

# REALITIES OF WAR



▶ **RIGHT:** Downtown Saigon, TET January 1968

▼ **BELOW:** Ho Chi Minh Trail - Laos and Cambodia

▲ **BELOW RIGHT:** Lima Site 20A - CIA and Hmong Forces headquarters, EC-47 ground map reference calibration site, Long Tieng, Laos

PHOTO BY: Tom Claytor



## The EC-47 Over Laos

Activated in 1969, Detachment 3 of the 6994th SS was tasked by the U.S. Embassy and Central Intelligence Agency to support the ground forces protecting the Laotian provincial capital of Luang Prabang close to the Plain of Jars...and to locate and identify opposing forces using the Ho Chi Minh Trail to move troops and supplies through the Bolavens Plateau and into Cambodia.



CAP-53 crash site after aircraft destroyed by U.S. airstrikes - April 22, 1970



EC-47 - #029 wingtip anti-aircraft artillery damage



EC-47 - #102 after enemy mortar attack

## The TET Offensive

Some 70,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) forces launched the TET Offensive (named for the lunar new year holiday), a coordinated series of fierce attacks on more than 100 cities and towns in South Vietnam.

On the evening of January 31, 1968, the NVA and VC made their most daring attack of the war, a massive raid against Saigon and Tan Son Nhut Air Base. From January 31 through February 3, the 360th TEWS and 6994th SS were able to launch only four aircraft as the others were grounded by battle damage. Nevertheless, these crews fixed 453 enemy targets, 70 percent within 20 miles of Tan Son Nhut and Saigon. The complete record of the reaction to these fixes is not available, but it is known that on February 4, artillery and airstrikes hit 14 fixes.

Also during TET at Nha Trang Air Base, the 361st TEWS/6994th SS crews flew eight base support missions and fixed 40 targets to be hit by air and naval fire. On January 31, they produced 11 fixes, which established that the enemy was closer to Nha Trang than other intelligence had indicated. The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, I Field Force, commented:

**"There is no question that this added support in the Nha Trang area [and] contributed to the ultimate local military and political victory."**

## Tracking the COSVN Headquarters

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced that American troops had crossed into Cambodia in hot pursuit of NVA forces. Their objective was to capture the Central Office, South Vietnam (COSVN), which served as the VC/NVA headquarters in the south. In early May, acting on an ARDF fix, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces struck a COSVN area known as "The City" and captured a vast store of materials. It was enough to set back NVA offensive plans for a definable period of time, though COSVN itself was never captured. The 6994th SS aircrews continued to fly ARDF missions over Laos and Cambodia to help the U.S. verify NVA compliance with the Paris Peace Accords. An EC-47 crew, call sign Baron 52, was shot down during one of these missions on February 5, 1973.

## ALL GAVE SOME SOME GAVE ALL



Vietnam Memorial - Washington, D.C.  
PHOTO BY: Christina Phensy, aedesign.wordpress.com

**"Some of your countrymen were unable to distinguish between their native dislike for war and the stainless patriotism of those who suffered its scars. But there has been a rethinking and now we can say to you, and say as a nation, thank you for your courage."**

**Ronald Reagan, 40th President, United States of America**



▲ **ABOVE:** The casket for the Baron 52 crew is carried to its final resting site

▶ **RIGHT:** Baron 52 headstone - Arlington Cemetery



▶ **LEFT:** EC-47s fly the "Missing Man" tribute formation during memorial service for the Tide 86 crew at Nha Trang - May 15, 1967

▼ **BELOW:** Program cover for Tide 86 memorial service



◀ **LEFT:** Family members accept the flag of their fallen father



Memorial Service for Tide 86