

# The Battle of Tra Binh Dong

Lt Col James F. Durand, USMC, has presented an inspiring account of the incredible [battle of Tra Binh Dong](#) fought by the 11th Company, 3rd Brigade, 2nd ROK Marine Brigade, the 11-3 Blue Dragons in February 1967. Includes a slide show.

The approximately 300 11-3 ROK Marines at the village of Tra Binh Dong in the Chu Lai region were attacked by about 1,500 man NVA regiment on February 14, 1967 (we have also seen a figure of about 2,400 NVA). The Marines were attacked in two directions and the enemy managed to breach the perimeter defenses. SSgt Bae Jang Choon and his first squad, 3rd platoon, rather than abandoning their position, fought with bullets, then grenades, then entrenching tools, pick axes, and finally fists. Pfc Kim Myong Deok killed 10 enemy with his rifle as the enemy advanced on him. Sgt Lee Hak Won took hand grenades in both hands, waited for the enemy to approach, and at the very last moment, threw himself and the grenades on the advancing enemy killing himself and four NVA. Pfc Lee Young Bok lured the enemy to his position, slipped into a spider hole, then released several grenades as the enemy entered the trench.



President Park Chung-hee reviews the ROK Marine Corps' 2nd Brigade, the "Blue Dragons," which had been tabbed for deployment to Vietnam as a combat unit. Presented by [East Asian Affairs](#).



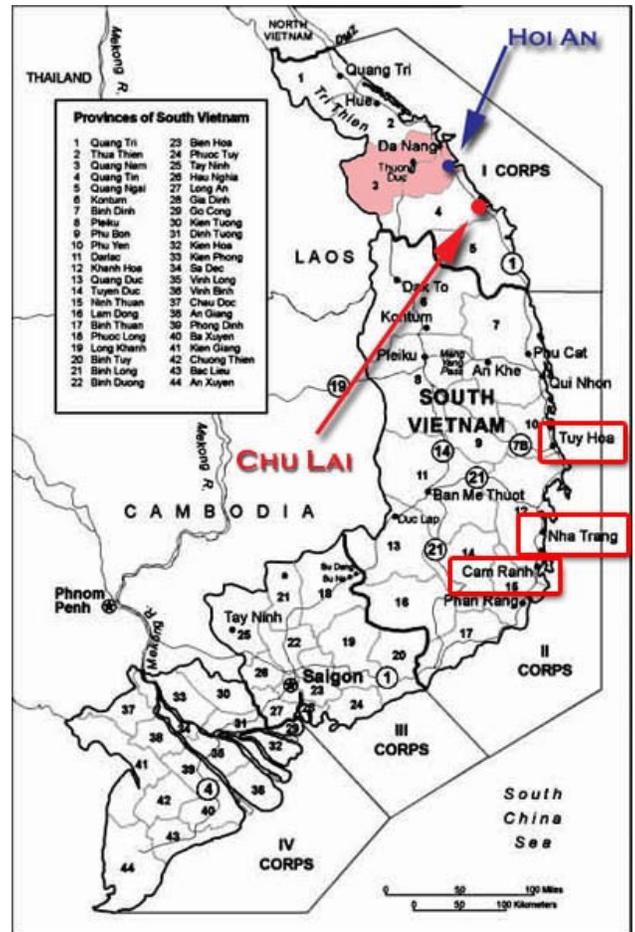
The Blue Dragon brigade was commanded by Brigadier General Yun Sang Kim, shown in this Defense Department photo presented by the USMC, "US Marines in Vietnam, 1967."

All the Blue Dragon brigade's officers had been trained by the USMC at Quantico or San Diego.

## Excerpts from

## Talking Proud Archives --- Military

### [The 2nd ROK Marine Brigade "Blue Dragons"](#)



The main message of this map is that the Blue Dragons moved from Cam Ranh Bay in a series of steps until they got to "Marine Country" of the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) in I Corps. The arrival of the ROK White Horse Division in 1966 enabled the ROK Marines to move north.

In August 1966, the Chu Lai region was added to the Dragons' area of responsibility (AOR). They were placed under the command of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) which was at the time in charge of operations in the northern I Corps abutting the DMZ. The Dragon's 1st Battalion arrived about three miles south of Chu Lai on August 1, 1966. The 2nd Battalion arrived in September. This freed the 1/26 Marines to replace Brigade Landing Team (BLT) 3/5 Marines aboard the Special Landing Force (SLF), at the time, the USS *Iwo Jima*.

The Dragons and the US Marines set up an arrangement where the US Marines would provide air assets and the Marines assigned these air assets to the Dragons just as if they were an American unit. The Marines had an organization known as the 1st ANGLICO, the 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. The 1st ANGLICO assigned its sub-unit one for duty in Vietnam in 1965. Its mission was to plan, coordinate, and conduct terminal control of fires in support of joint, allied, and coalition forces. Sub unit one was deployed to I Corps to make sure there was an air umbrella over the Blue Dragon Brigade in and out of the field. A two man fire control team was assigned to each ROKMC infantry company at all times.

# Interdiction near the DMZ

## Operations Hastings & Tally Ho

While the ROK Marines (Blue Dragons) were fully occupied south of DaNang in the Battle of Tra Binh Dong, the US Marines were engaged further north with the NVA 324th-B Division in **Operation Hastings** near the DMZ. Also in the DMZ area, a separate but related operation named **Tally Ho** was initiated to locate and interdict enemy vehicles, guns & munitions, and personnel being transported through the sanctuary DMZ. The Project CHECO Southeast Asia Report, Operation TALLY HO, dated 21 November 1966, represents the development of the air interdiction program in the DMZ from its inception on 20 July 1966 through 31 Aug 1966. The results of this action, as reflected in official correspondence, reviews and interviews, are significant in evaluating the area denial operations, under the Tally Ho concept. This program, which was a follow-on to Tiger Hound (air interdiction in Laos), began 30 miles inside the southern perimeter of Route Package 1 in NVN, then expanded to include the DMZ.

Read the full Checo report at: [ADA586299](http://ADA586299)

**The 362nd TEWS unit history, Jan-Mar 1967, states:** All missions flown in the EC-47 were under Project Phyllis Ann. Nine missions flown were in support of operations *Prairie, Pickett, Paul Revere, and Sam Houston*. Development missions were flown in the *Steel Tiger, Tiger Hound and Tally-Ho* areas. During February 1967, the 362<sup>nd</sup> was pleased to receive a letter of appreciation from the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, US Army. This letter of appreciation specifically mentioned the 362<sup>nd</sup> support of operation *Paul Revere IV*. The timely and accurate reconnaissance information provided by the 362<sup>nd</sup> enabled the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to inflict heavy losses in men and material on the enemy. All the officers and men of the 362<sup>nd</sup> were commended for their performance which was vital to the success of this operation.

**The 6994th Security Squadron history, Jan-Jun 1967, confirms** a 15 February 1967 timeline entry that their MACV directed ARDF area was expanded to include the coastal area of southern North Vietnam. Chapter IV, Mission Accomplishments, lists a number of interesting statistics for the squadron at Saigon and the 2 detachments at Nha Trang and Pleiku for the first 6 months of 1967: *Compass Dart* aircraft accomplished 5,251 ARDF missions. A total of 2,924 missions provided close tactical support for allied operations, and 2,327 were accomplished for continuity and development. ARDF results totaled 24,431 fixes and cuts. A total of 7,692 fixes were identified to specific VC/NVA transmitters and 3,488 were predesignated MACV priority targets. Much of the planning and execution of both ground and air actions stemmed from this ARDF information.

From 24 September 1966, *Drill Press* (EC-47 SIGINT Collection) maintained uninterrupted surveillance of low echelon NVA communications in the DMZ area. Staging from their operating location at Hue/Phu Bai, the project provided USM-808 with an invaluable source of intelligence relevant to tactical activities in the area. On 26 May, the Commanding General, USASA, in a message to the Director, National Security Agency commented: "Current *Drill Press* operations, flying against VC comms in and near the DMZ with USM-808 acting as CMA, are proving to be invaluable. Traffic, encrypted in readable systems, is intercepted on every sortie and immediately turned over to the cryptanalytic and linguistic personnel in the P&R section at USM-808 following the flight." Targeted against those NVA targets known or suspected to be passing traffic in readable, low level, crypto systems (PAVN 324B NVA Division and associated communications), *Drill Press* collected more than 78,000 minutes of manual Morse traffic. Eighty percent of this traffic was unique to USM-808 sources and 83.5 percent of the traffic was mission intercept. More than 3,150 messages were contained in the traffic, 64 percent of which were readable and resulted in the generation of more than 2,160 intelligence reports.

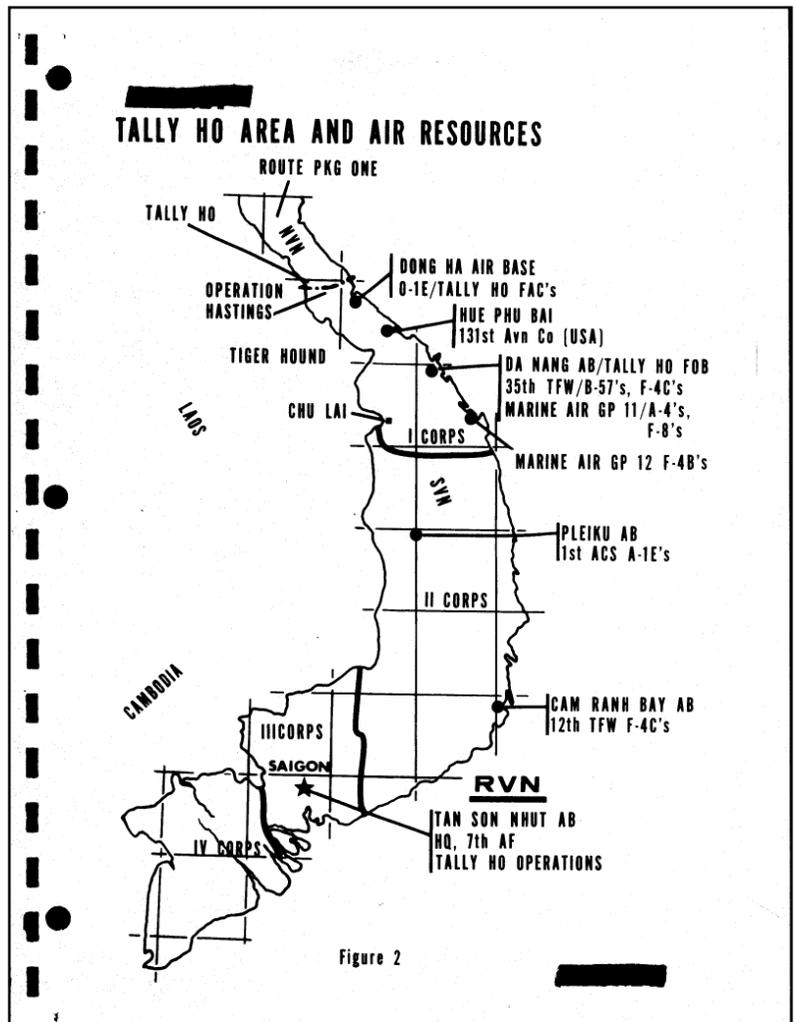
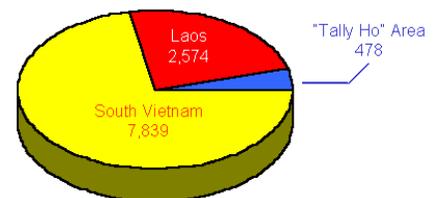


Figure 2

Distribution of EC-47 Sorties, 1967  
10,891 Total



Source: CHECO Report