard to the problem of race relations and human resources programs. It did not cease with the gradually diminishing American presence in Indochina, but perhaps helped mature military thinking and brought it into accord with equally future-oriented social programs which had been developed in the civilian community.

#### *Civic Action and the CAP Ministry*

The efforts to improve the socio-economic life of the people of Vietnam, to forward their political integration, and to achieve the personal security of the Vietnamese through government- and serviceman-sponsored projects were well described as civic action.

The civic action program was especially significant in this, that it enlisted the help and assistance of the Vietnamese people in the rebuilding efforts. It was hoped that such efforts would help immeasurably in unifying a society which had been fragmented by 28 years of fighting and centuries of ideological, religious, ethnic, and class conflict. Relatively little publicity had been given to this intense involvement of the American servicemen in a positive effort to improve the living conditions of the Vietnamese people. General Walt often emphasized the operational concept of two powerful hands, one clenched into a fist for use against the enemy and the hostile guerrillas, the other opened and extended to the Vietnamese people to care for them physically, binding their wounds, and to assist them materially by improving their life-support opportunities.

The relative lack of recognition of the voluminous charitable activities of the American serviceman may have been due, perhaps, to the difficulty of quantifying the results. In combat, one can determine what type of action has taken place, how many patrols have moved out, and how many casualties have been taken and inflicted. It is not easy, however, to catalogue the numbers aided by the multiple programs in use to better the lives of the indigenous people, and the programs were multiple, including Civic Action, Personal Response Program, Military Provincial Hospital Assistance, United States Agency for International Development, Coordinating Organization for Revolutionary Development

Systems, Village Assistance Teams, Combined Action Program, Medical Civic Action Program, and the Chaplains Civic Action Program.

Even at the subsistence level a determined effort was made and with much success. Not only was a "Food For Freedom" program developed but another training program evolved to teach the farmers how to improve their crops and livestock. Because rice is basic to their diet, much attention was given to this item. As a result, a miracle rice, called XR-8, developed in the Philippines, was introduced into Vietnam and soon produced three to eight times the yield of the local rice.

Also introduced were certain vegetables which can be grown the year around and an animal husbandry experiment called "Pig Project." This last project involved breeding American boars with Vietnamese swine, producing a strain of swine three times the size of the Vietnamese swine.

To foster the physical health of the people, medical civic action (MedCAP) was a civic action fixture. Doctors and corpsmen were made available at local aid stations. In addition, MedCAP teams moved out into the hamlet, bringing their knowledge and saving arts. During the last four months of 1969, more than 42,000 people were treated by Med-Cap teams of the 1st Marine Division alone. In the first 11 months of 1969, 1,333,506 persons were given medical and dental care in the I Corps Tactical Zone. It is worth remembering that Marine commitment was in this area alone, and I Corps was but one of five sections of the total United States concern in South Vietnam.

In the field of education, a magnificent story is discoverable. In 1954, only 400,000 children (10 percent of eligibles) attended school in all of Vietnam. By January 1970 thanks to the construction of 14,000 school rooms during the previous five years, there were 3,800,000 children (80 percent of eligibles) in school. In February 1970 in the city of Da Nang, Navy and Marine Corps units were involved in the construction of 80 new schools. Ninety-one new schools were completed there in 1969. In addition, Navy and Marine Corps officers and men conducted 8,382 classes in English during the first 11 months of 1969, the last year of peak Marine presence. Since the summer of 1965, III Marine Amphibious Force units supported 130,456 students and the III MAF Scholarship Fund provided funds for more than 4,500 deserving and needy students to

attend school in I Corps. Another fund, the III MAF High School Scholarship Program created from donations made to chapel funds in 1969, granted full high school tuition for 146 deserving youngsters. Additionally during 1969, 4,947 persons received medical aid training from Navy and Marine Corps personnel.<sup>16</sup>

It is fair to say that American involvement in Vietnam was continuous and complete, and concerned in meeting and filling human needs. The U.S. Marine was a military man, faithful to his responsibilities—and still a man, with a heart that cares, and fortunately with the ability, the compassion, and the strength to alleviate distress.

Chaplains and civic action were closely identified in Vietnam ever since troops first deployed there. Although the chaplain's primary mission was to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of his unit, his compassion for people frequently involved him in the welfare of the Vietnamese people living in his area of operation. He was often a motivating force behind the civic action program sponsored by his command or unit.

Most of the Marine commands in Vietnam had appointed civic action officers; however, the chaplain was normally the contact with the religious institutions in the area: schools, churches, orphanages, and hospitals. As a result of chaplains' interest, many of these institutions were founded, constructed, and supported. The China Beach Orphanage in Da Nang, supervised by Reverend Gordon Smith, a missionary in Vietnam for 41 years, was begun when the first Marine Corps helicopter squadron came to Da Nang with the assistance of Marines, and later, other service units. By 1970 this orphanage accommodated 3,300 orphans with building facilities that included five dormitories, several classrooms, and a beautiful, large chapel. Much help in constructing the chapel came from the Public Works Department of the Naval Support Activity, Da Nang. An important addition to this orphanage, completed during March 1970, was the Bruno Hochmuth Memorial Baby Pavilion. This two-story building, a memorial to the former commanding general of the 3d Marine Division, was financed by International Orphans, Inc.; the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association; and the 11th Region of the Navy League. Captain Eugene S. Swanson (Lutheran), the III MAF Force Chaplain from March 1969 - March 1970, served as the liaison for these groups with the China Beach

Orphanage. He reported that the support of the children had been contributed primarily by chaplains and servicemen in the Da Nang area who consequently provided donations of money, food, and clothing.

Civic action activities by chaplains were not limited to supporting those groups representing their particular faith. Chaplains simply responded to the needs of people wherever that need was evident. An example of this was the Dieu Nhan Buddhist Orphanage of Hoi An. This orphanage, supervised by Buddhist nuns, received considerable support from the chaplains of III MAF. General Walt was, as early as 1966, particularly instrumental in the support of this orphanage. Consequently, he interested International Orphans, Inc., in providing funds for the construction of a two-story building named as a memorial to Marine First Lieutenant John Smithson, who was killed in Vietnam. This orphanage provided day school and/or boarding facilities for 500 orphan children.

One of the most enjoyable aspects for Protestants as well as Catholic Chaplains was working with orphanages operated by the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres. The Catholic sisters who belong to this order exemplified the finest in the Christian tradition of love and care for the downrodden and abandoned children in this nation. The Sacred Heart Orphanage of China Beach cared for 150 children, many of whom were the illegitimate offspring of American servicemen. Were it not for this orphanage, these children of mixed blood would have been abandoned.

Recognizing the worthiness of this kind of Christian charity, chaplains continually provided truckloads of clothing, food, and gifts to help these sisters. Chaplains also encouraged the men in their units to take a personal interest in the children. As a result in 1970, 60 individual Marines from Headquarters Group, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were sponsoring orphans at the Sacred Heart Orphanage of China Beach. Many of these Marines made legal arrangements to adopt the children they sponsored and brought them to the States on their detachment from Vietnam. Chaplains often assisted in this effort.

Education was always a major area of chaplain concern. Because tuition was charged at Vietnamese schools, many children from poor families were deprived of receiving even a limited education.

Chaplains started scholarship funds for all levels of education in Vietnam. The Camp Horn/NSA scholarship program, administered primarily by chaplains, sponsored children for elementary school. The III MAF Scholarship Fund, administered by the Force Chaplain but supported financially by Marine Chapel Funds in I Corps, provided 110 high school scholarships a year. The General Walt Scholarship Fund in which chaplains worked closely with civic action officers provided hundreds of scholarships for both elementary and secondary education. Chaplains also provided scholarships for ministerial candidates to the Nha Trang Bible College. In March 1970, Chaplain Swanson reported to the Chief of Chaplains:

The humanitarian efforts of chaplains in Vietnam are almost too numerous to mention: gifts to refugee children at Christmas and Tet observances, health and comfort kits for ARVN wounded, parties for children, medical supplies for people in the neighboring villes, personal kindnesses to individuals, solicitation of clothing and other supplies from churches and organizations in the States. Although many of these ministries may never be recorded, thousands of Vietnamese people will remember the Christian demonstration of love for one's fellowmen shown by our chaplains in Vietnam. It is impossible to measure the extent to which chaplains have given outstanding example of genuine Personal Response.<sup>17</sup>

Located just outside of the An Hoa Combat Base was a maternity home and orphanage called Ba Loan's House. In the early months of 1970 the need for a new facility became apparent. The regimental chaplain, Commander Richard E. Bareiss (Conservation Baptist) began a plea to collect materials and funds.

Ba Loan was a well trained nurse, who operated a maternity home and orphanage in the village of Phu Da. In addition to these facilities, Ba Loan was also the head nurse in a small dispensary in the same village. These operations were under the loose control of the province of Hoi An. Soon after the Marines established a combat base in An Hoa, Ba Loan received considerable support in the form of clothes, some food, and consistent repairs to her dilapidated building which was in the midst of a crowded refugee area. However, it was always easy to tell which children in the area belonged to Ba Loan. They were always clean, happy, and well fed. As Marines continued to visit and help Ba Loan a real concern for a new facility began as a natural development to the planning stage.

The first step was to put the project under the control of the 5th Marines Civic Response Council, which was created to handle and dispense monies given by the Marines and their families to help the needy in the An Hoa area. Because of the nature of the project, it was decided that the final planning and construction should be under the direction of the regimental chaplain. Funds for building materials were contributed through the 5th Marines Civic Response Council, a gift by 1st Reconnaissance Battalion specifically designated for construction of an orphanage, and the 1st Marine Division Protestant chapel fund. Permission to build was obtained through the local district chief, and land was contributed by the An Hoa industrial complex. Construction began on 12 April when the Seabees at An Hoa bulldozed the area for the foundation. Chaplain Bareiss reported:

Construction actually was accomplished by a smooth working group of Marines and local villagers. The completed building measured 60' by 24' with a 12' extension in the rear for a kitchen, bunker, eating patio, shower and treatment room. Water is piped in from the An Hoa combat base and electric power for lights came from the An Hoa industrial complex. The planning and construction of the home kept uppermost in mind that the facility should continue its operation for many years after the Marines leave Vietnam. I believe that goal has been reached.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the Combined Action Group Program was also growing. In early 1970 two chaplains attached to III MAF Headquarters were assigned full-time duty with Combined Action Groups. Chaplains had ministered to these pacification teams since they were first formed but had not been assigned directly to what was popularly called the CAP ministry.

A CAP was one combined action platoon. A given group of these platoons constituted a CAC, or combined action company. A group of CACs constituted a CAG, that is, a combined action group. In 1970 there were four CAGs operative within I Corps. The northernmost CAG was headquartered in Quang Tri; the southernmost was headquartered in Chu Lai. The efforts of all four CAGs were coordinated by III MAF headquartered in Da Nang. The project *in toto*, from northern to southern I Corps, was designated the Combined Action Program.

A large percentage of Navy Chaplains serving with ground forces in I Corps were either exposed to this program or working within it. Only a war so unlike

other wars could produce this program as a viable and effective aid to U.S. goals.

The basic unit with which the chaplain was concerned was the individual combined action platoon. Such a platoon was comprised of some 10 to 15 U.S. Marines, a Navy Corpsman, and generally 20 to 30 South Vietnamese soldiers called Popular Forces. As an integrated force they fulfilled a function quite unique within the military structure. It was their task to live within the villages of the Vietnamese for the purpose of accomplishing a multifaceted objective. They were there to defend the villagers; instruct them in means of defense; provide them with basic medical care; and inculcate, by precept and example, an understanding of civic cohesion and solidarity. In short, the task of these men was to pacify the village, which meant the elimination of internal enemy activity and the creation of a civic unity sufficient to prevent future enemy instruction, intimidation, and destruction. Their success was remarkable.

For these men the war was quite different. Theirs was not the characteristic regimental compound life nor did they enjoy the Marine's customary identity with a battalion-size unit. As residents within a given "ville" they frequently occupied the villagers' huts and participated fully in their lives.

By day they were surrounded by the normal village routine and regularly involved in civic action and psychological operations. At night they assumed the recognizable identity of combat troops as they disappeared into the fields, woods, and rice paddies which surround the "ville" for the purpose of running patrols or setting ambushes in anticipation of "Charlie." The keys to the strength and success of these units were found not only in the mobility and agility but also in their proximity to, and identification with the basic hamlet unit. Denied domination of the hamlets, the enemy could not achieve his goal.

The prevailing attitude of the village populace toward their Marine guests was, with rare exception, one of deep appreciation, esteem, and frequently familial concern. Lieutenant Frank C. Cleveland (Episcopal) worked closely with combined action platoons during 1969 and 1970, while assigned to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Captain Ross Trower (Lutheran), Wing Chaplain, urging his chaplains to comprehensive CAP activity, requested that Cleveland record his experiences. He reported:

In the course of the year I spent with the units of 1st CAG, I had occasion to visit many villes within Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces which constituted the CAG AO [Area of Operations]. With amazing consistency the children and some adults would greet me with the "official" chant: "Marine's numbah one!"

I never ceased to be surprised and, indeed, heartened by the reception accorded the CAP units as they moved from ville to ville. It is even more surprising when one sees the circumstances under which it occurred. The villes are large and the native hootches incredibly small by American standards. Thus, the advent of ten or twelve Marines and their Corpsman with full field packs, weapons, ammunition, rations, assorted tape recorders, radios, and various other gear is no small occurrence. Moving at night they will enter a ville after the villagers have bedded down. Yet mama-san (the lady of the house) will arise and see that space is available for her unexpected guests. No inconvenience seems too much. With the coming of morning it is not uncommon to find her drawing and heating water for shaving or to make coffee or tea. There is a consistent willingness on the part of the Vietnamese to share their food with the Marines and festive occasions will find them always invited. It should be noted, also, that this sharing is reciprocal.<sup>19</sup>

The chaplain's role in the CAP program was one easily defined but also challenging, frustrating, and rewarding to fulfill. It was to provide the men with the spiritual and moral guidance, counsel, and support they needed to function effectively in a very anxious and highly-charged situation. This ministry, shaped as it was by the total program, tested the chaplain's initiative and ingenuity. On a much more serious level, it also tested his love of God as he understood its claim upon his life.

The Combined Action Program was initiated in Vietnam almost as soon as Marines arrived. Until 1970 all chaplain efforts and energies expended in this area were purely voluntary. They existed beyond a chaplain's unit duty assignment. Chaplains who had devoted time to this ministry did so only on the basis of a tacit understanding between themselves and those in charge of the program in their area.

A crucially important factor in ministering to the CAP units was coordination. The commitments, operations, and general lifestyle of these units precluded spontaneous, spur-of-the-moment trips out to them. This was true both because of the physical mobility of the units necessitated by the ever-changing face of the war and by the relative inaccessibility of the positions requiring helicopter transportation, and the planning that goes with it. Chaplain Cleveland reiterated:

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough how essential coordination is. The coordinating Chaplain will have in his file a continuing record of each unit, the dates it was visited, and a notation as to the visiting chaplain's affiliation, be he Roman Catholic or Protestant. This will make it possible for him to implement balanced coverage. There is nothing more destructive to a good, unified CAP ministry than a hit and miss approach with results in duplication of effort and/or neglect through poor communication, or sporadic attention to detail.<sup>20</sup>

The Combined Action Program was revolutionary. The one fledging platoon of 1966 matured into a substantial and easily recognizable structure. A variety of factors would indicate that the chaplain played an important role within this structure. He was a very real member of the team. A chaplain who received the opportunity to serve on this team found very quickly that his efforts were welcome and his position well regarded. CAG officers and NCOs appreciated the chaplain's dual function as listening post/confessor and liaison man. The individual trooper regarded the chaplain as one with whom openness of communication was possible and consequently felt free to discuss problem areas with him. In situations involving non-confidential communication, the chaplain was able frequently to bring these matters to command attention for remedial action. Lieutenant Dewey V. Page (Southern Baptist) was the chaplain of the 3d CAG. He remembered:

My "feed back" session was projected and achieved particular value. No problem, large or small, individual or collective, was too unimportant for personalized attention. Often the men needed a "Big Ear" to talk into and a sounding board against which to bounce their anxieties. "Hearing a man out," or group of men, served as a tremendous release value for frustrations, provided a therapeutic aid toward objectivity and adjustment, relieved tension, pointed up problem areas, built troop morale, stimulated renewed determination for success, and provided a valuable avenue to the Chaplain for assisting those in the Command Position. For example, one day the Chaplain was strangely requested to visit a particular CAP. Upon arrival it was found that the men were deeply angry at everything in general. Of course the men had their pet scape-goats, however after about one hour of "feed back," when pent-up hostility was ventilated, a level of objectivity was reached which resulted in understanding, appreciation, readjustment and the renewed personal application of the platoon members to their military mission. In short the men were tired, under physical and emotional strain, felt overburdened with "Mickey Mouse" demands, convinced that their CACO Commander considered their CAP "Number 10" and therefore, the men had gotten "hung-up" on their emotional mis-interpretations.<sup>21</sup>

The chaplain made known to the command that he was available as a referral person. When also a Marine requested to go to the rear to see the chaplain, or was sent there for this purpose, headquarters personnel must know that there would be a chaplain ready to serve this purpose.

Finally, the chaplain's responsibility or, in larger areas the coordinator's responsibility, was to see that the command was aware of the chaplain's activities. This involved far more than an end-of-the-month report. Prior to a CAP run the command was advised that such a run was to be made and was provided with a list of the individual units, in order, which would be visited. The chaplains constantly reminded themselves that the CAP units were integrally involved in and surrounded by a very real war. The units were located in areas in which a great deal could develop very quickly. For them anything could happen and usually did. It was imperative therefore that those in positions of command be aware of the personnel for whom they were responsible and their location at any given time. This constant movement necessitated a unique worship ministry. Chaplain Page reported his practice:

A consistent program of Divine Worship was set up for all 3d CAG personnel. This involved approximately 3 Worship Services per month in the field for each individual CAP unit. These services were spread out over a radius of 80 square miles and were held wherever the CAP was settled in its day position. As a result, Worship was conducted on the trails, in the cemeteries, by the rivers, in the banana groves, inside the homes of Vietnamese, in the villagers' front or back yards, in the barnyards, on the edge of rice paddies, in Catholic churches, next to Buddhist temples, and in almost every other conceivable place.<sup>22</sup>

Obviously, the chaplain's attitude on his visits had to be one of openness and receptivity. He had to constantly remind himself that coming, as he did, from rear areas for brief visits he was one who did not share the day-in and day-out anxieties, problems, hardships, and frustrations of the men he desired to minister to. In a word, the chaplain had to realize that he was reaching out to men who constantly live with some of life's hardest realities. In the final analysis, these men may easily forget the substance of the religious services the chaplain conducted. But they didn't forget that the chaplain "was there."

The rapid turn-over of CAP personnel required that the chaplain continuously extend his invitation and reaffirm his availability. As he bounced from

unit to unit the chaplain often felt that he was the eternal stranger. However, after some time and a substantial number of CAP visits he found himself greeted by familiar faces and welcoming words of recognition. The close interaction and interdependence of the platoons within a given company worked in the chaplain's favor. In a unit of CAG size the "word got around." When this occurred the chaplain discovered as he made his appointed rounds, that his appearance was no longer an unexpected surprise but an anticipated event on which the men could regularly depend. Chaplain Cleveland noted:

It is impossible to overstate the crucially important role which the chaplain plays in the CAP Marine's life. By definition the chaplain is a person within the military system who is distinctly different. He is unique. He is an officer who need not be regarded with suspicion. Unless he himself subsequently proves otherwise he is defined from the outset as a good guy. If the squad members are enabled to feel that here is one who accepts without censure, understands without question, and gives of himself without thought of reward, a strengthening relationship is born. The men see him as an officer with whom they can be themselves. The chaplain may very well be the only individual they will encounter in the course of their tour to whom they can express the questions, doubts, frustrations, and fears that they so often religiously conceal from each other behind an excessive front of fearless bravado.<sup>23</sup>

The CAP ministry was a unique one as well it should be for the Combined Action Program was itself unique. History may yet prove that of all approaches attempted in the war the approach symbolized in the Combined Action Program was the most effective, long-reaching, enduring, and viable. Before the terms "pacification" and "Vietnamization" were in vogue, CAP Marines were demonstrating what those terms tried to communicate. Ever since the program's inception, and with ever-increasing impact, this fact had been amply demonstrated.

The chaplain found that there were substantive differences between this ministry and others he had known. In an age bent on discovering itself the chaplain was often invited to contribute. The chaplain often discovered that from his life within small groups of CAP Marines he realized the deep truth and purpose of his ministry.

The situation in which he found himself and the circumstances under which he lived may have encouraged the CAP Marine to feel that he was forgot-

ten. By his concern, dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance, the chaplain who served his CAP units was remarkably appreciated, and if he willfully neglected this role, was remiss indeed. The Combined Action Program made the invitation even more pressing. There was but one appropriate response—serious involvement. Chaplain Cleveland concluded:

It is abundantly clear to me that in and through the lives of many CAP Marines sincerely intent on accomplishing a difficult task in a battle-scarred and war-weary land, I have been granted a new understanding of life's mystery and wonder and a deeper insight into the nature of the Kingdom of God.<sup>24</sup>

By the beginning of September 1970 the 1st CAG in Quang Tin Province, 2d CAG in Quang Ngai Province, and 3d CAG in Thua Thien Province had been disestablished. Earlier in July the 4th CAG at Quang Tri had been closed down, and near the end of September the Combined Action Force Headquarters in Quang Nam Province was dissolved. The program was ended but only long historical perspectives will measure its effect.

#### *New Concerns in Counseling*

During this period of gradual reduction of forces in Vietnam, specific problems came to light that did not begin just then nor did they begin in Vietnam, but concern about them was more obvious as combat activity lessened and men had greater opportunity to indulge themselves. These problems included drug usage, racial conflict, and irresponsible violence. The unhappy consequences of these disruptive circumstances wherever they occurred involved chaplains in some of the most challenging counseling circumstances they had ever encountered. Such problems that held the potential for destructive results across the whole nation and throughout one entire generation, also possessed the capability of drastically reducing the combat effectiveness of military units. Thus these moral concerns were in high visibility, and at almost every level chaplains were sought for their expertise in analysis and counseling.

To meet the crisis of these concerns, programs were brought into being to educate and provide a vehicle for getting at the root of the problems. The incidence of the use of marijuana by the 3d Marine Division personnel led to the formation of the Division Drug Abuse Committee. The ready availability

and inexpensive cost of marijuana in Quang Tri Province presented a serious problem. Division Chaplain Zoller wrote, "while the percentage of personnel who were habitual users was small, any incidence of use in a combat environment is serious. Furthermore, the ready availability of cheap marijuana was like an open invitation to the curious, uninformed Marine who was 'tempted to try it.'"<sup>25</sup>

A Division Drug Abuse Presentation Panel was formed composed of a medical officer, a legal officer, a chaplain, and a representative of the Provost Marshal. The respective unit commanding officer would request the presence of this team and it would travel to the unit and make its presentation. Simultaneously, pressure was brought to bear on Vietnamese authorities to reduce the availability of local marijuana with considerable success. As a result of these actions in September 1969 Chaplain Zoller reported, "The seriousness of this problem has significantly subsided."<sup>26</sup>

Significantly, great amounts of time were devoted by chaplains to learning the social and psychological elements surrounding drug abuse and lecturing to the servicemen regarding their responsible action. Questions of a double standard continually arose regarding the alcohol abuse, largely by older non-commissioned officers, and the drugs used largely by the younger Marine. Commands and chaplains moved to eliminate the criticism by including alcohol abuse in their contribution to the overall plan of education and counseling. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing chaplains seemed to embrace this avenue of ministry with a great particular will. Perhaps the presence of relatively greater numbers of men in rear areas with the wings made this more convenient than it was in the bush with the infantry Marines. Those Marines reporting principally to rear areas also had increased opportunities to carry the drug usage practices they had adopted as stateside young adults. As a result of the peacetime practice of one-year overseas tours of duty, Marines did not remain in Vietnam for "the duration," but thousands of young men had to be drafted or enlisted and funneled to the conflict zone. They of necessity took their habits with them. Drug usage was reported as extensive among some segments of society since 1964, and some critics feel that in 1969 the peak of the drug culture as an ideology was symbolized stateside in a massive rock music festival called "Woodstock" after the town in the northeastern United States where it

was held. Drugs were openly and widely used at this event, but with a murder at an Altamont, California rock festival in December 1969 and the overdosed death of a prominent rock singer in September 1970, the popularity of open drug usage appeared to have died, and drugs again went underground to be used largely as escape. These years were turbulent in America and the problematic attitudes flowed over into the military.

An articulate observer and reporter, Lieutenant Peter J. Cary (Roman Catholic), attached to MAG-13 from October 1969 to October 1970 represented scores of chaplains who participated in the initiation of stabilizing programs designed to check the rise of drug abuse. He remembered:

Drugs and drinks were means chosen by some to escape the loneliness and boredom of off-duty hours. Drugs were readily available, according to hearsay, some of which are exotic varieties not commonly found in the states. I participated in the drug lectures given to those who reported to the group. How many of the men experimented and how many used drugs regularly is difficult to assess. Approachability, availability, and privileged communication were the means I used to try to reach those who were using drugs. I am sure I reached only a small number of those involved.<sup>27</sup>

Another circumstance that demanded the utmost in counseling and leadership skills was racial unrest. In most commands, incidents and situations of the presence or potential of expressed racial prejudice or reaction, became the reason for the formation of major command watch committees and subordinate command Personal Action Committees throughout the I Corps coordinated by III MAF. Their purpose was to deal constructively and tactfully with sensitive racial matters which had the potential for serious destructive consequences. The committee examined instances of personal violence, property damage, insolence, insubordination, and direct disobedience in the hope of finding out how best to cope in such situations and how to anticipate and prevent them if possible. The work of such committees was attended to by Lieutenant Commander John K. Kaelberer (Lutheran), Regimental Chaplain, 11th Marines. He reported, "The threat of racial outbreaks was always just below the surface, but strong command leadership, leadership council of all units, and the forceful example of competence by black staff noncommissioned officers held the unrest in check."<sup>28</sup>

If a chaplain did not always participate in racially

stabilizing programs a primary leader, his presence in the command as a sounding board and a liaison person was often invaluable. Chaplain Bray serving with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines; 3d Engineer Battalion; 3d Motor Transport Battalion; and 9th Motor Transport Battalion in 1969 reported his pleasure at being assigned the duty, ". . . to discuss problems with a group of men who showed by their interest that they had a sensitivity toward racial problems. Conflicts with racial overtones were kept to a minimum because of the concern of these men."<sup>29</sup> Another chaplain, Lieutenant James G. Goode (Disciples of Christ) attached to MWSG-17, was asked to structure a Human Relations Seminar designed to help ease the tension among sergeants and below of mixed racial and ethnic origins. A low-key racial incident in the command had focussed attention on this area. Chaplain Goode reported that the command wished also to broaden its own understanding of the feelings, attitudes, and aspirations of Marines in their interpersonal relationships. A total of 53 men met in the seminar for three hours each week for four weeks with the same personnel involved in all four sessions. Chaplain Goode wrote:

For 48 hours I talked with these men, but for the most part I listened. In order that I might not forget, I taped each session. Many of the men seethed with anger and hostility. They argued, rebelled and cheerfully vocalized their hatreds. They were shocked with the fact that the Command permitted this. They were even more surprised when the Command listened to their gripes. Here were young men struggling to find new ways to beat the system, while at the same time afraid to face themselves as individuals. Here were young Marines wanting so much to identify with a man's world, while suffering the agony of suppressing the little boy within. Some of these men hid behind the mask of drugs, fearful of the transition from adolescence to whatever this person is we call an adult. All of them were quite sincere as they wanted answers to their questions NOW! "Don't put me off! Tell me what I want to know or give me a sedative to ease my mental anxiety." The word WHY dominated the scene and will continue to be the most disturbing word to those of us who seek to be leaders.<sup>30</sup>

As a result of this seminar, broader lines of communication and understanding were established within each group. The squadron and group commanding officers became more aware of the problems men at the grassroots level were confronting. Subsequently the methodology and essential ideas of this seminar were presented to Army, Air Force, and Navy chaplains in a regular monthly meeting, and



Chaplain Goode reported, “. . . over 40 copies of this work have been distributed to chaplains and line officers requesting them.”<sup>31</sup>

Another effort was begun when human relations seminars were introduced throughout the I Corps. In Chu Lai the frustration and anger of the lower-ranking black Marine was evident in the atmosphere. There was a degree of polarization, and one chaplain commented that a person could not sit with a group of another color in the club or mess hall without incurring the stares of both groups. The racial troubles were often expressive of vague dissatisfaction and fear of unfair treatment rather than provable acts of flagrant discrimination. The “system” and the “whole Corps” came under denunciation from the troubled. MAG-13 Chaplain Cary reflected later:

Nevertheless, quite a few black Marines did regularly attend the meetings, did give vent to their dissatisfaction in the presence of “Authority.” This undoubtedly helped the situation somewhat. The chairmen of the Group Leadership Council (two, during my tour at Chu Lai), showed great restraint and patience. They acted promptly where action was possible, thus alleviating the most volatile situations.<sup>32</sup>

Being conversant with these concerns about the situation of racial unrest, the Chief of Chaplains set about developing materials that would contribute to deeper understanding and healthy management of racial dynamics. One initial recommendation published to all chaplains was the acquisition of an Afro-American history series published by the Association for the Study of Afro-American History, based in Washington, D.C. Many unit library officers and chapel funds ordered the series and gave it prominent display.

Chaplains also addressed the relatively narrow but painful problems of physical violence by some Marines against others of their fellow Marines. The problem was perplexing and unprecedented and created some alarm. There were instances of shooting, hand grenading, sniping, and boobytrapping, sometimes with fatal results. Some tied these events to racial disturbance, others to drugs and other stimulants. Comprehensive investigations were continually conducted, but the agony of the problem was deepened by the lack of a clear picture as to the cause of these fearful incidents. Third Division Chaplain Zoller was one of the few chaplains to address the problem in a final report. He wrote:

My own thinking about this suggests several possible factors at work in these strange, startling incidents. First,

the dearth of any real inner sense of right and wrong within the perpetrator, a lack of moral development, a moral cripple. Second, prolonged exposure to a participation in a combat environment where violence and killing are commonplace will condition some individuals to consider violence as normal and acceptable. Third, weapons are readily available and knowledge of their use is widespread. Fourth, a frustrating, perhaps threatening situation, such as an order to return to the bush, confronts an individual. A simple, direct solution may seem to be the elimination of the source of frustration or threat by “blowing him (or them) away.” Add to this the possibility of racial overtones and/or the deterioration of inner inhibitions through the use of drugs or alcohol. Also, the exterior restraints and controls of family and society are largely non-existent in this combat setting. Judgement becomes warped, moral values distorted and the individual may react with animal-like fury, directness and, sometimes, cunning. These ideas may have no validity, but the tragic, shocking incidents demand some attempts to probe their cause and to explain their occurrence.<sup>33</sup>

It is not especially remarkable that chaplains were heavily involved in the counseling linked to these major problem areas, but it is of historical note that such broadly based counseling went on while in a combat zone. During World War II and the Korean conflict, counseling on such non-combat-related, essentially pastoral topics was not done on anywhere near the scale that occurred in Vietnam. Undoubtedly the national disturbance over U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the adoption by a highly visible segment of the nation's youth of an anti-establishment outlook, and the presence especially in the later years of the war, of large areas of relative security contributed to the character and extent of counseling required.

The counseling asked of chaplains did not center only on these dramatic areas. The whole range of marriage requests, compassionate and emergency leave, “Dear John” letters, and illness or family turmoil back home were part of the chaplains' counseling day. It could be said that the chaplains of the Vietnam era were challenged to perhaps the broadest, most comprehensive counseling ministry that ever faced them in their history. Some deficiencies in chaplain preparedness for the intense impact of this counseling demand were noted, and the Chaplain Corps leadership, notably in the person of Rear Admiral Francis L. Garrett, who became the 13th Navy Chief of Chaplains on 1 July 1970, moved to satisfy what was lacking in an ambitious post-Vietnam counseling training program for the entire Corps. Chaplain Garrett was intimately acquainted

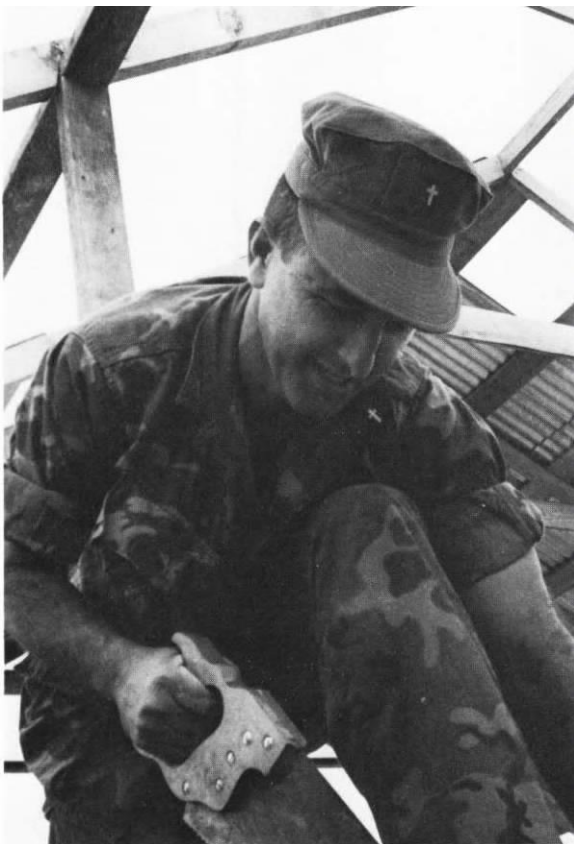
with the demands on chaplains in Vietnam having been the III MAF Staff Chaplain 1965-66 and subsequently involved in the direction of the Corps from the assignment desk in the Chaplains Division of the Bureau of Personnel in Washington.

It was obvious in Vietnam that the chaplain was more than a smooth-talking encourager of combat troops. The counseling done indicates that they and their message were drawn into the very depths of the human makeup and understanding of interpersonal relationships in their attempts to discharge their calling to minister to the confusion and anxiety of the Marines they loved. Commander Richard A. McGonigal (United Presbyterian) articulated this eloquently:

Talk to them when they are half drunk. Hear their remorse about premature fire or when they guessed wrong and their bunkie was blown away. Has there ever been a greater opportunity to think through with them the hard-

*Chaplain Harold M. Roberts, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, works on a combination chapel and recreation center 20 miles south of Da Nang, March 1969.*

Photo III MAF



rock issues of life and death? of guilt? of forgiveness? These (Marines) are thirsty. They want more than the release of marijuana. And just watch what they do with the religious maturity they have achieved.<sup>34</sup>

### *Chapel Construction*

During his Christmas visit to Vietnam in December 1966, the Navy's Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly, dedicated five new Navy-Marine Corps chapels. His action brought the total number of such houses of worship in the I Corps Tactical Zone at the time to 46, a figure representing the heaviest concentration of military chapels ever constructed in a combat area. Chapel construction by United States Navy and Marine Corps personnel in Vietnam presented a phenomenon unique in the annals of American warfare. It reflected the concerted efforts of the Chaplain Corps to provide complete religious coverage, with weekly opportunity for worship for every sailor, Seabee, and Marine in Vietnam. But it also reflected the desire of the serviceman for the encouragement given to him by the symbols of his faith.

While there appeared to be no change in the essential nature of the American sailor or Marine, such as would be sufficient to distinguish him from personnel of previous wars, and while there appeared to be in Vietnam no basis for suggesting an increase in the already impressive need and appetite for religion among combat personnel, the large number of chapels reflected a higher degree of prominence accorded religion and the work of the chaplain than in previous wars.

The profusion of chapels to a degree reflected the kind of war being fought in Vietnam, in itself most unusual if not unique. No chaplain, in more than 700 narrative reports of in-country Corps activities, suggested that the conflict was in any sense a holy war. Neither did any chaplain suggest that the troops, upon whose pulse he held a steady hand, considered it to be such. However, the fact that the initiative for construction of several I Corps chapels originated among the troops themselves (such as the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines Chapel; 7th Marines CP Chapel; and the 4th Marines CP Chapel), indicated a troop need requiring definition or identification. In Vietnam the young sailor and Marine had a need for spiritual reinforcement, not so much to provide courage to face his commitments or to strengthen his sense of rectitude, but rather to assist him to keep his



Photo 1st MarDiv  
*Men of 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, worship in their own chapel, constructed of native materials in the battalion area at Chu Lai.*

values and motives appropriately coordinated with his physical activity. At night, he may have had to defend himself in a fire fight. In the morning he may have been engaged in a civic action project intended to improve the sanitary conditions or educational facilities of a South Vietnamese hamlet. It was frequently difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish friend from foe. Such a constant shifting of gears from a hostile, life-or-death combat situation to gentle, understanding, constructive pacification, imposed emotional and spiritual demands upon young combat Marines and sailors never experienced to a similar degree in a combat zone before. To the chapel he had helped to construct and to the ministry of his church, he turned for restructuring and clarification of his values, ideals, and motives, and a careful reexamination of his feelings of achievement and frustration, and the inevitable confusion and loneliness of the young man in combat.

Chapels in Vietnam represented more than a symbol of the American sailor and Marine's desire to worship God. They represented a conscious effort on the part of supervisory Chaplain Corps personnel in-country to provide facilities to house the people of God at worship. While chapel facilities would have been hard pressed to seat 10 percent of the secure area population for any one Sunday observance, use of available facilities throughout the morning, afternoon, and evening extended their capability to an acceptable level.

Construction philosophy included three categories: (1) unit chapels, (2) area chapels, and (3) the chapel complex. Unit chapels built and maintained by battalions and similar-sized activities with chaplains attached were in the vast majority in late 1966. Area chapels were centrally located in order to provide worship facilities convenient to personnel of two or more battalion-sized units. The Engineers' 1st Battalion, 3d Marines chapel was the first, and was dedicated by the Chief of Chaplains, Christmas 1965; Amtracs, Tanks, Anti-Tanks, 3d Motor Transport's, "The Chapel of the Supporting Arms" was the second.

The chapel complex, a more sophisticated type of construction was represented by the "Chapel of The Abiding Presence," 1st Marine Division Chapel, prominently established on Chapel Hill in the Da Nang enclave. The "Chapel of the Abiding Presence" was a large chapel of V-type design. The structure was of

*Marines stand near the open doors of the wooden chapel of the 7th Engineer Battalion at Da Nang.*

Department of Defense (USN) Photo 112733



12" x 12" rejected bunker timbers, upright, seven feet apart. A 30" high native stone wall joined the timbers. The upper part of the exterior walls was made of permanent louvers extending up the corrugated tin roofing. The entrance was at the inside of the V. The main chapel seated 250 persons. The building formed a complex accommodating four religious services or four retreat groups at once. It was designed by Chaplain Morton, 3d Division Chaplain in 1966.

The first American military chapel to be dedicated in Vietnam was the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's, "Wing Memorial Chapel," in the airbase compound in Da Nang. An old French Foreign Legion barracks building was remodeled as a Navy Chapel by Sub Unit 2 of Marine Aircraft Group-16 during Operation Shufly in February and March 1963. Originally named "Shufly Chapel," it remained in constant use, both weekdays and Sundays, from its dedication through the end of the American presence.

In the beginning of the Navy-Marine Corps buildup in Vietnam in March 1965, the first Navy Chaplains in-country provided religious worship services for personnel of their units by taking the worship of the church into the field to platoon- and company-sized units, setting the altar upon empty ammunition cases, the hood of a jeep or mite, or upon carefully stacked sandbags beside a fighting pit. As other units continued to move into the I Corps Tactical Zone, battalions, aircraft groups, and naval units kept apace of the expansion by assuming the initiative to provide their own places of worship.

The first chapels employed were general purpose tents, 16' x 32' in size, with portable altars, and empty cartons and crude benches for seating. The next step in the evolutionary process, which extended over a period of six months, was the move to strongback framing covered with GP tenting. Then followed corrugated tin roofing with wirescreened enclosures and doors. Stars of David and crosses appeared as a matter of course, and impressive church bells were sometimes shipped from the United States by benevolent patrons. As an example, the Engineer Battalion Memorial Chapel bell was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Kroeze of Muskegon, Michigan.

During the following 15 months as specified areas within combat perimeters were informally declared secure, chapels of permanent construction began to appear in carefully selected, prominent locations. The more sophisticated chapel designs, both more

functional and with more concern for religious symbolism and beauty in worship, tested the designers' talents. Camp Tien Sha's Butler Hut chapel became one of Naval Support Activity Da Nang's permanent structures, as did the Seabee chapels at Camp Shields, Chu Lai, and Holy Trinity Chapel in Phu Bai.

Many of the Navy-Marine Corps chapels in Vietnam were designated as memorials, "Dedicated to the Glory of God and to the Memory of the Gallant Marines and Sailors Killed in Action," read one plaque. Another chapel was named "The Chapel of All Faiths," providing additional evidence of Navy and Marine Corps personnel assuming initiative and leadership in the modern ecumenical movement among American churches. There, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Christian Scientist, Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, and others shared both the facilities and the schedule of activities.

A northern I Corps chapel was constructed at Dong Ha, eight miles south of the DMZ. An area chapel built to accommodate worshippers of various units moving in and out of Dong Ha, it was conceived and financed by the III MAF and 3d Marine Division chaplains when it appeared in the fall of 1966 that more action would be taking place, and more troops would be employed in Quang Tri province in the months ahead. Dedicated to "Marines and Navy Corpsmen who gave their lives in Operation Hastings and Operation Prairie," Memorial Chapel was dedicated on 22 December 1966 by Chief of Chaplains James W. Kelly. This chapel was dedicated with borrowed pews. The Vietnamese craftsman constructing the pews, himself a former Viet Cong before his conversion to Christianity, was kidnapped by terrorists while delivering the pews.

In the last years of American involvement in Vietnam a new trend in chapel construction was apparent. Considerably less new construction was in evidence. This resulted in part from the move of 3d Marine Division to forward, unsettled, and insecure areas near Phu Bai and Dong Ha, leaving the more sophisticated chapels in the Da Nang enclave to the 1st Marine Division then settling in. But even in the Northern I Corps, while the tortured days of combat were being endured in 1967 and 1968, chapels continued to spring up. At the peak of Marine presence in the area immediately south of the DMZ there were 16 designated chapels standing as symbols of

the importance of faith in the life of the Marine—three were at Quang Tri, five at the Dong Ha combat base, three at Camp Carroll, and one each at Yankee Station, Cam Lo, the Rockpile, Ca Lu, and Cua Viet.

The chapels at Quang Tri included the 3d Marine Division CP, and the 3d Shore Party and 3d Battalion, 12th Marines chapels. At Dong Ha chapels rose at Headquarters, 3d Marine Division; 11th Engineer Battalion; 12th Marines; and 9th Motor Transport Battalion, and included the Marine Memorial Chapel of Dong Ha.

One of the most remarkable chapels in northern I Corps was at Yankee Station, a temporary base near the DMZ. This unique chapel consisted of a large open trench 25' x 45' which was scooped out of the earth to accommodate those who wished to worship in this location so near the DMZ. With the rear of the chapel reaching a depth of approximately 15', the ground floor afforded a level area for seating 60 people with standing room for 25 more. The ground floor rose gradually toward an altar constructed of wood and a cross was placed directly behind it. Seating consisted of bench-like arrangements of sand bags supporting long steel stakes lying crosswise, which, covered with sand bags. There were five double rows of these benches with a long similarly constructed bench running the width of the trench. This chapel was completely open air with sand bags shoring up the top rim of the earthen sides.

Until Camp Carroll was disestablished it boasted the 4th Marines; 1st Battalion, 12th Marines; and 2d Battalion, 9th Marines chapels. The 2d Battalion, 9th Marines chapel was honored by Major General Davis, the division commander, who participated in the dedication during which the chapel was named for Chaplain Robert Brett, formerly of the battalion, who was killed at Khe Sanh on 22 February 1968.

The Cam Lo chapel was occupied by various units, chief among them the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. The chapel at the Rockpile was built of native construction by the South Vietnamese. The structure was approximately 15 x 18 meters and contained two rooms, one of which had been made into an office and the other a bedroom used by the chaplain and his clerk. Materials consisted of a stone deck and split bamboo interior walls with open sides. The entryway contained a small steeple with a thatched cross. This chapel was started under the auspices of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines with Chaplain Myatt, with

modifications of the office and living quarters designed by successive chaplains. The Rockpile Chapel was dedicated to 1st Lieutenant (name and middle initial) Anderson who was killed while serving with 3d Battalion, 3d Marines in the Ca Lu area.

The Ca Lu Chapel was a well-planned structure. Measuring 20 x 30 meters and placed on a hillside overlooking the Ba Long Valley in a picturesque setting, this building project was worked out with the Montagnards of the Lan Cot Village. Planned similarly to the Rockpile Chapel with two offices at one end of the chapel, the whole structure was constructed on a sloping hillside giving an amphitheater appearance. Seating capacity was planned to accommodate 150 persons. A stone deck and native materials were used to complete the structure. There had been numerous delays in the completion of this chapel because of priority claims on materials and assistance from native workers. Lieutenant Commander Richard D. Black (Presbyterian), who supervised the construction in 1968, commented:

Stones from nearby river banks offer a cheap and readily available source of supply. The decking cleans itself and is particularly good during the monsoon season as the mud and dirt from boots quickly settles as the stones move under foot. The thatch materials will last two years and can either be replaced by native builders or covered with canvas fly tents at a later date. These structures with open sides are the coolest buildings during the hot weather and offer a quick escape route to slit trenches which flank the sides. The Ca Lu Chapel was not as yet dedicated, however a sign was erected by 3d Battalion, 9th Marines as a reminder of the prime moving battalion and in memory of "Those Fallen" of the battalion. All in all this type of construction is approximately one half as expensive as an equivalent "hardback" type building and being natural to the countryside is very fitting to a DMZ outpost.<sup>33</sup>

In many respects, the 1st Amtrac Battalion Chapel dedicated at Cua Viet on 4 September 1968 was the most unusual of all. It had been in the 1st Amtrac CP area and used a burnt-out shell of an amtrac lost in recent action in the Napoleon-Saline Operation. Under the supervision of Lieutenant Lawrence C. McAuliffe (Roman Catholic), the compact chapel was tastefully appointed in what was a very austere setting. Seating not more than 25 people, it provided secure space for worship. It was completely blanketed with sand bags and was marked by a white cross. Brigadier General Frank E. Garretson and the division chaplain were present for the dedication.

In time the Marines left Vietnam and although some chapels were disestablished, many remained as



*Chaplain Frank D. Mintjal celebrates Mass west of Da Nang in February 1971. Worshiping with him are men of the 1st Marines. Chaplain Mintjal was the last Catholic priest to serve in a combat zone with the 1st Marines, the last infantry unit to leave Vietnam.*

sentinels to the American Marine presence. One chaplain writing in April 1970 reflected pointedly:

Although most of our Marine combat troops have been withdrawn from the northernmost province of South Vietnam, south of the Demilitarized Zone, silent chapels stand on a dozen Quang Tri hills to commemorate the faith of thousands who climbed and clawed their way to eternal fame.

I am proud to have served with men like these Marines. They are gone now. They went home, redeployed, or were buried under distant skies. But their faith markers still stand. They stand as a silent tribute to the gallant men of the 3d Marine Division who when ordered, went and gave and, when ordered, departed leaving a little of soul, self, and sacrifice behind. Men somehow build their monuments after their own likeness. Some men are apparently content to be remembered for what they have been able to tear down. But the men of the 3d Marine Division erected the silent chapels.<sup>36</sup>

### *Reflections*

If the reports and letters of chaplains with Marines

in Vietnam are scanned for the topics that occur most universally they reveal the valuable fact that two categories are touched upon by almost all chaplains who spent time in the Vietnam theater of operations. Not surprisingly, they both have to do with personal relationships. The first item referred to by almost all was their relationship with Marines both personally and structurally, and the uniform admiration in which Marines were generally held by chaplains. One chaplain, late in 1971, noted:

I feel honored to have served the men of the First Marines. They are a grand lot. The senior officers (including Captains) are notable for their genuine naturalness, their lack of hypocrisy. The junior officers, by and large, are a group of fantastically talented, thoughtful, person-oriented young men in whom resides the future, the joy, the strength of the Marine Corps—and may CMC discover methods to assure their retention! The enlisted men, on the other hand, are commendably unique for their platoon-size pride, their bullish bluntness and their (usually) unspoken admiration for goodness

wherever found. Command does support the troops' need for Worship, and the troops at platoon level in the field are perhaps as good and receptive a congregation as a chaplain will have anywhere.

Aware of my shortcomings, I am especially grateful to the Commanding Officers and their staffs for their fine support of the chaplaincy. I am always pleased by their good humor, and, most of all, I am enriched by their warm friendship. Would that I could do more to reciprocate.<sup>37</sup>

Another said:

Finally, I cannot close without paying the highest tribute to the greatest group of men ever to stand up and fight for freedom—the United States Marines! It has been my privilege to serve with them both tours in Vietnam. These are the real young people of America. Our country and its future could not be in better hands. I am proud of them. I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve with them. May God bless and protect each of them and bring them all home safely.<sup>38</sup>

It is also not surprising that Marines feel benefited by the contribution and the presence of the chaplain. Although it is manifestly true that not all clergymen in uniform enjoyed where they were when they found themselves in Vietnam, and not all enjoyed being in uniform once they discovered the true scope of a chaplain's task, still most of the newer, non-career-oriented chaplains obviously made the best of the situation and threw themselves in ministry with dedication and purpose. And from the number of commendations received by chaplains it is apparent that the majority strove to excel at their calling to the side of the Marine fighting man. Chaplain Casazza, the 1st Marine Division Chaplain from mid-1966 until July of 1967, quoted a letter written by an executive officer of a regiment about his chaplain:

His conduct under fire was notably courageous and that of a very brave man. On numerous occasions this officer was observed running across exposed paddies and areas to be at the side of a Marine. With no apparent regard for his personal safety, thinking only of the wounded or dead Marine, he carried his inspiration and prayer to those who needed his help. He had the confidence and deep respect of the men and healed the scars which the loss of a friend frequently caused in those who survived. He eliminated bitterness from the hearts and instilled Christian determination and morale to be drawn against in future battle. He encouraged the men of all faiths to do more for their God, our Country, their Corps and themselves.

Few men have seen more combat action than their Chaplain. Invariably he sought out that unit which was most likely to encounter the heaviest contact. He would then go with that unit and continually circulated along the route of march. During breaks, never resting, he moved

among the men. His bravery, his humor, his right word at the right time contributed to the success of the unit.

This man was an inspiration to all who observed and served with him. He was known and loved throughout the Regiment.<sup>39</sup>

The love of the men for their chaplain was usually specific but the love of the chaplain for his men was often more general, categorically. The Assistant Division Chaplain of the 3d Division early in 1965-1966 expressed himself most sensitively on the subject:

No number of movies or stories can properly introduce one to the young Marine who fights here for his country. Take the teenager next door, remove most of the problems caused by teenage sensitivity to status among their peers and that is about as close as one can come to a general picture. I have always felt when I have seen their torn bodies that something more is demanded than the excellent care of the doctors and the corpsmen.

I have felt that a trumpeting of gratitude and praise is called for as a fitting human response. When the chips are down, they are amazingly selfless. I know I think more of me than they do of [themselves].<sup>40</sup>

And Chaplain Lepore of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines became almost lyrical in his final report:

The "grunt" as he stands in dirty, muddy majesty, is as fine a fighting man as the United States has ever produced. He is young, tough, intelligent. He understands why he is here and he believes in the purposes that put him here. And that is something, because if you take a "grunt" out of his muddy, waterfilled bunker; remove his helmet, his flak jacket, and his field uniform; and take away his rifle, clean him up and dress him in a sport shirt, slacks and loafers, you've got the kid who was playing on last year's high school football team. He is a national asset to be cherished.<sup>41</sup>

The second area of near-universal mention in the reflections of chaplains was their need for, and appreciation of, the comradeship and sense of brotherhood that was evident whenever it was possible to get chaplains together. Time after time chaplains remembered the unity they drew upon during the dark days and the easier times of their Vietnam experience. Perhaps the most enlivening feature of investigating this subject is the way in which it crossed denominational and traditional lines.

The examples of this truth are almost as numerous as are chaplains' communications, but some stand out as especially representative. Chaplain Henry T.

Lavin, Division Chaplain, 3d Marine Division, from October 1966 to October 1967, stated:

As I have written before I have never seen chaplains act with one another the way these men did in Vietnam. What a pleasure it was to see a Southern Baptist's face light up when his Catholic buddy came in from the field or to hear one or another asking someone to "stay in my hootch with me." When any of these men meet again in the States it won't be with a polite handshake but perhaps a close hug, a thumping on the back and cries of "do you remember this or that?" These men have shared something that is difficult to explain but they know how the crucible of war forges strong relationships which shall endure long after their uniforms have been doffed for the last time.<sup>42</sup>

The plaudits also disregarded organizational lines. The Regimental Chaplain, 11th Marines, from August 1969 to August 1970, Chaplain John H. Kaelberer, a Lutheran, had as a constant task the regulation of his artillery battalion chaplains who were in the majority Roman Catholic. These chaplains were assigned to artillery units in part so that they could be available to the more numerous infantry battalions operating in conjunction with an artillery unit. At the end of his tour Chaplain Kaelberer had this to say:

It was a pleasure and a joy to work with and beside the eight charging and dedicated Roman Catholic priests who at one time or another in this past year were assigned to battalions in the 11th Marines. They were: Chaplains Bevins, Conrad, Metznowner, Pilarski, Pierce, Grochowski, Farrow, and Visocky. Their names were like the Notre Dame line and they are just as strong . . . spiritually speaking of course! And just as the infantry battalion chaplains supported the "cannon-cockers," these chaplains helped support the "grunts" in their areas.<sup>43</sup>

By far the most sensitive expressions of the comradeship chaplains felt for chaplains came from those who struggled together with the same circumstances, fears, frustrations, and agonies inevitable in the conflict. One chaplain reported:

Second to nothing else I have learned or experienced over here is the making of new and lasting friendships with the chaplains with whom I have served. It has been a beautiful thing to share the same burdens and frustrations, laugh at the same jokes and happenings, lean on a shoulder when you aren't sure if you can trust your own, gripe to someone who knows and understands what you are griping about. I don't think there can ever be a closeness like this closeness . . . I have been grateful to the point of tears many times for it!<sup>44</sup>

And an infantry battalion chaplain remembered:

I want to thank in a special way those chaplains who made time to plow through the dust and heat and rain of

Vietnam, to accompany me in covering the CAPS, my Battalions, and those troopers in the boondocks who might have done without coverage. Men such as Chaplains Urbano, McMorrow, Ammons, Ryan, Bolles, McDermott, Casazza, Habiby, Seiders, Sims, and Oliver are among the many whose diligence and concern will not be forgotten. And, the "Big One," our Division Chaplain, Monsignor Lavin, he will be remembered by us all in a special way as friend, guider, true priest, and fighting representative for all the chaplains and their best interests and needs. May God bless all the Padres who passed this way, and their assistants, who worked quietly behind the scenes, thereby seeking to enable men out here to receive a continuing ministry to the soul and the whole man.<sup>45</sup>

Chaplain Weaver, who served with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines early in 1969, summed up by saying, "Ecumenicity is real in Vietnam. I have witnessed a true spirit of ecumenicity here that I never experienced during the first decade of my ministry. In the civilian ministry we talked about ecumenical endeavors. In Vietnam we didn't talk about ecumenicity, we practiced it."<sup>46</sup>

Finally, in their turn, all combat units had been withdrawn by mid-May 1971 and there remained only support units in I Corps. Several chaplains had been sent south to the Saigon area to complete their tours of service in Vietnam, and finally, on the 21st of June 1971 Chaplain Volz of FLC, who had remained extra days to tend the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital and the Phuoc Thanh Orphanage which he began to build in 1967, and which he loved, boarded his aircraft at Da Nang and the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps presence with Marines in I Corps was over.

Undoubtedly each chaplain asked himself the same questions: Had he accomplished his calling? Had he been what he should have been and done what he should have done? Chaplain Volz wrote the Chief of Chaplains and expressed himself positively, "During these two tours of duty I feel that I have found some fulfillment of the dream I had when I entered the Chaplain Corps. So, I leave humbly grateful for the opportunities that have been afforded me."<sup>47</sup>

Chaplain Bedingfield, in Quang Tri two years earlier, had written:

Without a doubt to some the chaplain is a rabbit's foot or a walking St. Christopher Medal, to some he is a burden or a symbol of a nonpragmatic approach to life, to others a threat. To most I have found he is what he makes himself be, a man like all others, who laughs and hurts, who bleeds and grits his teeth, whose stomach rumbles for



"C's" or whose throat constricts with a need for water, who prays to drown out his own terror when an 81 coughs its deadly phlegm, who endures damnable frustrations, who gets it all wired together, not because he has all the answers, but because he at least knows how to ask the right questions. I have found for myself that a chaplain can be a valued part of the team called Marines; he has a mission, he has a purpose, he has a place. It is purely, though not simply, a question of how much he is willing to give of himself, where it really is.<sup>48</sup>

Marines had given of themselves, indeed, and chaplains with them, and now it was time to go

home having discharged a most taxing opportunity: ministering to men in time of disturbing war, and through its hell to supply a measure of peace and a glimpse of heaven.

President John F. Kennedy in his Inaugural Address on 20 January 1961 could well have been expressive of Navy chaplain philosophy: "With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love. Asking his blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."



# Notes

## PART I The Drift into Turbulence

### CHAPTER I

#### MINISTERING IN A MINI-WAR APRIL 1962-FEBRUARY 1965

Unless otherwise noted the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplain Corps Historian 1966-1969, original research and preliminary text, "Navy Chaplains in Vietnam 1954-1964" (Washington: Chief of Chaplains, Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1968); RAdm John J. O'Connor, CHC, USN, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1968), hereafter O'Connor, *A Chaplain Looks at Vietnam*; Capt Robert H. Whitlow, USMCR, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Advisory and Combat Assistance Era 1954-1964* (Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1977), hereafter, Whitlow, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*; chaplain letters and end of tour reports cited are located in Chief of Chaplains Historical File, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington.

1. LtGen Homer Litzenberg, USMC, quoted by Chaplain John Craven in an article entitled, "Chaplain in the FMF." *Marine Corps Gazette*, Dec66, p. 45.
2. Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, USA, quoted by Major D. D. Nicholson, Jr., in an article entitled, "Their Faith is Yours," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Dec53, p. 16.
3. Adm Chester W. Nimitz, USN, quoted by Major D. D. Nicholson, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 21.
4. Clifford M. Drury, *The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy*, vol. VI, (Washington: GPO, 1960), p. 2.
5. LCdr Ernest S. Lemieux, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 6Apr67 with enclosure: "A Brief Account of Subunit 2," p. 2.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
7. Capt Henry E. Austin, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 7Apr67.
8. Lemieux, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
10. LCdr Anthony R. Peloquin, CHC, USNR, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 3Jun67, with enclosure, "MAG-16, 1st MAW, Mar 1962 - December 1962," p. 1.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Whitlow, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*, p. 70.
14. Lemieux, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
15. Cdr Elihu H. Rickel, CHC, USN, ltrs to CHC Historian, dtd 3 and 20Feb67.

#### Helping "Those Who Want to Be Free"

16. Lt Samuel Baez, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd

- 11Apr67 with enclosure: "Resume of Development with Subunit 2, MABS-16, 1st MAW, AirFMF, PAC," p. 1.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
18. Lemieux, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

#### Relocation to Da Nang

19. Baez, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

#### Chaplains' Routines Stabilize

20. Whitlow, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*, p. 85.
21. LCdr George O. Lindemann, CHC, USNR, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 24Apr67, with enclosure: "Tulangan Reflections."
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Lt Hugh D. Smith, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 8Mar67.
25. Lt William M. Gibson, CHC, USN, ltr to the Most Reverend Albert R. Zuroweste, dtd 19Oct63. A series of letters written between February and October to Bishop Zuroweste was included in Chaplain Gibson's report to the CHC Historian.
26. Lt John G. Harrison, CHC, USNR, "Chaplain in Vietnam," *Teenways*, 12Dec65.

#### "...To Preserve the Freedom and Independence of South Vietnam"

27. See Chronology, *New York Times*, 28Jan73, p. 25.
28. *Lutheran Chaplain's Newsletter*, Second Quarter 1963, p. 6.
29. Lt John G. Harrison, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 2Mar67.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. LCdr Robert V. Thornberry, CHC, USN, ltr to CG 1st MAW, dtd 16Apr65.
33. Lt Robert P. Heim, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 21Mar67.
34. JCS msg dtd 12Mar65 (HQMC MSG File).

### CHAPTER 2

#### SUPPORTING AMID CONFUSION MARCH-AUGUST 1965

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplains Corps Historian 1966-1969, unpublished original research; Chief of Chaplains' historical files and chaplains' end of tour reports, located in the COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel,

Washington, D.C.; Jack Shulimson and Maj Charles M. Johnson, USMC, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Landing and the Buildup 1965* (Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1978), hereafter, Shulimson and Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1965*.

1. Lt Paul L. Toland, CHC, USN, end of tour report (EOTR) dtd Dec65, p. 1

#### The 9th MEB Comes Ashore

2. LCdr Paul H. Running, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 7Mar67, p. 2.  
3. Ibid., p. 3.  
4. Lt C. Albert Vernon, CHC, USN, article in *The Disciple Chaplain*, Oct - Dec 1966, Committee on Military and Veterans Services, Disciples of Christ, p. 10.

#### The III Marine Amphibious Force is Created

5. Lt Paul H. Running, op. cit., p. 3.  
6. Capt Robert "Q" Jones, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 30Mar67.

#### Landing at Phu Bai

7. Ibid., p. 2.  
8. Lt Edward Wilcox, CHC, USNR, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 2Aug66, p. 2.  
9. Lt Colin E. Supple, CHC, USNR, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 1Dec67.  
10. Ibid., p. 2.  
11. Lt Leroy E. Muenzler, Jr., CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Apr66, p. 2.  
12. Ibid., p. 3.  
13. Lt Paul E. Roswog, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 1Mar67.

#### Chu Lai is Born

14. FMFPac CC Phone Conversation, The Naming of Chu Lai, 28Nov67.  
15. LCdr John P. Byrnes, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Jul65.  
16. LCdr George S. Thilking, CHC, USN, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 11Jan68.  
17. Hand-written notes by author during lecture by LtGen V. H. Krulak (Ret.) to USMC Command and Staff College student body, 9Mar78.

#### The Seabees Arrive

18. Lt Edward E. Jayne, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 10Jan66.

#### MAG-12 at Chu Lai

19. Lt Richard A. Long, CHC, USN, memo to Chief of Chaplains, dtd 26Sep66, p. 2.  
20. Ibid., p. 3.  
21. Lt Charles L. Reiter, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 28Feb65, p. 2.

#### Chaplain Organization at Da Nang

22. Division Chaplain, 3d MarDiv, ltr to the Chief of Chaplains,

dtd 7Aug65.

23. Ibid., p. 3.  
24. Jones, op. cit.  
25. Ibid., p. 3.

## PART II The Buildup Accelerates

### CHAPTER 3

### GROWING AND RESPONDING JULY 1965-SEPTEMBER 1965

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplain Corps Historian 1966-1969, unpublished original research; Chief of Chaplains' historical files and chaplains' end of tour reports, located in the COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington; Shulimson and Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1965*.

1. Lt Ronald C. DeBock, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 12Aug66, p. 3.  
2. Ibid.  
3. Ibid.  
4. Lt Robert W. Hodges, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Jun66.  
5. Lt(jg) Peter D. MacLean, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 17May66.

#### Civic Action Assumes Greater Importance

6. Lt John F. Walker, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Aug65.  
7. LCdr Paul H. Running, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 7Mar67.

#### Arrivals and Adjustments

8. LCdr George P. Murray, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Feb66.  
9. Ibid., p. 2.  
10. Ibid., p. 4.  
11. Cdr John J. O'Connor, CHC, USN, ltr to COC, dtd 28Jul65.  
12. Lt(jg) Peter D. MacLean, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 17May66.  
12. Cdr Connell J. Maguire, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 17Aug66.  
13. Lt Delbert J. Cory, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Aug66.

#### The Arrival of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing

14. Lt Thomas J. Dillon, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 30Mar66.  
15. Cdr Peter J. Bakker, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 14Mar66.  
16. Ibid., p. 3.  
17. Navy Commendation Medal Citation for LCdr Hugh F. Lecky, CHC, USN.  
18. LCdr Richard M. Tipton, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 29Dec65.  
19. Ibid., p. 2.

#### The Seabees Continue Their Buildup

20. Bakker, op. cit., p. 4.  
21. Cdr Everett B. Nelson, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Mar66.  
22. Ibid., p. 2.  
23. Cdr William F. Hollis, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Jul66.

## CHAPTER 4

LISTENING AND LEARNING  
SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1965

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplain Corps Historian 1966-1969, unpublished original research; Chief of Chaplains' historical files and chaplains' end of tour reports, located in the COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington; Shulimson and Johnson, USMC, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1965*.

1. *Navy Chaplain Bulletin*, Spring66, p. 10.

## Activity in the Southern ICTZ

2. Lt John J. Glynn, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Jun66.
3. Lt Patrick A. Dowd, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1May66.
4. Lt Philip F. Kahal, CHC, USN, ms: "Comforting the Afflicted," attached to EOTR.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Cdr Peter J. Bakker, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Apr66.

## Landing at Qui Nhon

8. Lt Ralph C. Betters, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Apr66.
9. Lt Walter A. Hiskett, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1May66.
10. Ibid.

## New Chaplain Leadership

11. Bakker, op. cit., p. 3.
12. III MAF Order 1730.1, dtd 1Oct65.
13. III MAF Staff Chaplain memo to CG, III MAF dtd 21Oct65.
14. Capt Francis L. Garrett oral briefing to COC, Jan66.
15. Capt Frank R. Morton, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 17Oct66.
16. Lt M. E. Dunks, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 19Nov66.

## Ceremonial Events and Administrative Concerns

17. Lt John J. Scanlon, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 28Aug66.
18. Lt Allen B. Craven, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Nov65.
19. LCdr James E. Seim, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 25Feb67.
20. Cdr Colin J. Maguire, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Sep66.
21. Ibid., p. 2.
22. Lt(jg) Raymond A. Roy, CHC, USN, newsletter included in EOTR, dtd 2Jan67.

## Chaplains for NSA and MCB-8

23. Cdr Martin F. Gibbons, CHC, USN, ltr to Chaplain's Division, n.d, [circa 1966].
24. LCdr Paul H. Lionberger, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 7Feb67.
25. Lt(jg) Robert S. Collins, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Jan68.
26. Lt George F. Tillett, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Nov66.
27. Ibid.

## Christmas Highlights

28. Roy, op. cit., p. 3.
29. Lionberger, op. cit., p. 3.
30. Scanlon, op. cit., p. 4.
31. Lt Delbert J. Cory, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Aug66.
32. Bakker, op. cit., p. 5.
33. Morton, op. cit., p. 3.
34. Scanlon, op. cit., p. 3.
35. Maguire, op. cit., p. 3.
36. Glynn, op. cit., p. 4.

## CHAPTER 5

SLOGGING AND SHARING  
JULY 1965-MARCH 1966

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplain Corps Historian 1966-1969, unpublished original research; Chief of Chaplains' historical files and chaplains' end of tour reports, located in the COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington; Shulimson and Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1965*.

1. LCdr Frederick E. Whitaker CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Nov66.
2. III MAF Chaplain's memorandum 6-65, dtd 9Aug66.
3. CMC ltr, to Chief of Chaplains dtd 22Apr67.
4. LCdr Murray H. Voth, CHC, USN, interview with Chaplain Corps Historian, 28Nov78.

## With the Wounded or on the Line?

5. Lt Eugene M. Smith, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 7Aug66.
6. *The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy*, (Washington: GPO, 1953), p. iv., vi.
7. Capt Francis L. Garrett, CHC, USN in a speech given at the Chaplains School, Newport, R.I., Jan67, COC tape library.
8. Lt C. Albert Vernon, CHC, USN, memo to the Chaplain Corps Historian, dtd 11Apr67 (ser 547).
9. Lt Allen B. Craven CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Nov65, p. 2.

## Combat Activity at Chu Lai

10. Lt Gerard W. Taylor, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Nov66, p. 1.
11. Lt John T. McNamara, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 28Sep66, p. 1.
12. Lt John J. Glynn, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Jun66, p. 3.
13. Lt George S. Goad, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 21Oct66, p. 3.
14. Lt Walter A. Hiskett, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd, 1Jun66, p. 2.

## Chaplain Participation in Major Operations

15. LCdr Nilus W. Hubble, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Dec66, p. 1.
16. Lt Patrick A. Dowd, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd May66, p. 3.
17. Lt Henry K. Loeffler, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Aug66.
18. Lt Edwin V. Bohula, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 27Feb67, p. 3.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

22. Hiskett, op.cit., p. 4.
23. Bohula, op. cit., p. 5.
24. LCdr Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Mar67.
25. Ibid., p. 2.
26. LCdr Robert C. Franklin, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Mar67.
27. Lt Roger K. Hansen, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Mar67, p. 2.

#### Adaptability and Patience

28. LCdr Nilus W. Hubble, CHC, USN, op. cit., enclosure 1, p. 1.
29. Ibid., p. 4.

## CHAPTER 6

### CALMING AND COMFORTING JANUARY-JUNE 1966

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN, Chaplain Corps Historian 1966-1969, unpublished original research; Chief of Chaplains' historical files and chaplains' end of tour reports, located in the COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, hereafter Moore research files; CHC Historians files; Shulimson and Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam 1965*.

1. "The Chopper Chaplains," *Time*, 11Feb66, p. 68.
2. *The History of the Chaplain Corps* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1960), vol. VI, p. 211.

#### Combat Action in Early 1966

3. Lt George R. Witt, EOTR, dtd 1Mar66, p. 3.
4. Cdr Jonathan C. Brown, Jr., EOTR, dtd 15Jan66, p. 2.
5. Lt John J. Scanlon, EOTR, dtd 15May65, p. 3.
6. Ibid., p. 4-5.
7. Ibid., p. 6.

#### Administrative Adjustments

8. Lt Robert F. Wood, EOTR, dtd Feb66, p. 2.
9. Lt Robert Reiner, EOTR, dtd Sep65, p. 1.
10. LCdr Paul H. Lionberger, EOTR, dtd Dec65, p. 3.
11. Capt Francis L. Garrett, interview with CHC Historian, dtd 28Mar69.
12. Ibid.
13. Capt Frank R. Morton, turnover narrative, dtd Oct66.

#### 1st Marine Division Arrives at Chu Lai

14. Capt John G. Wissing, ltr to FMFPAC Force Chaplain, dtd 25May66, p. 3.
15. Ibid., p. 5.
16. Capt John G. Wissing, ltr to the Chief of Chaplains, dtd 4Jun66, p. 2.
17. Cdr John T. Goad, EOTR, dtd 30May65, p. 1.
18. Ibid., p. 2.

#### 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Chaplains, January-April 1966

19. Cdr Peter J. Bakker, EOTR, dtd Mar65, p. 5.

20. LCdr Willard W. Bartlett, EOTR, dtd Apr65, p. 2.
21. Ibid., p. 3.

#### The Buddhist Revolt

22. LCdr Herman F. Wendler, EOTR, dtd Feb66, p. 1.
23. Capt Francis L. Garrett, interview with CHC Historian, dtd 1May69.
24. Ibid.
25. Cdr James A. Powell, EOTR, dtd May66, p. 2.
26. Chief of Chaplains memo to Chief of Naval Personnel, dtd 21Jun66.

#### Easter and Passover in I Corps

27. Lt Max E. Dunks, EOTR, dtd Oct65.
28. LCdr Willard W. Bartlett, EOTR, dtd, p. 4.
29. Capt Francis L. Garrett, ltr to FMFPac Force Chaplain, dtd 2Jun66, p. 2.
30. Ibid., p. 3.
31. Lt Robert L. Reiner, EOTR, dtd Sep65, p. 1.
32. Ibid., p. 3.
33. Ibid., p. 24.
34. Ibid., p. 5.
35. Ibid.

## PART III The Conflict Broadens

### CHAPTER 7

#### TEACHING AND PREACHING JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1966

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is taken from extant files of the Chaplain Corps Planning Group; Personal Response turnover file; following professional papers by LCdr W. Warren Newman, CHC, USN: "The Socio-psychological Situation in South Vietnam"; "The Winning Equation"; "New Dimensions in the Use of the Critical Incident Technique in Cross-Cultural Interaction Training"; "Personal Response Project: A Communications Perspective"; and chaplains' end of tour reports.

#### Hearts and Minds: The Personal Response Project

1. LtGen V. H. Krulak, Commanding General, FMFPac, ltr, dtd 23Mar66, COC Hist File, "Personal Response."
2. Ltr to LtGen Victor H. Krulak, CG, FMFPac to COC, dtd 15Apr65.
3. CGFMFPac ltr to commanding generals under his command, dtd 30Jun66.
4. Capt John H. Craven in Force Chaplains' Newsletter, FMFPac, Dec66, p. 1.
5. Author's notes of interview with Capt Edward H. Hemphill, CHC, USN, (Ret).
6. Chaplain Corps Planning Group, background information the Personal Response Project (COC Hist Files), p. 2.
7. Ibid., p. 3.

**Meeting the Needs of Worship**

8. Lt Thomas J. McDermott, USN, EOTR, dtd 12May67, p. 1.
9. Ibid., p. 3.
10. Lt John T. Collins, CHC USN, EOTR, dtd 17May67, p. 2.
11. Ibid.
12. Cdr Paul H. Lionberger, CHC USN, EOTR, dtd Dec66, p. 2.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Lt John J. Scanlon, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15May66, p. 4.
16. Lt Delbert J. Cory, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 25Aug66, p. 2.
17. LtCdr Earnest Lemieux, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 28Sep67, p. 3.
18. Capt John Wissing, CHC, USN, ltr to COC, dtd 22Aug66.
19. Capt David J. Casazza, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Sep67, p. 1.
20. Lt Edward R. Toner, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 1Sep67, p. 1.
21. LCdr Richard E. Barcus, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Mar67, p. 2.
22. Capt Paul R. Hammerl, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 4Apr67, p. 3.
23. Lt Cecil R. Threadgill, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15May67, p. 1.
24. Lt David B. Saltzman, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd 15Sep67, p. 4.
25. Ibid.
26. Lt John F. Weaver, CHC, USN, EOTR, dtd Mar67, p. 1.

**CHAPTER 8****RISKING AND REACHING  
JUNE-DECEMBER 1966**

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from Chief of Chaplains' historical files and EOTR, located in the COC Historical Reference Files, COC Office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.; Jack Shulimson, "U. S. Marines in Vietnam, An Expanding War, 1966," (ms, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1978), hereafter, Shulimson, "U. S. Marines in Vietnam 1966".

1. Cdr James A. Powell, EOTR, dtd 9May67, p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Lt Delbert J. Cory, EOTR, dtd 25Aug66, p. 3.

**Operation Prairie**

4. Lt William C. L. Asher, EOTR, dtd 19Jun67, p. 1.
5. Lt George R. Witt, EOTR, dtd 14Apr67, p. 3.
6. Ibid.
7. Lt Robert S. Collins, EOTR, dtd 17May67, p. 2.
8. LCdr Floyd E. Sims, EOTR, dtd 30Jun67, p. 1.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 3.
11. Lt Stanley J. Beach, tape recording sent to COC, 20Oct66.
12. Capt Francis L. Garrett, official report to COC, dtd 30Oct66.
13. Capt John H. Craven, FMFPAC Force Chaplains Newsletter, 1Dec66.
14. Ibid.

**Arrivals: New and Old**

15. Lt Lisle E. Stewart, EOTR, dtd 20Aug67, p. 2.

16. Ibid.
17. Cdr Connell J. Maguire, EOTR, dtd 15Aug66, p. 4.
18. Ibid.
19. LCdr Michael A. Ondo, EOTR, dtd 30Jun67, p. 4.
20. Ibid., p. 5.
21. Lt Robert M. Radasky, EOTR, dtd 22Aug66, p. 2.
22. Ibid., p. 3.
23. Lt Robert S. Collins, EOTR, dtd 17May67, p. 1.

**More Growing Pains**

24. Lt Ronald L. Hedwall, EOTR, dtd 15May67, p. 1.
25. Lt James E. Ammons, EOTR, dtd 15Sep67, p. 2.
26. Ibid., p. 3.
27. LCdr Eugene B. Davis, EOTR, dtd 13Sep67, p. 1.
28. Capt Henry T. Lavin, EOTR, dtd 28Sep67, p. 1.
29. Capt Frank R. Morton, Division Chaplain's Final Report, dtd Sep66, p. 4.
30. LCdr Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak, EOTR, 30Dec66, p. 3.
31. Lt Roger K. Hansen, EOTR, dtd Feb67, p. 2.

**1st Marine Division Chaplains**

32. Lt Robert R. Cunningham, EOTR, dtd 31Aug67, p. 1.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 3.
35. Ibid., p. 4.
36. Lt Robert M. Weeks, EOTR, 28Sep67, p. 2.
37. Ibid., p. 4.
38. Lt Roy A. Baxter, EOTR, dtd 25Mar67, p. 3.
39. Ibid., p. 4.
40. LCdr Earnest S. Lemieux, EOTR, dtd 30Jul67, p. 3.
41. Ibid., p. 4.
42. Lt Dean H. Pedersen, EOTR, dtd 17Sep67, p. 1.
43. Lt Conon J. Meehan, EOTR, dtd 30Sep67, p. 3.

**Seabees Chaplains in I Corps, October-December 1966**

44. LCdr Robert E. Blade, EOTR, dtd 12Nov67, p. 2.
45. Lt R. Blant Ferguson, EOTR, dtd 21Apr67, p. 1.

**Christmas 1966**

46. LtGen Lewis W. Walt, USMC, ltr to COC, dtd 6Aug66.
47. Lt Meehan, op. cit., p. 4.

**PART IV****The Heights and the Depths****CHAPTER 9****ENCOURAGING AND GIVING  
JANUARY-DECEMBER 1967**

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from Chief of Chaplains' historical files and EOTRs, located in the COC Historical Reference Files, COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

1. DOD, *Selected Manpower Statistics*, FY 1980 (Washington,

1981), lists 4,267 Marines killed in hostile action in Korea and 23,744 wounded.

2. By mid 1972, 12,926 Marines had been killed, another 88,542 Marines wounded, compared to 19,733 Marines killed and 67,207 wounded in World War II.

3. For chronologies and statistics see *New York Times*, 28Jan73, p. 25; *Time*, 6Nov72, pp. 22-29.

4. *New York Times*, 28Jan73, p. 25.

5. "End of Vietnam War in Sight," *U.S. News & World Report*, 11Sep67, pp. 44-45.

#### Combat Ministry—Early 1967

6. Capt Henry T. Lavin, ltr to COC, dtd 12May67.

7. Ibid.

8. Lt Francis K. Urbano, EOTR, dtd 12Mar68, p. 1.

9. Lavin, op. cit.

10. Lt John J. Wilson, EOTR, dtd 1Feb68, p. 1.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 2.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Lt Conon J. Meehan, EOTR, dtd 24Oct67, p. 2.

16. Lt Clark J. Tea, EOTR, dtd 12Dec68, p. 1.

17. Ibid., p. 2.

18. Lt Lester L. Westling, EOTR, dtd 1Nov67, p. 1.

19. Ibid., p. 3.

#### The Chaplain Civic Action Program

20. Capt Francis L. Garrett memo to CG III MAF, dtd 21Oct65.

21. 3d MarDiv Chaplain Quarterly Narrative Report of Chaplains' Activities, 1Jan - 31Mar67, dtd 5Apr67, Section VI, p. 2.

22. Capt Francis L. Garrett, ltr to COC, dtd 20Jul66.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. News Release, "Methodist Information," dtd 9Mar67.

#### Easter

26. Capt E. Vaughn Lyons, informal report to COC, dtd 3May67.

#### Summer Combat

27. Cdr Joseph E. Ryan, ltr to COC, dtd 6Jul67.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Mrs. Edna M. Hawkins, ltr to LtGen Lewis W. Walt, dtd 15Aug67. See also *Leatherneck*, Aug67, p. 65.

31. LCdr Preston C. Oliver, ltr to CHC Historian, dtd 8Aug67.

32. Ibid.

33. Lt John L. Seibert, ltr to COC, dtd 4Oct67.

34. Ibid.

35. Lt Lester L. Westling, Jr., EOTR, dtd 1Nov67, p. 3.

#### "Greater Love Hath No Man..."

36. Chaplain, 3d MarDiv, memo to Force Chaplain, FMFPAC, dtd 5Sept67.

37. Lt Conon J. Meehan, EOTR, dtd 24Oct67, p. 1.

38. Accounts of the action are based upon the proposed citation for the Medal of Honor, eyewitness reports of the action, and a report forwarded by Chaplain Capodanno's immediate relief, Chaplain Kelly.

39. Cdr Carl A. Auel, quoted from an article in the *Chaplain Corps Bulletin*, Aug70.

40. Capt David Casazza, memorial remarks at the dedication of the Capodanno Memorial Chapel.

41. COC News Release No. MGP-3 69.

42. LCdr Eli Takesian, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.

#### I Corps Pacification Efforts

43. COC news release, "Our Man in Vietnam", dtd 14Mar67, p. 3.

#### Changes and Administration

44. Capt Robert C. Fenning, EOTR, dtd 1Nov68, p. 1.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Capt Robert C. Fenning, ltr to Force Chaplain, FMFPAC, dtd 22Dec67, p. 2.

48. Capt Robert C. Fenning, Sermon at Memorial Service for MajGen Bruno A. Hochmuth, copy included in EOTR, dtd 1Nov68.

49. Capt David Casazza, EOTR, dtd 16Sep67, p. 2.

50. Lt James D. Pfannenstiel, ltr to COC Historian, dtd 27Dec78.

51. Ibid.

## CHAPTER 10

### AGONIZING AND REASONING JANUARY-DECEMBER 1968

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from Chief of Chaplains' historical files and EOTR located in the COC historical files, COC office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

1. *U.S. Marines in Vietnam 1954-1973. An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography*, (Washington: History & Museums Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), p. 93.

2. COC Ecclesiastical Public Affairs News Releases 5727/458, 5727/456, dtd 26Feb68.

3. Force Chaplain, III MAF memo 5050/1, dtd 5Feb68.

4. COC Ecclesiastical Public Affairs News Release 5727/466, dtd 10Jan68.

5. Ibid., p. 2.

#### Ministry Along the DMZ

6. Lt James H. Rutherford, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.

7. Ibid.

8. LCdr John W. McElroy, EOTR, n.d., pp. 1 and 2.

9. Capt John E. Zoller, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.

10. LCdr John F. Sibert II, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.

11. Ibid.

#### The Tet Offensive

12. NavSupAct, Saigon, "Tet-Vietnam" (Saigon: Naval Support Activity), Oct67.

13. *Marines in Vietnam 1954-1973*, op. cit. p. 292.



14. Lt John J. LePore, EOTR, dtd 25May68, p. 2.
15. Lt Bobby W. Myatt, EOTR, dtd 3Oct69.
16. *Washington Post*, 21Feb68, p. 22.
17. Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, *The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945-1975*, 5 Vols. (Washington, 1977), Vol 5, p. 157.
18. Cdr Carl A. Auel, report to COC, dtd 1Mar68, p. 2.
19. *Ibid.* p. 3.

#### The Siege of Khe Sanh

20. Lt Ray H. Stubbe, ltr to Mr. Royston L. Jones with copy to COC, dtd 8Apr68, p. 2.
21. Lt Ray W. Stubbe, narrative supplied to Chaplain Corps Historian, dtd 7Feb68.
22. Lt William R. Hampton, "In the 20th Century Catacombs," *The Lutheran Standard*, 30Apr68.
23. Account taken largely from Capt John E. Zoller, COC, USN, ltr to COC, dtd 9Dec68.
24. Seibert, op. cit., p. 2.
25. Rutherford, op. cit., p. 4.
26. Capt John E. Zoller, ltr to COC, dtd 10Oct68.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

#### The 27th Marines

28. Lt Michael P. O'Neil, EOTR, n.d., p. 1.
29. LCdr Merrill C. Leonard, EOTR, n.d., p. 1.
30. *Ibid.* p. 2.
31. Lt Michael P. O'Neil, EOTR, n.d., p. 3.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Lt Merlin E. Huebschman, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.

#### The Ministry of Mercy

34. Leatherneck Association, *Ambassadors in Green* (Washington, 1971), p. 143.
35. "Chaplain stays on for needy cause," *The Observer*, (Command Information Division, Office of Information, MACV) 24Apr68, p. 9
36. U.S. Navy Chaplains Division Ecclesiastical Public Affairs News Release Ser. No. 5720/655, dtd 7Jan70, p. 5.
37. *Ibid.* p. 6.

#### The 3d Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital

38. Zoller, op. cit., p. 6.
39. World Relief Commission Press Release, "Marine Tradition Lives on at Hoa Khanh," dtd 1May72.

#### Ministry Grows at the Force Logistic Command

40. Cdr Beryl C. Burr, EOTR, dtd 1Apr68, p. 5.

#### Dealing with Debate

41. COC Press Release: "Should We Be There?," COC Files No. 5727/613, dtd 7Jan69, p. 2.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
43. Lt Galen H. Myer, EOTR, dtd 20Dec68, p. 1.
44. CMC, ltr to COC, dtd 19Oct68.

## CHAPTER 11

### SWEATING AND PRAYING (1969-1972)

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from Chief of Chaplains' historical files and EOTR located in the COC Historical Reference Files, COC Office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

#### Activity in the Field

1. Capt John E. Zoller, ltr to COC, dtd 2Mar69, p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 3
3. LCdr David E. Brock, quoted by Captain John E. Zoller, ltr to COC, dtd 10May69, p. 2.
4. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, dtd 27Feb69, p. 1.
5. Capt John E. Zoller, ltr to COC, dtd 2Mar69, p. 5.
6. COC Ecclesiastical News Release No. 5720/658, dtd 7Jan79, p. 13.
7. Lt Bryant R. Nobles, EOTR, dtd 1Sep70, p. 1.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

#### Redeployment Begins

10. Lt Bernard J. Grochowski, EOTR, n.d., p. 1.

#### Personal Response Continuity

11. Cdr Neil M. Stevenson, EOTR, dtd 30Jul69, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Cdr John T. Beck, ltr to COC, dtd 7Mar71.
14. LCdr Earnest S. Lemieux, EOTR, dtd 1Jul67.
15. Cdr John T. Beck, CHC, USN, ltr to COC, dtd 2Feb71.

#### Civic Action and the CAP Ministry

16. Figures from Department of Navy Civic Action News Release, dtd 7Jan70.
17. Capt Eugene S. Swanson, Report to FMFPac Staff Chaplain, printed in Mar70 issue of Force Chaplains Newsletter.
18. Cdr Richard E. Bareiss, EOTR, n.d., p. 2.
19. Lt Frank C. Cleveland, rpt to FMFPac Staff Chaplain, dtd 26May70, p. 2.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
21. LCdr Dewey V. Page, EOTR, dtd 1Mar70, p. 3.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
23. Cleveland, op. cit., p. 7.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

#### New Concerns in Counseling

25. Capt John E. Zoller, EOTR, dtd 1Oct69, p. 6.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Lt Peter J. Cary, EOTR, dtd 1Nov79, p. 3.
28. LCdr John H. Kaelberer, EOTR, dtd 1Aug70, p. 1.

29. Lt William E. Bray, EOTR, dtd 1 Nov69, p. 3.
30. LCdr James G. Goode, EOTR, dtd 15Nov69.
31. Ibid.
32. Lt Peter J. Cary, op. cit., p. 4.
33. Capt John E. Zoller, EOTR, dtd 1Oct69, p. 7.
34. Cdr Richard A. McGonigal, EOTR, dtd 1Mar67, p. 6.

#### Chapel Construction

35. LCdr Richard D. Black, rpt to Division Chaplain, quoted in 3d Marine Division Chaplain Report on 3d Marine Division chapels attached to EOTR, dtd 1Oct68.
36. LCdr Ronald G. DeBock, quoted for *The Link*, p. 7.

#### Reflections

37. Lt Frank D. Minjal, EOTR, dtd Apr71, p. 4.
38. Lt Frank C. Jordan, EOTR, dtd 1Jan67, p. 4.
39. Capt David J. Casazza, EOTR, dtd Jun67, p. 7.
40. Cdr Connell J. Maguire, EOTR, dtd 1Sep66, p. 5.
41. Lt John J. Lepore, EOTR, dtd 25May68, p. 2.
42. Capt Henry T. Lavin, EOTR, dtd Oct67, p. 2.
43. LCdr John H. Kaelberer, EOTR, dtd Aug70, p. 2.
44. LCdr William Childers, EOTR, dtd Sept65, p. 2.
45. LCdr Eugene B. Davis, EOTR, n.d., p. 3.
46. Lt William D. Weaver, EOTR, dtd May69, p.3.
47. LCdr Anthony C. Volz, ltr to COC, dtd 10Jun71.
48. LCdr Robert W. Bedingfield, EOTR, dtd 20Jun69, p. 3.

## Appendix A

# Religious Denomination Short Titles Chaplains Corps, United States Navy

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AME	African Methodist Episcopal Church
AMEZ	African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
ABA	American Baptist Association
ABC	American Baptist Churches
AG	Assemblies of God
ARP	Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church
AGC	Associated Gospel Churches
BBF	Baptist Bible Fellowship
BGC	Baptist General Conference
BMAA	Baptist Missionary Association of America
BRETH	Brethren
CBC	Central Bible Church
CMA	Christian and Missionary Alliance
DC	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
CHCCC	Christian Churches and Churches of Christ
CME	Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
CR	Christian Reformed Church
CS	Christian Science
CC	Churches of Christ
CCCU	Churches of Christ in Christian Union
CGAI	Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)
CGCT	Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)
CGGC	Church of God General Conference
CGIC	Church of God In Christ
CGP	Church of God of Prophecy
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
LDSR	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Reorganized
N	Church of the Nazarene
CUBC	Church of the United Brethren in Christ
CB	Conservative Baptist Association of America
CCCC	Conservative Congregational Christian Conference
ECCA	Evangelical Covenant Church in America
ECC	Evangelical Congregational Church
EFCA	Evangelical Free Church in America
FM	Free Methodist Church of North America
FWBAPT	Free Will Baptist
GAGB	General Association of General Baptists
GARB	General Association of Regular Baptist Churches
IFCA	Independent Fundamental Churches of America
ICFG	International Church of Foursquare Gospel
J	Jewish

KYMF	Kansas Yearly Meeting of Friends
LCC	Liberal Catholic Church
LCA	Lutheran Church of America
LMS	Lutheran, Missouri Synod
ALC	Lutheran, American
AELC	Lutheran, Association of Evangelical
MISS	The Missionary Church
M	Moravian Church
NACCC	National Association of Congregational Christian Churches
NBCUS	National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
NBCA	National Baptist Convention of America
NFBC	National Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches
OBSC	Open Bible Standard Church
OCA	Orthodox Church of America
ORTH	Orthodox, Greek
ORTH	Orthodox, Russian
OP	Orthodox Presbyterian
PCG	Pentecostal Church
PE	Protestant Episcopal
PH	Pentecostal Holiness Church
PB	Plymouth Brethren
PCA	Presbyterian Church of America
PUS	Presbyterian in the U.S.
UP	Presbyterian, United, USA
CP	Presbyterian, Cumberland
RPES	Presbyterian, Reformed (Evangelical Synod)
PM	Primitive Methodist
PNBC	Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
RCA	Reformed Church in America
RC	Roman Catholic
SA	Salvation Army
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SB	Southern Baptist
UCC	United Church of Christ
UM	United Methodist
UU	Unitarian Universalist
W	Wesleyan Church

## Appendix B

# Navy Chaplains In Vietnam, 1962-1972

The names, ranks, denominations, dates, and units were derived from materials available in the historical files of the Chief of Chaplains' office, supplemented by the comments of reviewers and other knowledgeable personnel, and represent the best information available to the author and editors.

Name and Rank		Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
<b>1962</b>				
LCdr	S. Baez	UP	Jul62	MAG-16
<b>1964</b>				
Lt	T.W. Kelly	RC	Jan64	MAG-16
Lt	E.E. Jayne	UM	May64	MCB-3
LCdr	J.C. Haney	M	Jun64	MCB-4
Lt	F.M. Gothard	M	64-66	MCB-1
Lt	R.D. Heim	UP	Sep64	Sub Unit 2
Cdr	H.W. Holland	SB	Oct64	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	W.A. Stewart	SB	Oct64	1st MarDiv
Lt	P.L. Toland	RC	Dec64	MAG-16
<b>1965</b>				
LCdr	R.A. Long	RC	Jan65	MAG-12
LCdr	H.F. Lecky, Jr.	L	Jan65	MAG-16, IIIMAB
LCdr	R.M. Tipton	SB	Feb65	MWSG-17
LCdr	J. P. Byrnes	RC	Mar65	2nd Bn, 4th Mar
LCdr	W. P. Lane	SB	Mar65	1st Bn, 4th Mar
Cdr	P.J. Bakker	AB	Mar65	1st MAW Chaplain
Lt	J.F. Walker	PE	Mar65	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	P.H. Running	L	Mar65	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	T.O. Dillon	RC	Apr65	MAG-11
Cdr	J.J. O'Connor	RC	Apr65	3d MarDiv Chaplain
Lt	A.B. Craven	SB	Apr65	12th Mar
LCdr	C.A. Vernon	DC	Apr65	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	E.V. Bohula	RC	Apr65	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	L.E. Muenzler	CP	Apr65	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	C.L. Reiter	UM	May65	MAG-12
Lt	W.A. Hiskett	L	May65	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	J.T. Goad	SB	May65	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	R.C. Betters	UP	May65	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	E.M. Smith	PUS	May65	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	J.E. Seim	L	May65	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	P.F. Kahal	UCC	May65	3d Med Bn
Lt	P.E. Roswog	RC	May65	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv

Name and Rank		Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt	G.M. Sheldon	E	May65	MCB-10
LCdr	H.F. Lecky, Jr.	L	Jun65	MAG-10
LCdr	R.R. Smith	UM	Jun65	MAG-13
Lt	L.M. Malliett	N	Jun65	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	R.C. Franklin	RC	Jun65	3d FSR
Lt	R.C. Betters	UP	Jun65	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	J.J. Glynn	RC	Jun65	2d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	R.G. DeBock	AG	Jun65	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	W.M. Gibson	RC	Jun65	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	R.W. Hodges	CS	Jun65	1st Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	R.J. Usenza	RC	Jun65	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	P.J. Dowd	RC	Jul65	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	P.D. Maclean	PE	Jul65	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	R.E. Earnest	CGAI	Jul65	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	R.C. Osborn	UM	Jul65	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	A.D. Seeland	UM	Jul65	FLSG, 3d MarDiv
Lt	H.K. Loeffler	L	Jul65	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	G.R. McHorse	SB	Jul65	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	T.A. Saygers	M	Jul65	MCB-11
Capt	J.L. Wissing	RC	Aug65	3d MarDiv Chaplain
LCdr	A.W. Ekkens	UP	Aug65	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	D.C. Hinderer	SB	Aug65	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	C.J. Maguire	RC	Aug65	1st MarDiv Chaplain
Cdr	H.S. Karras	GO	Aug65	AsstDv Chaplain
LCdr	C.C. Kary	AB	Aug65	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	G.S. Cook	RCA	Aug65	1st Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	E.W. Epps	AB	Aug65	3d MedBn, 3d marDiv
Lt	D.J. Cory	LDSR	Aug65	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 3d marDiv
Lt	J.J. Scanlon	RC	Aug65	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	G.R. McHorse	SB	Aug65	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	E.H. Campbell	SB	Aug65	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	J.R. McNamara	RC	Aug65	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	S.L. Brandt	L	Aug65	Admin Asst Chaplain
Lt	H.K. Loeffler	L	Aug65	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	L.M. Malliet	N	Aug65	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	W.A. Stewart	SB	Aug65	1st SerBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	T.B. Handley	L	Aug65	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	D.J. Cory	RLDS	Aug65	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Capt	R.Q. Jones	BAP	Aug65	Force Chaplain, III MAF
Cdr	R. Mole	SDA	Aug65	Personal Response III MAF
Lt	R. Radasky	RO	Aug65	H&S Co, III MAF
Lt	R. Reiner	J	Sep65	H&S Co, III MAF
LCdr	M.W. Howard	SB	Sep65	MAG-36
LCdr	G.W. Taylor	RC	Sep65	MAG-12
Lt(jg)	G.T. Richards	SB	Sep65	MWHG-1
Lt(jg)	J.R. Daly	RC	Sep65	MAG-36
Lt	T.G. Ward	PE	Oct65	MWHG-1

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
LCdr D.L. Meschke	IFCA	Oct65	9th MAB
Lt(jg) M.E. Dunks	SB	Oct65	1st AmTracBn, 3d MarDiv
Capt F.R. Morton	L	Oct65	3d MarDiv Chaplain
Cdr M. Goodwin	SDA	Oct65	SerBn, 3d MarDiv
Capt F.L. Garrett	UM	Oct65	Force Chaplain III MAF
Lt R.A. Flanagan	RC	Oct65	1st ReconBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt B.E. Kane	RC	Oct65	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt W.J. Blank	RC	Oct65	1stTankBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.C. Swierenga	CR	Nov65	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr N.W. Hubble	RC	Nov65	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) D.T. McGrogan	RC	Nov65	MAG-16
Lt G.F. Tillet	UCC	Dec65	MCB-8
Lt(jg) R.A. Roy	RC	Dec65	5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr O.E. Kimzler	M	Dec65	12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr P.H. Lionberger	L	Dec65	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt L.L. Ahrnsbrak	AG	Dec65	B, MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.J. Glynn	RC	Dec65	C, MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.A. Roy	SB	Dec65	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 3d MarDiv

## 1966

Lt R.S. Collins	L	Jan66	MCB-11
Cdr J.C. Brown	SB	Jan66	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr T.A. Kenny	RC	Jan66	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LT(jg) R.W. Fullilove	SB	Jan66	HMM-163
Lt P.W. Pearson	UMC	Jan66	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.G. Hunkins	RC	Feb66	MCB-3
Lt D. Bowes	AB	Feb66	MCB-6
Lt R.K. Hansen	L	Feb66	2d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.W. McCarthy	AGC	Feb66	3d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.F. Wood	LDS	Feb66	3d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr H.C. Christmann	AG	Feb66	MAG-16
LT(jg) K.B. Abel	UP	Feb66	MAG-12
LT(jg) J.F. Weaver	L	Feb66	MAG-17
LT(jg) R.T. McCue	RC	Feb66	MAG-12
LT(jg) K.A. Mitchell	RC	Feb66	MAG-12
LCdr J.A. Baxter	UP	Feb66	3d AmTracBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.A. Baxter	SB	Feb66	1st MT Bn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.E. Barcus	AB	Feb66	1st Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr E.B. Ferguson	CP	Mar66	MCB-5
Lt D.C. Hathaway	N	Mar66	1st Med Bn, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.E. Shannon	UP	Mar66	MCB-40
LCdr R.E. Blade	UP	Mar66	MCB-53
Lt T.F. Johnson	UP	Mar66	MCB-7
Lt B.E. Kane	RC	Mar66	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt G.R. Witt	RC	Mar66	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr P.C. Hammerl	RC	Mar66	1st MarDiv Chaplain

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Cdr H.W. Holland	SB	Mar66	Asst Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
LCdr F.B. Baggott	SB	Mar66	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt E.F. Kane	RC	Mar66	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt S.J. Beach	CARB	Apr66	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt V.R. Capodanno	RC	Apr66	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt D.J. Cory	LDSR	May66	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.E. Harris	E	May66	2d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr J.A. Powell	RC	May66	4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr T.J. McDermott	RC	May66	1st Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.T. Collins	SB	May66	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt S.E. Almasy	RC	May66	1st Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.L. Hedwall	L	May66	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr W.A. Lane	SB	May66	3d SP Bn, 3d MarDiv
Lt G.M. Sheldon	E	May66	MCB-10
Lt W.C.L. Asher	AB	Jun66	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt L.L. Glover	UP	Jun66	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr F.E. Sims	SB	Jun66	4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr M.A. Ondo	RC	Jun66	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt G.I. McPartland	RC	Jun66	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt W.C.L. Asher	AB	Jun66	1st MT Bn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr E.S. Lemieux	M	Jul66	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt L.L. Glover	UP	Jul66	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.E. Doffin	SB	Jul66	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.J. Paciocco	SB	Jul66	1st Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt V.H. Krulak	E	Jul66	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt C.W. Erickson	L	Jul66	MCB-62
Lt J.E. Doffin	SB	Jul66	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr E.S. Lemieux	M	Jul66	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LT(jg) C.E. Bartholomew	UCC	Jul66	3d SP Bn, 3d MarDiv
Lt D.L. Olsen	L	Jul66	MCB-53
LCdr R.A. McGonigal	UP	Aug66	FMFPac, Personal Response
Lt W.C. Davis	UM	Aug66	1st LAAM Bn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr H.W. Jeffers	M	Aug66	Asst Wing Chaplain
LCdr D.L. Meschke	IFCA	Aug66	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt W.D. Bruner	M	Aug66	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr H.W. Bolles	E	Aug66	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.D. Ragland	SB	Aug66	9th MT Bn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr W.D. Brumer	M	Aug66	5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Capt D.J. Casazza	RC	Aug66	Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.E. Dorsey	DC	Aug66	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt E.W. Epps	AB	Aug66	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.R. Cunningham	UP	Aug66	1st Recon Bn, 1st MarDiv
Lt E.R. Toner	RC	Aug66	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) L.E. Stewart	UM	Aug66	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt L.E. Dorsey	PC	Aug66	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr R.S. Borden	UP	Sep66	1st AM, 3d MarDiv



Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
LCdr B. Geeza	RO	Sep66	1st MarDiv
Lt L.L. Westling	E	Sep66	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr E.B. Davis	PUS	Sep66	2d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt K.L. Hodder	SA	Sep66	MCB-133
LCdr J.S. Jenner	RC	Sep66	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt M.B. Burch	M	Sep66	9th EngBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.M. Weeks	L	Sep66	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr B. Geeza	EO	Sep66	III MAF
Cdr M.D. Seiders	EUB	Sep66	Asst Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) L.R. Lowry	RC	Sep66	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr J.R. Hershberger	L	Sep66	H&S Co., III MAF
Lt J.D. Graham	ABC	Sep66	HMM-163
Lt(jg) M.G. Witting	RC	Sep66	MAG-36
Lt(jg) D.B. Saltzman	J	Sep66	MWHG-1
Capt E.V. Lyons	UP	Oct66	Force Chaplain, III MAF
LCdr H.T. Connally	SB	Oct66	9th MAB
LCdr W.J. Milosek	RC	Oct66	MAG-11
Lt(jg) C.J. Meehan	RC	Oct66	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) R.D. Delleny	SB	Oct66	MCB-10
Lt B.V. Dennis	M	Oct66	MCB-71
Capt H.T. Lavin	RC	Oct66	Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
LCdr P. Oliver	PUS	Oct66	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt C.J. Meehan	RC	Oct66	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.E. Ammons	AB	Oct66	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.F. Harris	RC	Nov66	MCB-8
Lt H.L. Bergsma	CR	Nov66	MCB-74
Lt W.C. Kimble	SB	Nov66	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt B.G. Ryan	RC	Dec66	1st ReconBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) J.W. Wishard	RC	Dec66	MAG-16
Lt W.J. Winslow	DC	Dec66	1st MAW
Lt W.C. Topping	ACC	Dec66	MCB-121
LCdr R.L. Hustin	IFCA	Dec66	12th Mar, 3d MarDiv

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Cdr J.E. Ryan	RC	Jan67	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) P.N. Kearsley	LDS	Jan67	HqBn, FLSG
Lt(jg) L.J. Bentley	CARB	Jan67	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr J.E. Dwyer	UP	Jan67	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr E.D. Johnson	RC	Jan67	1st Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.O. Grubbs	CCAI	Jan67	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.C. Charnley	M	Jan67	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.F. Dwyer	UP	Jan67	MWSG-17
LCdr W.L. Niederhuth	DC	Jan67	MAG-13
Lt D.A. Amidon	UP	Jan67	1st LAAM Bn, 1st MAW

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt J.J. Nolan	RC	Jan67	MAG-13
Lt D.A. Mueller	L	Jan67	1st FSR
Lt E.P. Grose	PE	Jan67	1st FSR
Lt T.R. Pocock	LDS	Jan67	1st FSR
Lt R.D. Kemp	CDS	Jan67	1st FSR
Lt R.M. Lyons	RC	Feb67	1st Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr P.J. Ferrari	RC	Feb67	1st MAW Chaplain
LCdr F.W. McDonnell	RC	Feb67	MAG-12
Lt C.G. Smith	PUS	Feb67	MAG-12
Lt L.J. Bentley	CARB	Feb67	MWHG-1
Lt C.F. Jordan, Jr.	SB	Feb67	MAG-12
Lt E.H. Kicklighter	DC	Feb67	Asst Div Chaplain
Lt(jg) W.M. Hucabee	SB	Mar67	MCB-
Lt(jg) G.L. Cook	SB	Mar67	MCB-128
Cdr B.L. Burr	AB	Mar67	1st FSR
LCdr E.L. Takesian	UP	Apr67	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.R. Grosko	RC	Apr67	1st FSR
LCdr F.J. Urbano	RC	Apr67	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr P.P. Keeley	RC	Apr67	1st Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt L.S. Stanis, Jr.	SB	Apr67	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt H.T. Jones	SB	Apr67	1st Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) R.O. Swift, III	L	Apr67	3d EngBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt D.J. Williams	SB	Apr67	7th EngBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt M.C. Stine	L	Apr67	MCB-7
Capt L.J. McDonald	SB	May67	9th MAB
Lt(jg) J.R. Fiol	RPES	May67	MCB-53
Lt W.J. Houston	AB	May67	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt A.S. Kirk	LM	May67	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt N.D. Chasteen	UCF	May67	4th Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) J.M. Rigler	SB	May67	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.J. Wilson	SB	May67	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr B.G. Filmyer	RC	May67	4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt C.G. Smith	PUS	May67	1st FSR
LCdr J.E. Memorrow	RC	Jun67	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt B.W. Myatt	SB	Jun67	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt S.J. Habiby	DE	Jun67	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr H.T. Connally	SB	Jun67	26th RLT
Lt T.J. Rogers	SB	Jul67	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr J.W. McElory	RC	Jul67	3d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.W. Stubbe	L	Jul67	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt C.T. Kelly	RC	Jul67	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) K.L. Anderson	SB	Jul67	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr D.F. Fogarty	RC	Jul67	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr J.R. Hutton	UP	Jul67	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Cdr F.R. McAlister	PUS	Jul67	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.W. Robinson	M	Jul67	MAG-36

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
LCdr C.E. McFarland	M	Jul67	1st MarDiv
Lt A.A. Guetterman	CB	Jul67	1st MarDiv
LCdr A.M. Von Almen	DC	Jul67	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr G.A. Gunst	RC	Jul67	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr J.D. Yeich	L	Jul67	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) C.R. Parker	SB	Jul67	1st Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) J.W. Geer	SB	Jul67	1st ReconBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) K.E. Gohr	L	Jul67	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) W.E. Dodson	SB	Jul67	MCB-11
Lt R.R. Crowe	SB	Jul67	MCB-62
Cdr O. Schneider	UCC	Jul67	Asst. Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
LCdr N.A. Richard	RC	Jul67	3d Medical Bn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr G.E. Haroldson	CB	Aug67	MAG-16
Lt B.R. Walker	RC	Aug67	MAG-36
LCdr H.E. Philips	DC	Aug67	12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr J.F. Seibert	L	Aug67	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Capt J.A. Keeley	RC	Aug67	Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
Cdr M. Frimenko	RO	Aug67	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr C.B. McPhail	L	Aug67	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.E. Gordon	L	Aug67	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt M.D. O'Neil	RC	Aug67	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt A.A. Guetterman	CB	Aug67	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr B.R. Galland	RC	Aug67	1st FSR
LCdr L. W. Rushing	M	Sep68	1st FSR
Capt R.W. Below	SB	Sep67	Force Chaplain, III MAF
Lt S.M. Kirsch	J	Sep67	H&S Co., III MAF
Lt C.D. Harper, Jr.	UM	Sep67	MAG-16
Capt L.S. Darkowski	RC	Sep67	1st MAW Chaplain
Lt(jg) J.N. Rutherford	SB	Sep67	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr R.D. Black	UP	Sep67	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr C.A. Auel	L	Sep67	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr A.H. White	SB	Sep67	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt E.H. Luffman	SB	Sep67	1st Hosp Co, 1st MarDiv
Lt G.H. Meyer	CR	Sep67	1st SPBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.J. Lepore	RC	Sep67	1st MarDiv
Lt D.W. Pedersen	EPCA	Sep67	1st Hosp Co, 1st MarDiv
LCdr J.D. Brock	RFB	Oct67	1st TkBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt D.J. Hickey, Jr.	RC	Oct67	1st SPBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt G.J. Evans	RC	Oct67	1st EngBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) D.B. Reese	RC	Oct67	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg) R.P. Demers	RC	Oct67	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt M.L. Trawick	SB	Oct67	2d LAAMBn, 1st MAW
Lt(jg) F.W. Arneson	L	Oct67	MAG-36
Cdr J.T. Goad	SB	Oct67	1st FSR
LCdr J.A. Davis	SB	Oct67	1st FSR
Capt R.C. Fenning	LM	Oct67	Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt W.L. Driscoll	RC	Oct67	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.L. Heino	LM	Oct67	1st Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.R. Brett	RC	Oct67	3d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr J.W. Cohill	PUS	Oct67	4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt T.J. Rogers	SB	Oct67	9th MAB
Lt B.W. Attingnet	RC	Oct67	9th MAB
Cdr S. Darkowski	RC	Oct67	Asst. Force Chaplain, III MAW
Lt C.A. Tea, Jr.	E	Nov67	1st AmTrac Bn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr R.P. Beck	RC	Nov67	1st HospCo, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.C. Mulqueen	RC	Nov67	1st FSR
Lt L.J. Nichols	RC	Nov67	1st FSR
Cdr C.F. O'Gorman	RC	Nov67	MAG-11
Lt W.J. Klapps	RC	Nov67	MAG-16
Lt N.E. Knight	SB	Dec67	MWSG-17
Lt E.S. Haryasz	RC	Dec67	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv

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Lt F.A. Rothermel	SB	Jan68	MCB-9
Cdr J.V. Boreczky	RC	Jan68	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.F. Philips	SB	Jan68	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt K.T. Holland	RC	Jan68	MAG-12
Lt E.E. Keele	SB	Jan68	MAG-11
Lt R.V. Samples	SB	Jan68	MAG-13
Lt J.R. Perdew	SB	Jan68	1st LAAMBn, 1st MAW
Lt T.R. Pocock	LDS	Jan68	5th Comm Bn, FLC
Lt L.R. O'Hare	RC	Feb68	1stMarDiv WG
LCdr P.J. Everts	ECCA	Feb68	MAG-12
Lt H.W. Myers	L	Feb68	MCB-133
LCdr H.H. Bond	SB	Feb68	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr W.R. Hampton	L	Feb68	3d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Capt G.I. Paulson	AB	Feb68	1st FSR
Lt W.J. Brown	UP	Feb68	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt M.E. Huebschman	UCC	Feb68	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.A. Ecker	RC	Mar68	3d EngBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.B. Luebke, Jr.	ARP	Mar68	MCB-58
Lt W.P. Blackburn	SB	Mar68	MCB-3
Lt J.P. O'Connor	L	Mar68	MCB-7
Lt R.G. Kock	SB	Mar68	MCB-40
Lt E.J. Greco	RC	Mar68	1st Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr R.R. Scheer	L	Mar68	MAG-39
Lt R.O. Sullivan	DC	Apr68	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.J. Ecker	CC	Apr68	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.F. Kirstein	SB	Apr68	MCB-5
LCdr D.B. Fountain	AB	Apr68	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt M.F. Willard, Jr.	UP	May68	2d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv

Name and Rank		Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt	M.C. Slattery	RC	May68	1st Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	L.C. McAuliffe	RC	May68	1st AmTrac Bn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	W.D. Weaver	DC	May68	1stBn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	L.M. Richter	LMS	May68	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	M.H. Voth	E	May68	1st Bn, 3th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	R.C. Franklin	RC	May68	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	R. Kukler	RC	May68	1st Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	C.H. Taylor, Jr.	DC	May68	MCB-22
LCdr	M.H. Voth	E	May68	1st FSR
Lt	F.P. Thompson, Jr.	PUS	Jun68	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1stMarDiv
Lt	H.E. Starr	EFCA	Jun68	MCB-121
Lt	W.F. Maloney	RC	Jun68	MCB-12
Cdr	C.F. Schmid	UCC	Jun68	CBC Davisville
Lt	O.B. Forrester	SB	Jul68	MCB-4
Lt(jg)	J.W. Grove	UM	Jul68	MCB-11
Lt	W.B. Turner	LMS	Jul68	1st Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg)	W.E. Thompson, Jr.	SB	Jul68	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr	N.W. Hubble	RC	Jul68	3d MedBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	D.F. Brock	RC	Jul68	11th EngBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	R.W. Bedingfield	RCA	Jul68	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Capt	J.T. McDonnell	RC	Jul68	Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	G.L. Martin	UM	Jul68	Asst. Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	F.W. Cassady	UM	Jul68	7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	B.L. Simmons	SB	Jul68	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	B. Lovejoy	E	Jul68	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	A.E. Purdham	L	Jul68	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	I.C. Starling	UM	Jul68	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	M.H. Roberts	SB	Jul68	1st Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	C.B. Coleman	SB	Jul68	7th EngBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	V.P. Gerlock	RC	Jul68	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	N.M. Stevenson	UP	Jul68	Personal Response Officer, III MAF
Lt	R.E. Hannigan	RC	Aug68	TF X-Ray
Lt	F.J. Gill	RC	Aug68	1st FSR
LCdr	B.H. Struthers	AGC	Aug68	MWSG-17
Lt	G.B. Schumacher	PUS	Aug68	MACG-18
Cdr	A.W. Robertson	SB	Aug68	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	F.J. Gill	RC	Aug68	1st FSR
Cdr	M.J. Doermann	L	Aug68	12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	J.D. Allen	E	Aug68	3d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	R. Hensley	UP	Aug68	3d MarDiv
Lt	J.A. Zandstra	CR	Aug68	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	G.B. Hummer	UM	Aug68	3d Tank Bn, 3d MarDiv
Lt	S. Rubino	SB	Aug68	2d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr	V.E. Berg, Jr.	UP	Aug68	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	J.E. Bell	SB	Aug68	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	W.L. Childers	UM	Aug68	2d Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Capt J.E. Zoller	UM	Sep68	Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
Lt W.A. Will, Jr.	UM	Sep68	9th MarBrig
LCdr F.E. Whitaker	AB	Sep68	3d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt M.J. Hary	RC	Sep68	MCB-10
Capt R.H. Trower	L	Sep68	1st MAW Chaplain
LCdr W.F. Cusick	RC	Sep68	MAG-13
Lt J.N. Sestito	RC	Sep68	MAG-16
Lt R.K. Josphe	E	Sep68	MAG-11
Lt W.A. Will, Jr.	UM	Sep68	1st FSR
Capt R.W. Radcliffe	UM	Sep68	Force Chaplain, III MAF
Lt R.K. Joseph	DC	Sep68	H&S Co, III MAF
LCdr R.W. Harper	SB	Sep68	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt R.S. Lippert	L	Sep68	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.J. Horvat	RC	Sep68	11st MT Bn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr B.J. Ahern	RC	Oct68	5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.W. Black	UP	Oct68	9th EngBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr A.B. Pepper	UM	Oct68	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.M. Wright	RC	Oct68	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.K. Golie	AG	Oct68	1st ReconBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt S.B. Scott	UM	Oct68	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt P.J. O'Rourke	RC	Oct68	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt E.E. Richardson	RC	Oct68	Asst. Force Chaplain, III MAF
Lt D.F. DePascale	RC	Oct68	MWSG-17
Lt D.L. Krabbe	L	Oct68	MAG-12
Lt G.E. Long	SB	Oct68	MCB-8
LCdr L.W. Van Tassel	PUS	Oct68	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt R.A. Crist	E	Oct68	2d Bn, 4th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr W.E. Bray	UM	Oct68	1st Bn, 9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr L.E. Allred	SB	Nov68	3d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr C.R. Spencer	CGAI	Nov68	Admin Asst. 3d MarDiv
Lt D.L. Robinson	PE	Nov68	MCB-74
Lt B.C. Carson	CP	Nov68	MCB-40
Lt R.J. Greco	RC	Nov68	1st SpBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt D.M. Leitschuck	CB	Nov68	MAG-18
Lt J.A. Bruggeman	RC	Dec68	MAG-11
Cdr J.F. Carr	RC	Dec68	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.B. Fitzgerald	RC	Dec68	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr J.F. Carr	RC	Dec68	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv

## 1969

Capt M. Sullivan	RC	Jan69	Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
LCdr W.P. Ude	L	Jan69	1st FSR
Lt J.W. Butler	RC	Jan69	MAG-12

Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt R.N. Lockard	PE	Jan69	3d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.L. Sostrich	RC	Feb69	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt A.J. Libera	RC	Feb69	1st Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt D.E. Smith	LDS	Feb69	5th CommBn, III MAF
Capt R.M. Harrison	UM	Feb69	1st FSR
Lt D.E. Smith	RC	Feb69	1st FSR
Lt R.A. Moore	E	Feb69	MAG-11
Lt F.C. Cleveland	E	Feb69	MAG-13
Cdr R.M. Elder	E	Feb69	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.J. Bevins	RC	Feb69	3d Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt J.J. Conway	RC	Feb69	3d AmTracBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr A.S.M. Kirkland	N	Mar69	1st TKBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr G.W. Cox	BGC	Mar69	1st Hosp Co., 1st MarDiv
Lt I.H. Thompson	SB	Mar69	2d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt G.E. Garthe	UM	Mar69	MWHG-1
LCdr G.W. Cox	BGC	Mar69	9th MAB
Lt J.M. O'Brien	RC	Mar69	1st FSR
Lt J.L. Sostrich	RC	Mar69	3d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) C.A. Drake	RC	Mar69	2d Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt E.L. Bishop	E	Mar69	3d NCB
Lt J.L. Hall	SB	Mar69	MCB-3
Lt G.J. Dickson	NFB	Apr69	MCB-71
Lt V.E. Awes	L	Apr69	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Cdr J.F. Laboon, Jr.	RC	Apr69	3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr J. Dolaghan	ABC	Apr69	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt(jg) J.J. Richmond	RC	May69	MCB-133
Lt B.J. Grochowski	RC	May69	3d MarDiv
LCdr R.W. McCarthy	AGC	Jun69	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Lt J.R. Fiol	RPES	Jun69	3d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt Donoher	RC	Jun69	Admin Asst. 3d MarDiv
Lt W. Broughton	PE	Jun69	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt V.F. Germano	RC	Jun69	1st FSR
Lt R.A. Moore	E	Jun69	H&S Co., III MAF
LCdr D.V. Page	SB	Jul69	III CAG
LCdr L.E. Vogel	L	Jul69	Personal Response, III MAF
Lt A.V. Lawrence	SB	Jul69	MAG-12
Lt H.G. Cook	E	Jul69	MAG-16
LCdr W.F. Magor	UP	Jul69	1st MarDiv
LCdr R.J. Ecker	RC	Jul69	1st Bn, 12th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt T.O. Artwood, Jr.	E	Jul69	1st Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Cdr W.C. Fuller	SB	Jul69	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt W.C. Dike	UM	Jul69	3d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr E.L. Boyette	SB	Jul69	1st TkBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr R.A. Boyer	LCMC	Aug69	9th Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt W.J. Hultberg, Jr.	RC	Aug69	2d Bn, 5th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr L. Fiorino	RC	Aug69	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Cdr C.L. Keyser	E	Aug69	5th Mar, 1st MarDiv

Name and Rank		Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Cdr	W.R. Howard	SB	Aug69	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	R.G. DeBeck	AG	Aug69	HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Cdr	V.M. Smith	RC	Aug69	Asst. Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
Lt	A.L. Fiorino	RC	Aug69	2d Bn, 26th Mar, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	Roswog	RC	Aug69	MAG-13
Capt	H.C. Duncan	UM	Sep69	1st MAW Chaplain
LCdr	E.L. Gallagher, Jr.	RC	Sep69	MAG-16
Capt	E.S. Swanson	L	Sep69	Force Chaplain, III MAF
LCdr	T.E. Edwards	L	Sep69	1st FSR
Lt	J.J. Pierce	RC	Sep69	1st FSR
Lt	A.L. Fiorino	RC	Sep69	1st FSR
Lt	E.M. Hedberg	RC	Sep69	1st FSR
Lt	B.T. Visocky	RC	Sep69	1st Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	J.M. Gnall	RC	Sep69	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	E. Takesian	UP	Sep69	3d Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	E.F. Hughes	DC	Sep69	1st ReconBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	J.J. Pierce	RC	Sep69	1st Bn, 26th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	T. Edwards	L	Sep69	3d Bn, 26th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	B.R. Hubble	SB	Sep69	III MAF
Capt	R.E. Brengartner	RC	Sep69	Div Chaplain, 3d MarDiv
LCdr	T.E. Edwards	L	Sep69	9th MAB
Lt	J.J. Pierce	RC	Sep69	3d MarDiv
Lt	A.L. Fiorino	RC	Sep69	1st MarDiv
Lt	E.M. Hedberg	RC	Sep69	9th MAB
Lt	P.C. Lawson	SB	Sep69	3d TkBn, 3d MarDiv
Cdr	R.E. Bareiss	CB	Oct69	26th Mar
LCdr	E.H. Campbell, Jr.	SB	Oct69	2d Bn, 7th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	B.J. Grochowski	RC	Oct69	1st Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	P.W. McCure	UM	Oct69	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	F.X. Metznowar	RC	Oct69	2d Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	J.J. Conavad	RC	Oct69	4th Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	R.F. Grothaus	RC	Oct69	11st MTBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt(jg)	J.H. Rutherford	SB	Oct69	9th MAB
Lt	W.J. Klapps	RC	Oct69	3d MarDiv
Lt	V.E. Awes	L	Oct69	1st FSR
Lt	B.R. Nobles	SB	Oct69	1st FSR
Lt	W.J. Klapps	RC	Oct69	1st FSR
LCdr	F.W. McDonnell	RC	Oct69	Asst. Force Chaplain, III MAF
Lt	W.E. Outlaw, Jr.	UM	Oct69	MAG-18
Lt	P.J. Cary	RC	Oct69	MAG-18
Lt	J.G. Goode	DC	Nov69	MWSG-17
Lt	D.G. Page	SB	Nov69	MWSG-17
Lt	B.J. Grochowski	RC	Nov69	2d Bn, 3d Mar, 3d MarDiv
Lt	P.R. Pilarski	RC	Nov69	3d Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	J.F. Schaffer	UCC	Nov69	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	A.C. Volz	RC	Dec69	1st FSR



Name and Rank	Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
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Lt	W.R. May	RC	Dec69	1st FSR
Cdr	R.F. Hill	UCC	Dec69	1st MAW
Lt	J.C. Farrow	RC	Dec69	1st MAW

## 1970

Capt	H.F. Symons	UM	Jan70	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Capt	G.A. Rademacher	RC	Jan70	Div Chaplain, 1st MarDiv
Lt	J.R. Fletcher	LDS	Jan70	5th CommBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	E.A. Hamilton	RC	Jan70	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	C.E. Dorr	CB	Jan70	1st FSR
Lt	A. Boerger	RC	Jan70	1st MAW
Lt	J.R. Fletcher	LDS	Jan70	5th CommBn, III MAF
Lt	J.E. Dowers	AB	Feb70	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Cdr	H.F. MacCall, III	UP	Feb70	Asst. Chaplain, 1st MAW
LCdr	L.D. Cooper	DC	Mar70	MAG-11
Cdr	G.D. Landry	AB	Mar70	HqBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	J.C. Farrow	RC	Mar70	1st MarDiv
Lt	F.R. Zobel	UM	May70	MCB-5
Cdr	A.D. Prickett	SB	Jun70	1st MarDiv
LCdr	D.I. Olsen	ALC	Jul70	1st MedBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	P.F. Uhles	L	Jul70	1st EngBn, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	G.W. Evans	L	Jul70	11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	J.D. Mortitz	GARB	Jul70	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	W.A. Rowland, Jr.	CB	Jul70	11th MTBn, 1st MarDiv
Lt	Z.C. Mitchell, Jr.	SB	Jul70	1st MarDiv
Lt	F.L. Craven	RC	Jul70	1st MarDiv
Lt	L.G. Rupp	E	Jul70	1st MarDiv
Lt	A. Boerger	RC	Jul70	1st FSR
Capt	J.H. Carnes	SB	Jul70	1st MAW Chaplain
Cdr	K.J. Cottney	RC	Jul70	Asst. Chaplain, 1st MAW
Cdr	J.T. Beck	L	Jul70	Personal Response, III MAF
LCdr	O.L. Thacker	CGAI	Jul70	H&S Co., III MAF
Lt	F.S. Bianchino	RC	Aug70	II CAG
Lt	J.B. Fitzgerald	RC	Aug70	MAG-16
Cdr	G.B. Address	SB	Aug70	1st MarDiv
LCdr	M.L. Eyler	UCC	Aug70	1st MarDiv
LCdr	R.J. Dempsey	RC	Aug70	1st Bn, 1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	C.P. VanFrank, Jr.	SB	Aug70	MCB-4
LCdr	R.C. Wood	SB	Aug70	MCB-62
Lt	J.R. Smith	SB	Aug70	MCB-74
LCdr	J.W. Essinger	L	Sep70	2d Bn, 11th Mar, 1st MarDiv
Lt	F.D. Mintjal	RC	Sep70	1st MarDiv
Lt	F.W. Ryder	RC	Sep70	1st MAW
Lt	G.T. McMahon	RC	Sep70	1st MAW

Name and Rank		Denomination	Date Arrived in Vietnam	First Assigned Unit
Lt	R.D. Coapman	NACCC	Nov70	MAG-18
<b>1971</b>				
Lt(jg)	T.S. Carlson	CB	Jan71	MAG-16
Lt	F.W. Ryder	RC	Jan71	1st Mar, 1st MarDiv
LCdr	J.D. Regan	RC	Apr71	MAG-16
<b>1972</b>				
LCdr	T.W. Kuhn	RC	May72	MAG-12
LCdr	P.J. Holwager	DC	Sep72	Task Force Delta
LCdr	E.J. McMahan	RC	Sep72	MAG-11

# Appendix C

## List of Reviewers

Names are listed alphabetically by rank. Rank and status are those of the period at which the review of the manuscript was requested.

---

LtGen Victor A. Krulak, USMC (Ret)  
LtGen John H. Miller, USMC  
RAdm Francis L. Garrett, CHC, USN (Ret)  
MajGen Paul X. Kelley, USMC  
RAdm James W. Kelly, CHC, USN (Ret)

RAdm Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN (Ret)  
RAdm John J. O'Connor, CHC, USN (Ret)  
RAdm Neil M. Stevenson, CHC, USN  
RAdm Ross H. Trower, CHC, USN  
Capt Leonard L. Ahrnsbrak, CHC, USN

Capt Carl A. Auel, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt Samuel Baez, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt Richard D. Black, CHC, USN  
Capt Edwin V. Bohula, CHC, USN  
Capt Earl L. Boyette, CHC, USN

Capt David J. Casazza, CHC, USNR (Ret)  
Capt John H. Craven, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Col Edward P. Dupras, Jr., USMC (Ret)  
Capt George W. Evans, Jr., CHC, USN  
Capt Robert C. Fenning, CHC, USN

Capt John J. Glynn, CHC, USN  
Capt Walter A. Hiskett, CHC, USN  
Capt Edward E. Jayne, CHC, USN  
Capt Robert Q. Jones, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Col John H. King, Jr., USMC (Ret)

Capt Henry T. Lavin, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt Hugh F. Lecky, Jr., CHC, USN

Capt Connell J. Maguire, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt Leo J. McDonald, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt John R. McNamara, CHC, USN

Capt Frank R. Morton, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Col Thomas J. O'Connor, USMC (Ret)  
Capt James D. Pfannenstiel, CHC, USN  
Capt Paul H. Running, CHC, USN  
Capt Joseph E. Ryan, CHC, USN (Ret)

Capt Marlin D. Seiders, CHC, USN  
Capt James E. Seim, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Capt Eli Takesian, CHC, USN  
Col Leon N. Utter, USMC (Ret)  
Capt Robert H. Warren, CHC, USN

Capt John E. Zoller, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Cdr Peter J. Bakker, CHC, USNR  
Cdr Patrick A. Dowd, CHC, USN  
Cdr Nilus W. Hubble, CHC, USN  
Cdr Leroy E. Muenzler, CHC, USN

Cdr George P. Murray, CHC, USN (Ret)  
Cdr Paul L. Toland, CHC, USN  
LCdr William H. Gibson, CHC, USN  
LCdr Gary V. Lyons, CHC, USN  
LCdr John J. Scanlon, CHC, USNR

LCdr George M. Sheldon, CHC, USNR  
LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, CHC, USNR  
LCdr Herman F. Wendler, CHC, USN



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## *About the Author*

Captain Herbert L. Bergsma, official historian of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps from 1978 to 1980, researched, wrote, and edited this account of the chaplains who served with the Marines in Vietnam. His own tours of duty in Vietnam during 1967 and 1968 gave him first-hand insights into the assignment.

Chaplain Bergsma was commissioned in 1966, as a lieutenant (j.g.). In addition to submarine and destroyer service, he has served with Marines at Quantico, Virginia, and Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. In Vietnam, he was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74. He received a master of theology degree from the Princeton Theological Seminary in 1976.

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## COVERS

*Front: Chaplain Frederick E. Whitaker, chaplain for the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, holds religious services for men of Company M on a mountainous ridge-line north of the Rockpile. The Marines were participating in a search and clear operation near the DMZ. (Department of Defense Photo [USMC] A192846)*

*Back: The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.*

