

# TOWER OF DARKNESS

10101

TELLER



# Savage Worlds

## Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness

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*Savage Worlds* created by Shane Lacy Hensley

**Dedicated to:** The men and women who fought in Southeast Asia. May you find respite from the horrors you faced, both on and off the battlefield.

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# Welcome to the Jungle

Something dark stirs in the distant and forgotten places of Vietnam. Something vile that has pushed man to wage relentless war for millennia. It whispers from the deep vine-choked jungles and the high mist-shrouded mountains. It lurks in ancient temples and slithers along murky waterways. It even creeps through the dirty back alleys of the bombed-out cities of Hanoi and Hue.

The evil feeds on violence and death. The long war with the Japanese, then the French, and now the Americans has made it strong. Soldiers from both sides must battle this evil. Some will confront it—some will embrace it, but all must face it.

The time is either the 1950s or the 1960s. The place is Vietnam. You're a French or American soldier about to start a tour of duty through this violent land.

Your journey will test not only your courage under fire but your sanity as well. Besides the murderous Vietnamese Communist regulars and sly guerillas, you might just run into other things out there in the bush—things that man was not meant to know.

So strap on your rucksack and lock and load your weapon. You're about to embark on a tour of darkness.

## In Country

Vietnam may have seemed like a tropical paradise to those who flipped through the pages of National Geographic magazine in 1950, but for most of its history, this sliver of Southeast Asia has been a vicious battlefield. While America's sons are being sent to fight in the jungles of Vietnam, more is at stake than

the fall of the South to the communist North. A desperate struggle, worse than anything seen back home on TV, is being waged from the rice fields and marshy plains of the Mekong Delta to the steaming jungles and mist-shrouded heights of the mountains of the Chaine Annamitique.

Once you and your buddies have arrived at your unit, it's time to start your tour of duty. But before you go out and get yourselves killed, take some time to find out what you can expect during your time in-country. The following sections cover the important points every soldier should be aware of. Pay attention and you just might make it out okay.

## The Environment

Listen up, troop!

Welcome to the 'Nam! You're gonna love it.

The average temperature is officially "damn hot," there's enough rain annually to fill the Mississippi, monsoon season brings flash floods and mudslides, and if Charlie don't get you, the snakes, bugs, and other vermin might.

## It Ain't the Heat

Okay, it is the heat. And the humidity too. And it's going to make the weight of your ruck feel like you're carrying your mother-in-law on your back.

Keep plenty of water on you and you'll be fine. Forget and you'll be doing the "kickin' chicken" from heat stroke. And don't forget to take your salt tablets daily—when you sweat, you lose salt.

## Creatures

The jungles of Vietnam are home to 133 species of snake, 131 of which are venomous! Cobras, kraits (with their distinctive yellow and black bands) and the bright green bamboo vipers are among the most common and most deadly serpents in this part of the world. A bite from one of these can kill within an hour.

You'll also get to know our friend the leech. Wherever you find water, you'll find leeches. They won't kill you, so buck up and scrape off.

Worse than the leeches are the bugs. There are plenty of creepy-crawlies out in the bush, and every one of them will take a piece of meat from you if you'll let them. Mosquitoes are the most dangerous. Those pesky buggers are big as hornets out here and twice as mean. You'll also want to watch out for poisonous spiders, toads, and centipedes and a whole bunch of creepy-crawlies that science hasn't even categorized. And God help you if you fall into an ant nest.

Here at the base you might get to know some of our local vermin. Rats the size of Chihuahuas love to nest in and around our latrines and mess halls. Keep your mosquito netting around you and they probably won't chew on your fingers and toes while you're asleep.

## Meet Charlie

What to say about Charlie? By our standards, he's mean, cruel, and clever as a fox. From the Viet Minh of the 1950s to the Viet Cong and their regular North Vietnamese Army counterparts, they are an implacable foe. Thoroughly indoctrinated into a Maoist-dominated Communism mindset, most are used to living in the primitive conditions of the bush. They survive on handfuls of rice, barely potable water, and a tenuous supply chain that would force any Western army to come crawling out of the jungle, begging to surrender. To the French and Americans after them, the Communist forces seem like some weird sort of jungle creature immune to hardship or discomfort, and it's easy to see how they're regarded as subhumans.

Even their fellow countrymen in the South can't match their tenacity. The "Marvins" of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) just don't seem to have the stomach for the fight that their northern neighbors do, and would rather throw down their weapons or surrender when the going gets tough. And speaking of surrender, I've got one word for you round eyes—don't. The Viet Minh and Viet Cong, being guerillas, follow the Geneva Convention only when it suits them, which is about never. Expect to be killed outright if lucky, or tortured and killed if you're not. At

best you'll be taken to a POW camp if you get picked up by the regular NVA troops, where you'll spend an eternity in limbo. French troops from Dien Bien Phu spent years before seeing France again, and some American troops stayed at the Hanoi Hilton well past the end of the war.

## Character Types

Here's more information on the types of characters you might play in *Tour of Darkness* for those not so familiar with the military.

**Civilian:** A fair number of civilians can be found throughout Vietnam. Some are spooks working for the Central Intelligence Agency, others are reporters or perhaps archaeologists studying ancient temples.

**Forward Air Controller:** FACs are actually Air Force servicemen assigned to Army or Marine ground units to assist in guiding in airstrikes. Despite their alternate service branch, FACs are assumed to be part of the unit they're attached to and fall under their chain of command while in the field.

**Forward Observer:** This hero is an artilleryman trained to direct fire from supporting batteries for units in the field. Although equipped as a rifleman, the FO stays close to the company commander ready to call a fire mission. His experience with maps means he often navigates for the unit as well.

**Green Beret:** contrary to the public's perception, these elite soldiers were deployed to Vietnam to train indigenous soldiers and civilians in self-defense. These soldiers were the true "hearts and minds" winners, but were also able to fight when needed, carrying the war into the most hostile parts of "Indian country."

**Grenadier:** Also called a thumper because of the unique sound the weapon made when fired, the M79 was the primary grenade launcher of the war. This soldier provides firepower to the squad in places that the M-60 cannot reach—the deadspaces behind folds in the ground, cover, etc. He relies on his rifleman companions for close-in personal protection.

**Machinegunner:** The "hogman" or "pigman" provides the main firepower to the squad in the form of the M-60 machinegun. This weapon provides a much greater punch than the lighter M-16, but is very heavy. Machine gunners are often selected for their strength and stamina.

Each M60 has an assistant gunner, or A-gunner, who shares the load and feeds the ammo into the gun, keeping it firing. The A-gunner also carries the gun's extra ammo belts, barrel bag, and cleaning kit as well.

## Leadership

*Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* assumes your team is part of a squad of around 10 soldiers. The player characters are of course part of the squad (or attached to it in some way), and the rest of the group is made up of Extras. The squad leader needs a copy of the Squad Sheet found at the back of this book and at our website to record the non-player characters names, statistics, and basic personalities.

The squad leader might sometimes find himself commanding a platoon or even a company as well. These squads must be tracked as well, though it probably isn't important to create names and personalities for them unless they will be attached for an extended period.

Besides a bit of bookkeeping, the real challenge in playing *Tour of Darkness* is the role of leadership. Someone in the group needs to play the wet-behind-the-ears lieutenant or the gruff sergeant. Yes, this means one player is going to tell the others what to do. The Sarge might order your hero to charge a machine gun nest or the LT might tell him to take point in an almost certain ambush. That's life in the military, and one of the really challenging aspects of playing *Weird Wars*.

Leaders can enjoy the thrill of leading a lightning strike raid against an enemy position with no casualties. Then deal with the trauma of losing half their men in the next fight. Grunts get to bitch and moan about everything—which can make for great roleplaying—but in the end have to do what they're told or face the consequences. Refuse to polish your boots and you'll likely pull extra KP duty. Desert your squad when they're being overrun by the VC and you'll be lucky if you aren't put before a firing squad.

Like most *Savage Worlds* games, *Weird Wars* is designed for mature players who can handle giving orders and taking them. Try it and we think you'll really come to like this change of pace from the egalitarian nature of most parties in fantasy and other genres.

And remember, promotions and casualties can eventually put even a lowly PFC in charge.

**Corpsman (or Combat Medic):** Though not a doctor, this soldier is usually referred to by his buddies as 'Doc.' Soldiers with basic medical training are assigned to every platoon to provide immediate aid to injured troopers before they reach the surgeons back at a base.

**Paratrooper:** This soldier is a jump-trained member of the airborne infantry. Although there were very few combat jumps in the US portion of the Indochina wars, airborne soldiers saw heavy fighting in regular ground operations as elite infantry. Lacking the helicopter of their American successors, the French used paratroopers quite often as quick reaction forces, dropping them far beyond friendly lines.

**Rifleman:** Trained in the basic use of almost all of the infantry weapons in his country's arsenal, as well as the basics of hand to hand combat and demolitions, these are the most common soldiers on the battlefield.

**RTO (Radio Operator):** The communications specialist is a vital link in the chain of command. He allows access to aerial firepower and artillery support the US forces rely on in the field. RTOs must hump a heavy radio in addition to a host of other stuff in the bush, so make sure your hero can carry some weight before taking this job.

**Sailor:** The typical Brown Water Navy sailor served in the southern part of the country, patrolling the waterways of the delta and surrounding areas. This occupation is only available if the War Master wants to run a Naval campaign.

**SEAL:** Short for "Sea Air Land," these Navy special operators excel in infiltrating enemy territory by boat, aircraft, or foot patrols. Mostly operating with the Riverine forces, SEALs also found themselves working for MACV-SOG/SIG on occasion for highly secret operations throughout the Vietnams and their neighbors.

## Making Soldiers

The usual character creation procedure from the *Savage Worlds* rules apply, though you need to find out your hero's Service Branch and military rank as well (see below).

### 1) Service Branch

At this time you (with input from your War Master) should determine the time period of the setting and your branch of service (Army, Marine, Navy, French Foreign Legion, French Colonial, etc). Most teams should serve in the Army or Marines if playing a US campaign. You can also play the French Foreign Legion or French Colonial troops



if your WM is running a French campaign. The branch of the service that you choose determines the minimum requirements needed for that character. These minimums represent the skills received in Basic and Advanced training, and must be bought with the character's starting attribute and skill points.

Air Force and Naval characters are possible for one-shots or limited campaigns, but don't go "out in the bush" enough for the main focus of this game.

- **French Foreign Legion:** Vigor d6, Spirit d6, Shooting d6, Fighting d6, Throwing d6, Guts d4
- **French Colonial Forces:** Shooting d4, Throwing d4
- **US Army:** Strength d6, Shooting d6, Fighting d4, Throwing d4
- **Commonwealth (Australia/New Zealand) Army:** Strength d6, Shooting d8, Fighting d4, Throwing d4
- **US Marines:** Strength d6, Shooting d8, Fighting d6, Throwing d4
- **US Air Force:** Smarts d6, Shooting d4, Knowledge (service-related) d6
- **US Navy:** Shooting d4, Swimming d4, Knowledge (service-related) d6
- **RVN Army:** Shooting d4
- **RVN Paratrooper/Ranger:** Vigor d6, Spirit d8, Shooting d6, Fighting d6

### Elite Branches

Characters may also be part of an elite branch, such as the Rangers or SEALs or even Australian SAS. The rigid entrance requirements and exceptionally tough training mean few graduate to these special operations organizations.

- **Army LRRP/Ranger:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6, Shooting d6, Fighting d4, Throwing d4, Notice d8, Survival d6
- **Army Special Forces:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8, Shooting d6, Fighting d4, Throwing d4, Survival d6, Knowledge (Vietnam) d6
- **Marine Force Recon:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6, Shooting d8, Fighting d6, Throwing d4, Notice d8, Survival d6
- **Navy SEALs:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8, Shooting d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d6
- **SAS:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8, Shooting d8, Fighting d8, Throwing d6, Notice d6, Survival d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d4

Some heroes might also be civilians, such as attached reporters, archaeologists, or "spooks" working for the CIA.

## Women in Vietnam

Not all members of the armed forces sent to Vietnam were men. More than 7,500 American women served in Vietnam during the war in a number of capacities, though they were not combatants. The nurses in the countless field medical wards and surgical hospitals endured the harsh conditions of Vietnam to care for the wounded and aid the dying as well as assisting the local populace as part of the Medical Civilian Aid Program (MEDCAP). Among the many media representatives (in excess of four hundred at the war's height) from over twenty nations were female journalists, hunting the stories with their male counterparts and reporting the news from the front lines regardless of the danger. If you choose to play a female character, the number of opportunities open to you will be restricted to similar rolls. Be sure to check with your War Master first.

## 2) Military Rank

Your hero starts as a Private unless you take the Rank Edge.

## 3) Race

Humans are the only race allowed in *Tour of Darkness*. The good news is that they still get their free starting Edge as usual.

You can choose any ethnicity you like. People from around the world could be found in the armed forces deployed in Vietnam either with the French or US forces.

## 4) Traits

Your hero's attributes and skills are determined normally. Each character has five points to distribute among his five attributes, and 15 points to buy skills. All of the skills listed in *Savage Worlds* are available in *Tour of Darkness*.

### Secondary Statistics

Your hero's Charisma, Pace, Parry, and Toughness are figured normally.

*Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* introduces a new derived statistic for those unlucky enough to

find themselves facing the horrors that infest this blood-soaked land. The character sheets provided in the back of the book or at the Great White Games website ([www.greatwhitegames.com](http://www.greatwhitegames.com)) already have this statistic added to them.

**Sanity:** Those who face the mind-wrenching horrors of the Weird Wars are sometimes pushed over the edge. When this occurs a variety of unpleasant consequences can follow. The Sanity statistic is a trait that lets you monitor your character's mental health and well-being. It starts at 2 plus half your Spirit unless you have an Edge or Hindrance that modifies it. As a character faces the horror of war and supernatural weirdness his Sanity may fluctuate. More information on Sanity can be found on page 14. The War Master can find the real skinny on page 61.

## 5) Edges & Hindrances

All soldiers have been trained in basic combat skills and survival techniques, but the heroes you create excel more than the rest. Edges set your soldier apart from the bulk of the servicemembers trying to get through their tour of duty. Likewise, Hindrances are those quirks or flaws that make a hero interesting.

Most everyone in the military has a decent Shooting score from Basic training, but will you take an Edge like Marksman and try to be a sniper? Or go with Thumper King and concentrate on launching grenades? The choices you make here give you some idea of the kind of person your hero is and whether or not he's specialized in a particular weapon or occupation (such as medic).

## 6) Gear

Once your character is created, hit the supply room and gear up.

Characters in *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* don't get starting money to buy equipment (although they may carry some cash for luxuries when at camp or on R&R). As members of the military, they're assigned a basic load of equipment that is laid out by their unit's TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment). This limits the weapons a unit deploys with—even special operators.

When choosing the gear you want to take on a mission with you, watch that weight limit carefully. The heat and humidity sap the strength from even the brawniest soldier and make carrying a ton of gear not only impractical but deadly. Make sure you check with the rest of your squad to ensure the weight of extra ammo, special gear, and supplies is distributed among the team.

You War Masters need to be strict about the encumbrance rules—it's the only real limit to how much ammo and firepower the squad can carry.

For more information on the effects of weight, heat, and jungle conditions, see the *Savage Worlds* Main Rulebook, pages 18 and 95.

## 7) Background

Last but not least, provide a background for your character.

Maybe your trooper is a poor country boy from Alabama who joined up to escape the poverty of the sharecropper's life. Or is he an ex-medical student who saw the suffering of the inner city and joined despite his deferment to carry his burden of citizenship? Perhaps he joined to avoid a jail term or is one of the masses of young men called to serve his country through the draft.

The nature of the French Foreign Legion and the shared privations of a tour of duty in the 'Nam brought together a cross-section of the youth of America. Just about any type of person you can imagine could be found in this little corner of the Weird Wars. The strange things and exotic people they'll meet while in Southeast Asia are all that more interesting if your War Master has a good character background to draw on.

## New Hindrances

Most of the Hindrances given in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook are suitable for use with *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness*. In most cases, only Elderly and Young are not appropriate. The following new Hindrances are available, however.

### Activist (Minor)

The 1960s were a time of intense political activity and the turbulence of the times infected the youth. Your hero has developed a viewpoint that he feels passionately about. Maybe he is one of the few die-hard anticommunists dedicated to preventing the spread of the red menace through Southeast Asia, or maybe the character has some affinity with the growing peace movement or the radical Black Panther Party.

Whatever the nature of his beliefs, your hero attempts to fit all his experiences into his world view and to convert those he feels may be sympathetic to his cause at any opportunity.

The character suffers -1 Charisma when dealing with others who *don't* have a similar *Activist* Hindrance. He adds +1 to Charisma when dealing with those of similar beliefs.

### Bullet Magnet (Major)

Some soldiers are just in the wrong place at the wrong time. This character makes a habit of it.

This hero is hit by adjacent fire (using the Innocent Bystander rules) on a 1-2 for single-shot weapons, and a 1-3 for shotguns or full-auto fire.

# Special Operations

A variety of Special Operations Forces came into being during the Vietnam conflict. If you want to run an elite campaign, pick one of the Special Operations organizations detailed below.

## **LRRP Teams (US Army)**

Created out of a need to address the challenges of unconventional warfare, the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols' mission was reconnaissance behind enemy lines. In Vietnam this usually means putting a team deep in the jungle away from other American forces. In these situations they are free to use their special skills to find the enemy. Typically lasting six days, these patrols can sweep an area of eight square kilometers. The mission begins with a helicopter insertion, although depending on the situation this can also be accomplished by Patrol Boat Riverine (PBR), on foot, or by parachute. The main task of most patrols is observation, which means a mission is successful if the troopers fire no shots. That said, the "lurps" (as they are sometimes called) always go out loaded for bear, routinely carrying packs in excess of 100lbs! At the height of US involvement, less than 1600 men were assigned to LRRP companies.

In addition to intelligence gathering, other LRRP missions include locating targets for airstrikes, bomb or artillery damage assessment, scouting potential LZs, and setting ambushes.

Generally a LRRP team consists of six men: a team leader, assistant team leader, two radio operators, and two scouts. Most troopers carry M-16s or similar weapons, and everyone carries plenty of extra ammo, supplies, and rations.

## **Rangers (US Army)**

In January 1969, the LRRPs were officially reorganized and designated the 75th Rangers. Though now named and organized as Ranger companies, the units were still spread throughout the country attached to such units as 1st Air Cavalry, 1st Infantry and 101st Airborne, and still undertook the long range recon role they had fulfilled as LRRPs.

## **Special Forces (US Army)**

Special Forces in Vietnam play many roles. The Weird Wars adds a few missions which are not publicized to the folks back home, or which are heavily edited when word of them leaked out.

**Civilian Irregular Defense Groups:** Typically, Special Forces missions deal with bolstering the indigenous population's ability to resist the depredations of the Viet Cong and NVA. Special Forces teams first entered the country in 1957, and began to organize the Montagnards and other paramilitary groups into Civilian Irregular Defense Groups. As US involvement increased, the Fifth Special Forces Group arrived in-country. They set up a chain of fortified camps deep in the hinterlands, where they organized the locals as anti-guerilla forces. The organization of a typical SF A-Detachment can be found in the Appendix of this book.

**Mobile Guerilla Forces:** Besides the static role of the CIDGs, Special Forces soldiers also raise Mobile Guerilla Forces (MGF). These units are made up of Vietnamese with American advisors, and operate outside of friendly artillery range in areas that are definitely "Indian Country." They stage cross-border raids and ambushes, call in air strikes, and disrupt the enemy in his sanctuaries.

**Mobile strike Teams:** Also under the Special Forces umbrella are quick reaction forces that can respond to attacks on remote camps. Known as MIKE forces, they are composed of CIDG Vietnamese troopers, with US Special Forces soldiers acting as officers and NCOs. Each Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) is assigned one MIKE team with another on call for the entire south (and beyond). Operating in heavily contested areas, against hardened VC and NVA units, their missions often become slugging matches. These units conducted more combat jumps than any other organization in Vietnam.

## **Marine Force Recon (Marines)**

Fulfilling much the same role as the LRRPs but for the USMC, force recon troopers often scout the way before larger marine units

## **SEAL (SEa Air Land) (Navy)**

These soldiers are US Navy commandos, skilled in infiltrating enemy territory by a variety of methods, and are often attached to MACV-SIG for secret missions. Developed from the Underwater Demolition Teams of the second World War, the SEALs see extensive action in the Mekong Delta.

## **SAS (Special Air Service) (Australian or New Zealand Army)**

Patterned after the British commandos of World War II fame, the Australian and New Zealand governments sent squadrons of their elite soldiers to Vietnam from 1966 until 1971-72. Quickly dubbed "The Jungle Ghosts," these elite soldiers carry out deep reconnaissance and ambush patrols.

### **Doubting Thomas (Major)**

Besides the description presented in *Savage Worlds*, Doubting Thomas' are just not prepared to deal with the mind-twisting realization that these horrors could actually be real. Characters with this Hindrance suffer double Sanity loss. On the plus side, they start with a Sanity of +2.

### **F—ing New Guy (Minor)**

Your soldier just started his tour of duty in the 'Nam. To make things worse, his training didn't take as well as most.

Referred to as the FNG (F—ing New Guy), most of his squad think he's only good for walking point and burning barrels of crap at the firebase.

The newbie is never dealt cards on the first round of any combat (he's always "surprised").

In addition, he subtracts 2 from Notice rolls made to detect ambushes or booby traps, as well as most Vietnam-related Common Knowledge rolls. To top it off, he'll be assigned the worst duties in the platoon—latrine detail, filling sandbags, and walking point, to name a few.

Of course, an FNG doesn't stay new forever. The reason such an awful Hindrance is Minor is because it can be bought off.

After each relatively active month of service, the hero makes a Smarts roll at -2. If the roll is successful, he drops one group of penalties—either the action card penalty or the -2 to Notice and Common Knowledge rolls. He may roll again after another active month to rid himself of the other penalty, at which point he's no longer an FNG.

Note that not every soldier who steps off the plane in-country has this Hindrance; only those knuckleheads who take a little longer to adjust to the 'Nam.

### **Hard Case (Major)**

This career soldier has a hard time associating with the young pukers drafted into the services and insists that none of them will ruin his military. He is a notorious hardass and spares nobody his brutal verbal (and occasionally physical) assaults.

This soldier has -2 Charisma and does not tolerate disobedience or lax discipline in the ranks. Only characters with a Rank Edge may take this Hindrance.

### **Heat Prone (Major)**

This hero just doesn't do well in the tropical heat of Southeast Asia. Maybe he's fat. Maybe he's from Minnesota.

Whatever the reason, he always subtracts 2 from Vigor rolls made to resist the effects of heat and dehydration, even when he gets the required four quarts of water per day.

### **Short Timer (Major)**

This soldier is so close to ending his tour he can almost taste the drinks on the Freedom Bird. With just weeks left on his tour, he isn't too interested in dying for Uncle Sam. Whenever given unpleasant or dangerous tasks he complains constantly about being "too short for this."

Roll a 1d6+6 at character creation. This is how many weeks your grunt has left in-country.

Every time the character takes a wound and he has any bennies remaining, he *must* make a Soak roll.

This Hindrance may only be taken by Wild Cards.

### **Slow (Major)**

Not everyone was born with cat-like reflexes. This soldier is just a little slow on the uptake, or maybe freezes up when lead starts flying.

He draws two cards in combat and acts on the worst. If he draws a Joker, he uses it normally and ignores his Hindrance for the round.

Slow characters cannot take the Quick Edge, but they can actually improve their reaction time by taking the Level Headed Edges (but not during character creation). For this soldier, Level Headed allows them to draw one card and act normally. Improved Level Headed grants them two cards and they act on the best of the two.

## **New Edges**

*Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* introduces a large number of new Edges into *Savage Worlds*, mostly related to specific military occupations. As such, many of the new Edges are not very appropriate outside this particular setting.

Likewise, the following Edges from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook are not appropriate for characters in most *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* games, although your War Master may allow the use of some in special circumstances or scenarios: Arcane background (and the associated Champion, Gadgeteer, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Mentalist, Mr. Fix-it, and Wizard professional Edges), Noble, Power Edges, Rich, Filthy Rich.

## **Background Edges**

### **Acclimated**

**Requirements:** Novice, Vigor d6+

This character might have grown up in the jungle, or maybe was stationed in Panama or the deserts of Algeria. Whatever his background, he seems to take the heat of the 'Nam better than others and so doesn't suffer as much on patrol.

The acclimated grunt adds +2 to Vigor rolls made to resist Fatigue due to heat and humidity.

## Grizzled

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Spirit d6+, Vigor d8+, Fighting d8+, Shooting d8+, Survival d6+, Rank (NCO)

This soldier is either an enlisted soldier who's served several tours in Vietnam or a grizzled platoon sergeant from World War II or Korea. Whatever their background, these men stand head and shoulders above the typical grunts around them.

You must have your War Master's permission to gain this Edge. It immediately advances your hero to Seasoned (or one full character Rank above the rest of the player characters). The price is that the advancements must be repaid. The next 20 Experience Points your hero would earn at the end of each game session are forfeited to "pay back" the debt (basically the character begins with -20 Experience Points). Experience Points acquired from bennies at the end of each session also go toward the debt, so the more gained through good roleplaying, the quicker the payback can occur.

## West Pointer

**Requirements:** Novice, Service (Army)

A distinguished graduate of the West Point Military Academy, this soldier is the US Army's best officer material. Schooled in military tradition and procedures, graduates of his caliber are few and far between.

This future General begins the game at rank O1 and adds +2 to his Promotion rolls (see page 15).

West Pointers also have +2 Charisma when dealing with "Headquarters"-type officers (rather than field officers—GM's call). Unfortunately, most of the enlisted troops have a dim view of "ring-knockers," and his Charisma is at -2 with enlisted soldiers until he reaches the rank of Captain.

## Combat Edges

### Clipping the Grass

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Rock and Roll, Shooting d8+

This machine-gunner can provide true grazing fire—just a few inches off the ground. The weapon must be a medium or heavy MG, such as an M60 or .50 cal, and must be braced on a grounded bipod, tripod, window, or other solid surface.

When using suppressive fire, those caught in the area of effect take damage on a Spirit roll of a 1 or 2 instead of just a 1.

### Groundhog

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Guts d6+, Smarts d6+

This soldier seems to be able to blend into the ground when under fire. He can find the most

advantageous fold or nook to fit his body into to avoid incoming fire. When prone, this soldier receives -4 protection, instead of the usual -2. He is also only hit by Suppressive fire if both his Spirit die and his Wild Die come up ones. While this Edge is negated if the attacker moves within 3", the Groundhog still receives this Edge's benefits even if attacked from the side.

### Hose 'Em Down

**Requirements:** Novice, Shooting d8+

With this Edge a machine-gunner can suppress an area more effectively than the typical "pigman."

When using a braced medium or heavy machine-gun (such as an M60 or .50 cal), this hero can suppress an area equal to two Medium Burst templates. The second template must be adjacent to the first (in any direction), and the weapon burns through double its usual amount of ammunition.

### Improved Hose 'em Down

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Hose 'em Down

This edge allows an MG gunner to suppress an area equal to three Medium Burst templates, at triple the usual amount of ammo spent. Each additional template must be adjacent to the first.

### Thumper King

**Requirements:** Novice, Shooting d8+

A "thumper" is an M79 grenade launcher. A grunt with this Edge has an uncanny knack with this or other grenade launchers (such as the M203), and can lob his shots with startling accuracy.

Halve all deviation rolls for grenades launched by this soldier.

### Thumper God

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Marksman, Thumper King

These veteran grenadiers really know how to reach out and thump someone and take professional pride in the accuracy and destructive effect of their fire.

The Thumper God now knows how to angle the shot so that it does the most damage to the targets beneath it. He halves deviation rolls as above, and adds +2 to his grenade's damage rolls.

## Leadership Edges

### Born Leader

**Requirements:** Veteran

Command comes easy to this soldier and his troops respect him. He looks after his men and teaches them to look after each other. The result is a well-disciplined and effective force that works well as a unit.

Soldiers making group rolls while under this leader's command roll d8 as the Wild Die instead of d6.

### Command Presence

**Requirements:** Novice, Command, Rank

A booming voice, effective hand signals, or simple training as a unit results in a much more effective combat element. At the center of that element is the field officer in command.

An NCO or officer with this Edge has a "command radius" of 10" instead of the usual 5".

### Remember Cameron!

**Requirements:** Novice, Command, Rank (Officer), Service (French Foreign Legion)

On April 30th, 1863, sixty-five Legionnaires held off a force of over 2000 Mexican troops outside a dusty Mexican village. The battle ended with a bayonet charge by the six remaining



Legionnaires. This date has become enshrined in Legion history, and the wooden hand of the commanding officer is paraded before the ranks each year.

This Foreign Legion NCO or Officer can imbue those around him with the *esprit* which has permeated legionnaires for decades.

As an action, the leader may make a Spirit roll at -2. If successful, every Shaken legionnaire in his command radius is automatically unshaken.

## Professional Edges

### Hardened

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Guts d8+

This soldier has seen things that would make most men lose their mind. Somehow he's hardened himself to it and soldiers on.

The soldier gains one extra point of Sanity during "down time." This is usually between missions, and is entirely at the War Master's discretion, and is in addition to any he might gain for other reasons.

### Medic!

**Requirements:** Novice, Healing d6+

A character with this Edge can get wounded soldiers up and fighting again in seconds.

If the medic can get to a wounded non-Wild Card by the end of the round in which he was wounded, he can make an immediate Healing roll at -2. If the roll is successful, the victim is merely Shaken instead of wounded.

### Ranger Tab

**Requirements:** Novice; Service (Special Ops: LRRP or Ranger)

This soldier is a graduate of the grueling training at the US Army's Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. This school emphasizes small unit tactics, self-sufficiency, and other infantry skills. This character gains +2 to all Fatigue rolls made against environmental hazards (including cold, heat, and sleep), and +2 to all Survival rolls. Ranger-trained soldiers make Vigor rolls every 18 hours for sleep deprivation, as opposed to the standard 12 hours.

### Rank (NCO)

**Requirements:** Novice; Smarts d6+

This character begins the game as a non-commissioned officer. In the Army and Marines this is a corporal. In the Navy he's a petty officer.

### Rank (Officer)

**Requirements:** Novice; Smarts d6+

This character is an officer. As a US service member, he is either a product of the Reserve

Officers Training Corps (ROTC) or an undistinguished graduate of one of the US Military Academies (West Point or Annapolis).

This Edge makes your hero a 2nd Lieutenant in charge of a single platoon. Except in very unusual circumstances, there is only one officer per platoon.

### **Semper Fi, Mac**

**Requirements:** Service (Marine)

The US Marines are proud of their history of being the first to be deployed in battle. Semper Fidelis, "always faithful", is their motto and, abbreviated to Semper Fi, is used as a greeting and rallying cry.

A Marine with this Edge gains +1 Toughness.

### **Spotter**

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d8+

This character has a special knack for calling in supporting fire, and can make all the difference in the world when trying to break an enemy assault.

A character with this Edge can shift the target point of artillery up to 20" per round without delay (instead of the usual 10"). In addition, the deviation for any airstrikes this character calls in are halved (rounding down).

### **Water training**

**Requirements:** Novice; Vigor d8+, Swimming d6+, Service (Special Ops: SEAL, Marine Recon, Special Forces)

Your hero has been to one of the various military schools that teach combat swimming. Whether a SEAL, Marine Recon, or Special Forces soldier, this rigorous training has improved the grunt's swimming ability far beyond those of the typical person. This hero can hold his breath for twice as long, and all Swimming rolls are at +2.

## **Social Edges**

### **Band of Brothers**

**Requirements:** Wild Card, Veteran, Common Bond

This group of soldiers has been to Hell and back together. That kind of bond hardens men, and makes them able to better withstand wounds that might otherwise have put them out of action.

Subtract 1 point of damage from every attack that hits the character for each other "brother" within 6", to a maximum of -4. If three heroes with the Band of Brothers Edge fight together, for instance, they ignore three points of damage from every attack that hits them.

### **Idealist**

**Requirements:** Novice, Knowledge (Vietnamese) d6

This soldier sees the potential in the people and land of Vietnam, and thinks that with a little help from the West, this could be an ideal place to live. He's even taken the time to learn about the peoples and cultures of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

Most of his squad mates think he's crazy and the bigots call him a "gook-lover".

This hero has +2 Charisma when interacting with Vietnamese soldiers or civilians. He also adds +2 to Common Knowledge rolls about Southeast Asian culture.

Heroes with the Bloodthirsty Hindrance can't take this Edge.

### **Scrounger**

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Streetwise d6+

Wars and the associated chaos often bring out unusual traits in people, both good and bad. Some seem to have an uncanny ability to find just what they're looking for among the mountains of equipment shipped into the theater.

A consummate trader and wheeler-dealer, this soldier can find a way to acquire almost any piece of equipment or luxury item. Once per session, and while in a populated area (such as a large village or town), a successful Streetwise roll allows the Scrounger to do one of the following:

- Improve one squad's Ammo one level
- Improve one squad's Rations one level
- Acquire 2d6 "refills" for a medic's med pack
- Acquire some rare but not particularly valuable item (a Coca-Cola in a distant village, matches in the jungle, etc)

## **Weird Edges**

### **Courage Under Fire**

**Requirements:** Novice, Command, Rank

It is said that fortune favors the bold. No matter the war, officers who put the welfare of their men before their own personal safety always inspire troops.

The War Master secretly rolls 1d4 at the start of each mission. This is the number of wounding attacks your character can ignore while standing and commanding your troops. Instead of hitting your hero, the round knocks off his helmet, the bayonet tears a canteen off his hip, and so on. Standing in the open while under direct enemy fire triples the command radius of this leader.

This Edge only works against direct-fire ranged attacks or melee attacks. It has no effect on damage inflicted from area effect weapons.

# Setting Rules

## Madness

Even the strongest souls can be scarred by the horrors of war—especially those seen in the *Weird Wars*.

Those who fail Guts checks due to some horrific monster or Thing Man Was Not Meant to Know not only suffer the immediate effects as usual, but also move a little closer to the brink of insanity. Every time a Guts check is failed, the hero loses a Sanity point. The exact effects of this are hidden away in the War Master's section (page 61). Be warned that once you drop below 0 points, your hero will undergo serious...changes.

## Supply

The rules for keeping track of allies' ammo are in full force in *Tour of Darkness*. In *Weird Wars*, we use the same system to track both ammunition and rations (food and water). In either case, the character in charge of the team (whether it's a patrol, squad, or battalion) keeps track of the group's Ammo Level and Rations.

If there's a medic in the party, he keeps track of the group's Medical Supplies.

### Ammunition

Each group of Extras starts with an Ammo Level of Very High, High (typical), Low, or Out. You'll find a Supply Track on the Ally Sheet to help you keep track. Very High Encumbrance level means the Extras have a -1 penalty to their physical rolls due to being overloaded.

After each fight, the ammo drops a level. Allies dealt a deuce during combat drop an ammo level

immediately after that round. When the combat is over, use the average ammo level for the entire group of Extras.

Once the team is "Out," they have a few bullets each, perhaps one grenade for every dozen men, and so on. Individuals aren't completely helpless, but as a group are combat ineffective.

### Rations

Field rations weigh six pounds for each day's worth of food. Soldiers are also expected to carry an additional six pounds of water, for a total weight of 12 pounds carried for one day's rations (24 pounds for two days, and so on). Amounts of rations should be tracked, as hungry soldiers are ineffective soldiers. Each canteen cover has a pouch for a bottle of 50 water purification tablets. Unless no sources of water are available or the soldiers lose their canteens or water purification tablets, assume that they can find enough water to keep them going.

Each day Extras don't have sufficient rations they become Fatigued. They cannot become Incapacitated, however (there's always *something* to eat in the jungle). Leaders should be warned that even Exhausted (-2) allies are very ineffective in combat.

Wild Cards make Vigor rolls as usual instead. Subtract 2 from the roll if consuming less than half rations. Roll once per day after the first day without food and water, then every 12 hours afterwards.

Wild Cards do not become Incapacitated unless they absolutely refuse to eat or drink whatever nature provides.

**True Deprivation:** Use the regular rules for hunger and thirst if the characters are actually deprived of food and water, such as in captivity.



## Medical Supplies

Medics play an extremely critical roll in keeping men alive and fighting in the field. They rely greatly on their field kits to do their messy work, and find their job much more difficult to perform when their kits run dry.

A medical pack contains various drugs, supplies, and instruments for treating casualties, and adds +2 to the Healing rolls of anyone who uses it.

The medic character must keep track of the amount of perishable supplies within, however. Each pack starts with 10 points worth of drugs, bandages, and other nonreusable items. Every use subtracts 1d4 points worth of items.

If the med pack runs out, the medic can still use the instruments and non-expendables inside, but does not gain the +2 bonus to his Healing rolls.

**Refills:** Med packs can be refilled to full at any well-stocked base or hospital. Other sources (civilian clinics, villages, and so on) can be looted for 1d6 points worth of supplies.

## Awards and Medals

Conspicuous acts of bravery can result in medals for the Armed Forces' best. These in turn can lead to promotions and perhaps much-needed R&R.

To get noticed, a soldier's commander must put in a request for an award. This is done between missions, and usually takes a week or so for the paperwork to clear headquarters.

After any mission in which the Commanding Officer cites the hero for bravery, the medal-winner's player rolls 1d20 and adds the following modifiers:

### Awards Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+X	CO's Charisma modifier
+1	CO is a LTC or higher
-2	CO is an NCO
-2	Easy Mission
+2	Difficult Mission
+2	Character was wounded

### Awards Result

d20	Result
1-12	Issued a citation for bravery
13-15	Bronze Star
16-19	Silver Star
20-23	Distinguished Service Cross
24+	Medal of Honor

## Promotion

At the completion of a mission, each soldier can roll a d20 and add or subtract the modifiers below. Modifiers are cumulative. A total of 20+ means the character has been promoted one rank.

### Promotion Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	Easy Mission
-	Routine Mission
+2	Difficult Mission
-2	Character is a Captain or higher
+1	Character is a Private
+2	Character is in the Phoenix Program
+1	Character received a Bronze Star on this mission.
+2	Character received a Silver Star on this mission.
+4	Character received a Distinguished Service Cross on this mission.
+6	Character received the Medal of Honor on this mission.

## Support

The United States' greatest advantage over the Communists is the huge array of support available to the troops on the ground. Wounded soldiers know they are merely a short helicopter ride from a fully equipped hospital, and any patrol in the field can have artillery or fast jets screaming overhead in seconds with a little luck and a lot of clout. While France lacked the helicopters that the US had later in Vietnam, they still had both artillery and aircraft reserves that the Viet Minh were hard-pressed to counter.

### Communications

The key to all this support is effective communication links. Without good comms, there are no medevacs to extract the wounded, no helicopter gunships or howitzers on call, or other instruments of destruction that allow Western forces to take on and defeat numerically superior opposition.

Every unit down to the platoon level has a field radio to keep in touch with higher elements and relay messages up the chain of command. Squad leaders relay messages to their platoon leaders, who radio requests to their company HQ. Higher up the organizational chart the communications requirements become more

sophisticated. At battalion level, the communication elements are housed in a fortified bunker at a firebase and provide access to pretty much any support the military has at its disposal.

## Fire Support

Commanders can radio for artillery and airstrike support, although what's available from general support depends on what else is going on in-country at the moment, and so is something of a random process. To determine if support is available have the CO make a d6 Support Roll adding the modifiers below. A total of 4+ means support is available. If the mission is deep in North Vietnam or its neighbors, or it specifically states that no support of any type is available, no one will answer the call so no roll can be made.

## Support Roll Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Dedicated Support
+1	Character is E5-E6 or O1-O3
+2	Character is E7-E9 or O4-O6
+3	Character is O7 or higher
-3	For each Support Roll attempted in the past 8 hours
+1	If about to be overrun (WM's discretion)

During the Op Order generation, the unit might be assigned a specific allotment of artillery or air support. If this is the case, the specified support is on call.

If no support was allocated during the mission briefing, the CO has called in general supporting fire. The CO (or Forward Observer) rolls on the Support Table to see what's available. (The WM may also choose based on the particular situation.) If it is night or the weather is bad, aircraft cannot be called in and the result is automatically Mortars or Guns.

After the type of support is determined, roll the Delay Die to see how long it takes to arrive. The Bingo Die is rolled every round after the asset fires. On a roll of 1, the asset is used up or otherwise diverted and its fire mission is over. On any other roll, the asset remains on call.

## Support Table

d6	Available General Support
1-3	Aircraft (Artillery at night or in bad weather)
4-6	Artillery

## Artillery Support

d6	Delay Die	Bingo Die
1-2 Mortars	d4	d6
3-6 Guns	d6	d10

### Artillery Barrage

The first barrage arrives after a number of rounds as determined by rolling the delay die. The CO's player places two adjacent templates on his desired targets and rolls a d12 and 2d10-1 x2". This is the direction and number of inches the rounds deviate, measure from the center of each template.

*Mortars* covers 60mm, 81mm or 4.2" tubes and uses Medium Burst Templates for 3d6 damage. *Guns* covers 105mm, 155mm, 175mm or 8" weapons, and cause 4d8 damage with Large Burst Templates.

**Adjusting Fire:** The CO can allow the barrage to continue each round in the same location, or he can adjust the target point up to 10" per round without delay. If the barrage is not used in a round, or is shifted more than 10" in a round, it must be called in again (meaning another delay die roll). Even with the accuracy of modern guns, artillery fire is still a little unpredictable. Whether or not the CO has shifted fire or allowed it to come down on the same location, each template deviates d4-1 inches each turn using a d12 to determine the direction.

**Illumination:** Artillery batteries can also fire illumination flares each round instead of HE. These are extremely bright phosphorous rounds shot high into the sky that drift down on a small parachute. This counts as the battery's barrage for the turn. Illumination rounds negate all darkness penalties in any non-jungle terrain for 2d10 rounds. In light jungle, penalties are reduced to -1. They have no effect in thick jungle.

## Air Support

Type (d10)	Delay Die	Bingo Die
<b>French</b>		
1-3 F8F Bearcat	d6	d8
4-5 F6F Hellcat	d6	d6
6-7 P-63 King Cobra	d6	d6
8-10 A-26	d6	d8
<b>American</b>		
1-2 Huey Gunship	d6	d6
3-5 F-4 Phantom	d4	d6
6 F-100 Super Sabre	d4	d4
7-8 A-1E Skyraider	d6	d8
9 B-52	d4	d8
10 Spooky Gunship	d6	d10

## Airstrikes

Air support ranges from Army helicopter gunships to prop-driven A-1E Skyraiders and high-flying B-52s on Arc Light missions. Dedicated air support loiters in area as long as possible during crucial moments of the operation to try and provide effective coverage. General air support is often aircraft in the area returning from a mission with undropped ordinance. After calling in the support, roll the Delay Die to see how long it takes the aircraft to reach the unit and start blasting any VM or VC foolish enough to be seen.

Once the aircraft arrives, the CO can determine which one of its weapons it uses each round. See the Aircraft Payloads table below to find out what particular munitions an aircraft has at its disposal. If it is listed as having a choice of munitions, randomly determine what it has available. As always, roll the Bingo Die after every round the aircraft fires, on a 1, it is no longer available.

**Rockets** are Medium Burst Templates that cause 3d10 damage. The player can place as many of the aircraft's rockets as he wishes on the battlefield each turn, but all rockets fired in a single round must be adjacent. Roll 1d10-1" deviation for each Burst Template.

**Bombs** are Large Burst Templates that cause 4d10 damage. The player can place as many of the aircraft's bombs as he wishes on the battlefield each turn, but all bombs dropped in a single round must be adjacent. Roll 1d10-1" x 3 (or x2 for the Skyraider) deviation.

**Guns** fire a single Strafe Template each round. This is Suppressive Fire. Those who are hit suffer 2d8+1 damage. There is no deviation.

**Cannons** fire a single Large Burst Template each round. Those hit (as per Suppressive Fire) suffer 3d8 damage. Roll 1d10-1" deviation as with rockets. Only the Spooky Gunship (or Spectre in late war) carries cannons. The Spooky may fire all of its munitions each turn. (These gunships were devastating—no position under their protection was ever overrun.)

**Napalm** is sticky, flaming goo that incinerates most targets. It has an AP value of 30, causes 3d10 damage, and burns for 10 rounds on objects, or 1d10 rounds on "soft targets" such as people. Napalm creates a chain of four Medium Burst Templates in a straight line. Roll deviation as for bombs and move the entire chain the indicated direction and distance.

Napalm can also be used tactically to destroy vegetation and soft cover (though, on a larger scale, it was found to be ineffective as a defoliant). Most flora (as well as fauna) beneath the template is destroyed and no longer provides cover or concealment.

## Aircraft Payloads

### Aircraft French

Aircraft	Munitions Available
F8F Bearcat	Guns, Bombs x2 or Napalm x1 or Rockets x2
F6F Hellcat	Bombs x2
P-63 King Cobra	Guns, Bombs x1
A-26	Guns, Rockets x2, Bombs x6

### American

Huey Gunship	Rockets x4, Guns
F-4 Phantom	Guns, Rockets x4, and Bombs x6 or Napalm x4
F-100 Super Sabre	Rockets x8 or Bombs x5 or Napalm x2
A-1E Skyraider	Guns, Bombs x4, Napalm x2
B-52	Bombs x10
Spooky Gunship	Cannon, Guns x2*

\*The Spooky may fire all of its munitions each turn.

## Resupply

Soldiers can only carry so much into the bush, as you probably discovered as soon as you added up the weight of your equipment. If heavy contact is made and a lengthy fight ensues, soldiers burn through their ammo in short order.

Fortunately, the US military well understands that an army "fights on its stomach," and can't be effective without sufficient arms and ammo.

Such essentials as water, food and even clean socks can be brought in to resupply troops on missions far away from the base, allowing them to continue fighting or finish long operations.

A CO may make a standard Support Roll to try and arrange this. It typically takes 1d6 hours for resupply to arrive from headquarters (it takes them a while to gather the requested gear). When they get there, they better have some place to land.

Resupply choppers need somewhere to land, so the most essential thing in calling for resupply is a secure landing zone (LZ). If no LZ exists, the helicopters refuse to land and the Support Roll is wasted.

Assuming support arrives, the entire unit's ammo, rations, and medical supply levels are returned to High.

In an emergency, maverick pilots might bring in crates of ammo to squads in danger of being overrun. This typically takes only 1d6 x 10 minutes, and adds a -1 to the Support Roll. It also risks the helicopter being shot down landing in such a hot LZ. If a chopper is destroyed in this way, no more will be sent in. Chopper pilots don't like to land among the wreckage of the last good samaritan who tried to bring your mail.

## Background Information

### Equipment

Soldiers are organized into units as prescribed by their service's Tables of Organization and Equipment (TO&E). These describe how many soldiers are in a unit, what weapons they carry, and the rank structure. These descriptions are provided for you in Appendix 1, with the smallest unit being the squad. In *Tour of Darkness*, the types of mission and closeness of the terrain usually makes organizations above the company level beyond the scope of the game, although they can be done.

Once the players have generated their characters, use the handy squad sheet to fill in the rest of the squad. If playing a company level game, fill in three more squads and you're ready to go.

### Money

Characters may carry two or three types of currency in each of the phases of the war. For French Indochina, the currency of the Indochina Federation was the Piastre, although the franc was also used. The conversion rate was 1 Piastre to 10 francs. For price conversions from the main

rulebook, 5 francs equal 1 dollar. A typical enlisted soldier in Indochina received 367 francs/month in pay, with officers receiving twice or more that amount.

As the US moved into Vietnam, the US dollar became king. The conversion rates for the various moneys from 1962 to 1974 are as follows: MSC (Military Script Currency) or 'Scrip' is issued by the military and converts to dollars at a rate of 1.5MSC to 1 dollar US. The local Vietnamese currency, the Dong (divisible into 100 Xu), replaced the Piastre in 1954 and converts at a rate of 100D to 1 dollar.

As a guide for your players, PFCs are paid around \$100 per month, a Sergeant First Class can earn nearly \$350 per month, while Second Lieutenants receive just under \$250 per month. Much of this money is either sent home or kept in a bank in the rear, with only a small amount being kept by soldiers.

In game terms, money isn't very important to the average grunt. While it might be nice to have a wad of cash when visiting the bars and brothels of Saigon, it doesn't do much good at basecamp. Storage space is limited and thievery is rampant. Likewise, buying combat equipment is out of the question. Your platoon leader or company commander won't allow soldiers to take civilian weapons in the field, assuming he could even find somewhere to buy one.



Soldiers have enough cash to get the small luxuries they may want from the PX, enough to get drunk and satisfy whatever cravings they have on R&R, and enough to be constantly followed by small children begging for money or candy wherever they go.

## Feeding the Troops

The old maxim states that an army marches on its stomach, but nowhere does it say that the army has to enjoy the walk. As they had been for their fathers in WWII, C-rations are the staple diet of the grunts in Southeast Asia.

Each C-ration contains some crackers and a spread (jam, cheese, or peanut butter), fruitcake, sometimes a can of fruit, and one canned meat item, an exotic delicacy like franks and beans, ham and lima beans, ham and eggs, and tuna. Often coated with a layer of thick grease, the meals are pretty unappealing cold but the heat tabs used to warm the food are often missing, meaning hot meals are a luxury in the field. Along with the food, the ration pack contains a book of matches, a plastic spoon, toilet tissue and a pack of coffee or cocoa. With so much of their food coming from cans, many grunts consider the P38 can opener their most vital bit of gear!

The LRRPs had their own rations, freeze dried in packs to reduce the load, and far more appetizing. However, they needed to be mixed with water so extra canteens had to be carried to reconstitute the rations. Back at their main base camp, all soldiers are treated to hot meals courtesy of the unit's cooks.

## Chieu Hoi Program

The Chieu Hoi ('Open Arms') program is intended to win over guerillas fighting with the VC with the incentive of money, better conditions, and periods of leave. Those Viet Cong fighters who defect under the Chieu Hoi program are sometimes used by the US as guides, interpreters, and sources of intelligence. Called 'Kit Carson Scouts,' these irregular soldiers are rarely wholly trusted, but they are experienced jungle fighters. Despite the fears of the US soldiers the Kit Carsons are generally loyal, knowing they can expect no mercy from their former comrades. Still, rumors abound of VC coming in under the Chieu Hoi program, getting fed by the US until healthy enough to go back out and take up the struggle once more.

A Kit Carson scout might make an interesting character for a player looking for something different. Such a character makes a valuable addition to almost any unit, and the possible animosity between him and the other soldiers in the unit could make an excellent source of tension.

## Military Justice

In any place where thousands of men are brought together, there is going to be trouble. The armed forces require discipline to be maintained or the machine stops, and punishment in the military has to be harsh. The threat of being brought up on an Article 15 charge (one subject to nonjudicial punishment) is usually enough to bring a soldier to his senses. For these relatively minor infractions, a soldier may be confined to barracks, a punishment that mostly consists of physical exercise, lots of marching and unpleasant tedious duties such as KP or latrine detail. After a period of hard work, the soldier usually returns to active service with no further blemish on his record.

For more serious crimes (most of which are drugs or black-marketeering related offences), a court martial is convened and may result in the soldier being incarcerated in one of the military stockades while awaiting trial. The most notorious of these is Long Binh—known to the troops as LBJ (Long Binh Jail). Time spent in one of these stockades consists of hard labor in brutal conditions. The range of punishments available to the courts martial included fines, reductions in rank, or dishonorable discharges. If his offense is serious enough, the soldier may be returned to the military's maximum-security prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to serve his sentence.

Players who occasionally infringe on army regs or disobey commands—particularly for good reasons—should experience the lighter end of the punishment scale. If such behavior persists, fines or jail time may be exacted as a gentle reminder that the military stands no dissent in the ranks!

## War Crimes

Despite what the hippies back home tell you, the vast majority of soldiers in Vietnam didn't go around shooting innocent women and children. Those who do are quickly subjected to the harshest military justice, which can include court martial and long prison sentences of 20 years or more.

Most importantly, soldiers are taught from day one in basic training that receiving an unlawful order is no excuse for following it. Each and every soldier, from the highest general to the lowliest private, is responsible for his or her own actions.

Soldiers are also expected to report unlawful orders or acts, and can be prosecuted by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) should they be found negligent or obstructive of reporting or stopping an unlawful act.

Characters with the Bloodthirsty Hindrance had best save their bloodlust for actual battle.

# Standard Gear and Vehicles

Soldiers learn the hard way that there is a price to pay for carrying too much gear. The heat and humidity in Vietnam can kill as surely as the enemy, so your characters better not be humping too much stuff. On some missions the War Master will issue your unit with special equipment, in addition to the standard gear found here. Usually however, you will just be carrying the following essentials with you.

## Encumbrance

Be sure to figure the weight of your soldier's load carefully. In *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* in addition to the standard *Savage Worlds* encumbrance penalties, the load penalties also affect a character's Vigor checks and all Vigor-based skills.

That's right, soldier, carry too much gear out on patrol and you're going to collapse.

## Weapons and Ammo

Each soldier carries his standard weapon (which varies according to his specialty) along with his own ammo and a share of the ammunition for the heavier weapons.

Typically, an American rifleman carries his personal weapon (an M-16 or M-14 depending on time period and service), 7-15 magazines of ammo (or more, depending on the mission), and 2-4 fragmentation grenades.

A machinegunner carries his M-60, 2-3 belts of ammo (usually carried in the box slung over the shoulder although a ready belt or two might be worn over the shoulders or across the chest), and a .45 pistol with 3 magazines.

The assistant gunner is equipped as a rifleman with the addition of 2-4 extra belts of M-60 ammo, the barrel bag (containing the M-60

cleaning kit, spare barrel, asbestos glove, traversing and elevation mechanism for the tripod), and occasionally a tripod. This paraphernalia replaces the extra gear the rifleman usually carries. In addition, occasionally, an ammobearer is assigned to the crew. This rifleman is tasked with carrying 3-6 extra belts of ammo, and stays with the weapon in a firefight.

A grenadier carries his M-79 grenade launcher, 12-15 rounds of ammo (usually carried in a bag slung over the shoulder or in a vest that distributes the weight). These are mostly HE, with some buckshot rounds, smoke, and flares, depending on mission. In addition he is armed with a .45 pistol with 3 magazines.

All other specialties are equipped as the rifleman, but may be assigned other items of specialist equipment. The RTO, FO and FAC each carry a PRC-25 radio and a few extra smoke grenades.

Elite units often have access to weaponry not available to line units. If your character is a member of an elite unit, check with your War Master to see what gear is available.

## Armor

Some US infantry are issued flak jackets and helmets. Due to the weight and perceived lack of protection, most soldiers in the field don't wear their flak vests, and many opt out of their "steel pots" as well in favor of other headgear such as the soft "boonie" hat. This is not standard military issue however and, in most units, only standard government-issue gear is allowed—at least on base. Out in the jungle, away from the officers, squads might relax their standards a bit.

## Webbing

A grunt's LBE (Load Bearing Equipment) or "webbing" consists of a belt and suspenders to carry and distribute the weight of the soldier's gear. Attached to the LBE are the following essentials: 2 one quart canteens, 2 ammo pouches, a bayonet or machete, a butt pack with weapon cleaning kit, poncho, and first aid packet. These are all standard gear and should be carried by all soldiers.

## Additional Gear

The gear attached to the webbing is only the beginning of what is needed in the field. Each soldier must also carry a rucksack or backpack containing C-rations (sufficient for the mission), a two quart canteen, wet weather gear, more ammo for their personal weapon, personal hygiene items, and any other items the grunt feels are vital.

In addition, each soldier may be required to carry the platoon mortar rounds (if the unit's mortars are accompanying it on the mission) one or more LAW rockets, grenades, claymore mines, and bags of IV fluids for the medic. Extra ammo belts for the unit's M60 are distributed amongst the soldiers as well. You may select which of these standard items you wish to carry at the start of each mission. Extra ammo and medical supplies may be a pain to carry, but are worth their weight in gold when the bullets start flying.

It also might be useful to leave a little bit of space for a few luxury items. Chocolate bars Cokes and other hard to get snacks can often make things go more smoothly, both with the locals and fellow soldiers.

## Saddle Up!

Of course, the weight of all this soon adds up. Before you take any special gear, or your War Master assigns you with even more mission-essential items, you are already carrying around 80lbs. The Standard US Gear Weights table should help you calculate your exact load. Hope you remembered to put a few points into your Strength, troop; you've got to hump that pack all day! Once you choose your gear your War Master will assign you to a unit in-country and it's time to start your tour of duty.

## Proving Grounds

Over the course of the war, equipment from most of the major powers found its way onto the battlefields of Vietnam. The conflict provided an outstanding proving ground for the development of new weapons and technologies, as well as a dumping ground for the tons of equipment left over from World War II.

## Standard US Gear Weights

Weapons	Weight (lbs)
M1911A1	2
M1911A1 7 round magazine	1
M16	8
M16 20 round magazine	1
M14	10
M14 20round magazine	1.5
M60	23
M60 100 round belt	10
M60 tripod	15
M79	6
M79 grenade	1
M1911A1	4
M1911A1 7 round clip	0.5
Bayonet	1
M72 LAW	5
M26 Grenade	1
60mm mortar (2 man load)	40
60mm mortar round	1
81mm mortar (3 man load)	130
81mm mortar round	1.5

Additional Gear	Weight (lbs)
LBE	5
Flak jacket	12
Steel helmet	5
Flak vest	12
Aircrew vest	18
Rucksack	5
M60 barrel bag	5
PRC 25 radio	25
Radio Batteries	4
1 quart canteen (full)	3
1 quart canteen (empty)	1
Two quart canteen (full)	5
Machete	3
C rations (per meal)	2
M18 Claymore mine	2.5
Medical pack (Aid Bag)	5
Mine Detector	15
Night Vision Scope	6
Camera	1.5
Binoculars	3
IV Fluid Bag	2



**YOU GREEN TROOPERS ARE PROBABLY GOING TO DO WHAT YOU DO IN EVERY GAME. YOU'LL PICK UP THE TOUGHEST COMBAT EDGES TO MAKE THE MEANEST SOLDIER YOU CAN, THEN LOAD UP WITH ENOUGH WEAPONRY TO TAKE OUT A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY AND START LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, RIGHT?**

**WELL YOU'RE IN FOR A SHOCK 'COS HERE IN THE 'NAM, IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT! THE LOAD LIMITS ARE THE SAME AS IN THE SAVAGE WORLDS RULES, BUT HERE IN THE RAINFORESTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, YOUR ENCUMBRANCE ALSO AFFECTS YOUR FATIGUE CHECKS!**

**THAT'S RIGHT, SOLDIER, THE MORE YOU CARRY THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO DROP FROM EXHAUSTION, DIE FROM SUNSTROKE, OR SHRIVEL UP FROM DEHYDRATION. THE DUMB SCHMUCK WHO DECIDES TO HAUL 150LBS OF GEAR IS GONNA NEED A LOT OF WATER AND A LOT OF BREAKS TO REST. THE WEATHER AND THE TERRAIN IN THE 'NAM MAKE YOU WANT TO TRAVEL LIGHT.**

**PROBLEM IS, YOU'LL NEED ALL THIS STUFF AND YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO TAKE ALL THE AMMO YOU CAN CARRY TOO! BEAR IN MIND YOU CAN GO THROUGH AN M16 MAGAZINE IN 3 COMBAT ROUNDS AND YOU'RE GOING TO START LOOKING FOR PLACES TO STUFF THAT EXTRA AMMO. STILL, MAYBE YOU CAN GET ALL THOSE OTHER LOSERS IN YOUR UNIT TO HUMP THE HEAVY GEAR WHILE YOU HOLD THE MAP!**

**SO, YOU'VE FILLED YOUR PACK AND GOT IT ONTO YOUR SHOULDERS. WHO KNOWS, MAYBE YOU CAN EVEN MOVE YOUR FEET A LITTLE, TOO. NOW ITS TIME TO GO OUT AND PROVE WHAT A BADASS YOU REALLY ARE. WHEN A FIREFIGHT STARTS, BE SURE TO DROP THE FREAKIN' THING OR THE ENCUMBRANCE PENALTY TO YOUR SHOOTING ROLLS WILL HAVE YOU POPPING CAPS AT EVERYTHING BUT CHARLIE. BUT IF YOU LEFT YOUR GRENADES AND CLAYMORES IN IT YOU WON'T WANT TO STRAY TOO FAR.**

**WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LEAVE IT LYING AROUND AFTER A FIGHT OR THE CONG WILL BOOBYTRAP THE THING AND THAT'LL END YOUR TOUR REAL FAST.**

**WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE!**

## US and ARVN

Most weapons used by the ARVN were supplied by the US, originally from existing stocks of World War II weapons. As the war progressed and the amount of money available grew, ARVN units were equipped with increasingly modern weapons, until some ARVN units' equipment mirrored that of the US forces they were operating with. Korean and Thai forces were also equipped with US equipment—mostly of WWII vintage, but become increasingly modernized as the war in Vietnam goes on.

### Infantry Weapons

#### Pistols

**M1911A1:** The U.S. military's standard sidearm for nearly 50 years at the time of America's involvement in Vietnam. This weapon saw action in every American conflict from the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916 through Vietnam, with over 19 million produced and distributed to many allies. A rugged, dependable weapon, with good knockdown power, the .45 can be found in almost every unit in South Vietnam.

**S&W .38 Revolver:** These long-barreled 6-shot revolvers are typically carried mainly by aircrew, both rotary and fixed wing aircraft, but also occasionally by military police units.

#### Submachineguns

**M1/M1928 Thompson:** A holdover from US World War II stockpiles, the "Tommy Gun" and its ammunition is heavy to carry in the tropical heat of the 'Nam, but many were sent to equip the French and later South Vietnamese armies. This version of the venerable "Tommy Gun" accepts either a 20 or 30 round box magazine.

**M3A1 "Greasegun":** So named because its design reminded soldiers of the grease guns they had used on their cars in civilian life, the M3 was developed as a cheaper war-time alternative to the submachinegun. Made of stamped parts, this ugly but robust weapon fires the same pistol ammunition as the M1911A1 and the Thompson. Many of these weapons are still used as a back-up weapons for US vehicle crews in the 1960s.

#### Rifles

**M1 Garand:** The M1 Garand was developed to equip US infantry with a self-loading rifle in WWII, and provided US units with an impressive volume of non-automatic rifle fire. The rifle is loaded with an eight round clip that fits inside the weapon's internal magazine. The design of this clip is such that the soldier can only load all



eight rounds into the weapon at once—no “topping off” a partially emptied rifle. Despite this drawback, the rifle was popular with front-line troops and can be found with some US allies in the 1960s.

**M1 Carbine:** The M1 Carbine was designed to give rear echelon troops and officers a handier weapon than the heavy M1 Garand. While not as long-ranged or rugged as its larger brother, it does have a 20 or 30 round magazine. The Carbine is popular among soldiers in Southeast Asia for its light weight and higher ammunition capacity and is used extensively by ARVN soldiers.

**M14:** A rifle designed to replace the M1 Garand, the M14 rifle was adopted by the US Army in 1957. It saw combat extensively for the first time in Southeast Asia, but was found to be too long and too heavy to be carried all day in a hot and wet climate. Although originally designed to be fired either semi or fully automatic, most M14s in theater have the auto-fire capability removed. The M14 was replaced as a first-line weapon in the late 1960s.

**M14A1 Squad Automatic Rifle:** Designed to provide firepower to the M14-armed infantry squad, these M14s were equipped with features that allowed more effective automatic fire than a regular M14. The fire selector is installed, giving it full automatic fire capability.

**M16:** Derided as a toy gun made by the Mattel Corporation, the Colt M16 was not popular when first introduced in Vietnam. It was originally issued to Air Force troops in-country, but its light weight (due to the use of plastic in the buttstock and handguards) makes it ideal for ground troops marching in the heat of Southeast Asia. Problems surfaced due to a lack of training among the troops in the rifle's proper care, but once the initial bugs were straightened out, the weapon performed admirably. The M16 can be fired in either the single shot or fully automatic mode from a 20 round clip.

**XM-177E1/CAR-15/XM-177E2:** Originally appearing as the CAR-15 in 1965, this rifle was intended for US Special Forces in Vietnam. The original M16 was simply shortened by cutting the length of the barrel in half (to 10 inches) and adding a shortened retractable buttstock. In mid-1967 Colt slightly upgraded the Commando by lengthening the barrel up to 11.5 inches, and this version was adopted as XM-177E2.

Many of these weapons can be found among REMFs (Rear Area Mother F-----), who like the appearance of carrying a weapon designed for elite troops. The XM-177E1 isn't too rugged in hand-to-hand combat, and if used as a club has a tendency to be battered beyond use. Any 1s rolled in Fighting indicate that the rifle has been ruined as a firearm.

**M40/Remington 70:** Used as a sniper rifle by the USMC beginning in 1966. This bolt-action rifle fires from a 5 round internal magazine using a 10X Unertl scope. The scope provides a +2 Shooting bonus to shots over Short range as long as the firer does not move this round.

**M21 Sniper Rifle:** During the Vietnam War, the US Army felt the demand for an accurate sniper rifle. The army accordingly selected the then-standard M14 for its ability to provide a quick second shot. The Army Marksmanship Unit was charged with turning the M14 into effective sniper rifle. This was done by adding a telescopic sight (see M40 above for scope rules). It was adopted by US Army in 1971.

## Machinegun Special Rules

Weapons noted as requiring crews of two or more are fired most effectively when fully crewed. While they can be fired with no penalty by one person, it takes only a single action by the A-gunner to reload with a full crew. When working alone, it takes three actions to reload one of these weapons. An A-gunner can also link belts together while the gun is being fired with a successful Agility check, providing a continuous feed of ammo as long as the belts are linked. Any 1s on this roll indicate the belt is twisted and the gun has jammed. Unjamming the gun requires a successful Repair roll from both the gunner and assistant gunner.

## MG Overheating

Modern air-cooled belt-fed machineguns often have a rate of fire that exceeds the capacity of the barrel to cool itself, resulting in melted barrels. When firing suppressive fire, a 1 rolled on the Shooting roll indicates that the barrel has overheated. It must then be changed. If no barrels are available the gunner can either wait five rounds for the weapon to cool, or pour 4 quarts of water on the barrel. A third solution is to keep firing the weapon. On subsequent rolls in which the gunner takes none of the above remedial actions, any 1s rolled indicate the barrel has melted, ruining the gun until it can be worked on by the unit armorer.

**BAR:** The Browning Automatic Rifle served with US forces in WWII and thousands of these weapons were produced. After Korea, the BAR was gradually replaced in US service, but the BAR continued to see action in the armories of many US allies around the world. The BAR has an integral bipod for stabilization. The biggest drawback is the 20 round magazine, which is much too small to allow the weapon to be used in a support role. It does compensate somewhat for this drawback by having a reload time of one action, though.

**M60:** Called the "pig" or "hog", the M60 machinegun was phased in as the standard light machinegun of the US military in the 1960s. Patterned after the infamous German MG42, the M60 is an air-cooled weapon supplied by a 100 round belt of ammunition. It can be found in a variety of roles in the 'Nam, from supporting ground troops to vehicle mounts to helicopter defense. The M60 has a built-in bipod and carrying handle, and a "quick-change" barrel for replacement to avoid overheating. If the gun overheats (see Overheating above), the barrel can be changed with the spare provided in the barrel bag. This operation requires three actions (five if no assistant gunner is available).

**M63 Stoner:** The Stoner 63/63A 5.56mm machinegun was the culmination of Dr. Eugene Stoner's idea for a modular firearm that could be made into a variety of configurations, from a carbine to a fixed machine gun for vehicle use.

This version of the weapon is mostly used by Navy SEALs. A belt-fed, light machinegun, the M63 uses either a 150-round snail drum, 100-round or 150-round plastic box. A clip-on bipod is available, but SEAL operators usually do not use it in the field. It can also be attached to the standard US tripod for static positions, although the weapon's rarity usually precludes its use in this role.

**M1919:** This crew-served weapon is air-cooled and belt fed from a 250 round disintegrating link belt, and typically fired from a tripod. An extremely reliable weapon, it can take a lot of abuse, and many examples of this gun served throughout Southeast Asia from 1946 until well into the 1960s. This gun typically has a crew of three attached, but two soldiers can serve the weapon with no penalties. A strong soldier with an asbestos glove can fire it from the hip with a -6 to the Shooting roll.

**M2HB:** The Browning .50 caliber machinegun has seen service in a variety of roles, from ground combat in the hands of the infantry to vehicles and aircraft. Although it has a slow rate of fire, its heavy rounds can inflict damage on men and vehicles alike. The M2 can be fired either single shot or fully automatic from a 100 round disintegrating link belt.

### Antitank Weapons

**M72 LAW:** Replacing the cumbersome WWII Bazooka, the LAW was designed after the highly successful German Panzerfaust as a single shot, disposable weapon capable of taking out enemy tanks. The lack of enemy tanks in Vietnam relegates these weapons into improvised bunker busters.

Unfortunately, these weapons were designed for use in Europe and don't hold up well in the environmental conditions in the 'Nam, and are

prone to fail when fired due to moisture buildup in the firing mechanism. When firing a LAW, a 1 or 2 on the Shooting roll indicates the firing mechanism has been fouled, rendering the weapon useless. No amount of tinkering in the field can get one of these to work (although a sadistic War Master might give such a tinkerer a chance to have it explode in his face).

A flame template must be placed at the rear of the LAW when fired to represent the backblast area. Anyone within the first half of the template must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken. Anyone rolling a 1 on their Spirit die takes 1d6 damage.

**Recoilless Rifle:** The advantage of recoilless guns lies in their lightweight and relatively high performance. This light weight is achieved through the absence of a recoil mechanism eliminating the need for heavy gun mounts, which are a significant part of the weight of a typical artillery piece. Vehicles can easily carry a recoilless rifle, and in some instances the lighter (57mm) recoilless rifles could be fired from the shoulder like a giant bazooka or fired from its integral monopod or bipod.

One drawback of this weapon is the fact that the breach expels propellant gasses rearward thereby balancing the forces caused by the projectile accelerating out of the gun tube. This creates a large backblast and resultant smoke/dust cloud that is impossible to miss.

The fan-shaped backblast covers an area of two flame templates laid side by side, with their narrow ends placed on the rear of the weapon. Anyone in this area must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken. Anyone rolling a 1 on his Spirit die takes 2d6 damage. If this weapon is fired in an enclosed space, the damage is automatic.

### Grenades and Explosives

**M26 "Baseball" Hand grenade:** This fragmentation hand grenade was round, lighter, and fairly well balanced, allowing the soldier to throw it further than the old Mk2 "pineapples."

**M79 Grenade launcher:** The M79 "Blooper" closely resembles a large bore, single barrel, sawed-off shotgun. Designed as a close-support weapon for the infantry, it bridged the gap between the maximum throwing distance of a hand grenade, and the lowest range of supporting mortar fire. The arming distance of most grenades was 20 meters, and it could engage point targets out to 150 meters, and area targets to 300 meters. Area shots are lobbed through the air at an angle instead of fired directly at a target. This can increase the range and might get by some obstacles such as a berm or low wall.

There is a -2 Shooting penalty on any area shot. The M79 can fire high explosive, multi-projectile (buckshot), smoke grenades, CS gas, and flares.

**Multiprojectile (Buckshot):** This "grenade" is a giant shotgun shell, filled with steel balls. The shooter places the small end of the flame template at the tip of his weapon, and the large end on as many targets as he is able. He then makes a shooting roll at +2. Defenders making an Agility roll equal or greater to the attacker's Shooting roll are able to dodge out of the way. Those who fail suffer 3d6 damage. Raises on the attacker's Shooting roll have no further effect.

**Flare:** This round shoots a parachute flare, that bursts several hundred feet above the ground and floats down on its own parachute. The parachute flare provides light in an 18" radius, reducing the lighting penalties to dim (-1).

**High Explosive:** This is a typical high explosive grenade, causing damage to everything under a Medium Burst Template centered on the target.

**Smoke:** This round spews a thick blanket of smoke. On the round of the attack place a Medium Burst template to represent the smoke. On the second round place another Medium template touching the first as the cloud expands. On the third round place a Small Burst template touching the second. On the fourth round the cloud dissipates. Line of sight is blocked by the

cloud, and any ranged weapon fire through it suffers a -4 penalty to the Shooting roll.

**CS:** This round releases a cloud of tear gas. Place a Medium Burst template on the target point. This stays in place for three rounds (less if a strong wind is blowing). Anyone under the template each round must make a Vigor roll at -2 (-4 if in an enclosed space). Those who fail are Shaken, and remain Shaken as long as they are in the gas cloud. Once out of the gas, a character cannot attempt to recover from being shaken for three rounds. Gas masks negate the effects of CS.

**Claymore Mine:** Used both offensively and defensively by US forces, this weapon, although classified as a mine, is not buried in the ground. Instead, it stands on two sets of scissor legs and is pointed in the direction it is meant to fire. The Claymore can be command or remotely detonated by a tripwire. When triggered, the plastic explosive inside detonates, blasting a hail of steel ball-bearings in a cone-shaped killzone.

The Claymore uses two flamer templates side by side to indicate the killzone. Anyone within this area takes full damage. Anyone not under cover in a 180-degree arc behind the Claymore out to 6 inches must make a Spirit check or be Shaken due to blowback. Anyone who rolls a one on this check is hit for 2d6 damage.



## Support Weapons

**60mm Mortar:** Designed to provide the infantry company with a portable form of artillery, the 60mm mortar was light enough to be carried by its crew of three. Due to the weight of the ammo and the heat, humidity and terrain, the number of rounds available to a company in the boonies was limited and most members of a platoon would carry several mortar rounds. Logistics flights would fly in extra ammo if a patrol base was being set up or a firefight expected. Dense overhead cover precludes the use of mortars if a clearing can't be found to set them up in.

**81mm Mortar:** This mortar was a heavier version of the 60mm mortar. Though technically portable, the weight of this weapon generally meant it was left at camp except for mechanized operations. Each 81mm mortar is crewed by a squad of six.

**Flamethrower:** US forces in Vietnam used the lessons gained through hard jungle fighting in the Pacific in World War II and employed a variety of flame weapons. Most were mounted on vehicles, but a few infantry-style flame units were employed. Use the statistics from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. The target of a flamethrower receives no bonuses for cover, as the flames wash around most protection, and tend to suck the air out of caves and bunkers.

## Personal Armor

**Helmet:** French, US, and allied force's troops use steel helmets throughout most of the war, although this varies by unit type and personal preference. Most NVA forces wear pith style helmets that provide no ballistic protection. Although the helmets used by the Western forces and their allies help reduce the severity of head injuries in the war, the "steel pot" helmet is heavy and tends to trap heat around the wearer's head in the tropical conditions of Southeast Asia. Whenever the War Master requires a soldier to check for Fatigue due to heat, subtract 1 from the roll if he wore his helmet for the majority of the time. This modifier is used in the heat only. It does not effect rolls for Fatigue from terrain or other hazards.

**Flak Vest:** In an attempt to limit casualties among US ground troops, flak vests were introduced on a wider scale than had been attempted in Korea. The vests are heavy and hot, however, and are perceived as not providing much protection. Whenever the War Master requires a soldier to check for Fatigue due to heat, subtract 1 from the roll if he wore his flak vest for the majority of the time. Again, this modifier only applies to heat-induced Fatigue checks.

**Aircrew Flak Vests:** Since aircrews didn't have to worry about humping heavy gear through the jungle, their vests had "chickenplate" steel inserts



to provide additional protection. Some pilots, door gunners, and crew chiefs went so far as to stack a mound of these vests under them to provide additional protection from anti-aircraft fire. If a foot soldier acquires one of these and tries to use it in the boonies, subtract 4 from all Vigor rolls he makes to resist heat Fatigue. Helicopter crews can ignore this penalty while flying.

## Miscellaneous

**Mine Detectors:** Mine detectors consist of a belt or backpack mounted unit, a set of headphones, and a long wand with an electromagnetic detector at the end. Minesweeping is a task that takes concentration. The minesweeper must remain fairly oblivious to his surroundings while listening to the equipment. The soldier using the set is at -4 to all Notice checks to detect ambushes. Mine detectors provide a +4 to the Notice roll to detect mines or metallic booby traps.

**Trip Flare:** These devices consist of a magnesium flare set off by a thin trip wire. Designed to give early warning against nocturnal attackers, the trip flare casts a bright light in a radius equal to a small burst template. Targets in the area of illumination are treated as being in dim light (-1) for Shooting attacks.

**PRC-25 Field Radio:** The main radio carried in the field by US troops, the "Prick 25" is a backpack-type radio worn by the radioman. Although he can't carry a regular rucksack, grenades and some personal gear can be attached. The range of this FM set varies from line of sight to 5 miles, with ranges of up to 25 miles possible if broadcasting from a high hilltop. The bulky batteries for this radio last for 12 hours, and weigh 4 pounds.

**Tigerstripe Fatigues:** Worn by elite units such as LRRPs and Special Forces, as well as thousands of "chairborne rangers" in Saigon and other rear areas, these uniforms are arguably the best camouflage available. Soldiers wearing these in the jungles of Southeast Asia add +1 to their Stealth rolls. Issued sets are hard to come by for regular infantry units, but they can be easily picked up in most big Vietnamese cities.

**Night Vision Scopes:** The first war to see widespread use of light enhancing scopes, the American AN-PVS-2 night vision scope provided a dim view of the area at night by amplifying existing light. It does not work in a lightless environment, such as underground or inside a sealed building. A hero using a night vision device treats the illumination level as dim (-1 to Shooting rolls), unless a half moon or better is present, in which case all penalties are ignored. The batteries typically last 100 hours.

An individual can fire out to the normal range of the weapon the scope is mounted on. The shooter must be sure of his targets, however, as individual recognition is impossible within the hazy green field of view provided by these primitive scopes.

## US Vehicles

The US used a wide variety of armored vehicles in their fight against the Viet Cong and their NVA sponsors. The following lists, while not exhaustive, provide detailed statistics for the most common of the vehicles used. If the War Master wants to include other vehicles used in the conflicts, these vehicles provide a good starting point for your own conversions.

### Vehicular Notes

Some of the vehicles have special abilities due to their construction or optional equipment. For most of these abilities, see the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. Some of the new abilities are listed below.

**Flammable:** Poor ammo stowage, exposed fuel lines, or other design flaws give these vehicles a tendency to suffer catastrophic damage when hit. Any Critical Hits scored against the vehicle have +2 added to the roll on the Critical Hits Table.

**Single Shot:** The weapon on this vehicle is mounted outside the crew compartment. Once fired, the weapon must be reloaded by an exposed crewman. The entire reloading process can take several actions, during which the crewman is considered to have medium (-2) cover.

### M113

The M113 was introduced as an armored personnel carrier. Fully amphibious, the aluminum-hulled vehicle has a crew of two, and can carry eleven loaded troops in the rear compartment. Cheap, simple to manufacture, and easy to maintain, it was not liked at first by the ARVN troops due to its deployment as a light tank and the resulting losses. Used properly with the correct doctrine, however, it was an effective APC. The driver sits in the left front of the hull, beside the front-mounted engine. The commander has a hatch in the center of the roof. A roof hatch is also mounted over the troop compartment, and the rear is taken up by a ramp for entry by the troops. Due to the presence of mines, most troops took to riding on the roof rather than in the troop compartment.

A wide variety of M113 variants were produced, including a command model with a higher roof (the M557), an armored ambulance, two mortar carriers (the M125 and M106), and a recovery

vehicle (M806). Some of the more common variants are listed below.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 4/16

**Toughness:** 14/12/12 (4/2/2)

**Crew:** 2; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Heavy Armor

**Weapons:**

- M2 Browning on top pintle mount (1000 rounds)

### M113 ACAV

The M113 Armored Cavalry Vehicle (ACAV) is an up-gunned version of the M113. Envisioned as a way to provide fire support to the mechanized infantry company, the ACAV suffers from the M113's lack of armor, and despite the addition of the extra machine guns is just as easily destroyed by a determined foe.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 4/16

**Toughness:** 14/12/12 (4/2/2)

**Crew:** 2; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Heavy Armor

**Weapons:**

- M2 Browning on top pintle mount (1000 rounds) with gunshield (gives gunner AV +4)
- M60 MG mounted right and left of roof hatch with gunshield (gives gunner AV +4)



### M132

The M132 is an M113 modified into a mobile flamethrower. The cupola is replaced with the flame gun mounting, and the passenger compartment is taken up by the M10 fuel and pressure unit, which consists of four 50 gallon spherical flame fuel tanks. Each of these are topped by a spherical air compressor. See the rules for vehicle mounted flamethrowers in the *Savage Worlds Rulebook* for details.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 4/16

**Toughness:** 14/12/12 (4/2/2)

**Crew:** 2 **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Flammable, Heavy Armor

**Weapons:**

- M10-8 Flamethrower (5 Bursts) (Range 25/50/100; Damage 2d10, ROF 1, ignores armor and cover)
- 7.62mm MG coaxial (200 rounds) (Range 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1, ROF 3; AP2)

### LVTP5 Amtrac

An amphibious landing vehicle, the LVTP5 is a large vehicle with an inverted V-shaped bow that makes for more efficient water operation. Infantry access is via a bow ramp and the crew and passenger compartment are at the front of the vehicle, with the powerplant to the rear. One large and two smaller access hatches are over the passenger compartment. When operating in the water, weight for the LVTP5 has to be reduced and it can carry only 25 passengers. LVTE1 is the engineer version of the LVTP5. A large, toothed, V-shaped excavator blade is mounted on the front of the vehicle, and it can clear a path through a minefield was 16 game-inches deep and 12 feet wide.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 3/12 (land) 1/3 (water)

**Toughness:** 16/12/12 (5/3/3), LVTE1 19/12/12 (8/3/3)

**Crew:** 3 (34 passengers); **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Heavy Armor

**Weapons:**

- M1919A4 MG on commander's cupola (250 rounds)

### M41 Walker Bulldog

The M41 was developed as a light tank design to replace the Chaffee following World War II. Many M41s were shipped to South Vietnam as the US began to build up the ARVN armored forces. It proved very effective in defeating the NVA's Soviet supplied armor in the armor battles of 1970-1972.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 5/12

**Toughness:** 22/18/18 (10/5/5)

**Crew:** 4; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Stabilizer, Heavy Armor

**Weapons:**

- 76mm main gun (57 rounds)

AP (Range 75/150/300; Damage 3d10; ROF 1; AP15, reload 1 action)

HE (Range 75/150/300; Damage 3d10; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template, AP5, reload 1 action)

- M2 MG on top pintle mount (550 rounds)
- 30 MG in coax (1000 rounds) (Range 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3; AP2)

### M48 Patton

The M48 was America's main battle tank at the beginning of the war, gradually being replaced by the M60 as the 1960s went on. Designed to face the hordes of Soviet armor expected on the plains of Germany, the M48 is more than a match for any armor it's likely to come up against in Vietnam. Of course, like all armored vehicles it's vulnerable to foot soldiers without its own infantry support.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 3/12

**Toughness:** 30/20/20 (15/6/5)

**Crew:** 4; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Heavy Armor, Stabilizer

#### **Weapons:**

- 90mm main gun (64 rounds)

AP (Range 75/150/300; Damage 3d10+1; ROF 1; AP24, reload 1 action)

HE (Range 75/150/300; Damage 3d10+1; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template, AP8, reload 1 action)

- M2 MG in top pintle (550 rounds)
- 30 MG in coax (1000 rounds) (Range 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3; AP2)

### M67 Flame Vehicle

The M67 is identical to the M48 except that the main gun is replaced with a flamethrower. This devastating weapon uses the rules from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for vehicle-mounted flamers, and can direct its burning fuel to affect either a direct line of fire using the cone template, or arc it for greater range using a Small Burst radius.

**Notes:** Flammable.

- M7-6 Flame Gun (5 Bursts) (Range 25/50/100; Damage 2d10, ROF 1, ignores armor and cover).

### M50 Ontos

The Greek word for "thing", the Ontos is a lightweight tracked armored fighting vehicle. Designed in the early 1950's to be an air transportable tank destroyer. This nine and a half ton tracked vehicle was armed with six 106mm recoilless rifles, four .50 caliber spotter rifles, and a .30 cal Browning machine gun. Each vehicle was manned by a crew of three, but some vehicles in-country had two crewman.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 4/12

**Toughness:** 20/13/13 (10/4/4)

**Crew:** 3; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Fixed Guns (the Recoilless Rifles can only fire to the front), Single Shot (loading each recoilless rifles takes three rounds outside the vehicle), Heavy Armor



### Weapons:

- 106 mm recoilless rifles (18 rounds)  
AP (Range 50/100/200; Damage 3d10+2; ROF 1/3; AP18)  
HE (Range 50/100/200; Damage 3d8; ROF 1/3; Medium Burst Template)  
Canister (Range 10/20/40; Damage 2d10; ROF 1/3; Pick a point of detonation. The shell behaves as a canister round (see the *Savage Worlds* rulebook) from that point onward for 18").
- .50 Spotting Rifles (10 rounds) (Range 50/100/200; Damage 2d10; ROF 1; Shots 5; AP2)
- M1919A4 (500 rounds) on top pintle mount

### M551 Sheridan

Designed as a light air-droppable tank and reconnaissance vehicle, the Sheridan has an aluminum hull and steel turret, and is designed with buoyancy cells to give it an amphibious capability. The original 152mm gun-launcher on the M551 is able to fire the Shillelagh missile (almost never used in Vietnam), HEAT, WP, and canister. The thin armor and combustible cases of the main gun ammo create serious problems for its crews. It is often replaced in recon units with heavier, more reliable tanks or M113s.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 3/18 **Toughness:** 15/13/13 (5/3/3)

**Crew:** 4; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Heavy Armor, Flammable

#### Weapons:

- 152mm gun (20 rounds)  
-HEAT (Range 100/200/400; Damage 3d10; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template; AP20)  
-WP (Range 100/200/400; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template)  
-Canister (Range 24" path; Damage 2d6; ROF 1; AP2)
- M2 MG on top mount (1000 rounds)
- .30 MG in bow (1000 rounds) (Range 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3; AP2)

## VC and NVA

The VC and NVA forces got their weapons from wherever they could. China and Russia were both large suppliers of these forces in the form of weaponry and vehicles as well.

## Infantry Weapons

### Pistols

**Tokarev:** Widely used during WWII, the Tokarev was exported to Soviet client states in great numbers. It was designed without any safety, instead being equipped with a half-cock position. If dropped, the user makes an Agility roll. On a 1 the pistol goes off and fires in a random

direction. Use the innocent by-stander rules to determine if anyone in the line of fire is struck.

**Marakov:** This pistol was designed as a self-defense handgun for Soviet Army officers and police and provides good defense at short and medium distances, with the usual high reliability of Soviet designs. This all-steel pistol is extremely sturdy, simple to operate and maintain and very reliable.

### Submachineguns

**PPSh-41:** Retired from Soviet Army service soon after WWII, the PPSH was widely exported to some pro-Soviet countries around the world, including Vietnam. The PPSH-41 is a simple but effective wartime weapon. It can be fired in either single shot or full automatic mode. Long ranged (compared with other SMGs), accurate, and reliable, the main drawbacks of the PPSH-41 are its weight and length.

### Rifles

**AK-47:** Adopted by the Soviet Army in 1947 this rifle was manufactured in huge numbers, for both internal use and export. Rugged and dependable, this weapon and the Type 56 Chinese copy came to symbolize Communism worldwide. The stock and grip are made of wood, and the rifle is designed to take hard knocks.

**SKS:** This rifle is of a similar age as the M14. A folding bayonet is permanently attached to the gun beneath the barrel, so no action is required to fix the bayonet. This gun is large and cumbersome so any Vietnamese troops armed with SKS rifles suffer -1 to all Stealth rolls.

**SVD Dragunov:** The SVD was designed to extend the effective range of fire of every Soviet infantry squad up to 600 meters and to provide special fire support. Lightweight and quite accurate, this rifle is only capable of semi-automatic fire.

### Machineguns

**PK:** The PK was developed as a general-purpose machinegun. Its crew of three—gunner, assistant gunner, and ammo bearer—may use the PK with its integral bipod or on a lightweight tripod. This belt-fed machinegun has a chrome quick-change barrel. If the gun overheats (see the section on Machineguns page 23) the barrel can be changed in one action (two if no assistant gunner is available).

**RPD:** The Soviet designed RPD and the Chinese Type 56 LMG copy were belt-fed guns, the belt being contained in a drum allowing for easier one-man operation. The gun has only a full-auto setting so Vietnamese gunners fire short bursts to prevent overheating the non-removable barrel.



**RPK:** The RPK is an AK-47 with a sturdier receiver, heavier and longer, non-detachable barrel, and re-contoured wooden buttstock. A non-detachable, folding bipod is mounted under the barrel. The RPK can be fed from 40 round boxes or 75 round drum magazines, as well as from standard AK-47 type 30 round magazines.

**DShK:** This Soviet heavy-caliber belt-fed machine gun was designed as a dedicated anti-aircraft weapon. Widely exported to Soviet-friendly nations and regimes, it is heavily used in Indochina and Vietnam, especially in the anti-aircraft role. The DShK fires only full-auto from 50 round belts, and is mounted on a wheeled universal mount fitted with a removable steel shield. This gives the gunner armor +4. The wheels can be removed and a mount "tail" separated to form a folding tripod, allowing the gun to be used in its anti-aircraft role.

### Grenades and Explosives

**RPG-2/RPG-7:** also called the BT-40, this Soviet designed weapon was patterned after the German Panzerfaust of World War II. The RPG-2, and later the RPG-7, is effective against emplacements and armored vehicles. RPGs can be reloaded, and a typical gunner carries 3 extra rounds in a backpack.

Chain link fences and treelimits can detonate the warhead prematurely. An RPG round striking such a barrier explodes on a d6 roll of 1-3, with the burst template centered on the barrier.

**Sapper Harness:** Sappers often wear these explosive packs to penetrate barbed wire and other obstacles used by US forces. The sapper acts as a human bomb taking out bunkers, command posts, and vehicles. A simple canvas harness with an explosive charge, the weapon is detonated by the wearer by a pull-cord. When attempting to detonate a sapper harness, roll a d12. On a one it fails to detonate. Otherwise, place a medium blast marker centered on the sapper, who dies in the attack.

### Support Weapons

**Recoilless Rifles:** The VC and NVA use a variety of calibers of recoilless rifles as close artillery support. Use the rules as presented in the US section.

## NVA Vehicles

### PT76

The PT-76 is one of several light amphibious tanks developed and used by the Soviet Army and exported to their client states. The vehicle entered service in 1954 and is amphibious without additional preparation. The PT-76 is

lightly armored and undergunned for a modern tank, and is operated by a three man crew. The PT-76 is often used to transport troops.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 2/8

**Toughness:** 15/12/12 (4/1/1)

**Crew:** 3; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Amphibious, Heavy Armor, Stabilizer

#### Weapons:

- 76mm main gun (40 rounds)

AP (Range 75/150/300; Damage 4d10+2; ROF 1; AP14, reload 1 action)

HE (Range 75/150/300; Damage 3d8; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template, AP9, reload 1 action)

- PK MG in coax (1000 rounds 7.62Rmm)

### T-54 Main Battle Tank

The T-54 series tanks first appeared in 1949 as replacements for the T-34 tank of World War II, and large numbers saw service, around the world, including Vietnam and Cambodia. T-54s were rarely seen in the South however, and were only encountered in any numbers during the abortive 1972 Easter Offensive, as well as during the ARVN invasion of Laos. Large numbers of T-54s crossed into the South across the DMZ during the final battles in 1975.

The T-54 combines a high-velocity gun with a highly mobile chassis, a low silhouette, and exceptional long-range endurance. It does suffer from a slow rate of fire however, and the protection afforded by its low silhouette is offset by its poor armor protection, which is thin.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 3/12

**Toughness:** 40/30/25 (24/15/10)

**Crew:** 3; **Cost:** Military only

**Notes:** Tracked, Heavy Armor, Sloped Armor (+4 Front only)

#### Weapons:

- 100mm main gun (34 rounds)

AP (Range 100/200/400; Damage 4d10+2; ROF 1; AP35, reload 2 actions)

HE (Range 100/200/400; Damage 3d8; ROF 1; Medium Burst Template, AP20, reload 2 actions)

- PK MG in coax (1000 rounds 7.62Rmm)

## The French

French forces in Indochina were supplied with a hodgepodge of weapons. Mostly because the French arms industry was still suffering greatly from the occupation of World War II, and the growing war in its colony required more weapons than the rebuilt French military could supply. The United States was hostile to the French policy in Indochina, and aid was severely restricted before the political climate changed in 1949. When South Korea was invaded, however, American aid poured in, to the point that by the end of the war most

materiel was supplied by the US. From mid-1950 on, most front-line European and Foreign Legion units were equipped with US or British WWII-vintage weapons and vehicles. Colonial troops serving in Indochina, however, continued to use a gamut of weapons, with some units even having to use pre-War and World War I era weapons.

Besides the weapons listed below, French characters after June 1950 can also choose from among the following US weapons:

- M1911A1 Pistol
- M3A1 Greasegun
- M1 Garand
- M1 Carbine
- Thompson SMG
- BAR
- M1919A4 Machinegun
- M2HB Machinegun
- Bazooka
- Recoilless Rifle (57 and 75mm)

Another concern for French forces is the bewildering array of weapons available, and the number of different calibers and sizes of ammunition required. Logistics were a nightmare for most forces in the field. Even elite units such as the Foreign Legion paratroopers are armed with a dizzying array of weapons, each with a different caliber.

## Infantry Weapons

### Pistols

**Enfield No. 2:** A sturdy revolver of British design.

### Submachineguns

**MAT-49:** Developed at the French state arms factory MAT (Manufacture Nationale d'Armes de Tulle) in the late 1940s, the MAT-49 was widely used by French military and police forces throughout the Indochina campaign. Its success inspired the North Vietnamese to locally produce a copy, chambered for the Soviet 7.62mm TT round.

The MAT-49 is a stamped steel design, with a 20 or 32 round magazine. Army issue MAT-49's can only fire in full auto, but some batches were made for Gendarmerie and Police with dual triggers for both full-auto and single shots.

**MP40:** Stocks of this excellent German weapon were acquired by the French after the War and sent to Indochina, where they could be found as late as the mid-1960s among units of CIDGs in some hamlets. Unfortunately for the French soldiers, many units received British 9mm rounds, which resulted in jams and accidental misfires. If a 1 is rolled on the Shooting roll the MP40 has



jammed on the ammunition, requiring an action to clear.

**Sten:** Fulfilling the British Army's need in WWII for a cheap, mass-produced submachinegun, the Sten was produced in record numbers, and many found their way into French hands after the War. An ugly weapon made of stamped metal and steel tubes, it is nevertheless reliable and deadly.

## Rifles

**No. 4 Lee-Enfield:** This sturdy bolt-action rifle was the mainstay of British ground forces in World War II, and large stocks were sent to France after the War. It fires a .303 round from a 10 round internal magazine.

**Lebel 1886M93, Berthier M1907/15:** These bolt-action rifles were prime examples of how the French government used Indochina as a dumping ground for their old ordnance. Developed before or during the First World War, these rifles of varying calibers were used to equip the colonial troops, and only added to their poor performance when faced with the superior weaponry supplied to the Viet Minh by the Soviets and Chinese.

**MAS-36:** The French MAS-36 was designed to replace the elderly Berthiers and Lebels and began production in 1932. Being slightly better than the other bolt-action rifles in French service, this weapon could be found in the hands of the European units until the influx of American-made weapons arrived in 1950. Unfortunately, it was still a bolt-action rifle whose time was past in Indochina.

Robust and reliable, the MAS-36 is equipped with a thin spike bayonet stored in a tube under the fore-end. This bayonet can be taken out and readied when needed (requires 1 action).

## Machineguns

**Bren:** Originally developed from a Czech design at the start of WWII, the Bren was manufactured by Enfield Lock and saw action with British and Commonwealth troops across the globe. Wartime stocks were transferred to the French for service in Indochina. This weapon has an integral bipod and carrying handle above the barrel for easy transport. Its curved, top-mounted magazine gives it a distinctive appearance. If the gunner has taken the time to place magazines within easy reach, the gun can be reloaded in 1 round without an assistant gunner. The Bren is equipped with a selector switch that allows the user to chose between single shots and fully automatic fire.

**Reibel M1931A Fortress Gun / FM 24/29:** Stripped out of the Maginot Line emplacements, this 7.5mm machine gun was used in Indochina by French Colonial Forces for many years after WWII. A number of conversions were made, with some using a side-mounted drum magazine

containing 150 rounds. The FM 24/29 typically is equipped with a top-mounted 20 round magazine much like the Bren with an integral bipod, while the old Fortress guns are fired from makeshift tripods.

## Antitank Weapons

**Recoilless Rifle:** French recoilless rifles are US supplied weapons, and are used extensively as infantry support weapons. Use the statistics given in the US section. The majority were 57mm, although some 75mm weapons were used.

**Bazooka:** This World War II hold-over is mostly useless against most post-war tanks, but continues in the inventories of many nations well after the war. The launcher is essentially a tube about 60 inches long, with a rocket propelled shaped charge in the back. The bazooka's relatively light weight, combined with its punch against armor and other hard targets such as bunkers, are its main advantages. Disadvantages include a dangerous back blast and limited range, making the bazooka team vulnerable to counterattack.

## Grenades and Explosives

**Hand Grenades:** The vast majority of grenades used by the French forces in Vietnam were American-made M67 "Pineapple" grenades. Use the statistics presented in *Savage Worlds*.



# US/ARVN Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Weight	Shots	MinStr	Cost	Notes
<b>Pistols</b>								
MI911A1 (.45)	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	2	7	—	—	
Hush Puppy (.45)	5/10/20	2d6+2	1	2	7	—	—	Silenced/SF
<b>Submachine Guns</b>								
M1 Thompson (.45)	12/24/48	2d6+1	3	13	20/30	—	—	
M3 Grease Gun (.45)	12/24/48	2d6	3	15	30	—	—	
<b>Rifles</b>								
M1 Garand (.30)	24/48/96	2d8	1	10	8	—	—	AP2
M1 Carbine (.30)	15/35/75	2d6-1	1/3	6	20/30	—	—	API
M40 (7.62)	48/96/192	2d8+1	1	15	5	—	—	AP2, Snapfire penalty
M21 (7.62)	48/96/192	2d8+1	1	9	20	—	—	AP2, Snapfire penalty
<b>Assault Rifles</b>								
M14 (7.62)	24/48/96	2d8+1	1/3	9	20	—	—	AP2, Snapfire penalty
M16 (5.56)	24/48/96	2d8	3	8	20	—	—	AP2
<b>MGs</b>								
M60 (7.62)	30/60/120	2d8+1	3	23	100	d8	—	AP2; Crew Served (2)
Stoner (5.56)	30/60/120	2d8-1	3	12	50/100/150	—	—	AP2, SF Only
<b>Support</b>								
M72 LAW	24/48/96	4d8+2	1	5	—	—	—	Medium, Single shot, misfire on 1 or 2, AP30
M79 (point)	25/50/75	3d6	1	7	—	—	—	Medium, 10" min range, one action to reload
M79 (area)	50/100/150	3d6	1	7	—	—	—	Medium, 10" min range, one action to reload
<b>Recoilless Rifles</b>								
57mm (HE)	25/50/100	4d8+1	1	45	1	d10	Mil.	Medium Burst Template, 1 action to reload
57mm (AP)	25/50/100	4d8+1	1	45	1	d10	Mil.	AP 10, 1 action to reload
75mm (HE)	30/60/120	3d10	1	114	1	—	Mil.	Medium Burst Template, 1 action to reload
75mm (AP)	30/60/120	3d10	1	114	1	—	Mil.	AP 25, 1 action to reload
60mm Mortar	75/150/300	3d8	1	46	1	—	Mil.	Use Medium Burst Template, min range 25
81mm Mortar	150/300/600	4d8+2	1	115	1	—	Mil.	Use Medium Burst Template, min range 100
<b>Grenades</b>								
M26	5/10/20*	3d6	1	—	—	—	—	Medium, *Thrown

## French/Communist Vietnamese Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Weight	Shots	MinStr	Cost	Notes
<b>Pistols</b>								
Browning HP (9mm)	12/24/48	2d6	1	2	13	—	200	
Enfield No.2 MkI (.38)	12/24/48	2d6	1	2	6	—	175	Revolver
Tokarev (7.62mm)	10/20/40	2d6	1	1	8	—	175	
Marakov (9mm)	12/24/48	2d6	1	2	8	—	200	
<b>Submachine Guns</b>								
MAT-49 (9mm)	12/24/48	2d6	3	10	20/32	—	275	
Sten Gun (9mm)	12/24/48	2d6	3	9	32	—	300	
PPSh-41 (7.62)	20/40/60	2d6+1	3	12	71/35	—	300	AP1
<b>Rifles</b>								
Berthier/Lebel (8)	24/48/96	2d8	1	9	3/8	—	225	AP2
MAS-36 (7.5)	24/48/96	2d8-1	1	9	5	—	250	AP2
SVD (7.62)	48/96/192	2d8+1	1	10	10	—	400	AP2, Snapfire penalty
<b>Assault Rifles</b>								
AK47 (7.62R)	24/48/96	2d8+1	3	10	30	—	450	AP2
<b>MGs</b>								
Reibel/FM24/29 (7.5)	25/50/100	2d8-1	2	20	150/20	d6	600	AP2 Crew-served (2)
Bren Gun	30/60/120	2d8	3	22	20	d8	600	AP2
PK (7.62R)	30/60/120	2d8	3	19	100/200/250	d6	650	AP2
RPK (7.62R)	30/60/120	2d8+1	3	11	40/75	—	600	AP2
DShK (12.7)	50/100/200	2d12	3	78	50	—	900	Crew-served (3), AP3, tripod mounted, May not move
<b>Support</b>								
Bazooka	24/48/96	3d10	1	12	1	d6	Mil.	Med Burst Template, AP9
RPG 2	15/30/60	3d8	1	1	—	—	Mil.	Small Burst Template, AP 9
RPG 7	24/48/96	4d8+2	1	1	—	—	Mil.	Med Burst Template, AP 18

## Personal Armor

Type	Armor value	Weight	Notes
Steel Pot	+4	5	See notes for heat modifier, 50% chance to protect head
Flak Vest	+2/+4	12	See notes for heat modifier, covers torso
Aircrew vest	+3/+6	18	See notes for heat modifier, covers torso

# War Master's Intel



## Classified Briefing

**LISTEN UP, KNUCKLEHEAD! THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CLASSIFIED AT ECHELONS ABOVE REALITY, AND IS FOR THE EYES OF THE WAR MASTER! DON'T WORRY, THOUGH. YOU'LL GET TO KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS INFORMATION, ALTHOUGH THE ONLY ONE YOU MIGHT BE TELLING IS EITHER SAINT PETE AT THE PEARLY GATES OR THE DOC AT THE NUT HOUSE AS HE FITS YOU FOR A STRAJHTJACKET!**

**SO DON'T YOU GO POKIN' AROUND WHERE YOU'RE NOT WANTED. TRUST ME, YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU POOR SCHMUCKS ANYWAY. WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU GOIN' OUTTA YER NOODLE BEFORE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO NOW WOULD WE? BWAHAHAHA!**

So far, the information in this book has stuck to the mundane military aspects of the conflict and has only occasionally hinted at something darker. But something strange and terrifying does lie out there in the jungles of Southeast Asia, and *when* your heroes stumble over it, there will be Hell to pay.

The rest of this book is for the War Master only. This chapter gives the WM the history of Indochina, including tidbits that are generally not available to the public (or even to most of the government for that matter). It certainly shouldn't be read by those who wish to play, so read no further if you plan on taking your own *Tour of Darkness*.

## Indochina: An Introduction

Before you go off sending your poor players into the wilds of Indochina, it's important to know a little about the lay of the land. The terrain of Southeast Asia has worked to shape not only the military operations conducted there by Western powers but has also influenced the civilizations who call that part of Asia home.

Once you get the geography down, we move onto the histories of the various countries that make up the region. The time of the Indochina Wars was one of great upheaval, and this section tries to explain and put into perspective what is happening in each country. While not a replacement for a good history book, this summary will give the War Master enough information to run scenarios and campaigns set in Vietnam and the borders of Cambodia and Laos. Following the country specific sections, a history of the events leading up to and during the Indochina Wars is presented. This part of the chapter gives an overview of general, area-wide events of interest and the military side of the region before and during the conflicts. Details are given on campaigns, operations, and other, darker things that didn't make it into the papers back

home. Armed with this backdrop of information, the War Master can bring to life the missions generated from the tables of Chapter, or those of his own making.

## France's Vietnam

During the French colonial period, what would later be known as Vietnam was divided into three regions. The north of the country—that area that would later be North Vietnam—was known as Tonkin. To the south of Tonkin was Annam, covering the thin neck between Laos and the ocean. Below Annam was Cochinchina. The capital of Indochina for the French was Hanoi, in Tonkin. Check out the accompanying map to see major towns and cities, and the location of the all-important Colonial Routes (RCs). Most action in a French-oriented campaign takes place in Tonkin, around Hanoi and north to the Chinese border.

## South Vietnam

### Geography

South Vietnam occupies a land area almost equal to Germany, with a coastline whose length is equal to that from Boston to Miami on the US's eastern seaboard. It is divided into three major regions.

The Mekong Delta occupies the southern part of the country. Formed by the Mekong River, which originates in Tibet, the Delta is composed of fertile plains with heavy rainfall. It is an excellent rice-growing area, and is nowhere more than 10 feet above sea level. By the 1960s, more than 9,000 square miles of the Delta were under rice cultivation. The Ca Mau Peninsula, at the southern-most tip of the delta, is covered with dense jungles and mangrove swamps.

The Chaine Annamitique forms the second major region of South Vietnam. Ranging in height from 5,000 to 8,521 feet, this mountain chain is the southernmost spur of those extending from China and Tibet. They extend almost the whole length of the country, forming the western border of South Vietnam. Numerous spurs extend toward the coast, and tend to break the country up into coastal enclaves. Within the Chaine Ammanitique are the Central Highlands. This area of about 20,000 square miles is divided in two. The northern most region consists of irregular terrain rising from 600 to 1,600 feet in elevation, and is covered in bamboo and tropical forests. Within this region are rubber plantations and farms. The

southern area rises to 3,000 feet and is devoted to the cultivation of coffee, tea, tobacco, and vegetables. The forest growth here is divided between evergreens at higher elevations and bamboo at lower elevations.

The last major division of South Vietnam is the coastal enclaves, formed by the spurs of the mountains. These enclaves vary in size and isolation. In some places the spurs extend to the sea, in others they stop 40 miles inland, allowing easy overland communication between areas. These areas are very fertile rice-growing areas.

The French constructed roads in Vietnam during their colonial period. Much like Rome, all the roads ran to the capital, in this case, Hanoi. In the north, where most of the fighting took place during the French Indochina War, the roads ran from Hanoi to the Chinese border (RC1), and along the Indochina-China border (Colonial Route (RC) 4) from Cao Bang through Lang Son to Tien Yen on the coast. Colonial Route 6 connected the capital to Lai Chau in the Thai Highlands. Paralleling RC4 deeper in the country was RC3. Other roads ran to other parts of the country, but during the fighting these were the most important. Most of the road net in the south was oriented in a north-south direction, with RC1 running along the coast from Saigon to Hanoi. Colonial Route 14 ran along the Cambodian border through the provincial capital of Pleiku before rejoining RC1 at Da Nang.

### Weather

South Vietnam is a tropical country, with a hot and humid climate. The monthly average temperature is 80 degrees Fahrenheit, but can climb much higher. The annual rainfall is heavy, contributing to a high humidity that combined with the temperature saps the energy of those not acclimated to the country. Two monsoon seasons occur, blowing from the south in the summer and the north in the winter.

### Government

Theoretically a democracy under the 1954 Geneva Peace Accords, South Vietnam was separated from North Vietnam by a demilitarized zone (DMZ), no more than five kilometers wide, established on either side of the demarcation line. A series of presidents were elected, although the fairness of the elections depends on who you asked. Originally ruled by Annam's emperor Bao Dai, Ngo Dinh Diem deposed him and took power in 1955. Diem refused to hold elections until they were held in North Vietnam, and in 1956 refused to hold them at all. Under Diem the insurgents gained more and more power, aided by reinforcements and material support from the

North. Although Diem was reelected in 1961, he became more and more unpopular due to the ever-increasing corruption of his government. A crisis situation in Saigon developed in early 1963. Diem was assassinated in a military coup in November, and General Duong Van Minh took over the government. In the course of the next year seven more governments came and went before a measure of stability returned to the South in 1964.

## North Vietnam

Formed from the 1954 peace Accords in Geneva, North Vietnam consists of the old Indochinese provinces of Tonkin and parts of Annam. Ho Chi Minh became the leader of the North, with his seat of power in the old French capital of Hanoi. Patterning himself after Josef Stalin in the 1940s, Ho emphasized nationalism over Communism and began a program of land reform in 1955.

Under the influence of Chinese "advisors," thousands of landowners were sent to gulags and thousands more murdered. When a revolt broke out in 1956 the army moved in to ruthlessly stamp it out, killing another 6,000 peasants. In 1959 the North Vietnamese Politburo passed a resolution calling for the start of a political struggle in South Vietnam, and assassinations of Southern officials began, peaking at over 4,000 per year. Construction and expansion of a supply route began that year, and aid was sent to the Pathet Lao guerillas in Laos. As the 1960s wore on and greater numbers of American troops were sent to Southeast Asia, ever greater numbers of NVA soldiers were sent south as their Viet Cong allies were eliminated in South Vietnam.

## Laos

### Geography

This landlocked country is roughly the size of Oregon and was formed from the remnants of an earlier civilization into the Kingdom of Laos. Joined together with Cambodia and Vietnam into French Indochina, this backwater country was basically left alone by its imperial masters.

The northern half of the country is covered in rough hills and black limestone spires, which gradually give way to the Plain of Jars. This area is a flat plain covered by ancient stone burial urns whose origins are lost in the mists of time. The southern half of the country narrows and empties into the Bolovens plateau, bounded on the east by the Chaine Annamitique mountains

that cover most of the border between the two countries. In the west, Laos is divided from Thailand by the Mekong River. French coffee plantations and vacation villas cover the Bolovens Plateau.

### Populace

The populace was divided between the lowland Laotians, who make up about half the populace, the Lao Theung, dark-skinned mountaineers who made up thirty percent of the population, and a variety of Sino-Tibetan hill tribes who live on the mountain tops, making up the remaining twenty percent. Among these tribes can be found the fierce Hmong, as well as other, less well known tribes who do not gladly welcome strangers. Ancient sites dot the land, from the Plains of Jars to the mountains, and French archeologists have found many sites of interest throughout the inhospitable terrain.

### Government

After World War II, the French, in conjunction with native troops, began a systematic campaign to retake Laos. By the summer of 1946 what little resistance to the return of the French remained was defeated and pushed into exile in Thailand. In an experiment meant to give their holdings some autonomy, the government allowed the formation of the Laotian National Army in 1949. The Viet Minh attempted to capture territory surrounding the Plain of Jars from Laos in 1953, which was stopped only by a massive airlift of French troops into the country. Two other invasions were stopped in 1954 before the fall of Dien Bien Phu.

In 1954, Laos was granted independence, although the French, and later the Americans, continued to provide advisors for the Laotian Royal Army. The French even kept two garrisons in the country to help guarantee its sovereignty. By 1959 a civil war had broken out between the government forces and their American and French advisors and Communist guerillas backed by the North Vietnamese government. Unfortunately, as the anti-guerilla campaign began to show promise, a coup by one of the military commanders in 1960 brought about a supposedly neutralist government that called for the removal of all foreign (Western) troops in Vietnam. The country dissolved into war again, with fighting between the Neutralist Armed Forces, the Laotian Armed Forces, Communist guerilla forces, and Hmong tribesmen organized into anti-guerilla units.



# Cambodia

## Geography

The size of Missouri, Cambodia shares borders with Thailand on the north and west, Laos on the northeast, and Vietnam to the east and southeast. The most important topographical feature is the plain formed by the Tonle Sap (Great Lake), measuring about 2,590 square kilometers during the dry season to about 24,605 square kilometers during the rainy season. This densely populated plain is devoted to wet rice cultivation and constitutes the heartland of Cambodia. Most (about 75 percent) of the country lies at elevations of less than 100 meters above sea level. The Cardamon Mountains, their north-south extension to the east, the Elephant Range and the steep escarpment of the Dangrek Mountains along the northern border with Thailand form the high ground of the country and serve to accentuate the bowl-like nature of the land.

## Weather

Temperatures in Cambodia range from 50° to 89° Fahrenheit. Two tropical monsoons occur each year. The southwest monsoon blows inland in a northeasterly direction bringing moisture-laden winds from the Gulf of Thailand/Indian Ocean from May to October with the period of heaviest rains from September-October. The northeast monsoon blows in a southwesterly direction toward the coast and ushers in the dry season, November to March, with the period of least rainfall occurring in January and February.

## Populace

Cambodia is ethnically homogeneous, with more than 90 percent of its people descended from the Khmer. Other national minorities comprise about 3 percent of the total population, and include some remnants of the Cham and other scattered tribal minorities in remote mountain and deep jungle areas.

During the colonial period, the French built a limited number of roads and a railroad that extended from Phnom Penh through Batdambang to the Thai border. The cultivation of rubber and corn were economically important, and the fertile provinces of Batdambang and Siemreab became the rice baskets of Indochina. Outside of agriculture, industry was rudimentary and was designed primarily to process raw materials such as rubber for local use or export.

## Government

In stark contrast to neighboring Cochinchina and to the other Vietnamese-populated territories of Indochina, Cambodia was relatively quiescent politically during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The carefully maintained fiction of royal rule was probably the major factor. Khmer villagers, long inured to abuses of power, believed that as long as a monarch occupied the throne "all was right with the world."

Cambodia's situation at the end of the World War II was chaotic. The Khmer Issarak, a guerrilla movement operating in the border areas, included Cambodian leftists, Vietnamese leftists, anti-monarchists, and opportunistic bandits taking advantage of the chaos to terrorize villagers. Though their fortunes rose and fell during the immediate postwar period, by 1954 the Khmer Issarak operating with the Viet Minh controlled as much as 50 percent of Cambodia's territory.

Although Cambodia had achieved independence by late 1953, its military situation remained unsettled. Communist Viet Minh activities increased at the very time French Union forces were stretched thin elsewhere in Indochina. In April 1954, several Viet Minh battalions crossed the border into Cambodia. Royalist forces engaged them but could not force their complete withdrawal.

The Geneva Conference of 1954 stipulated that all Viet Minh military forces be withdrawn within ninety days from Cambodia and that Cambodian resistance forces be demobilized within thirty days. In a separate agreement signed by the Cambodian representative, the French and the Viet Minh agreed to withdraw all forces from Cambodian soil by October 1954.

In exchange for the withdrawal of Viet Minh forces, the communist representatives in Geneva wanted full neutrality for Cambodia and for Laos that would prevent the basing of United States military forces in these countries. On the eve of the conference's conclusion, however, the Cambodian representative, Sam Sary, insisted that, if Cambodia were to be genuinely independent, it must not be prohibited from seeking whatever military assistance it desired (Cambodia had earlier appealed to Washington for military aid). The conference accepted this point over North Vietnam's strenuous objections. In the final agreement, Cambodia accepted a watered-down neutrality, vowing not to join any military alliance "not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" or to allow the basing of foreign military forces on its territory "as long as its security is not threatened."

Cambodia's quest for security and nation-building assistance caused it to turn to the United States in 1955. A military aid agreement was negotiated that secured funds and equipment for the Cambodian military, and a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) was established in Phnom Penh to supervise the delivery and the use of equipment that began to arrive from the United States. By the early 1960s, aid from Washington constituted 30 percent of Cambodia's defense budget and 14 percent of total budget inflows.

Relations with the United States, however, proved to be stormy. United States officials both in Washington and in Phnom Penh frequently underestimated Prince Sihanouk, the Cambodian leader, and considered him to be an erratic figure with minimal understanding of the threat posed by communism. Sihanouk mistrusted US intentions toward Cambodia due to several key factors. The growing United States influence within the Cambodian armed forces caused alarm due to fears of pro-Western coup plotting. This played to Sihanouk's own belief that he had been targeted by US intelligence agencies for replacement by a more pro-Western leader. The frequent incursions into Cambodian airspace by US and VNAF aircraft and border crossings by South Vietnamese troops in hot pursuit of VC who

crossed into Cambodian territory when military pressure upon them became too sustained also strained relations.

In the early to mid-1960s, the government in Saigon appeared to the Cambodians to totter on the brink of anarchy. In the cities, the South Vietnamese government had become increasingly ineffectual and unstable, while in the countryside the ARVN forces were steadily losing ground to the Hanoi-backed insurgents. To observers in Cambodia, South Vietnam's short-term viability was seriously in doubt, and this compelled a change in their foreign policy. First, Cambodia severed diplomatic ties with Saigon in August 1963. The following March, it announced plans to establish diplomatic relations with North Vietnam and to negotiate a border settlement directly with Hanoi. Cambodia opened border talks with the VC in mid-1966, and the latter recognized the inviolability of Cambodia's borders a year later. North Vietnam quickly followed suit. Cambodia was the first foreign government to recognize the Communist Provisional Revolutionary Government after it was established in June 1969.

In the late 1960s, Cambodia sought to restore a measure of equilibrium by improving its ties with the West. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces were increasing their use of sanctuaries in Cambodia, which also served as the southern terminus of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Cambodian neutrality in the conflict seemed to be slipping. On Cambodia's eastern border, South Vietnam, surprisingly, had not collapsed, even in the face of the communist Tet Offensive in 1968, and President Nguyen Van Thieu's government was bringing a measure of stability to the war-ravaged country. As the Cambodian government began to feel the loss of economic and military aid from the United States, it began to have second thoughts about the break with Washington.

In late 1967 and in early 1968, Cambodia signaled that it would not object to hot pursuit of communist forces by South Vietnamese or by United States troops into its territory. Washington accepted the recommendation of the MACV and, beginning in March 1969, ordered a series of airstrikes against Cambodian sanctuaries used by the NVA and the VC. In April 1969, President Nixon sent a note to the prince affirming that the United States recognized and respected "the sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia with its present frontiers." Shortly thereafter, in June 1969, full diplomatic relations were restored between Phnom Penh and Washington.



# Military Divisions of South Vietnam

Due to the diverse terrain that made up South Vietnam, the US divided the Nam into four areas, termed Corps Tactical Zones (CTZs). From north to south they are:

**I Corps:** The northeast part of this zone is characterized by sandy beaches, wide, flat river valleys, marshes, and rolling countryside. I Corps is the second-most populated area of Vietnam. The dense population limits the use of artillery and air support during operations. Inland from the coast, the highlands begin and run to the Laotian border.

**II Corps:** The rugged Central Highlands form the northern part of this zone, blending into the rolling piedmont to the south. Mountain ranges cut by steep river valleys and covered with dense forests and jungle make this a difficult area in which to conduct operations. Few roads cut through this area, and most movements are made by air. Inclement weather and fog are frequently present, and hamper what little mobility airpower gives to the US and its allies. A rolling plateau is present along the Cambodian-Laotian border, and provides the only relief from the rugged Highlands.

**III Corps:** Covering the area northwest of the Mekong Delta, the III Corps is a region of piedmont, characterized by gently rolling hills, broad plains, and lush vegetation. Well suited for armored operations, this area is host to the Iron Triangle, War Zone C and D, and the terminus of the major infiltration routes from Cambodia.

**IV Corps:** The Mekong Delta, covered by canals, waterways, rice paddies, and swamps, make up the IV Corps Zone. Unsited to armor or motorized movement, during the monsoon season this area is all but impassable. This is also the breadbasket of the country, and contains most of the population.

## A Brief History of the Vietnam Conflict

Most soldiers coming in-country have some idea of what is going on in Southeast Asia, whether from watching the evening news for the last few years or a brief indoctrination before boarding a troopship or MAC flight to the killing fields of Vietnam.

The following section gives an overview of not only what has happened in the region for the last few millennia, but also fills you in on how the war progresses over time.

## The Weird Wars

Let's start with why this war is weird.

The dark energies released by the violence of war give rise to dark entities. The earliest recorded histories tell weird tales of restless dead, great defeats caused by fantastic events, and phenomena unexplainable by science. Of course, most modern scholars blame these bizarre tales on the ignorance of the ancient writers, bungled translations, or simple lies.

But these weird wartime stories persist even in the modern day. Each conflict seems to give rise to its own strange and macabre tales. Modern science ascribes many of these reports to post-traumatic stress syndrome or the use of drugs by troops in the field.

With these pat explanations, such stories are conveniently relegated to the shelves of the nation's grocery tabloids, when they are reported at all. Soldiers who try to tell the truth are marginalized or placed into institutions if they persist in their tales. But not everyone is oblivious to the truth behind these tales.

## Sons of Solomon

Since before the pyramids were raised in Egypt, a select group of scholars have tracked this strangeness. Calling themselves the Sons of Solomon, this secret cabal was instituted with two goals. The first was to try to limit the spread of knowledge of these strange events, for it was quickly learned that fear could give rise to the evil as well as violence.

The second goal was to limit the damage done by such manifestations directly. The Sons quietly seek out those who encounter the darkness and survive. Those who seem capable are recruited into a web of secret organizations and sent directly at these threats when they arise.

The sect's members spread out across the globe and infiltrated governments, clans, tribes, and families. When war begins, the Sons are poised to keep the supernatural aspects from the public, and secretly recruit agents to seek out and destroy the things that arise in the conflict's wake.

## Section 1: Ancient History

### Heart of Darkness

Southeast Asia has long been recognized as a place where strange events happen. Its deep, trackless jungles, hidden valleys, and inhospitable climate seem to conspire to keep it a place of mystery. Civilizations have risen and fallen with little notice from the outside world,

their presence hinted at only by vine-covered ruins that sink deeper into the ground each year until nothing remains of their builders' former glories.

Over the millennia, a variety of outside civilizations have attempted to penetrate the vastness of what would later be called Indochina. The Indians pushed eastward, managing to gain a foothold in the west before returning to their native lands. In the north, the Chinese turned covetous eyes toward this land along the South China Sea.

A host of others also set up settlements along the coast. Most of these invaders came to grief, however, and many fled back to their native lands with wild stories of strange creatures lurking in the deep jungles, ancient temples to unknown gods, and even dragons cavorting off the shores, ready to wreck the ships of interlopers.

## **Empires Lost and Found**

Southeast Asia has always welcomed new blood. In what is now Laos sits a wide plain covered with what are thought to be massive stone burial urns. The true origin of the urns are shrouded in mystery, but later civilizations sprang up in the region only to finally add their dead to this so-called "Plain of Jars."

Later, around the 3rd century BC a sophisticated Bronze Age culture called the "Dong Son" emerged in the area. These people claimed to have a divine destiny over their less-developed neighbors. Their startling technological accomplishments gave them dominance over the region—until the jungle itself suddenly swallowed up their capital. The reason for this sudden demise is still unknown, but tales among some of the ancient mountain tribes in present day Vietnam hint at some dark pact gone awry.

From the 1st to 6th centuries AD, the south of what is now Vietnam was part of the Indian-influenced kingdom of Funan, which produced fine art and architecture, but which fell before the might of another empire, that of Champa.

The kingdom of Champa appeared around present-day Da Nang in the late 2nd century and spread south to what is now Nha Trang by the 8th century. Known for its excessive cruelty, the kingdom existed in part through conducting raids in the region. The Cham religious rituals have been mysteriously all but expunged from the historical records, although they left a host of curious artifacts behind that hint at a greater civilization than the archeological record suggests. Indeed, apart from a few scattered ruins, it seems the Cham built no permanent structures, such is the extent that their works were destroyed after their fall.

Remnants of the Cham civilization fled into Cambodia where they merged with the fledgling Khmer Empire. This new Cham-inspired civilization was but a pale reflection of the kingdom of Champa, but under the influence of Cham advisors—who some in the court accused of being wizards and sorcerers—the Khmer grew into a powerful force in Indochina. Their cities and temple complexes grew ever more impressive, and were dedicated to a variety of powerful entities originally worshipped by the Cham and earlier civilizations until around 1431. In that year, the capital city of Angkor was attacked and its people decimated.

Stories of Angkor's sack were confused as to the identity of the attackers, but in truth an evil unleashed by dark rites in one of their temple complexes broke free and rampaged unchecked through the complex and beyond. Later peoples who filtered back into the area changed the temples, covering them with symbols of Hinduism and Buddhism in an attempt to close the gates and imprison the evil within.

## **Enter the Dragon**

The Sons of Solomon made their first entrance into the court of the Chinese Emperor as trade advisors, but it took close to a hundred years before one would rise to a position of power. In that time the cabal had realized the presence of something sinister within the jungles south of China; something the Cham were at the heart of.

Under the guise of spreading Chinese civilization, the Emperor was convinced by his Sons of Solomon-affiliated advisors to invade his neighbors to the south. The Chinese conquered the Red River Delta (in what is now North Vietnam) in the 2nd Century, and destroyed many local "pagan" complexes, defacing those that were too extensive to be destroyed. Unfortunately, not all the sites were cleansed. Some places were spared, in part by the influence of court advisors (some would later say sorcerers) who were also seeking to influence the region's leaders.

For several hundred years the Cham and their dark spirits resisted the Chinese attempts at domination. According to Chinese mythology, lines of power that crisscross the globe converge somewhere in Indochina. Legends said that he who controlled such a nexus could truly become a divine being, and the Chinese conquest of the area marked the first serious exploration of the ancient Cham sites that dotted the landscape. Despite the best efforts of the Sons of Solomon, many ancient sites were plundered, their wealth and knowledge carted back to China for examination by the so-called sorcerers at court.

## The Phoenix

Perhaps because of such exploitation, the thousand year rule of the Chinese was marked by tenacious Vietnamese resistance and repeated rebellions. Chinese control ended in AD 938 when the heroic figure Ngo Quyen vanquished the Chinese armies at the Bach Dang River. Some said that Ngo Quyen rose from humble beginnings as a laborer for the Chinese overlords at one of their archeological sites, receiving arcane power through exposure to things he found buried there. Because of his humble origins and a reputed resistance to fire, he became associated with a Phoenix-like creature of Vietnamese mythology.

During the next few centuries, an unholy alliance between the Cham and the Vietnamese repulsed repeated invasions by China. Their common enemy defeated, the Cham and the Vietnamese fell to fighting once more and the kingdom of Champa was all but destroyed.

But the Vietnamese had learned something of the Cham's brutality and expanded their borders southwards from the Red River Delta, populating much of the Mekong Delta. The original inhabitants were driven off or enslaved—indigenous tribes along the coast and in the deep jungle were the focus of extermination campaigns. Ancient Vietnamese historical records called these people “un-humans” or “demon-folk.”

These rough translations are explained by modern scholars as a typical xenophobia against those who had interbred with the Indian and Chinese settlers of ages past, but other, less mainstream, scholars see these passages as proof of a degenerate intermingling of humans and other, mysterious creatures. Perhaps it is a legacy of the diabolical rule of the Champa kingdom whose remnants had fled to neighboring Cambodia and Laos.

## The Course of Empire

In the global race for colonies that spurred the great European powers of the 17th and 18th Centuries, France turned her eyes toward the mysterious Orient. With Britain firmly entrenched in India and influential in China, France looked toward the weak and fragmented kingdoms of Indochina.

In 1858, French and Spanish-led forces stormed Da Nang after several Christian missionaries had been killed. A year later, Saigon was seized. By 1874, France had conquered all of southern Vietnam, which became the French colony of Cochinchina.

Along the way France had also gobbled up Cambodia and Laos. The main interest in these colonies lay in mineral and natural resource

exploitation, but French Sons of Solomon worked behind the scenes. Many expeditions began to make their way into the trackless jungle away from the coastal enclaves where most of the population lived. These explorers encountered primitive peoples in the primeval jungles, many quite unlike the natives who lived along the coastal plain. Some of these tribes dwelled in the remains of fantastic ruins while others led lives of almost Stone Age primitiveness among the lush vegetation of the interior. In this age of enlightenment, archaeologists and treasure hunters tracked down ruins for lost treasures, while scholars attempted to decipher the many writings they found.

## Tomb Raiders

French archaeologists of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient took a particular interest in the ancient civilizations that had occupied Indochina. They restored many of the Cham buildings at My Son, one of the few sites whose buildings had escaped the widespread destruction hundreds of years before. Many of the Cham artworks and statues were taken to Paris for further study at the Musée Guimet. Some expeditions pushed deep into present day Laos and Cambodia, exploring the Khmer ruins and poking among the burial urns in the Plain of Jars.

By 1860 French explorers had discovered the jungle-covered ruins of Angkor, and began excavations throughout the 250 square mile city. Strange artifacts uncovered were shipped back to France for study, although many found their way into the hands of foreign collectors. It was at this time that the Sons of Solomon, who thought that all trace of the Champa kingdom had been eradicated by the Vietnamese, became aware of the site and its possible importance as a breeding ground of dark forces.

Like their Chinese predecessors, many of these expeditions into the interior failed to return, and French troops, notably the Foreign Legion, were sent to suppress the bandits presumed to infest the hinterlands. While some bandits were found, many of these patrols fell victim to whatever lurked among the dark foliage in the deep jungles. Tales of strange creatures were given little credence, but the pay of legionnaires was raised to levels many times that of their brethren serving in Africa. The pay and other less-virtuous benefits kept the soldiers quiet about their experiences.

## Seed of Darkness

The man who would be known to the world as Ho Chi Minh was born in 1890 in a village in central Vietnam. His father was a functionary at the imperial court under the rule of the French,

and delved deep into ancient manuscripts recovered at various sites under the Chinese occupation of hundreds of years ago. Ho was sent to be schooled in Hue and, with the influence of his father, was able to spend time poring over ancient Cham tracts at the various museums in the city.

In 1911, Ho sailed for Marseilles as a galley boy aboard a passenger liner. Ending up in Paris, he worked a variety of jobs and spent much of his time wandering the ancient Far Eastern exhibits of the city's museums.

After World War I Ho went to Moscow as a convert of the Communist party, and soon he was roaming Asia as a covert agent for Stalin. Using a variety of aliases, he would surface in cities throughout Southeast Asia. Again and again he was reported dead, only to reappear in a new country months later. In 1929 he assembled militants in Hong Kong and formed the Indochinese Communist Party. Arrested by the British in 1931, he returned to Moscow in 1933. He stayed there until 1938, reportedly recovering from tuberculosis, before returning to China as a military advisor to the Communist forces.

Some intelligence sources hinted that his extensive familiarity with occult sites in Indochina, coupled with the knowledge gained from the ancient Chinese tracts that his father had deciphered while at court, made Ho an agent of unusual talents.

## World War II

The outbreak of war in Europe did not affect the colonies in Indochina until 1940. The defeat of France by Germany and the formation of the Vichy government changed the dynamics of the region and set events into motion that would have far-reaching consequences. In 1940 the French were forced to sign the Franco-Japanese treaty, recognizing Japan's preeminence in Indochina in return for nominal recognition of French sovereignty. France was allowed to keep troops in the area, but Japanese troops were stationed alongside the legionnaires.

As the Germans attempted to solidify their power through means both mundane and arcane, teams of occult researchers spread through the Third Reich in search of anything connected with the supernatural. German scientists who searched the museums of Paris uncovered the many artifacts brought back from Indochina.

An SS researcher, Hans Schroeder, discovered that a location within Indochina rested at a nexus of ley lines. These mystical lines crisscrossed the globe, and where they intersected the bounds of reality strained and sometimes opened to admit forces beyond

modern science's abilities to explain. At a nexus such as the one centered in Indochina, unspeakable power was thought to reside.

Within weeks of this latest discovery a U-boat was dispatched to Japan carrying a cargo of some of Germany's best occult scientists and archaeologists, and plans for a variety of Germany's advanced weapons.

## The Axis of Evil

The German delegation was received warmly in Japan. The designs for such things as advanced U-boats, rockets, and jet engines delighted the military leaders of the island nation. In exchange for the technical information presented by the Germans, Japan agreed to allow the scientists access to the jungles of Indochina. The Germans were reluctant to share their occult discoveries with the Japanese, unaware that the Japanese had begun their own project after finding an ancient manuscript titled the *Book of Shan* in a monastery close to the Indochinese border.

By 1943 many of the sites previously discovered by the French were being mapped and excavated by the scientists of the Third Reich. German progress was much faster than that of previous explorers, and dark things better left undisturbed were brought from the jungles to laboratories in Hanoi, where the Japanese secret police, the *kempatai* observed them and reported back to Japan. Some promising specimens were shipped to Germany, although of the five such voyages, only one made it safely back to the Reich. The others either succumbed to Allied warships or their cargoes. Raids on the lab by Japanese soldiers disguised as Viet bandits gathered more of the German's hard-won knowledge for the Japanese.

## Night of the Samurai

The Japanese sent those documents and specimens stolen in Indochina to a special research unit in northern China. Designated Unit 731, this facility experimented with biological weapons, chemicals, and supernatural horrors on Allied prisoners and Chinese civilians. As the Allies closed in on mainland Japan in early 1945, the High Command ordered that the French be cleared from Indochina to secure the flank of the ever-shrinking Greater Co-prosperity Sphere. Unit 731's commanders decided this was a perfect opportunity to take over the German lab in Hanoi, as well as allowing them to unleash their "products" for field testing.

On the night of March 9, 1945, the garrison commanders of the various French outposts in northern Vietnam (Tonkin) were invited to dinner with their Japanese counterparts. As the

meals ended, their hosts slaughtered the unsuspecting French leaders while their troops were attacked in their barracks. Although the Japanese "enhanced warriors" killed many of the soldiers, some rallied and fought their way out.

The survivors of the initial attacks, mostly Foreign Legion units, gathered together under the command of General Marcel Alessandri outside Hanoi. When wild stories about attacks on his troops by fantastic beings came over the wireless, he realized that someone needed to get out and take back word to Europe. He gathered up 2,000 soldiers in a battered command and determined that the only way to freedom lay across the border in Nationalist China.

It was during this flight for the border that the Japanese commander decided to unleash "experiments" from Unit 731. Many French troopers died horribly in the jungle from the unspeakable horrors that tracked them, their agonizing death screams spurring their comrades to greater speed. Fifty-three days later the remaining soldiers reached the safety of Chang Kai Shek's China, having fought off a pursuing force of 10,000 soldiers.

## Liberation?

After the war, Ho Chi Minh and his Communist party quickly filled the power vacuum left in Indochina by the collapse of the Japanese. Battered and still reeling from occupation, France was unable to send troops back into Indochina, and asked British and Nationalist Chinese troops to intervene.

In the south the British moved into the cities, suppressing any dissent and anti-colonial opposition and attempting to gain control of the area. In the north Chiang Kai Shek's troops moved in and began to loot the area. Increasing pressure from his foes in the Communist movement made the Nationalist leader increasingly desperate to hold on to power. Having learned of the strangeness in Indochina from the survivors of the legion's march and the fate some of his own people suffered at the hands of Unit 731, Chiang ordered his officers to find the sources of power in Indochina. The plundering of temples, ruins, and just about anything else did little to endear the Chinese occupiers to the locals, but did yield some knowledge of the occult that would be put to use by the Nationalists and their Communist successors.

Ho Chi Minh was aware of the goals of the Chinese search and his spies in the Chinese camps reported the results of the various expeditions. Some of the things found by the Chinese confirmed Ho's research into the power

## Timeline of Vietnam

1627	First Catholic missionary arrives
1860	French archeologists begin to excavate ruins of Angkor Wat
1887	French declare Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos the French Union
1916	French remove artifacts to Paris
1941	Japanese occupy Indochina
1945	Ho Chi Minh declares independence from the French
	British and Chinese troops occupy Vietnam
1946	Vietminh attack Hanoi—war with French begins
1954	Battle of Dien Bien Phu ends in crushing French defeat
	SEATO founded
1957	pro-Diem and anti-Diem civil war begins in Vietnam
1959	US advisors arrive in Laos as part of OPERATION HOTFOOT
1962	Strategic hamlet program begins
1963	Battle of Ap Bac
	President Diem assassinated
	First NVA troops identified in South Vietnam
1964	Gulf of Tonkin resolution
1965	North Vietnamese forces attack US Special Forces base near Pleiku. Battle of Ia Drang Valley
1967	CEDAR FALLS clears Iron Triangle. JUNCTION CITY
1968	Seige of Khe Sanh Tet Offensive
1970	Cambodian invasion
1971	ARVN invades Laos
	Lam Son 719 Raid by ARVN Ranger Control Group
1972	Easter Offensive. Peace agreement between the United States and North Vietnam
1973	The last US troops return home, POWs repatriated
1974	Heavy fighting between NVA and ARVN
1975	Final North offensive into South Vietnam, followed by collapse of the South

of the kingdom of Champa. Ho filed the information away for later use, and continued to plot his takeover of Vietnam, appointing Vo Nguyen Giap as his primary military commander.

## **Return of the French**

By March 1946 French troops returned to Hanoi and began to re-exert their colonial power. They found a country that was not eager to return to the French orbit, and a variety of groups were ranged against them. While their take-over in the south was fairly swift, a slow Chinese withdrawal hampered the transition in the north. Many of the non-Communist elements eventually came over to the French side, but the Communist Viet Minh clashed with the occupiers, escalating into heavy fighting by December 1946.

By 1947 the Europeans had regained control over the urban areas, highways, and some of the rice-growing regions. The VM withdrew into the rough terrain of northeast Tonkin, close to the Chinese border. The fighting of the previous years, the opening of a variety of ancient sites by the Germans, Japanese, and Chinese, as well as the savage nature of the fledgling guerilla war all combined to increase the amount of negative supernatural energy that began to flow into the converging ley lines of Indochina. Deep in the jungles, *something* stirred in its ancient slumber and began to strain at its bonds.

## **Section 2: The Recent Past**

### **Send in the Expendables**

Increasing reports of strange encounters in the jungles of Indochina began to reach the French high command. Having suffered through some of the most savage fighting in history during WWI and its attendant horrors, the French generals were familiar with the effect this could have if these tales got back to the general populace.

The bulk of the French army was made up of conscripts, yet none would be sent to fight in Indochina. Only the Foreign Legion, colonial troops from French holdings in Africa, and locally raised troops would fight to regain the colony.

Losses were high in these units, and those few who returned home raving about seeing things in the jungle were easily dismissed as suffering from the rigors of war or the effects of jungle-contracted diseases.

### **"Like Chasing Ghosts"**

A major operation of 1947 was the first in what would become the typical French attempt to bring their enemies to a decisive battle.

OPERATION LEA involved ten battalions moving by road, four by river, and two parachuting into the main center of Viet Minh resistance in an effort to stamp it out.

Taken by surprise, somehow Ho Chi Minh managed to escape the ring of paratroopers around his base. Some reports stated that an unexpected fog hampered efforts, while others said that fierce fighting by fanatical guards held up the attackers long enough for the Communist leader to escape.

Whatever the reason, LEA was a failure. The overland column moved too slowly, having to fight its way along a narrow front, while the river-borne troops had to march further than originally thought. Although the French inflicted much greater losses than they sustained, they failed to trap Ho's army, while showing him the effectiveness of the airborne component of his enemy. Tales of wildly spinning compasses and mats of clinging river weeds were dismissed as the excuses of incompetent commanders.

Other operations in the year also failed to decisively defeat the foe. While they inflicted grievous losses on a seemingly endless supply of guerillas, the battles never seemed to break the back of the growing rebellion.

## **1948**

### **Fruit on the Vine**

The French control over the countryside was rapidly slipping away. During the day, roads and hamlets were nominally under colonial control, but as night fell the Europeans and their allies retreated to their fortified positions and urban centers leaving the countryside to the Viet Minh. Each morning crews would clear the mines laid on Colonial Routes the previous night, allowing traffic to flow again.

The fighting settled into a monotonous routine, with the French troops dispersed in squad-sized outposts, watchtowers, and bunkers. These tiny garrisons presented the guerrillas with wonderful targets to mass and attack, gaining weapons and radios when the unit was destroyed, and leaving only stripped bodies for the rescuers to find.

It also became apparent that the VM had little regard for prisoners. Soldiers who failed to return from patrols would often be found butchered in horrific ways, when they were found at all. From the expressions on what remained of their faces it was obvious they were tortured while still alive. It became a common practice among the isolated French troops to save a bullet for themselves to prevent capture by the enemy.

One major action of the year took place at the isolated post of Phu Tong Hoa on RC 3. As an



experiment to be conducted with flesh and blood, Giap chose an isolated post to attack in force. Unfortunately for the Viet Minh, two companies of Foreign Legionnaires were able to hold the fort against a determined attack by 4,000 of Giap's best troops.

The relief column that arrived two days later found disquieting evidence of modern weapons, along with other, *stranger* things in the wreckage of the outpost and its surroundings. The survivors were taken back to Hanoi and scattered among outposts across Indochina. Broken up thus, their wild tales of the attack were easily attributed to jungle madness.

## 1949

### A Sense of Foreboding

With the total defeat of the Nationalist Chinese, Ho found a sanctuary for his movement outside of Indochina. Chinese training and equipment supply now began on a massive scale across the border. In response, the French built a series of larger outposts along the rugged border, stationing several companies with artillery support at each.

Intended to close the frontier, these posts instead became a major drain of resources, particularly to maintain control of the tenuous supply-line along Colonial Route Four (RC4). Despite the increased size of supply convoys, attacks continued with unprecedented savagery. Survivors recounted seeing the wounded butchered where they fell, their pleas for mercy falling on deaf ears.

Soldiers stationed along the border began to feel a sense of overwhelming dread as they became more and more isolated. Patrols into their surroundings ceased, defeating the very purpose of the border garrisons.

Attacks on French posts were unnerving to the Western soldiers. Human wave attacks pushed forward with no regard for losses. Assaults came again and again through the wire, preceded by sappers who were little more than human bombs designed to blow away the obstacles. Somehow the enemy always seemed to know just where the command and radio bunkers were, destroying them in the opening assaults as well as any heavy weapons the French had.

In the face of this style of combat, morale among the Western soldiers plummeted. The only bright spot for the French was the success of General Alessandri's campaign in the Delta, in which he managed to choke off the Viet Minh food-producing region. This campaign was so successful that it caused a famine among the guerillas, slowing their operations until more food could be brought from their supply bases in China.

## 1950

### Steel Wind

Under increased pressure from the Viet Minh along the Chinese border, the French drew up plans to withdraw from the isolated posts along RC4 and abandon the frontier. Unfortunately, Giap moved first, attacking and taking the town of Dong Khe, overrunning the post and killing all but 100 men. The garrison at Dong Khe was ordered to abandon their post, while a relief column from Lang Son moved up RC4 to recapture Dong Khe and open the way for their comrades retreating from the north.

An attempt to retake the town ran into fierce resistance, and the columns left RC4 for an overland route in an attempt to link-up. Beset on all sides by a savage foe who seemed to strike from thin air, the separated forces were decimated as they tried to retreat to the garrison at That Khe. Small bands of survivors filtered back, bearing tales of horror during the desperate retreat.

The arrival of the shell-shocked survivors precipitated a collapse of French forces in the region and a hurried (some observers say panicked) withdrawal away from the border. Not only did this open up the frontier to the guerillas for easy movement of their men and supplies from their Chinese sanctuaries, but it left tons of French stores in the hastily abandoned supply center of Lang Son.

### "A Secure Base of Fire"

The collapse and loss of northeast Tonkin seemed to paralyze the French military establishment. Soon after this defeat, General Jean De Lattre de Tassigny was assigned as not only the commander of the armed forces but also the governor. He began to fortify the Delta, where the majority of the populace lived and where the main crop of rice was produced. He built a series of blockhouses designed to withstand the artillery used by the Viet Minh, which he garrisoned with locally raised troops. This freed up the more reliable and better-armed Foreign Legion and French troops. Secretly, he also imported a cadre of adepts trained by the American Office of Supernatural Investigations during World War II. The French High Command had finally decided to fight fire with fire. The French government, at the urging of some officials who were secretly Sons of Solomon, revived a World War I-era organization—the Bureau des Phénomènes Mystérieux Non Expliqués (Bureau of Unexplained Mysterious Phenomenon). This sub-bureau of the Internal Ministry had its roots in organizations that dated

back to the destruction of the Knights Templars in the Medieval Ages. Its agents soon found themselves waging a covert war deep in the jungles and hinterlands for which they were woefully unprepared. At the invitation of the BPMNE an American military mission, the Military Assistance Advisory Groups-Indochina, was formed to provide aid to the French. This aid not only included military materiel but also assistance of a more unconventional nature with the assignment of several CIA operatives to Vietnam.

## 1951

### Giap's Bloody Nose

De Lattre didn't have long to wait until Giap made his next move. The new year began with three major attacks against the newly constructed "De Lattre Line." Over the course of six months, the VM were defeated time and again thanks to the newly created Mobile Groups, along with extensive air support and the first deployment of napalm in Indochina. These defeats caused Giap to pull back his forces and look for another way to defeat the French.

Ho Chi Minh appealed to the Communist Chinese for help. Eager for access to the ancient sites in Vietnam, Mao was only too happy to help. In exchange for allowing access to some

sites in north Tonkin, Chinese advisors began to train cadres of Viet Minh and equip them with Chinese weaponry. Expeditions were sent into some of the jungle ruins, and while the Chinese took the lion's share of the finds, the Viet Minh learned to use some of the powers awakened on such expeditions for their battle against the French. De Lattre's BPMNE agents uncovered the existence of some of the VM's expeditions, and major French forces were sent along RC6 toward Hoa Binh.

While many questioned the value of sending a major force out to the end of a vulnerable supply line, the real purpose of this mission was known only to De Lattre and the head of the BPMNE, Marcel DuPuy. It distracted the Viet Minh, allowing Foreign Legionnaires to parachute deep into VM territory to destroy suspected supernatural sites and pre-war French archeological digs. Attacking with surprise, many of these areas were destroyed before Ho or his allies could exploit them. The lack of French survivors from these deep raids aided in the cover-up of their true purpose and only hints at the unspeakable horrors that hid there.

### Too Successful to Live

De Lattre was the most successful in a constant succession of French commanders in Indochina. The French government thought for the first time that they could see a light at the end of the tunnel until, shortly after the successes of 1951, the general was diagnosed with an incurable disease and succumbed to it in 1952. The true cause of this wasting disease was never known for, shortly after his death, his personal staff cremated his body.

De Lattre's death was only the beginning of a long slide into darkness for the French. His replacement, General Raoul Salan, was a no-nonsense soldier who didn't believe in the supernatural and had no use for those who did. Compounding this was an outbreak of disease among the French government, centered in the Ministry of the Interior's offices in Hanoi. By the time it was over, most of the BPMNE agents had fallen to this unknown, untreatable tropical disease.

### Countdown to Disaster

The highpoint of the year for the French came in October, when two battalions of VM regulars attacked an isolated garrison at Nghia Lo. The outpost was successfully held until reinforced by paratroopers. This victory against incredible odds placed the idea in the minds of the French command that an isolated garrison could be held and successfully reinforced, and that Giap's troops would press home an assault against heavy firepower. This thinking lay behind later events at the isolated airstrip of Dien Bien Phu.



## 1952

### A Building Storm

Relentless pressure forced the French back into an ever-shrinking area around the Delta. Viet Minh tactics became increasingly sophisticated, and the supplies of artillery and antiaircraft guns from their allies began to make a difference. The De Lattre Line held, however, and assaults against some French garrisons did not go according to plan.

Increasingly impatient, Ho directed Giap to thrust into Laos in October. Ho's archaeologists had deciphered manuscripts found during their excavations which seemed to indicate a great source of power lay somewhere across the border, and the Communist leader was eager to use any resource to end French colonialism once and for all. French radio intercepts and BPMNE agents in Ho's camp caught wind of this move and managed to send word back to Hanoi.

Although the French commander in chief did not believe the wild rumors of the reason for the Viet Minh move towards Laos, BPMNE reports to General Salan's superiors in Paris convinced the Sons of Solomon to push for action against this move. At the High Command's insistence, General Salan ordered a strong offensive by over 30,000 French troops. Despite the 100-mile advance of the French troops toward Viet Minh supply centers, the sites in Laos were too important to Ho, and the main body of the VM army continued toward the ruins.

## 1953

### Slipping Away

As Giap continued to push into Laos, it became obvious that his goal was the Plain of Jars. The French used their entire air fleet to move large numbers of troops into the area, establishing several fortified outposts in the area. This blocking action caused Giap to temporarily retreat back into Vietnam.

Due to his constant dismissal of the weird events that had plagued his command, General Salan was replaced by General Navarre at the insistence of Marcel DuPuy. The newly appointed commander of French forces in Vietnam decided soon after his arrival that it was essential to halt the Viet Minh offensive underway in Laos. To do so, Navarre believed it was necessary for the French to capture and hold the town of Dien Bien Phu, sixteen kilometers from the Laotian border. For the Viet Minh, control of Dien Bien Phu was an important link in the supply route from China.

### Cameron Redux

Reviewing the previous battles, Navarre latched onto the success at Nghlia Lo in '51. Conceived as a way to smash Giap's forces between the anvil of a strong airhead and the hammer of air power, armor, and artillery, Dien Bien Phu was chosen as the site of the decisive battle. Overconfident, Navarre felt it impossible for Giap's men to move artillery into the surrounding hills. He was wrong and the Viet Minh annihilated the 10,000 man garrison in an apocalyptic three month battle characterized by fierce artillery bombardments followed by human wave assaults. Only 3,000 soldiers survived the battle and captivity.

This defeat was followed by major Viet Minh victories in the Delta and the Central Highlands. A new French government sued for peace, and a cease-fire was signed in July 1954, dividing the country at the 17th Parallel.

## Section 3: Prelude to War

### 1959-1961

#### What Are They Hiding?

In Laos, OPERATION HOTFOOT provided US Special Forces advisors to assist French advisors in training the Royal Laotian Army. Led by Lieutenant Colonel "Bull" Simons, HOTFOOT was originally conducted as a clandestine operation, its members wearing civilian clothing.

Despite their common purpose, the French proved to be an impediment to the Americans. Strangely, they allowed the Special Forces soldiers to teach military skills, but forbade them to go with Laotian troops outside their cantonment areas. The truth behind this uneasy arrangement was exposed when Major Steven Wilson managed to join a Laotian patrol on a mission.

The Laotians, under the direction of their French advisors, attacked and cleared a mountain village. Inside the hamlet Wilson saw evidence of cannibalism and other, more horrifying practices. Questioning of Laotian troops over several months revealed that the French were waging a shadow war against *something* in the mountains and jungles of the Vietnamese border. Wilson passed this information to Washington, where it came to the attention of Sons of Solomon in the Kennedy administration.

News of the latest efforts against ancient sites in the jungles of Laos were just one more piece in a puzzle of darkness that the Sons of Solomon had been assembling since the start of the French Indochina War. With the partitioning

of the country, Ho's government in the North had seemed to shy away from its dark alliance, but previous experience indicated that this would be only temporary; such power is hard to resist. The Sons' research brought them to the conclusion that Southeast Asia might hold the legendary "Singularity"; an evil so great it could destroy the world, which had been assumed by the Sons in the 1940s to be Hitler. Now they thought that it might refer to something that had lain long-dormant at the nexus of ley lines somewhere in Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam.

### **The Domino Theory**

The Kennedy administration was looking to fight the good fight, and the Sons of Solomon were only too happy to provide a pretext to prevent the potential rise of the Singularity. In Washington, the Domino Theory first began to circulate. The theory dictated that, were Vietnam allowed to fall to Communism, other nations of Southeast Asia, and possibly Japan would also fall one after another.

Not wanting to send in large numbers of troops to be exposed to the malevolent horrors they knew to lurk in that part of the world, the Sons played on Kennedy's love of the unconventional and flamboyant to recommend sending only advisors and Special Forces soldiers to the area. Kennedy agreed, and in 1961 granted the Special Forces their distinctive green berets. Many of these Special Forces were veterans of weird phenomena in WWII or Korea.

Although the OSI had been absorbed into the Central Intelligence Agency in 1948 and innocently renamed The Central Office of Foreign Experimental Technology (COFET), the military had created a special office in the Pentagon to deal with the horrors of war that they were sure would follow any other conflicts."

Designed to duplicate the capabilities lost to the Central Intelligence Agency, and overseen by Major General Tim Latta, himself a former OSI operative in Europe, the Special Intelligence Group (SIG) consisted of teams that could be placed in each Military Assistance Command wherever they were assigned. The primary mission of the SIG was the detection and destruction of paranormal phenomenon.

Realizing the effect on morale that such knowledge could have on the average trooper, SIG also worked actively to suppress any knowledge of the occult or supernatural among the soldiers in the field. The Army Institute of Military History began a secret project to compile accounts of occult events documented throughout the US military's history. Code-named FULL MOON, its organization slowly grew and soon a sub-basement of the Pentagon was dedicated to researching the methods of detection and destruction of these supernatural events.

### **Ugly Americans**

Other groups in the government had also gotten word of the strange happenings in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Seeing the United States as the champion of freedom in the world and dedicated to the global war on Communism, some factions of the US government were not content to contain the Red Menace. Instead these officials thought that a campaign must be waged to actively defeat the Soviet Union and its satellites before they defeated the Free World. The members of this secret organization called themselves Janus, after the two-faced Roman god. Janus drew members from across the military, government, and intelligence agencies, and was led by retired General Harold Thomason, who had commanded the OSI in Europe.

Janus believed that the occult could be harnessed and used for good—in this case to aid in the destruction of Communism. Their biggest fear were reports filtering out of China and the Soviet Union about supernatural and mysterious experiments dealing with mind control, telepathy, and other darker paths of research gleaned from the interrogation of captured Nazi scientists.

Originally COFET followed the three mandates of the OSI: the disruption of occult activity, the suppression of public knowledge of the occult, and support for the war effort using the organization's unique abilities. As a result of Janus' influence, a fourth goal had crept in by the mid-1950s, one which the Sons of Solomon adamantly opposed. This goal was to search out new occult knowledge and make use of it. The Sons rightly felt that more occult knowledge in human hands only strengthened the evil they existed to fight. Unfortunately, COFET pressed forward with this agenda with the support of Janus.

In support of Janus' efforts to find and harness the sites of power rumored to be in Southeast Asia, the CIA began the recruitment of hundreds of ex-soldiers for the newly formed "Black CATs" (Covert Action Teams). Able to impersonate US soldiers, mercenaries, or operate "clean"—not linked to any government, these troops would be their front line strikers. CAT missions consisted of the exploration and exploitation of mystical sites, eliminating any opposition, and destroying or recovering anything of value of an occult or supernatural nature.

Supporting these paramilitary teams were two firms in Southeast Asia. Bird & Son and Air America were transportation firms that soon became active in the region. Flying a variety of surplus military cargo aircraft, as well as helicopters, these two firms provided a covert means of getting COFET operatives places they needed to go, without subjecting them to the scrutiny of the military transportation command.

## **The Wrong Man**

Back in Vietnam, Diem had consolidated his control by moving against lawless elements in the Saigon area and by suppressing the religious sects in the Mekong Delta. He also launched a "denounce the communists" campaign, in which, according to communist accounts, 25,000 communist sympathizers were arrested and more than 1,000 killed. In response to Diem's anticommunist campaign, the Communist Party stepped up terrorist activities in the South, assassinating several hundred officials of the Diem government. This led to the arrest of another 65,000 suspected Communists and the killing of more than 2,000 by the Saigon government in 1957.

Diem's family included some members who had spent time with various French expeditions into the interior. Some of them, like his brother who headed the secret police, seemed determined to do anything to stay in power, including dabbling in the occult. Many of those arrested as communists were taken to special camps in the interior, never to be heard from again. American advisors began to notice that many of the political appointees who were given command of troops seemed to have links to mysterious organizations and many of the missions seemed to be undertaken with no military objective in mind.

The Diem regime's brutal suppression of traditional religious groups such as Buddhists also began to raise doubts among the members of the US mission in-country. These doubts were exacerbated when a COFET report blamed the suppression of the Buddhists on the growing influence of several Vietnamese sorcerers who he employed to keep him in power.

## **Escalation**

In 1961 the rapid increase of insurgency in the South Vietnamese countryside led President Kennedy's administration to decide to increase US support for the Diem regime, despite their misgiving as to his tactics and motives. Growing fear of the Domino Theory and the confirmed use of supernatural aid by Ho Chi Minh's forces during the war with the French made backing Diem's regime the lesser of two evils. Over \$65 million in military equipment and \$136 million in economic aid were delivered in 1961, along with personnel increases bringing the number of advisors to 3,200.

## **1962**

The United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was formed under the command of General Paul D. Harkins in

February 1962. At the insistence of the Sons of Solomon at the Department of Defense, MACV-SIG was also formed and based in Saigon.

## **Hearts and Minds**

By 1962 the cornerstone of the counterinsurgency effort was the Strategic Hamlet Program, which called for the consolidation of 14,000 villages of South Vietnam into 11,000 secure hamlets. Each hamlet was to have its own houses, schools, wells, and watchtowers, and was intended to isolate guerrillas from their source of supplies and information. Or, in Maoist terminology, to separate the fish (the guerillas) from the sea in which they swam (the Vietnamese peasants).

The program had its problems, however, aside from the frequent attacks on the hamlets by guerrilla units. The self-defense units for the hamlets, termed Regional Forces or Popular Forces, were often poorly trained, and support from ARVN was frequently inadequate. The RF-PF troops were also often Viet Cong by night. Corruption, favoritism, and the resentment of a growing number of peasants forced to resettle plagued the program.

The influx of American material, advisors, and most importantly helicopters improved the capabilities of the ARVN greatly. Unfortunately, Diem's increasingly erratic and repressive government caused more and more peasants to look toward the VC as a means of bettering their situation. On the battlefield, the guerillas, with the help of troops and supplies from the North coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and Cambodia, began to strike at the ARVN with greater and greater force.

## **1963**

In January 1963 an ARVN regiment with new M113 armored personnel carriers and helicopters was defeated by a National Liberation Front battalion at Ap Bac. The American advisors were worried at the implications of this defeat, but Diem refused to change his military tactics, instead promising that his brother was preparing a "surprise" for the NLF and their sponsors. The numbers of peasants rounded up and sent to camps in the interior increased, and despite the best efforts of the Americans assigned to MACV-SIG, no details could be obtained on these camps.

## **A Change of Government**

Diem grew steadily more unpopular as his regime became more repressive. Harassment of Buddhist groups, the self-immolation of priests, and raids on their pagodas resulting in thousands of arrests alienated much of the population.

Demonstrations by university students also resulted in the arrest some 4,000 people, many of whom disappeared into the camps run by Ngo Dinh Nhu.

In September 1963, a member of MACV-SIG was able to pinpoint the location of one of these camps, and an overflight by a CIA U-2 surveillance plane showed that Diem was willing to use any method to stay in power, including the excavation of an ancient temple site with the use of slave labor.

Outraged by the Diem regime's repressive policies, the Kennedy administration indicated to South Vietnamese military leaders that Washington would be willing to support a new military government. Diem and Nhu were assassinated in a military coup in early November, and General Duong Van Minh took over. A B-52 strike from Guam was authorized, and the ancient temple and the surrounding camp were destroyed in an hour-long bombardment.

## 1964

### The Cold War Heats Up

Realizing that the government of the South was weak, the North opted for an increase in pressure. By 1964 a liberated zone had been



established from the Central Highlands to the edge of the Mekong Delta, giving the communists control over more than half the total land area and about half the population of the South. Their forces in-country totaled 30 to 40 battalions, including 35,000 guerrillas and 80,000 irregulars. Moreover, with the completion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos, the number of NVA troops infiltrating into the South began to increase. ARVN control was limited mainly to the cities. In '64 and '65 successive Saigon governments fell to a series of coups.

By July 1964 the number of US military advisers had reached 16,000. Despite their best efforts however, the situation continued to deteriorate. The northern insurgents were becoming so successful on the battlefield that they largely abandoned their black pajamas in favor of a military uniform. Despite the increasingly desperate situation in the south, the Johnson administration remained hesitant to raise the American commitment to South Vietnam.

Unlike Kennedy, Johnson had not been "read into" the supernatural side of the conflict in Vietnam. His hand was tipped, though in August 1964, following the shelling of US warships in the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Vietnamese coast. Johnson approved air strikes against North Vietnamese naval bases. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution gave the president the power "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."

### Keeping Things Quiet

The repeated calls for additional troops by General William C. Westmoreland, commander of MACV, posed a problem for those few generals in the Pentagon aware of the supernatural threat in Southeast Asia. Reports from advisors in-country relating encounters too strange to be true, the Diem-sponsored camps, the tales gathered by OPERATION FULL MOON, and CIA reports all pointed to a disturbing increase in the level of supernatural events affecting the region.

General Latta, head of SIG, realized that a large influx of troops would make it almost impossible to keep these stories from getting to the American public. Also, the growing press coverage of the conflict imposed its own burdens. A decision was made to use draftees versus general mobilization. Parameters were set ensuring most of the fighting would be carried out by the lower classes, while the better educated, more well-informed would be exempt from service. In short, those who were least likely to be believed were most likely to serve.

To help those who would witness manifestations of the darkness firsthand and survive, the CIA was tasked with developing a chemical solution to relieve mental anguish. Under the code name BLANK SLATE, a variety of existing drugs were tested and new ones developed to erase memories and ease mental trauma.

## Section 4: The War Years

### 1965

#### More is Better

In February 1965 the United States began a program of air strikes known as OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER against military targets in North Vietnam. Despite the bombing of the North, ARVN losses grew steadily, and the political situation in Saigon became precarious as one unstable government succeeded another. General William C. Westmoreland, commander of MACV, urged the use of US combat troops to stop the Communist advance, which he predicted could take over the country within a year.

The first two battalions of U.S. Marines arrived in Vietnam in March 1965 to protect the U.S. airbase at Da Nang. The following month, Westmoreland convinced Washington to commit combat troops sufficient to secure base areas and mount a series of "search and destroy" missions. Along with the US troops, contingents from Australia and New Zealand also arrived in-country. By late 1965, the United States expeditionary force in South Vietnam numbered 180,000

With the influx of troops, the military situation had stabilized somewhat. Infiltration from the north, however, had also increased, and whole divisions began moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, despite an increase in bombing. NVA strength was estimated to be about 220,000, divided almost equally between guerrillas and main force troops; the latter including units of NVA regulars totaling about 13,000 troops.

#### The Brown Water Navy

The increasingly blatant seaborne infiltration of the South by the VC convinced MACV that a US navy presence was necessary to interdict this flow of personnel and materiel. Designated Task Force 115, OPERATION MARKET TIME saw the creation of the Brown Water Navy. These forces included Coast Guard cutters, navy sea-going ships, patrol aircraft, and a river patrol force. The river patrol force comprised of old landing craft, swift PBRs, hovercraft, and a bewildering variety

of other vessels. As the river patrol force grew in importance, its designation changed to Task Force 116, under the aegis of OPERATION GAME WARDEN.

PBRs were not only used to patrol the many miles of river and interdict the flow of NVA and VC supplies, but also provided a means of infiltration to special operations soldiers and MACV-SIG troops. While spared the foot-slogging of their land-borne comrades, the crews of the PBRs fought battles that were just as dangerous as any infantryman.

#### The Valley of Death

In October 1965 the NVA began an operation to cut South Vietnam in half across the Central Highlands. An assault began against the Special Forces camp at Plei Me. An ARVN relief column was assembled and began fighting its way toward the camp. In support of this operation elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division were airlifted into the Ia Drang valley. This became the first major battle between the US and North Vietnam, in which a full NVA regiment fought elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry.

Vicious fighting resulted in casualties of 25 percent of the Division. However, the use of massive helicopter airlifts seemed to validate the concept of the airmobile division and gave US leaders a glimmer of hope that they could defeat this elusive enemy through the use of superior mobility. The NVA learned in this battle the way in which the US would fight this coming war and ways to combat the might of the new western enemy, but it cost them dearly.

For the next year the Cavalry relentlessly pursued the NVA and their VC allies. Air cavalry scouts would fix the location of the enemy, who would be pinned in place by helicopter gunships. Troops were brought in by slicks, supported by gunfire from artillery choppers onto the battlefield. When the enemy finally broke and ran, troops would be lifted into their line of retreat.

### 1966

#### Expanding the War

In 1966, more US troops entered the theater. The 25th Infantry Division arrived, but despite sweeps of the Cambodian border in conjunction with Australian units, little contact was made, although caches of equipment and weapons were found. Troops from other countries also arrived, including the "Tiger" Brigade from South Korea, which proved itself to be especially fearsome against the guerillas.

By mid-1966 United States forces, now numbering 350,000, had gained the initiative in several key areas. They gradually pushed the

communists out of the heavily populated zones of the south into the more remote mountainous regions and into areas along the Cambodian border. Sweeps and operations throughout the South had caused thousands of NVA and VC casualties and kept the North's forces off-balance.

Revolutionary forces in the South, under the command of General Nguyen Chi Thanh, responded by launching an aggressive campaign of harassment operations and full-scale attacks by regiment-sized units. This approach proved costly, however, in terms of manpower and resources, and by late 1966 about 5,000 troops, including main force PAVN units, were being infiltrated from the North each month to help implement this strategy. Increasingly, when contact was made, the insurgent forces were forced to slip across the border into Cambodia to seek relief from their pursuers.

## 1967

### Crushing the Triangle

With the NVA reeling from their losses in '66, Westmoreland decided to attack an area known as the Iron Triangle. Located north of Saigon at the junction of War Zone C and D in III Corps, this was an area of dense jungle, tangled vegetation, miles of tunnels and hundreds of bunkers. The area had been a haven for the Viet Minh against the French, and had been further developed against the ARVN in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The area had a fearsome reputation, and patrols that had ventured in often were found later, mutilated and strewn across the countryside. ARVN troops would only enter the area in massive numbers, when they entered at all. Westmoreland would hear none of this talk of weirdness inside the Triangle. Despite the dire warnings of his MACV-SIG staff, he decided to launch OPERATION CEDAR FALLS. Units of the 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions, 196th and 173rd Brigades, and 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment encircled the area and cut it into pieces. Enemy forces scattered and fled the area, and the enemy losses were a little over 700 for 72 US soldiers killed.

The clearing of the Triangle was just the start of the operation, however. With the surface secured, the real work was just beginning. While engineers cleared away the undergrowth and demolished any structures on the surface, American soldiers, the fearless 'tunnel rats', moved into the underground labyrinth to clear it of the enemy. They met fierce resistance, and many became lost in the twisting passages that led deeper into the earth.

For three weeks a battle raged below the ground, with the Viet Cong becoming increasingly desperate as the US soldiers crawled deeper and deeper into their warrens. Troops coming back to the surface reported Vietnamese who had been underground for so long that they were almost unrecognizable as humans, and tunnels leading deeper than their ropes would allow them to go. As MACV-SIG agents moved in and took over the debriefings, it was decided to destroy the upper galleries and any entrances that could be found after flooding the tunnels with gasoline and nerve agents.

As the last US troops withdrew from the devastated landscape, secure in the knowledge that the Iron Triangle was rendered useless, figures arose from undetected tunnel complexes and began the task of rebuilding their fortress.

### Hammer and Anvil

Hard on the heels of CEDAR FALLS and in the same region of the South was JUNCTION CITY. This operation was destined to be the largest land operation undertaken during the war. Intelligence believed that a full NVA Division, along with its support bases, lay within the area. Involving over 45,000 men from four US divisions, as well as Australian and ARVN troops, it focused on a triangular area abutting the Cambodian border.

Units deployed in a horseshoe pattern, forming an anvil. Once in place, other units moved up the open end of the horseshoe to sweep up and smash the insurgents. On February 22 airmobile assaults along the Cambodian border and the only combat drop of the war by regular US paratroopers opened up the operation. Sporadic fighting occurred initially, with two large engagements near the village of Prek Klok, but as the noose tightened contact became more frequent. Desperate fighting raged at some of the firebases as the NVA attempted to negate the US advantage in firepower.

At Fire Base Gold, human wave assaults followed a furious artillery barrage. Despite intense support fire and point blank artillery fire nothing seemed to stop the attackers. Even a counterattack by armor was hard put to stem the tide, and the VC swarmed the tanks like ants on elephants. Desperate hand-to-hand fighting ensued throughout the perimeter. Finally, as the sun came up the enemy broke and fled the battlefield, leaving over 600 dead in and around the perimeter.

A week and a half later another major battle developed along the Cambodian border and once again fierce, almost unstoppable attacks fell upon US positions. Savage fighting raged up and down the line until daybreak, when the enemy



vanished from the field, leaving 500 dead behind. Despite their best efforts, the fleeing enemy proved elusive, and further contact was unable to be made again as the Viet Cong melted into the jungle. By mid-April the operation was ended for lack of contact with the enemy.

### **Dark Allies**

CEDAR FALLS and JUNCTION CITY showed the North's leadership that the increasing firepower of the US forces was difficult to match, even with fully trained regular troops. Occult and supernatural aid had so far been used sparingly, its deployment controlled by a special branch of the North Vietnamese leadership. A supersoldier formula stolen by the Chinese after World War II worked well during its debut at Fire Base Gold, but despite its boost to the individual soldier, in the face of US firepower it was clear that huge quantities would be needed for victory.

Ho Chi Minh decided that the only way to turn the tide of war in his favor was by harnessing the supernatural forces abounding in this ancient land, which seemed to have been fed by the war. Unfortunately for Ho, the Chinese had stripped the North of most of its ancient sites during their occupation. Occasional weird events on the battlefield were too uncontrollable and random to rely on. What was needed was a source of steady power.

Forming his paranormal scientists under the aegis of the Ministry of Thought Advancement, Ho directed the scholars to begin researching means of bringing this plan to fruition. Researchers were dispatched into China and the Soviet Union with orders to find out what they needed. Agents were also infiltrated into the South in an attempt to locate sites of interest and find out Diem's secrets from those few officials who had survived the coup and the subsequent purge.

### **The Border Battles**

In the fall of 1967 three major engagements took place along the Laos-Cambodian-South Vietnam borders. Two NVA regiments attempted to capture towns held by ARVN or local militia units and were beaten back with heavy losses. An operation by the US Army to clear the rubber plantations around Loc Ninh resulted in over 1,000 NVA casualties. Just south of that battle things finally turned the North's way. A US battalion ran into one of the most devastating ambushes of the war along the edge of the recently cleared Iron Triangle.

The NVA seemed to appear out of nowhere, and in the first few minutes many of the battalion's staff lay dead or dying. The unit was forced to dig in and await help, while the NVA

regiment managed to slip away with minimal losses. These battles, however, were just preludes to the bloodiest fighting since the Ia Drang Valley.

### **Dak To**

The Special Forces camp at Dak To had been a thorn in the side of the NVA forces since its establishment. Black CAT units and MACV-SIG teams had been using the camp as a staging post for clandestine strikes into Cambodia, where they had disrupted or destroyed several ancient Cham sites the NVA had uncovered during their construction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

An NVA defector told US troops that an attack by four regiments was imminent. His description of preparations taking place at a hill overlooking the site of the battle struck one of his MACV-SIG interrogators as oddly reminiscent of rites the Nazis had performed in World War II. In a preemptive move, several US battalions moved into blocking positions, almost immediately drawing a heavy response from the NVA forces. Heavy bombing by B-52s and close air support followed.

While the battle raged around Dak To, the 173rd Airborne attacked Hill 875—the site of the arcane preparations. The attackers were stopped dead in their tracks, and despite heavy artillery and air support, it took almost a week to clear the extensive bunkers and underground complexes that were found on the hilltop. As the fighting died down, military intelligence teams quickly moved into the rubble and began removing artifacts. Only later was it discovered that these were in fact CIA Black CAT personnel. The final destination of the artifacts was unknown, but the Sons suspected Janus involvement.

### **Just When You Thought it was Over**

The battles in the Central Highlands had drained manpower from both sides, but the North had taken the brunt of the casualties. For Ho Chi Minh, these defeats only served to underscore the urgency of the acquisition of new means to defeat the South and their hated American masters. Luck was with Ho, or so it seemed, as some of his agents in the South began to make contact with officials who had served Diem in "special" capacities and were willing to put their special knowledge to work for the North. Unfortunately, the sites of power that they were familiar with lay within the South, many around Hue and Da Nang, once the center of the Champa empire.

The activation of these sites would also require the release of vast quantities of dark energy, including the deaths of many innocents. For Ho, this became the North's number one

priority. Infiltration stepped up along the Trail, in preparation for an attack on the Lunar New Year, a time of great power in which the ley lines would flare with power and be most easily tapped. Unaware of his true reasons, the party leadership in Hanoi was convinced by Ho that the time was ripe for a general offensive in the rural areas combined with a popular uprising in the cities. The North's generals were informed that the primary goals of this combined major offensive and uprising were to destabilize the Saigon regime and to force the United States to opt for a negotiated settlement. In fact what followed was an attempt to harness the massive potential dark energies of the old Cham sites of power.

As the rate of infiltration of troops from the North rose, MACV predicted a major Communist offensive early the following year, but it was projected to be a conventional attack, with the DMZ area expected to bear the brunt of the attack. Accordingly, United States troops were sent to strengthen northern border posts, and the security of the Saigon area was transferred to ARVN forces. Ho's agents began to play their part also. Those in positions of power, as well as those who were subtly influenced through sorcerous means from afar, allowed more than half of the ARVN forces to be on leave because of the approaching Tet (Lunar New Year) holiday, despite warnings of the impending offensive.

## 1968

### Tet

On January 31, 1968, the full-scale offensive began, with simultaneous attacks by the communists on five major cities, thirty-six provincial capitals, sixty-four district capitals, and numerous villages. In Saigon, suicide squads attacked the Independence Palace (the residence of the president), the radio station, the ARVN's Joint General Staff Compound, Tan Son Nhut airfield, and the United States embassy, causing considerable damage and throwing the city into turmoil. The American and ARVN soldiers found themselves in a firestorm, and fought bitter battles throughout the country for almost every town and military base.

As the country descended into anarchy, special NVA teams from the Politburo's Ministry of Thought Advancement fanned out across the country, moving to pre-designated sites that were thought to hold items of interest. Their agents who attacked the American Embassy were especially interested in destroying files and information they knew the US had gathered on supernatural activities throughout Southeast

Asia. Unfortunately for the US, the attacks generally succeeded, although all the attackers were finally killed. Most of the NVA and VC forces throughout the country were fought off within a few days, but Hue, which had been seized by an estimated 12,000 Communist troops who had previously infiltrated the city, remained under their control until late February.

After the battle MACV-SIG operatives moved into the smoking rubble of the city and made disturbing discoveries. They found that 2,000 to 3,000 officials, police, and others had been executed in Hue. Mass graves contained heaps of bodies, while shaken Marines and Army troops reported all sorts of wild tales of things that defied explanation seen during the fighting. More detailed investigation revealed that the old French museum of the Champa empire had been thoroughly looted, with a gaping pit dug in its basement. What was found in the basement was not revealed.

Although a loss to the North, the Tet Offensive was seen as a turning point in the United States. War weary and having been told by the military that the offensive power of the insurgents was all but crushed, this offensive revitalized the peace movement and protests grew in size and frequency.

### Spy vs Spy

After Tet it became increasingly obvious to those in the know that the North had begun a major program to find and exploit the various occult sites that lay scattered around Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, and that something arcane had been triggered in Hue. While the US military had experienced such a war against the Nazis and their paranormal programs, the Army now found itself woefully under-equipped to fight such an unconventional campaign in Southeast Asia. Compounding this problem, the use of uninformed soldiers, such as Special Forces or LRRPs, had led to a number of blunders and tragedies, and the alliances made with hill and mountain tribes occasionally placed American soldiers in the grasp of the evil that they were sent to fight. It was obvious that a new program would have to be instituted.

Recruitment by MACV-SIG began among servicemen who had encountered strange events on the battlefield, as well as those who MACV-SIG recruiters felt had an aptitude for such work. Code-named the Phoenix program and activated in late 1968, this classified project had two goals. Overtly (as overtly as a classified project could be), Phoenix worked to identify VC political cadre, leaders, and others in the South and North and "neutralize" them. Phoenix was originally designed to combine the capabilities of the CIA,

MACV-SIG, the South Vietnamese Central Intelligence Organization, and National Police.

The program's true mission was much more classified, and known only to a handful of individuals in-country. Members of Phoenix were actually tasked with finding and destroying sites of a supernatural nature, whether they were in use by the North or not. Their mandate extended throughout the Vietnams, Cambodia, and Laos. Unfortunately, the destruction of MACV-SIG's files during Tet meant that the program started at a severe disadvantage.

Adding to the difficulty of an already seemingly impossible mission, Phoenix's partners in the Central Intelligence Agency were often at odds with the soldiers of the program. In practice, the CIA only paid lip service to this project, often using the Phoenix members to do the dangerous grunt work of securing a site so they could move in, evaluate the contents, and remove anything of value. Their Black CAT units occasionally battled other American units for possession of sites, and thus spawned rumors of American and Western mercenaries fighting for the North, which only added to the witches' brew of dark energy circulating throughout the region.

### **Go Tell Alice**

Since the beginning of US involvement in Vietnam, the CIA had been tasked with the development of a variety of drugs designed to alleviate the mind-bending effect that exposure to the supernatural had on troops. Research had focused on two areas. The first was a drug or combinations of drugs that would produce selective amnesia in the subject. This was felt to be the best way to suppress the stories that would follow confrontations with the paranormal, and help cover up such encounters.

A wide array of drugs was developed, some more successful than others. One of the most successful was a synthetic drug using LSD. Mixed with two other drugs, it produced a total amnesia for the 48 hours prior to its ingestion, and left the mind susceptible to suggestions to fill in the blank thus created. Unfortunately, the formula for LSD was leaked to the public, manufacture and recreational use began in the US and soon spread throughout the world.

Other drugs were used to soothe the shattered minds of those who had seen things man was not meant to know. Large quantities of the narcotic were manufactured and sent to the psychiatric hospitals set up for such troops at Saigon, Tokyo, and Guam. Unfortunately, sometimes these drugs made their way onto the black market, where their powerful addictive qualities were discovered.

1969

### **A Change in Office**

Back in the States a new President took office in the beginning of 1969. Richard Nixon immediately demanded to know what was happening in Vietnam. A veteran of the US Navy in the Pacific during World War II, his fears of supernatural happenings in Southeast Asia were confirmed in a Pentagon briefing by General Latta. Nixon decided that the best thing to do was focus on the destruction of these sites, in conjunction with the withdrawing US forces.

Already, tabloid papers had reported on some of the strange events in the 'Nam. The CIA had worked hard to discredit the writers of such stories, and rumors of widespread drug-use by the soldiers over there, while helping to explain such strangeness, did nothing to help the military's image, further straining relations between the two organizations.

### **Quiet Before the Storm**

During the first part of the year military activity was low compared to previous years, as the Communists tried to recover from the Tet disaster and instead concentrated on scouring Laos and Cambodia for occult resources. In the shadows, the men of the Phoenix Program fought



a savage war throughout Southeast Asia against both flesh and blood and other, stranger foes. Along with a few Black CAT teams, several sites were destroyed.

The most successful operation of the war was carried out by Phoenix team D-43. After a grueling insertion and movement, the team discovered an ancient temple complex dedicated to beings of whose true nature were lost in the mists of time. Having been excavated by the Ministry of Thought Advancement, this site had been transformed into a major installation by the North Vietnamese, with the intention of using the power contained within to further their war against the South. The Phoenix team arrived just in time to interrupt a ceremony that Ho was taking part in, and the resultant cross-dimensional rip not only killed the team but also the leader of the North and many of his inner circle.

The improved combat situation, along with the death of Ho and the apparent disruption of his cabal, led Nixon to speed the withdrawal of US troops, who turned their areas of responsibility over to the ARVN.

## 1970

### Crossing the Line

Early in 1970, a Phoenix team found a well-guarded archeological excavation site along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the "Dog's Head" region of the border. Other teams deployed to the area began to find a series of ancient temple complexes in the rugged terrain, some of which had substantial garrisons of NVA troops. In late February Phoenix team F-23 also found a sole survivor of a Black CAT unit while sweeping deep within Cambodia along the Mekong River. He was taken back to Saigon for debriefing, and under Phoenix interrogation told of a huge staging area that contained not only conventional troops but *things beyond description*. The memories proved too much for the man, who died raving about the things he had seen.

In April 1970, Nixon authorized the invasion of Cambodia by a joint United States-ARVN force of 30,000 troops for the alleged purpose of destroying Communist bases across the border. Not only were thousands of weapons captured and tons of equipment, ammunition, and vehicles destroyed, but this foray allowed large forces to be amassed against the sites identified by Phoenix. Although regular troopers were sparingly used in direct assault, the penetration did allow artillery to be moved into range and scouts to get a clearer picture of the situation. All the

previously identified sites were destroyed, and others uncovered were searched for further information.

A Riverine task force was even sent up the Mekong River into Cambodia, where it smashed the complex discovered by the Black CATs. By the end of this drive, it seemed that the occult programs of the North had suffered irreparable damage. In addition, US forces had gathered huge quantities of intelligence materials, which were sent to labs in Guam and Johnson Atoll in the Pacific for further study.

Unfortunately for the administration, the invasion resulted in massive protests in the United States, leading to the passage of legislation by Congress requiring the removal of United States troops from Cambodia by the end of June.

### Mission Accomplished?

With many foci destroyed in Cambodia, Ho Chi Minh dead, and the ARVN seeming to finally hold its own in the field against the insurgents through the Vietnamization program, it seemed to many that the US mission in Vietnam was finally drawing to an end. At the Pentagon, plans began to be finalized for the withdrawal of the bulk of American forces. During the remainder of 1970, the bulk of US combat troops were returned home, leaving only two brigades, a few infantry battalions, and a few cavalry squadrons in-country.

While the troop reductions continued in the 'Nam, evidence taken during the Cambodian incursion was painstakingly researched at a secure facility on the tiny speck of land called Johnson Atoll in the South Pacific. Under the codename CASSANDRA GLASS, researchers were brought in from around the US and some of its allies to decipher the many tablets, scrolls, and carvings taken during the campaign. The work was difficult and slow, and was not helped by the descent into madness of several of the staff.

### Too Good to be True

Late in November, a CASSANDRA GLASS research team finally made a breakthrough in their research and by mid-December a horrifying discovery was made.

A major site of supernatural significance lay within Laos, specifically within the Plain of Jars. When cross-referenced with French accounts, as well as the activities of the Viet Minh during the 1950s, it appeared almost certain that the North knew of this site, if not its significance. Word of this was passed to CASSANDRA GLASS's commander, a Son of Solomon. The information was quickly sent on to Washington, but by this

time the vast majority of US ground troops had departed the country, and anti-war protests were being staged around the world.

## 1971

### **The Last Hurrah**

The last major reported ground action of the war by United States forces was DEWEY CANYON II, an operation that cleared the area along the Vietnamese-Laotian border and established a base for ARVN troops. Under intense pressure from his US advisors, South Vietnamese President Thieu was presented with information that major NVA concentrations were using Laos as a staging area in preparation for an invasion of the South. Urged against his better judgement to initiate a preemptive strike, Thieu directed the ARVN to prepare for operations in Laos.

While South Vietnam readied for invasion, a US mission was sent to Phnom Penh with the title "Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia." The unit, supposedly put in place to facilitate the transfer of equipment and supplies to help close the Ho Chi Minh Trail, was actually made up of members of the Phoenix Program.

In February the ARVN forces launched their attack into Laos. Code named LAM SON 719, three divisions attacked along the old Colonial Route 9. Heavy resistance, a narrow axis of attack, bad weather, and intelligence leaks to the North caused the attack to falter. A series of counterattacks by NVA armor overran the forward positions and stalled the attack. Like their French predecessors 20 years prior, the ARVN forces were decimated as they retreated along the old RC9, and the retreat turned into a rout.

### **Operation Backdoor**

While the ARVN forces were being shattered along the Laotian border, several teams of Phoenix Program soldiers, CIA CATs, and MIKE Force units dropped deep into Laos on the sites identified by the researchers of CASSANDRA GLASS. Despite the ARVN forces' defeat far to the south, the Special Operations forces of OPERATION BACKDOOR fought their way into the two most important sites.

As the troops forced their way into the primary nexus located on the Plain of Jars, they found evidence of a structure capable of channeling incredible energies. Suddenly they were attacked by horrors beyond imagining, which poured up out of the bowels of the complex. With most of his team dead or going insane, the team commander triggered the tactical nuclear device they had carried as a

back-up. The 10 kiloton device obliterated the complex and caused a sinkhole to open, as if the earth itself attempted to obliterate the evidence of the anomaly.

Twenty miles away, just as the second Phoenix team secured the secondary site, it too imploded at the instant of its brethren's destruction. Unfortunately, the world could never know of the sacrifices of these heroic individuals. They were listed as missing and presumed dead in an R&R plane crash outside Clark Air Base in the Philippines, though some whisper that a few of the soldiers actually did make it back.

## 1972-1975

### **Shoot and Scoot**

Having destroyed the main known foci of supernatural activity in Southeast Asia, and with rampant anti-war sentiment back home, President Nixon decided to fully withdraw US forces from South Vietnam. The American decision was followed by the Australians, New Zealanders, and Koreans.

In the months that followed OPERATION BACKDOOR, MACV-SIG observers were pleased to note that the level of supernatural activity mirrored that seen in conflicts previously, and no evidence was seen of the North using any occult forces. In 1973 a peace accord was signed in Paris calling for a halt to hostilities and a withdrawal of all forces from South Vietnam, though small-scale skirmishing continued after the accord went into effect.

Unfortunately, word had leaked out that something had happened in the depths of Laos in 1971. Rather than let word of this operation directed against an officially non-existent supernatural threat get to the public, another crisis was engineered by some of Nixon's Sons of Solomon advisers.

The Watergate scandal devoured the attention of the American public and press, and led to the resignation of President Nixon in the summer of 1974.

In December of that year the North launched a major attack against the South. What began as a limited offensive to test the capabilities of the ARVN soon precipitated a rout among the southern soldiers. Within five months South Vietnam surrendered to the North. With no evidence of a resurgence of occult activity, the Sons of Solomon stood by as the South was conquered. As one anonymous member noted, "Our battle isn't against Communism, it's against the greater darkness that threatens all of humanity, regardless of ideology."

# Running the Game



***OK WAR MASTERS, LISTEN UP,  
'COS THIS IS IMPORTANT! I KNOW  
YOU'RE FIRED UP TO GET YOUR  
PLAYERS INTO THE HORRORS OF  
VIETNAM. JUST A QUICK WORD OF  
ADVICE ON THE SETTING AND YOUR  
JOB AS THE WAR MASTER.***

It's easy for a group of players sitting on their keisters in a nice air-conditioned den with plenty of snacks to decide to take on a whole battalion of NVA regulars. In real life, though, they'd probably move quietly back through the brush and get the heck out of the AO with their tails between their legs! It's up to you as the War Master to convey a sense of what their alter-egos are facing and feeling way out in Indian country with no support for miles around!

This section fills in a lot of background material to help you create the right atmosphere. Some hints on what kinds of missions in the 'Nam make good roleplaying scenarios are presented on the pages to come.

## Forming Units

While your players are creating their characters, you will have to give some thought as to how the different ideas they have can combine to form a unit. A mixture of specialties is suggested as it gives the players access to the widest possible range of Edges.

A Special Forces campaign can be exciting if each of the players fills a different role in an A-Detachment (see the Appendix for details on how these are organized).

A mixture of military ranks in the unit makes for interesting situations as it gives the players control over a variety of other troops and puts some in a subordinate position to others (see below).

## Military Rank and Units

Whether during character generation or as a result of gaining experience, some of your players' characters will be promoted through the ranks.

Only a small fraction of army officers in Vietnam are graduates of West Point, with the majority coming from college campuses through the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) or from the ranks via Officer Candidate School (OCS). With officers serving a tour of only six months in combat commands, many soldiers feel that the enlisted men lose their leaders just as the officers have learned enough to be effective in the field.

Furthermore, as many firefights are conducted at platoon and company level, casualties amongst the ranks of Lieutenants and Captains further compound the problem. Good officers are often those willing to lead, rather than order, their men into battle which puts them in harm's way, and their Vietnamese enemies are extremely effective at targeting those who appear to be giving the orders. Experienced units learn not to salute their officers in the field and try hard to make them indistinguishable from the other soldiers.

Between the officers and the men are the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). The sergeants and corporals of the military keep order and discipline and, as is the case in most armies, are a measure of the quality of the service. Often promoted through experience, they teach the young officers and the young enlisted men alike. As the war drags on, the number of high quality NCOs is diminished through attrition and Officer Candidate School, leading to a gradual decline in standards in some units. High casualty rates among junior officers also places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the NCOs who often have to fill the positions of Officers in the short term until replacements arrive. It then falls to the NCO to ensure that the green officer survives long enough to learn to be an effective leader.

Try to keep the heroes as close together as military organization allows. If only one hero has the Rank (Officer) Edge, have the other players be the members of his HQ squad. Keeping the players in a single squad allows for the widest range of possible missions. If there are a number of NCO characters, give them their own squads to control using the *Savage Worlds* rules for allies, but keep them in the same platoon and conduct operations at platoon level. If you have a large number of officer characters, the game will be slightly different and operations are more likely to be conducted at a company level, with fewer patrols and more assaults.

## Campaign Types

### Standard Campaigns

In a standard campaign, your players create soldiers that then undertake several routine military missions before gradually introducing the weird aspects of the conflict in Vietnam. Of course, you may choose to play the game perfectly "straight" with none of the arcane elements of the story. If you do decide to bring the horrific truth about the Weird Wars to light, be sure to mix the weird scenarios with plenty of routine military missions or your heroes will be stark raving mad in no time.

Typically, the unit undertakes a couple of missions per game month, advancing every other mission. By the end of their first tour, they should have some knowledge that there is a secret side to the war and be of Veteran experience rank. Remember that your pukes are at the whim of the military and, to keep the missions varied or as a change of pace, feel free to have the unit move to another part of the country. The CTZ modifiers on the mission generator should ensure that the unit experiences

some different missions if they move from one part of Vietnam to another.

If you want to introduce the secret organizations like Phoenix, SIG and Janus, your characters should be strongly "encouraged" to sign up for a second tour of duty. This should give them the opportunity to be inducted into the ranks of these shadowy groups and explore the full range of what the Weird Wars has to offer. It is quite possible for a character to start in one of the earlier time periods (French or early American) and survive to see the war through to its conclusion as he fights the darkness from the shadows. Typically, once a character is inducted into one of these shadow organizations, he is in for the duration.

### Elite Campaigns

These highly trained soldiers take part in a subtly different war and the modifiers on the mission generator mean the chances of the unit being assigned to special or downright weird missions are greater if the unit is Elite.

An Elite unit relies more heavily on its own abilities (there is less chance of having support available on Elite missions) and, as all the characters start play as Special Forces, they are expected to be able to deal with the hardships they face. Elite campaigns, then, can turn weird more quickly, though a mix of routine military adventures is still needed to protect the heroes' fragile Sanity.

Special Forces camps have large numbers of allied troops the players can control and missions for the Green Berets can sometimes include large-scale assaults or base defenses. Recon and Ranger units must provide intelligence gathering services and cross-border operations, while the SEALs also perform covert assassination missions as well as reconnaissance in the Delta region.

## Sanity

Combat puts a lot of stress on an individual and combat in the Weird Wars heaps still more on top. To reflect the mental strain grunts in Vietnam endure, each Wild Card has a Sanity stat. A soldier's Sanity is equal to 2 plus half his Spirit, but can be modified by Edges and Hindrances. A positive number means a character is well grounded and stable, while a negative number means that he's starting to get that weird light in his eye that says, "wow, this axe would look good in your head." Anything from grisly horrors of war, to supernatural creatures, to certain items (books, strange idols, and other, more esoteric things) can cause a fluctuation in Sanity. If a character advances his Spirit after character creation it also increases his current Sanity by one point.

## Drugs in Vietnam

The use of drugs in Vietnam was relatively widespread, particularly in the later stages of the war, from marijuana to opium and heroin. With Southeast Asia being such an important region for the production of many hard drugs, a wide variety of narcotics was readily available to the troops, in the field as well as the administrative and support staff in the rear. The CIA and MACV-SIG also found that certain drug combinations allowed their operatives to forget some of the horrors they encountered, prolonging their operational life.

If your character has the Habit Hindrance, there is a good chance he is a regular user of one of these narcotics. Which drug and the degree of dependence depends on whether you chose the minor or major version of the Hindrance.

A soldier with a Minor Habit is a pot-head, smoking marijuana to relieve his tension. While he can avoid the effects of the drug by not smoking, he still talks and acts like a stoner and so suffers the -1 Charisma penalty. A Major Habit indicates a more serious problem such as opium or heroin addiction. Rules for kicking the habit are presented in the *Savage Worlds* main book.

In addition to the effects suffered by those with a habit listed in the *Savage Worlds* rules, any soldier under the influence of drugs ignores all the rules relating to Sanity loss for the period they remain intoxicated (this includes alcohol but not tobacco). Should he be called upon to fight or perform any important duties, treat the soldier as if he were Fatigued, but apply the penalty to mental functions as well.

Serious drug abuse among combat soldiers is a deadly threat, endangering not only the life of the drug user but of his comrades as well. Most soldiers take a very dim view of those who put their lives at risk and often take matters into their own hands. If discovered, those with drug problems and those who supplied them are subject to the harsh penalties of military justice. A trip to the stockade can provide brutal rehabilitation.

## Horrors of War

As a soldier makes it through his tour of duty, he is forced to endure and witness things that push him to his limits. Couple with this the dark secrets that lurk in the jungles of Southeast Asia and you have a mind numbing cocktail capable of pushing even the most down-to-earth to the brink of madness. Anytime a soldier fails a Guts check he loses one point of Sanity. If a character goes bust on a Guts check he must roll on the Psychosis Table regardless of his current Sanity. Characters suffer the effects of Fear as normal.

## Recovery

In general, if a hero gets some Rest & Relaxation (R&R) for a few days, he can recover Sanity. Sometimes the satisfaction of seeing things through can have a similar effect. Finally, if a hero goes two game months without losing any further Sanity, he regains 1 point of Sanity. The Sanity Recovery Table below lists a few ways in which he can try to repair the damage. As War Master, feel free to add additional items to the list as they arise in your campaign. A character's Sanity can never exceed 2 plus half his Spirit.

## Sanity Recovery Table

Condition	Recovery
Each three days R&R	+1
Successful mission	+1
Two "sane" months	+1

## Losing it

If a hero's Sanity slips too far he becomes twitchy, nervous and a little peculiar. If he isn't treated, he can become dangerously unhinged.

Anytime a Sanity loss takes a character to -1 or lower, he must make a Spirit roll. Those who fail develop a quirk or personality disorder. This acts as an additional Hindrance for the hero (who does not get any points for this Hindrance—it's simply the price he pays for the descent into madness).

Roll on the following table to determine the disorders afflicting the character. Some results have definite game effects while others manifest themselves only in the way the player roleplays them. Prolonged therapy or CIA drugs may correct or permanently remove these disorders in time (at the discretion of the War Master).

If duplicate results are rolled on the Psychosis Table, the problem becomes worse. Maybe a trooper's superstition goes from carrying a rabbit's foot to having to kill a fresh rabbit before each mission to bathing in it's blood. The details are left to the imagination of the individual War Master.



## Psychosis Table

d20 (+ 2 if Mind-numbing, +4 if Mind-wrenching)

**1-2 Superstitious:** Whether it be religion, a lucky rabbit's foot or the ace of spades tucked into his helmet, your hero has found something that helps him deal with the terrors he faces. Pick a simple routine or object to be the focus of this disorder. As long as the focus is undisturbed, this soldier is fine. If the focus is lost or disturbed all Spirit rolls are made at -2 for the duration of the mission.

**3-4 Don't Shoot!:** This trooper has seen many he perceived as innocent die in the conflicts he has fought in. Because of this, he won't act in violence toward non-military individuals without first being attacked himself. He always gives the benefit of the doubt to those "innocents caught in the crossfire of war." Of course, in a place like the 'Nam this is not a good habit to have. He receives the Pacifist (Minor) Hindrance, and won't fire on full-auto for fear of hitting any innocent bystanders.

**5-6 Thousand Yard Stare:** The distant look in this soldier's eyes speaks volumes about the horrors he's seen. This soldier makes all his Notice rolls at -2.

**7-8 Flashbacks:** When it really hits the fan this trooper is overwhelmed by images of past battles and dead comrades. In a combat situation, images flash through his mind, confusing the past with reality. He draws two cards per action, and acts on the worst of the two. If the trooper has the Slow Edge, this has no additional effect.

**9-10 Downer, Dude:** This soldier has been through many units and many comrades in the course of his career. He's seen and done things most men would rather forget, and many of his buddies have died. He finds it difficult to form relationships—why bother when they're bound to be just more meat for the grinder? Viewed as a bit of a wet blanket in the best situations, this soldier suffers a -4 to his Charisma, and, if a leader, his Command Radius is halved.

**11-12 Night Terrors:** The horrors of war affect every person differently. Your hero is plagued by the visions of things he or she has seen. Maybe the face of a close friend killed during training comes to haunt his dreams, or perhaps her time in the hospitals back in the World has disturbed her.

Whatever the reason, this character is traumatized by past events and cannot sleep properly without drink or drugs. As a result the individual is permanently tired or intoxicated. When it is important to sleep, a failed Vigor roll (-2) means this character cannot. When it is important to stay awake, a failed Vigor roll (-2) means the tired grunt falls asleep.

**13-14 Addiction:** This soldier has seen too much and been "helped" by some of MACV-SIG's chemicals. While they have eased the horrors locked within this man's mind, they have also created powerful cravings for more to keep the demons at bay. The vet has a Major Habit Hindrance.

**15-16 The Shakes:** When the adrenaline starts pumping, this soldier starts to shake like a leaf. During combat or anytime the character is under stress, his hands start shaking, reducing all Agility and Agility related skill rolls by -1.

**17-18 Paranoia:** This lifer has seen things in the course of his duty that his government has refused to explain. He feels that every mystery has a deeper meaning and goes to great lengths to fit them into his skewed perception of the world around him. He gets the Delusional Hindrance (Major), as well as a -2 to his Charisma.

**19-20 Blood Lust:** This lifer has killed more than his fair share, and many times he was close enough to look into his enemies' eyes. While most would be disgusted by this, the experience has awakened a strange lust within this veteran. He gains the Bloodthirsty Hindrance.

**21-22 Unnatural Appetite:** This soldier begins to believe he can survive the war only through eating strange and disgusting things. It starts simply enough, with bugs or paper or cigarette butts. This gives a -2 to Charisma when dealing with those who know of these weird habits. If the character rolls this result again, it begins to progress in loathsomeness. Eventually, people around the basecamp may notice the mascots have disappeared as they go to fill his appetite for blood or other—entrees.

**23+ Marked for Death:** The character has looked into the pits of Hell and seen his place setting at the table. He knows it's just a matter of time before he dies, no matter what he does. This character receives one less benny at the start of each adventure session for each time he rolls this result.

## Booby Traps and Mines

Mines and booby traps play a key role in the conflict in Vietnam, although each side uses them differently. The Americans tend to employ them in a traditional defensive role, although the invention of the Claymore mine has given the US an offensive mine for their arsenal that is used extensively in ambushes. The Viet Minh, Viet Cong, and NVA use mines and booby traps as a form of asymmetrical warfare, planting them along roads, booby-trapping supply caches, and in other nuisance methods.

### Mines

Traditional minefields such as those used by the French and Americans consist of belts of mines laid in the ground around a camp or installation. These are designed to break up ground attack and inflict losses on the enemy, and are especially useful against the first charges of the human wave assaults used by the Viet Cong against French and US Special Forces outposts.

Areas filled with mines are rated by their density and represented by a die used to determine the likelihood of injury. Minefields are rated as light (d10), medium (d8), heavy (d6), or very heavy (d4). For every 2 yards (1") that a soldier moves through a mined area, roll its associated Density Die. Any 1s that come up indicate a mine has been triggered, with the resulting damage as detailed in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. If the mines are not laid in a conventional minefield, they are treated as individual booby traps using the following rules.

(Note that the stats for anti-personnel and Bouncing Betty mines have been reduced from the main *Savage Worlds* book.)

### Booby Traps

Booby traps are usually solitary items, and are used to great effect by the guerillas. These devices are designed not so much to kill the enemy (although that certainly can happen) as to maim him, causing fear and confusion among the greater whole.

The array of Booby Traps in the VC arsenal runs the gamut from primitive punji stake pits to unexploded ordnance rigged to detonate when a soldier steps on a pressure plate. The VC are incredibly clever in this regard, despite no formal schooling in demolitions.

The Mission Generator indicates if a unit encounters booby traps while conducting operations. Roll or select a type of booby trap on the chart below.

Unlike mines, booby traps are carefully placed in locations where they are most likely to be triggered. As they pass through the area, soldiers in the unit must try to detect and avoid the deadly devices.

### Detection

Soldiers attempting to detect mines or booby traps must make a Notice check, taking into account the device's modifier. If detected it can be marked and avoided by soldiers following the point man (no further Notice roll required to spot a marked booby trap).

The unit's speed of movement also affects a soldier's chance of detecting devices.

### Detection Modifiers

Modifier	Circumstance
+2	Mine detector vs mines
-2	Poor visibility
-2	Full pace
+0	Half pace or less
N/A*	Running
Variable	Device Notice modifier
+1	Elite soldier

\* If running, no Notice roll to spot the device is allowed.

Any 1s on the Notice die indicate the soldier has triggered the device. Failure means the soldier didn't spot the mine or booby trap, leaving all the members of the unit following to make Notice rolls. A success indicates that the soldier spotted the device and may try to disable it or mark it for the other members of the unit to avoid.

Note that running prevents any attempt to spot booby traps or mines. The soldier makes an Agility roll and must get at least a raise to avoid triggering the device as he charges past! Running through the bush can be very dangerous.

### Mines (d8)

Type	Notice Mod.	Dam.	Notes
<b>1-3:</b> Anti-personnel	-1	3d8	Small Burst Template
<b>4:</b> Bouncing Betty	-1	3d8	Med. Burst Template
<b>5-6:</b> Shoe Mine	-2	3d6	Small Burst Template
<b>7:</b> Artillery Shell	-2	2d10	Medi. Burst Template
<b>8:</b> Aerial Bomb	+1	3d10	Large Burst Template

## Booby traps (d6)

Type	Notice Mod.	Dam.	Notes
1: Pungi Pit	0	1d6+1	If wounded, Pace -1
2: Toe Popper	-3	2d6	If wounded, Pace -2
3: Hand Grenade	0	3d6	Med. Burst Template
4: Crossbow	-1	2d6	
5: Tiger Pit	-1	2d6	Agility roll at -2 to avoid
6: Drop Fall	-2	3d6	Agility roll at -2 for half damage, raise = no damage

## Secrets in the Jungle

So, you know all about the war. This is where it gets weird. The further through their tour of duty the heroes get, the more strange stuff they see and hear. Behind the myths and denials, the US has a special unit to combat the strangeness in Vietnam.

## Phoenix Program

Phoenix (Phung Hoang in Vietnamese) has two roles to play following its inception in July of 1968. While classified, its "open" mission is to act as a covert anti-guerrilla force, gathering information on members of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese government and exploiting that information. The soldiers of Phoenix work to decapitate the leadership of both the North's government and its southern insurgent allies by removing their authority figures. It is this program of assassination that supposedly grants the Phoenix members a cloak of classification.

In reality, Phoenix is the brainchild of Major General Timothy Latta, head of the Pentagon's Special Intelligence Group. The unit's true mission is to ferret out and destroy the supernatural wherever it is found on and around the battlefield.

Theoretically working with the CIA's Central Office of Foreign Experimental Technology, Phoenix members are sent throughout Southeast Asia when stories of the paranormal or weird are related by allied militaries. OPERATION FULL MOON also provides leads to Phoenix, generating missions that seek to preempt the unearthing of sites that may contain ancient evils before they can be unleashed.



## **A Few Good Men**

Phoenix operatives are drawn from across all of the armed services, but with the introduction of mood-altering chemicals recruitment has become more selective than it was for the OSI during World War II. A soldier who has seen things he should not have seen is often given psychiatric counseling and shipped back to the Philippines, Guam, or Hawaii if he seems unstable or lacks the skills needed by the program. Seasoned soldiers are more likely to be recruited into this Top Secret organization.

Once recruited, they are given training in the use of a wider variety of weapons and tactics, and used in mostly mundane missions against the Viet Cong until their utility can be proven. This works to segregate them away from the other troops they might talk to, and gives more senior members of the Phoenix Program the chance to evaluate the newbie. When they have proven their worth they're schooled in techniques that can be used against the supernatural, and the weirdness of their missions increases. The typical one-year tour is extended for Phoenix program members for the duration, or until their minds give out under the repeated exposure of things man was not meant to know.

## **Trust Nobody**

Unfortunately for the soldiers of Phoenix, not only do they have to worry about the NVA, VC, and the supernatural, they also wage a covert war against the CIA's Black CATs. While technically on the same side, the CIA, under the influence of Janus, prefers to retrieve the occult for inspection and possible exploitation. Phoenix's mission is clear: elimination of the threat. Phoenix soldiers typically go into the field "clean," with no rank, ID, or identifiers of any kind, although this is not always the case. They have access to any weapon found on the battlefield, and often carry Communist weapons into enemy territory to ease the problem of resupply.

## **Brainiacs**

One of the resources the Phoenix program has to draw upon in their fight against these unknown evils is the University of Maryland's Military Education program. The University of Maryland has long been associated with the military overseas, providing classroom education to deployed troops as a way to better them during their time in the military. In fact, "Go to Vietnam and earn a college degree" was actually used as a recruiting slogan!



In actuality, this provided just the right cover story for MACV-SIG to bring in those academics who had pursued the study of the occult and supernatural and put them to work for the government. Code-named SALEM BREEZE, this initiative provided the professors with an environment where they could expand their horizons and conduct a little "field research," and offered the military a vast knowledge base in-country from which to draw upon in their epic struggle against the ever expanding weirdness.

Of course, not every professor in the program in Vietnam was part of SALEM BREEZE, but those who were fully briefed on the goings-on in Vietnam's primeval jungles were occasionally sent out into the field as advisors when an occult site was expected in the vicinity. While more of a liability in a firefight or when stealthy movement through the jungle was required, these academics' knowledge could make all the difference in the world between success and failure when encountering the supernatural.

### Phoenix in Your Campaign

Unless you want to hop right into the weird aspect of the *Weird Wars*, we suggest you keep the activities of COFET or Phoenix a "battlefield myth," one of those things that everyone has heard of but no one has seen for themselves.

When your characters have seen and survived the unknown and made a report to higher headquarters, word eventually reaches the Phoenix Program's superiors, especially if they have been very vocal about their encounter. They will then be approached and debriefed by a military intel unit operating under FULL MOON auspices. Depending on the characters (and War Master) the soldiers may be inducted into Phoenix, or they may be warned against speaking of their strange experiences ever again.

Phoenix soldiers are well equipped, somewhat trained in the supernatural, and sent into the field where their superiors hope that the firepower and training of the late 20th Century is enough to deal with these ancient otherworldly forces. They have no supernatural support (rune magic, discovered during WWII, is no longer taught outside the CIA). Also, unlike the Black CATs, the Phoenix Program does not believe in trying to use these dark powers against the VC.

If you decide to allow characters to join the Phoenix Program (see below), each character automatically gains the Edge Phoenix Program and has the option to purchase the following Edges:

### Highest Clearance

**Requirements:** Veteran, Smarts d8, Service: (Phoenix Program)

While many soldiers are recruited into Phoenix, not everyone is fully indoctrinated into the Program until they have proven their worth to MACV-SIG. Once this has happened the soldier is taken out of the field and put through a crash course dealing with the nature of the threat and the mission of Phoenix. Briefings by FULL MOON analysts as well as field training round out this two week course.

Soldiers with this Edge gain an additional +1 to their Sanity, as well as +2 to any Knowledge (Arcane) rolls. Guts checks against supernatural entities are also at +1. For non-unique horrors with a specific vulnerability, the Phoenix trooper might remember how to defeat it with a Common Knowledge check at -6. This roll, however, is always at the discretion of the War Master, and individual characters may receive a plus or minus to the roll based on previous experiences with similar monsters.

### Occult Exposure

**Requirements:** Veteran, Guts d10+, Service: (Phoenix Program)

This trooper has seen the things that lurk in the dark and has somehow managed to steel his mind against it. This exposure, combined with a training program that teaches the Phoenix members that these otherworldly entities can be defeated, works to insulate the mind from the psychic backlash that affects most people exposed to these Mind-wrenching encounters.

The hero gains +2 to his Sanity, and recovers Sanity at twice the normal rate (1 point per game month).

### Phoenix Program

**Requirements:** Veteran, Service: (Phoenix Program)

Noticed and earmarked for the program by the officers of the Phoenix Program, this character has been approached about joining this elite unit and agreed. Once the character has been inducted into the Phoenix Program, his Service Branch is altered to Phoenix.

He also undergoes special training in both normal military special forces operations and also in how to deal with the darkness that is stalking South East Asia. Any time he fails a Guts check due to fear, he actually *gains* a benny (though it can't be spent on the failed Fear roll). The Phoenix Program teaches its troopers calm in the face of terror.

# Operations

## Roleplaying and Wargaming

Continual patrols don't make great roleplaying scenarios, as it is hard to recreate the nerve-shredding terror of edging through the jungles where the primary difficulties are low visibility and the problems of moving quietly. Ambushes come quickly, with the VC appearing out of nowhere from their spider holes. This works fine on a tabletop but is hard to get across to players while role-playing.

Role-playing adventures then should be missions with a more definite goal, in which the soldiers are briefed to complete some clear task, such as rescuing downed aircrew or exploring a particular site.

For wargaming, the opposite is true. Firefights, ambushes, and full-scale battles work very well, while administering aid to the local populace, or researching the secrets lost in the jungles, lose something if they are just played out as wargames.

The beauty of *Savage Worlds* is that both of these types of games are handled easily with the same set of rules, and you should take advantage of this versatility to keep games of *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* fresh. As your player characters discover a lost temple, the mission is a straightforward roleplaying one. As they are ambushed on the return journey, the game is played out on the tabletop as a wargame complete with allied units, support elements and off-table artillery! There are few games systems that offer that kind of scope so successfully. One mission could be an all-night four man listening post braving the horrors of some jungle creature, the next a company sized assault against NVA bunker positions with scores of miniatures on each side.

Miniatures are extremely important to *Weird Wars* settings (although we recommend their use with any *Savage Worlds* game). Old Glory produces a fine range of 28mm minis suitable for use with *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness*. (Smaller scales, down to 5mm, are available if you want to manage large-scale operations including armor and helicopters at low cost!)

## Mass Battles

Operations at battalion levels and above are perfectly feasible with *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* using the *Savage Worlds* rules for Mass Battles. This system also allows you to simulate a mass attack on a larger French outpost, US firebase, or Special Forces camp.

The WM should prepare two maps of the Area of Operations before the adventure begins. The players' map shows known terrain, roads, and possible LZs. The other map is the War Master's own, which shows the real terrain, disposition of enemy troop, locations of tunnels and bunker complexes, booby trapped and mined areas, and any other items of interest.

Enterprising players could launch a series of missions to attempt to fill in some of the blanks on their maps before the massed battle. These could be played out as full scenarios as a prelude to the primary operation creating an interesting mini-campaign.

Using the maps and the Mass Battles rules presented in *Savage Worlds* you will be able to run full-scale operations with large numbers of units. The following additional notes are useful for figuring the various modifiers each round of the mass battle (see *Savage Worlds* for more details).

## Battle Modifiers

**Tokens:** The Vietnamese often outnumber the French or US forces numerically but are not as well equipped or trained, so the numbers of tokens should be weighted in favor of the French or US despite a numerical disadvantage. The exact ratio varies, but as a crude guide, trained NVA regulars equate 1:1 with French Foreign Legion, US, Korean, and Commonwealth troops. Viet Minh count as 2:1, and VC as 3:1. For French Colonial troops or ARVN, most Communist Vietnamese forces are on par, so use actual numbers involved to figure out the ratio.

**Artillery or Air Support:** The US always has at least +2 here due to the range and availability of support. On most large scale missions there is a high chance that heavy support is available giving the American commander +3. French commanders have air support available, depending on the priority given to the location or battle, giving them anything from a +1 to +3.

**Terrain:** These modifiers depend on the decisions made by the generals and the maps. Depending on whereabouts contact is made, the WM may impose a modifier. If the Vietnamese were warned of the French or US intentions, there may well be bunkers and fortifications (+2).

**Battle Plan:** This is often where the VC come into their own. Tricks and traps are their stock in trade and add a few points to the total battle roll.

## Op Orders

In *Weird Wars; Tour of Darkness* the War Master has complete control over the missions the soldiers undertake. In other roleplaying games the players have more freedom to decide what their characters' goals are and how they intend to pursue them. As soldiers, the members of the unit are expected to do as they are told and perform whatever missions their superiors deem necessary.

At the heart of *Savage Worlds* games are the exploits of your player characters and this setting is no exception. As War Master, you have complete freedom to tailor the campaign as you see fit, varying the missions the unit undertakes to keep the game fresh and interesting for your players. The previous chapters should have given you a wealth of ideas for styles of campaigns and types of missions for your players to undertake. The *Weird Wars; Tour of Darkness*, mission generator provides you with a means of devising fully fleshed out missions, or ideas if you need some hints to create a mission on the fly.

## Blood Trails and Body Count

In Vietnam, the body count became the most important measure of the success of an operation. At first, only confirmed dead were eligible to be included. Over time, methods employed in calculating casualty figures became more creative.

It was estimated, for instance, that for every 100 dead counted there would be 30 more dying of their wounds who made it off the battlefield. Soldiers were dispatched to follow blood trails through the jungle to find extra bodies to count. Some felt that if the soldier was still trailing blood after a few hundred yards or so, he would be dead soon and added him to the total without the body.

A few officers graded their subordinates solely on body counts from their missions which lead to estimated, exaggerated, or outright fabricated counts. Units with high counts got recognition. Unfortunately for the Americans, creatures such as moon walkers stymie these victory tabulations.

Despite what Hollywood would have the public believe, most soldiers' war experience consisted of a lot of duty at a firebase or basecamp, punctuated by patrols or the occasional big operation that might last days or weeks. The following tables are divided by nationality (French or US/Allies). They are usually modified by branch of service for the US and allied forces (Army, Phoenix Program, LRRP/Recon, Marines, or Special Forces).

The War Master should make one or two rolls per month for a campaign, with officers serving a 6 month tour and NCOs and enlisted troops serving a 12 month tour (unless they have the Short-timer Hindrance).

As with adventure generators in other settings, the mission generator is intended to give you guidance when designing scenarios. If you don't like one of the results, or you think it is inappropriate, feel free to modify the results or just choose them, rather than rolling.

To make your job easier, we have included an Operations Order form in the back of your book and online at [www.greatwhitegames.com](http://www.greatwhitegames.com). This allows you to fill in each section quickly and easily, and come up with missions in a simple, standard way. Refer to the sheet as you read through the following sections.

## Mission Generator: French

As noted in Chapter Three, the French military in Indochina consisted of a majority of colonial troops from France's African holdings and the French Foreign Legion. In general, for a variety of reasons the colonial troops did not fight well, and the Foreign Legion carried out the bulk of the fighting. The following Mission Generator assumes that a group of players are members of, or are under the control of, the Foreign Legion. If the War Master wants to play with a totally colonial force, subtract 2 from all rolls on Table 2FR.

The War Master should roll an entry on the Mission Table using the unit modifiers. Once the mission type is decided, roll on the following tables as you fill in the entries on the Op Order. On all sub-tables, also use the appropriate modifiers.

### Table 1FR: Missions

**Modifiers:** Colonial Troops -2, Foreign legion +1, Paratroops +2

d10	Result
1-2	Route patrol
3-4	Outpost Patrol
5	Outpost Relief
6	Convoy Ambush Relief
8-9	Presence Patrol
10	Airborne Attack
11+	Savage Tale

#### Route Patrol

The many narrow roads that wind their way across the rugged terrain of Tonkin provided the only lifeline to French outposts scattered across the countryside. Their importance cannot be emphasized enough. Patrols are often sent out to ensure the roads are clear of mines and passable. Such a patrol either includes a unit on foot with mine detectors attached or relying on their eyes and other senses to detect the telltale traces. Some are backed by armor or vehicles. No matter the composition, the Viet Minh eagerly use these route patrols to rack up the body count and destroy the French morale.

#### Outpost Patrol

The daily, mind-numbing routine of garrison duty is occasionally interrupted by the need to make sure the Viet Minh aren't just out of sight of the outpost perimeter, preparing for an attack. This patrol's goal is to sweep the surrounding area and prevent such an assault, as well as show any local villagers the military prowess of the French Empire.

#### Outpost Relief

One of the far-flung outposts is under attack. It is either a Foreign Legion post (1-3), a Colonial troop camp (4-5), a local forces outpost (6) or an artillery firebase (7-8). The heroes' goal is to engage the attackers from the rear and throw their assault into disarray. Add an additional d12 to the number of enemy troops. Half of these troops may deploy along the characters' route of march as ambushers.

#### Convoy Ambush Relief

A supply convoy traveling the winding roads that provide the lifeblood of each outpost has been ambushed and is pinned down. The characters' team must move into the area with all speed and relieve the trapped unit.

#### Presence Patrol

The unit has been tapped to provide a French presence in several villages in the area. This typically involves going from village to village, talking to the headmen, and showing them how remarkable it is to be a small part of the greater French Union. A translator is automatically be assigned to the characters' patrol.

#### Rear Guard

Colonial forces have taken a beating at an isolated outpost, and reinforcements air-dropped into the battle have been unable to stem the tide of Communists sweeping the area. The far-flung units and their would-be rescuers are now hard-pressed and in an untenable situation. They have been instructed to fall back to (relatively) more secure territory. Your unit has been moved up along their line of retreat and is instructed to act as a rear guard as they pass through your lines.

#### Airborne Attack

An enemy concentration has been found and an attack is planned. The unit should expect heavy fighting once they hit the ground as the enemy tries to wipe them out before they can regroup after the drop. Roll twice for the numbers of enemy present on the Opposition table.

### Table 2FR: Support

**Modifiers:** +1 if leader is an O2 or greater, -2 if Colonial Troops only, -3 if Airborne Attack mission

d10	Result
1-5	No Support Available
6-8	Aircraft: roll on air support table (p. 16) to determine what's on call.
9+	Guns: roll on artillery support table (p. 16) to determine what's available.



## Table 3FR: Attachments

**Modifiers:** -2 if Route patrol; if Airborne Attack mission 5 or 6 becomes 1 or 2

d8	Result
1	None
2	Colonial Troop Squad
3	Local Irregulars
4	Armee Nationale Vietnamienne squad
5	Armor
6	APCs
7	Forward Air Controller
8	Military Intelligence Officer

### None

No attachments are added to the heroes' unit.

### Colonial Troop Squad

A unit of 10 African Colonial troops has been attached to the unit for support. They are armed with either Lee-Enfields (1-3), MAS-36s (4-5), or Berthier M1907/15s (6-8). Each also carries a hand grenade. The squad may (30% chance) have a Bren machinegun.

### Local Irregulars

A unit of 2d12 Montagnards has been assigned to accompany the characters' unit on this mission. They are armed with a variety of weapons, mostly obsolete firearms, although occasionally (30% chance) the unit is armed with crossbows and hand weapons. They are very familiar with the local terrain.

### Armee Nationale Vietnamienne squad

A squad of 10+2d12 local conscripts has been assigned to the unit. They are equipped with Lebel 1886M93 rifles, one hand grenade per two soldiers, and one MAT-49 for their European NCO.

### Armor

An AFV has been assigned to the unit, terrain permitting. It is either an armored car (1-4), M-8 (5-7), M-4 (8), M-5 (9-11), or M24 (12).

### APCs

The characters' unit has had several armored personnel carriers attached to it for the mission (if terrain allows). Roll a d6 to determine type: M3 Halftrack (1-3), Gun Truck (4), Crab (5), LVT-5 (6).

### Forward Air Controller

This airman has been assigned to provide close air support for the characters. He carries a MAT-49 and a radio tuned to the Air Force frequencies, as well as a quantity of smoke grenades. His statistics are as follows:

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6

**Edges:** Spotter

### Military Intelligence Officer

A MI officer has been assigned to accompany the patrol. He keeps his reasons to himself, but many French intel agents worked with organized crime on the side, or were smugglers themselves. He may be working to meet new contacts and using the characters as bodyguards, or may double-cross them to the VM to provide weapons and equipment to the enemy. He may actually be a MI agent doing his duty.

Whatever the case, he is very interested in any strange things encountered during the course of the adventure, but is emphatic the characters not reveal anything they see. The officer is deadly intolerant of those who cannot be trusted with secrets.

## Table 4FR: Opposition

**Modifiers:** Tonkin +1, any Relief mission +2, Airborne Attack +2

d10	Result
1	VM Indoctrination team
2	VM Tax collector
3	VM archeological expedition
4-6	VM Popular Forces
7-9	VM Regional militia
10-11	VM Regulars
12	VM Regulars Platoon
13+	Weird opposition

### VM Indoctrination Team

The VC are operating a political unit in the area. It consists of 1d4 instructors/recruiters, and 1d6 bodyguards. These individuals all use VM Regulars statistics and blend in well with their surroundings. They will be hard for the players to distinguish from local villagers. Locals in the same village as the political unit are hostile to French units.

### VM Tax Collector

A VM tax collector has been visiting the villages in the area, raising funds for the Viet Minh. If the players bring him in successfully, each character is rewarded with 1 additional experience point. 2d6 Regional Militia bodyguards accompany the tax collector as protection.

## VM Archeological Expedition

A VM or Chinese expedition of 2d6 scientists is being escorted through the area by 2d8 VM regular guards and 2d10 porters. Use the VM Regular soldier stats on page 123 for the scientists. They are searching for ancient ruins, or may have already found them. In either case, they carry documents, maps, and artifacts that would be of great interest to the BPMNE. If you are not yet ready to explore the weirder aspect of the war, roll again.

## VM Popular Forces

2d6+6 VM Popular Forces are moving through the unit's AO. They are relatively weak opponents, but know the area well and spent the night mining the roads and trails used by the French. In addition to any other complications, the VM lead the unit into a trapped area (treat as an additional roll of booby traps on Table 5FR: Complications).

## VM Regional Militia

A VM Regional Militia unit of strength equal to the players' unit +d12 is in the area, preparing to attack local French outposts. There is a 50% chance they are aware of the unit and have set an ambush. The main force unit is well equipped with rifles, machine guns, and grenades.

## VM Regulars

2d8 VM regulars are passing through. They may be scouts for a larger unit or the survivors of a larger force attacked by other French units. Roll again on this sub-table for additional forces the unit encounters. If the roll is a VM Regulars Platoon unit, these are scouts for the larger unit. If it is a VM Popular Force or Regional militia these Main Force troopers are the remnants of a larger force and the VM are a separate unit.

## VM Regulars Platoon

A platoon of 30 well-armed Main Force regulars is moving through the area. The platoon leader has maps, radio codes and other material of great interest to the high command and capturing this intact provides each hero with an additional experience point. Note that the unit does not have to capture the platoon leader alive, they just need to recover the intelligence.

## Weird

The unit has encountered something Man Was Not Meant To Know. Choose one of the weird creatures featured in the Bestiary (pages 124 to 131). Adventure seeds are included there to give you some ideas how to work them into missions. If you are not ready to explore the weirder aspect of the war, roll again on this table.

## Table 5FR: Complications

d12	Result
1	Downed aircraft
2	BPMNE Officer Attached
3	Bad Weather
4-5	None
6	Weirdness
7-8	Booby Traps
9-11	Sniper
12	Turncoats

### Downed aircraft needs rescue

During the course of the mission, an aircraft is forced down near the characters and they are called upon to check out the crash site. The crew may be alive (50%) and nearby, or they may have been taken by a VM patrol, in which case the unit will be ordered to hunt them down and rescue the pilots.

### BPMNE Officer Attached

An officer from higher headquarters has been assigned to the unit for any number of reasons. This man is actually a member of the French government's paranormal investigation agency, the BPMNE, and has joined the unit to subtly steer them in the direction of some supernatural site that he intends to investigate. Automatically roll on Table 8 below. His statistics are as follows:

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Knowledge (Arcane) d8

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Charisma:** 0,

**Toughness:** 6, **Sanity:** -1

**Edges:** Acclimated, Level-headed

**Gear:** MAT-49 w/200 rounds, web gear, rucksack

### Bad Weather

The infamous *crachin* (spittle) has raised its ugly head and blanketed the area with a moist, clingy fog and rain. Airstrikes are impossible, and vision is limited to 12". These conditions can last for days, and lift when deemed appropriate by the War Master.

### Weirdness

Roll on Table 8 below.

### Booby Traps

The VM have sprinkled this area with booby traps designed to kill or wound unwary soldiers. Roll a d6 for each trap the unit manages to detect or set off. On a 1-4 it was the last device

in the area, on a 5-6 the AO contains further traps. Type of booby traps present can be determined by making a roll on the Booby Trap table (p. 64).

### Sniper

A single VM sniper with a Lee-Enfield Rifle is positioned to take a shot at the unit. Depending on the line of sight provided by the terrain, he or she opens fire at the furthest range, and fires 2-3 shots before attempting to escape. Use the statistics for a Main Force Viet Minh soldier from Chapter Six, but increase his Shooting a step and add the Marksman Edge.

### Turncoats

Any ANV troops or local irregulars attached to the unit or in the area are actually defecting to the VM. At the first chance they either attack the characters or desert them. If no such troops are attached, any ANV they encounter are defecting. They may attack the characters' unit outright, or attempt to bluff their way past. Astute characters (Notice -2) may realize they have no European officers with them.

## Table 6-8

These tables are used for both French and US campaigns, and can be found on pages 78-82.

## Mission Generator: US and Allies

Apply the following modifiers to rolls on all tables and sub-tables.

### US Mission Modifiers:

Situation	Modifier
<b>Unit Modifiers</b>	
Unit mostly Novice grunts	-1
Unit mostly Elite	+2
Phoenix Program Unit	+2
<b>CTZ Modifiers</b>	
I Corps	+1
II Corps	0
III Corps	-1
IV Corps	-2

**Example:** A WM creating missions for a Phoenix Unit (+2 for Elite, +2 for Phoenix) up near the DMZ (-1 for I Corps) receives a total +3 modifier to rolls on the Mission Generator.

## Table 1US: Mission

d8	Result
1	Civic Action
2	Relief
3	Assault
4-5	Patrol
6-7	Recon
8	Ambush
9	Savage Tale

### Civic Action

The unit is part of the broader pacification effort and enter local settlements in an attempt to win over the populace. They are however not always accepting. Determine the attitude of the villagers as usual (see the *Savage Worlds* Main Rulebook).

### Civic Action Mission Sub-table

d8	Result
1-2	Strategic Hamlet
3-4	Medical Mission
5-6	Hearts And Minds
7-8	RF/PF Recruitment

**Strategic Hamlet** missions automatically have an added Hostile Populace complication as well as a standard result on Table 5US: Complications (p. 77).

**Medical** missions involve the unit accompanying a team of doctors (and nurses) to deliver MEDCAP aid.

**Hearts and minds** missions involve the unit in an attempt to leave the population in a better frame of mind than when they arrived. Tact and diplomacy are required for this mission.

**Recruitment drives** for the regional forces involve attempting to convince the young men in the villages to become fighters for the South.

### Relief

US forces are in trouble and the unit has been assigned the task of assisting. Roll on the sub-table to determine what outfit is in need of help. The heroes may be part of a larger relief force (particularly in the case of a basecamp relief mission) or they may be dispatched alone but, either way they are well supported, re-roll any "no-support" results on Table 2US: Support.

Whatever the mission, expect contact when the unit arrives.

### Relief Mission Sub-table

d8	Result
1-2	Ambush
3-4	Basecamp
5-6	Patrol
7-8	Rescue

### Assault

In an effort to bring the VC/NVA to a decisive battle, a sizeable US force has been assembled to launch an assault. Roll on the mission sub-table below to determine the type of assault.

### Assault Mission Sub-table

d8	Result
1-2	Riverine
3-4	Armored
5-6	Airmobile
7-8	Infantry

**Riverine** assaults always have Brown Water Navy attachments (see Table 3US: Attachments).

**Armored** assaults always have armor attached.

**Airmobile** assaults always have helicopters.

**Infantry** assaults add a +4 modifier to its attachments roll.

### Patrol

The bulk of missions are routine patrols searching for and engaging the enemy in an attempt to bring superior US firepower to bear. Roll on the sub-table to determine the type of patrol the unit is conducting.

### Patrol Mission Sub-table

d8	Result
1-2	Riverine Patrol
3-4	Search and Destroy
5-6	Presence Patrol
7-8	Border Patrol

**Riverine Patrol** automatically results in Brown Water Navy support instead of rolling on the Support sub-table.

**Search and Destroy** missions are very aggressive, attempting to find, fix in place, and destroy the enemy and their base camps.

**Presence patrols** are routine operations, and typically involve going from village to village, talking to the headmen, and showing them how great it is to have Uncle Sam helping to defend their country. An ARVN translator will automatically be assigned to the characters'

patrol. Do not roll on the Support table for these missions, there is no dedicated support available.

**Border Patrols** are intended to harass the influx of enemy men and supplies into the South.

### Recon

Actively searching for the enemy, the unit has been dispatched to find and observe, rather than attack.

### Recon Mission Sub-table

d8	Result
1-2	LP/OP
3-4	LRRP
5-6	Infiltration
7-8	Kidnap

**Listening Posts** are small affairs, maybe as few as four man missions, establishing a post far outside the main perimeter watching for the enemy.

**Long Range Recon** missions are usually six-man affairs, involving several days in the jungles watching for signs of troop movements.

**Infiltration** missions involve crossing the borders into Cambodia or Laos.

**Kidnap** missions typically involve forces infiltrating into an area to extract a particular person wanted by the US/ARVN command. The War Master should specify a target (e.g. a local tax collector or political cadre) when generating this mission in the Op Order.

### Ambush

The unit must move to a likely enemy avenue of approach, pick a spot, and set up an ambush. The unit is usually on their own and has no attachments or dedicated support available. Rolls on either of these tables are at -2.

### Savage Tale

The unit encounters one of the Savage Tales presented on pages 83 to 121, or one of the War Master's own creation. Select one of the Savage Tales and check off the entries on the list as the players complete them. Some Savage Tales require that the players have completed some previous task or have reached a minimum character Rank. Do not choose these until the conditions are met. Check out occasional additional scenarios to at our website ([www.greatwhitegames.com](http://www.greatwhitegames.com)) as well.

## Support

Once you know what mission the characters are being assigned, roll on the Support Table to find out what assets the unit can call upon. Remember that they can still attempt to raise general support using comms rolls as normal during the mission, even if you roll a No Support result on this table. That just means there is no dedicated support. During the Op Order briefing before the mission, the players should be informed of the dedicated support available to them.

### Table 2US: Support

**Modifier:** Presence patrol: no roll, relief +2, infiltration -2, ambush -2

d8	Result
1-4	No Support Available
5-6	Guns: roll on artillery support table (p. 16) to determine what's available.
7+	Aircraft: roll on air support table (p. 16) to determine what's on call.

## Attachments

On some missions, the unit has some additional element from another outfit attached. Write up an ally sheet for the attachment and give it to the players to use.

### Table 3US: Attachments

**Modifiers:** Elite or SF +2, Civil Affairs +2, Infantry Assault +4, recon +2, ambush +2

d10	Result
1	Brown Water Navy
2	Armor
3	Dog Team
4	None
5	Interpreter
6	ARVN
7	None
8	Intel
9	Kit Carson
10+	Motagnards

#### Brown Water Navy

The unit has been assigned sufficient PBRs to ferry it up the river on its mission.

If the unit is larger than platoon strength, additional monitor craft are also attached. During the mission, as an added complication

the unit must stop and search any junks or other vessels they encounter while on the waterways.

#### Armor

Terrain permitting, the patrol is carried in an APC. For Army units this is either an M113 (1-3) or an M113ACAV (4-6). For marines, it is a LVTP5.

If the unit is larger than platoon strength, an armored vehicle has also been assigned to accompany the characters. For US Army troops roll a d6 to determine the type of vehicle: M48 (1-2), M42 (3), M132 (4-5) or M163 (6). For US Marines it will be either an M48 (1-3), M50 Ontos (4-5), or M163 (6).

#### Dog Team

A scout dog handler and dog have been attached to the team for the duration of the adventure. Use typical Rifleman stats with an additional d8 in Knowledge (Animal Handling). He is armed with an M-16 and .45 pistol. Use the Dog stats from the *Savage Worlds* Bestiary. Fill out an ally sheet for the dog and handler and give it to your players to control for this mission.

#### None

No additional attachments are made to the characters' unit.

#### Interpreter

The unit has been assigned a Vietnamese interpreter to assist them. The interpreter is an ARVN Rifleman who speaks competent French, can communicate with any ethnic group in-country and speaks fluent American (he learned it from John Wayne movies). Fill out an ally sheet and give it to your players to use.

#### ARVN

A unit of ARVN soldiers is attached to the players' unit. The ARVN unit is the same strength as the players' unit. Fill out an ally sheet for it and give it to the players to use.

#### Intel

A MI officer has been assigned to accompany the patrol. He keeps his reasons to himself, but may be a MACV-SIG agent, CIA officer, Phoenix liaison, or actually an intelligence spook. He is very interested in any strange things encountered during the course of the adventure, but is emphatic that the characters not reveal anything they see. Do not fill out an ally sheet for the intel officer, you control this mysterious figure.

## Kit Carson

The unit has been assigned a Kit Carson scout to join them for this mission. The former VC has the same stats as a Main Force guerilla, is armed with an M1 or M16, and can provide detailed information about enemy tactics. Roll 1d6 to see if he is fanatically loyal to his new paymasters (1-4), behaving suspiciously (5), or a turncoat (6). Fill out an ally sheet for the Kit Carson and give it to your players to control (until he switches sides at least).

## Montagnards

2d12 montagnards are assigned to join the unit on this mission. While not equipped to US standards, these troops are tough fighters, used to the terrain. Using the stats on page 122, fill out an ally sheet for the montagnards and give it to your players to use.

## Opposition

Whenever the War Master needs to generate a random firefight, you can use this table (remember to use the CTZ modifiers).

### Table 4US: Opposition

**Modifiers:** I Corps +1, II Corps +0, III Corps -1, IV Corps -2, Phoenix Program +2, Relief +2, recon -2, border patrol +2, search and destroy +1

d10	Result
1	VC political cadre
2-3	VC Regional militia
4	VC Tax collector
5-6	VC main force
7-8	NVA
9-10	NVA platoon
11	Vietnamese sorcerer
12	Weird opposition

## VC Political Cadre

The VC are operating a political unit in the area. It consists of two entertainers, 1d4 instructors/recruiters, and 1d6 bodyguards. They all use VC main force stats and blend in well with the locals. They will be hard for the players to distinguish from villagers. Locals in the same village as the political unit will be hostile to US units.

## VC Regional Militia

2d6+6 VC militia are moving through the unit's AO. They are relatively weak opponents, but know the area intimately and have spent the day setting mines or booby traps. In addition to any other complications, the VC lead the players into a trapped area (treat as an additional booby traps roll on Table 5US: Complications).

## VC Tax Collector

A VC tax collector has been visiting the villages in the area, raising funds for the NLF. If the players bring him in successfully, each character is rewarded with 1 additional experience point. 1d4 main force bodyguards accompany the tax collector.

## VC Main Force

A main force VC unit of equal strength to the players' unit is patrolling the area. There is a 50% chance they are aware of the unit and have set an ambush. The VC unit is well equipped with assault rifles, machine guns, grenades and RPGs.

## NVA

1d6 NVA regulars are passing through. They may be scouts for a larger unit or the survivors of a larger force attacked by other American units. Roll again on this sub-table for additional forces the unit encounters. If the roll is an NVA unit, these two units are linked. If it is a VC force these are survivors and the VC are a separate unit.

## NVA Platoon

A platoon of well-armed NVA regulars is moving through the area. They have a field radio amongst their equipment and each round of contact there is a 50% chance they summon an additional platoon, which arrives in 1d4 rounds. The leader has maps, radio codes and other material of great interest to the top brass and capturing this intact provides each hero with an additional experience point. Note that the unit does not have to capture the platoon leader alive, they just need to search him for intel.

## Vietnamese Sorcerer

A VC or NVA sorcerer is being escorted through the area by 1d8 VC or NVA guards. Use the NVA soldier stats on page 124 for the sorcerer but he or she has 1d4 powers and 2d8 Power Points to use this mission. There is a 50% chance that he is accompanying another force of Communists. If so, roll again on this table. If you are not yet ready to explore the weirder aspect of the Weird Wars, roll again on this table.

## Weird

The unit has encountered something Man Was Not Meant To Know. Choose one of the weird creatures featured in the Bestiary (pages 124 to 131). Adventure seeds are included there to give you some ideas how to work them into missions. If you are not ready to explore the weirder aspect of the Weird Wars, roll again on this table and ignore this result.

## Table 5US: Complications

**Modifiers:** Recon +2, Search and Destroy: roll twice

d20	Result
1	Hostile populace
2-3	Lost!
4	Tunnel System
5	Bunker Complex
6-7	Sniper
8-10	Minefield/Booby Traps
11-13	None
14-15	Comms down
16	Brass
17-18	Staging Area
19	Rescue Mission
20	Weirdness (Table 8)

### Hostile populace

The local people in a village the unit pass through are angry about the US presence. Using the NPC Reaction rules from *Savage Worlds*, the villagers are treated as if they rolled the worst possible result on Reaction Table.

### Lost!

At some point on their mission, the unit loses its way. How badly lost they are depends on the Smarts of the leadership. The unit leader makes a Smarts roll. On a failure, the unit is badly lost and can find no landmarks for 8 hours. A success indicates that 4 hours wandering is required. A raise cuts the time the unit is lost to 2 hours, but in the heat and rough terrain of Vietnam even that can be exhausting. Any 1s on the roll indicate the unit has wandered into an enemy stronghold (see Staging Area below).

### Tunnel System

The unit stumbles on a tunnel complex, although the first they may know of its presence is a blast of gunfire. A search reveals the tunnels, which can extend for miles under the surface, and may contain substantial enemy forces. Experienced tunnel rats are best for this type of fighting, and can be requested using a comms roll. If unavailable, regular grunts will have to make do. Check out the tunnel tables in the *Savage Tale* on page 105 for information on what the unit may find underground. This is a mundane mission, however, so ignore any weird results on these tables.

### News Crew

A news crew of journalists is in the area and hooks up with the squad to get a glimpse of "the action." The crew consists of d6 people, and is either TV (usually with groups of three or more) or newspaper journalists.

If the mission is generally successful, award an additional experience point to the characters. If a journalist is killed, however, subtract 2 experience points. Any weird encounters reported by the journalists automatically bring the unit to the attention of a very angry MACV-SIG officer, keen to cover up the affair—by any means necessary.

### Bunker Complex

The patrol has stumbled on a series of mutually supporting bunkers. They are well camouflaged, and require a Notice roll at -3 to spot before they open fire on the group from 2d12" away.

There are 1d6 bunkers in this complex, each equipped with a machinegun and 1d6 troops (NVA or Main Force VC). The bunkers provide overhead cover and their firing slits provide improved heavy cover (-6). The bunkers have escape tunnels to the rear, and the enemy will bug out if more than half of the bunkers are destroyed.

### Sniper

A single VC sniper with a Lee-Enfield or M1 Rifle is positioned to take a shot at the unit. Depending on the line of sight provided by the terrain, he or she opens fire at the furthest range, and fires 2-3 shots before attempting to escape. Use the statistics for a Main Force Viet Cong soldier (see page 123).

### Minefield/Booby Traps

Somewhere along the unit's line of march it stumbles into a minefield or encounters booby traps. Whether the obstacles are left over from an American unit that had been in the area or have been laid by the North Vietnamese and their VC allies, the mines and booby traps are equal-opportunity maimers. Roll 1d6 to determine if the unit has encountered mines (1-2) or booby traps (3-6), then roll on the appropriate table (page 64) to determine the type of device.

Minefield density can be determined by rolling a d8: 1-4 light; 5-6 medium, 7 heavy; 8 very heavy. The mines extend for an area of 2d12" along the patrol's path.

If booby traps are discovered, for each trap the unit manages to detect, roll 1d6 to determine if that was the last device (1-4) or if the area contains further traps (5-6).

### Comms Down

Damn lowest bidders. The unit's batteries for their radios are on their way out, or the radio itself is faulty. For whatever reason, the radios go dead on the unit at an inopportune time. All attempts to repair radios in the field are at a -2 penalty.

## Brass

A senior officer has decided to check out the action first hand, and has chosen the unit as his escort. He tags along with the unit, and can be a liability or asset. Requests for support are automatically approved if he feels the situation warrants it. He may also be a CIA or MACV-SIG agent, using the characters to advance a hidden agenda. If he is killed or captured the heroes each gain two less experience points.

## Staging Area

The patrol has stumbled on a major assembly area for the NVA preparing to attack nearby US or ARVN basecamps. The staging area consists of well-camouflaged supply dumps of ammunition, rice, weapons, and bivouac areas for soldiers. There are d10x10 NVA soldiers in the general area and several significant contacts may be made before finding the staging area (or the unit may accidentally blunder in undetected). Stockpiles have d12 guards at each section, but due to the boredom of their duty, any Notice rolls against the characters are at -2.

## Rescue Mission

An aircraft has been brought down near the characters' unit and they are called upon to check out the crash site. The crew may be alive (50% chance) and nearby, or they may have been taken by a VC patrol, in which case the unit is ordered to hunt them down and rescue the pilots.

## Weirdness

The unit has had the misfortune to run into the weirdness that stalks the jungles of Southeast Asia. Roll on Table 8 to find out what mind-numbing horror they encounter.

## Distractions

After you have finished your creating your mission, you have enough information to get straight into the briefing. Sometimes however you might want to throw in something a little different to provide a twist on the usual military stories.

These distractions are a selection of side stories that have little major effect on an individual mission, but can have an impact in the longer term. For the most part, the unit can ignore these stories with no real penalty in game terms. Roll 1d20 or choose one of these distractions whenever you want an extra plot element to introduce your players to some of the things US servicemen must deal with on their tours in-country.

## Table 6: Distractions

1) The unit discovers a pair of orphans, two young boys in need of food and shelter. If the players arrange jobs in the camp for them, they have made friends for life who can get minor items for them. If they ignore the plight of the children they become VC recruits.

2) One of the characters finds a puppy to adopt. As long as he looks after it he gains +1 Sanity. If it ever dies, he gets -1 Sanity.

3) The MPs or a senior NCO sweeps through the camp searching for contraband. If the characters have nothing to hide, there is no problem.

4) Another unit develops an intense rivalry with the character's unit. Each is always trying to out-do the other.

5) One of the characters' friends develops a serious drug problem. If the heroes don't get him some help, he is a danger in a combat situation.

6) One of the characters meets a girl in a local village or town. Whether a relationship develops or whether she is pursuing him, the girl's family strongly disapproves.

7) The unit witnesses an unlawful killing by another unit. This unit has an impressive record of high body counts but perhaps the characters now understand why.

8) One of the characters discovers a bizarre object from Vietnam's history. The artifact may be nothing but a trinket, or it may have some arcane significance.

9) One of the heroes receives a Dear John letter from back home. For the next mission his Spirit rolls are reduced by -1.

10) The unit's superior makes it plain that a higher body count is needed to impress the brass. Whether this means increased patrols or more creative counting, the unit is under pressure to produce results.

11) One of the characters' buddies wants a medal and keeps on talking about it. He starts to take unnecessary risks for the decoration.

12) There is a nasty strain of VD at the local town. Characters who visit the mama san have a 50% chance of picking up an infection that needs treating! If the unit has a medic, they have to try and explain the problem to the locals.

13) A freak storm brings high winds and torrential rain to batter the unit. Notice rolls are made at -2 for the duration of the storm. Radios suffer from the rain, flights cannot get through the weather, and the ground turns to mud.

14) Temperatures soar to 110° with the attendant miseries and Fatigue modifiers.

15) Somehow the characters make an enemy in their unit. The enemy slightly outranks the



characters and decides to make their tour a misery. This may have a detrimental effect on the unit's morale.

**16)** One or more of the characters makes a very close friend in their unit or a closely related unit. If this friend is killed, the character(s) suffer -1 Sanity.

**17)** The unit receives letters from home, boosting recipients' Spirit rolls by +1 for the next week. Each character has a letter on a d6 roll of 1-3.

**18)** Christmas comes early! The Playboy girls visit the basecamp on a morale-boosting trip. Every unit is praying they aren't on other duties as the girls come through.

**19)** A resupply aircraft arrives, but instead of whatever the unit requested, the plane or chopper is stocked with crates of beer and ice-cream. While this is a welcome treat, water, ammo and mortar rounds may have been more useful!

**20)** The unit is having one of those days in the 'Nam when everything seems to be going wrong. Roll for two Distractions.

## Table 7: Random Encounters

The mission generator and the Distractions Table can be used to create complete scenarios with all the information needed for the WM to run it. These tables are intended to provide the War Master with a good idea of the kinds of everyday occurrences and trouble the grunts had to endure on their routine missions. Feel free to roll or choose an entry on these tables whenever you think the soldiers need something to distract them from the drudgery of patrolling or the debauchery of R&R. These encounters can be used for both the French and American periods.

## Country Encounters

Use these encounters to spark ideas when the unit is out on patrol in any terrain. Roll once every few hours or so spent in any one terrain type. Units moving at full speed cannot move quietly. Add +1 to the roll.

### Country Encounters Table

d8	Result
1	Creatures
2	Abandoned camp
3	Blood trail
4	Discarded equipment
5	Bunker
6	Ambush
7	River
8	Contact

**Creatures:** The unit encounters some of the indigenous beasts of Vietnam. Whether they have found snakes, leeches, ants, or mosquitoes depends on the terrain type and the time of year, but the creature(s) may attack if provoked.

**Abandoned camp:** The soldiers have come across evidence of a Viet Cong presence. Maybe a still smoldering camp-fire or abandoned weapons pile indicates the VC have only just left.

**Blood trail:** Coming across a blood trail often means a body to add to the unit's body count. If the soldier is only lightly wounded however, he may still be dangerous. Of course, it might not be human blood..

**Discarded equipment:** Abandoned weaponry can give clues about the type of forces in the area. Ancient rifles indicate peasants operating as VC militia, while well maintained AKs and heavy weapons show that main force VC or regulars from the North are in the area. These tempting trophies may be booby trapped, however. The Special Forces often booby trap VC weapons and leave them lying on trails.

**Bunker:** A Notice (-2) roll by the pointman detects concealed positions ahead. Whether or not the bunkers are still occupied, the unit should deal with them to make sure the enemy can't use them in the future. If there are troops in the bunkers, the unit could be in for a stand up fight; getting troops out of fortified positions is not easy.

**Ambush:** The reason units are trained to stay off trails and roads and break their own path through close terrain is to reduce the chances of being ambushed. A Notice (-4) by the pointman may tip off the heroes, perhaps due to brown, dying vegetation or something else slightly out of place. Otherwise, the unit must fight its way out. Training dictates that the ambushed unit must get out of the killing zone as quickly as possible by assaulting the ambushers directly.

**River:** A fast flowing river cuts across the unit's path. Whether a well known terrain feature (and therefore a possible ambush or booby trap site) or a surprise, perhaps caused by flash floods and therefore not marked on any maps, fording the river leaves the unit vulnerable.

**Contact:** The unit makes contact with the enemy. An opposed Notice roll against each unit's Stealth decides which units are aware of the other's presence. In jungle terrain, these encounters take place at less than 10" range. Other terrain types may lead to less surprising contacts, but a desperate firefight is guaranteed. The NVA or VC attempt to break contact and disperse unless they greatly outnumber their opponents.

## Village Encounters

Whenever a unit enters a village, there is the opportunity for trouble or an interesting encounter. When the unit first arrives, make a roll on the NPC Reaction Table in *Savage Worlds* and apply any modifiers you see fit depending on the unit's previous behavior in this AO or in this village.

The result is the attitude of the villagers in the settlement and guides their reaction to the encounters presented below. Units without an interpreter or soldier who speaks Vietnamese have a hard time making themselves understood and suffer a -1 penalty on the roll.

If the majority of visits to villages result in negative sentiments, you could have an increase in enemy activity and booby trapping to demonstrate the effects of their poor relations with the populace. Likewise, if the unit develops good relations with the local populace, there may be a slight reduction in VC activity, or the soldiers may get better information about movements of enemy troops.

### Village Encounters Table

d8	Result
1	Angry Headman
2	Sick villagers
3	Something's wrong
4	Tunnels
5	Bumper harvest
6	Weapons store
7	VC presence
8	Celebration

**Angry Headman:** The headman is responsible for speaking for the villagers, who are outraged about something. Perhaps the soldiers have killed livestock or damaged crops. Perhaps the villagers feel affronted by the way the soldiers treat the young girls in the village. Whatever it is, all the villagers, and the headman in particular, are mad about it, shouting and protesting loudly.

**Sick Villagers:** An illness has affected several villagers that is beyond their ability to treat. US medicine can heal the sick on a Healing (-2), earning the gratitude of the villagers. Maybe some bureaucratic problem prevents effective treatment however, or perhaps the VC aren't happy about the village accepting US help and decide to teach the villagers a lesson.

**Something's Wrong:** Maybe there are no young men in the village, maybe there aren't any men at all. Or perhaps the children are being kept out of sight. Whatever it is, a successful Common Knowledge roll tips the soldier off that something is about to happen.

**Tunnels:** A successful Notice roll (-2) detects a tunnel entrance inside one of the hooches. Possibly, the place is just a bomb shelter or maybe there is someone down there, hiding from the Americans. Whichever is true, the unit should search the village very thoroughly.

**Bumper Harvest:** The soldiers find several more baskets of rice than could be expected. The villagers protest that the rice is their harvest and is for their own use. A Common Knowledge roll allows an estimate that there is enough to feed a platoon or company for a week. The find is usually destroyed in place.

**Weapon Store:** The unit finds a cache of AKs, grenades and other weapons. The villagers deny all knowledge of the weapons. The soldiers should destroy the weapons and take suspected VC sympathizers in for questioning.

**VC Presence:** Several young men in the village look familiar, have military style haircuts or otherwise rouse the soldiers' suspicions. The whole village may be a hive of VC activity.

**Celebration:** The simple people of the village invite the soldiers to take part in their village festival. Perhaps it is a peasant custom, or perhaps they hold the event in the soldiers' honor. Whatever the reason, there is cigarettes, revolting Tiger beer and rice with a very fishy sauce. Not to join in is beaucoup rude.

## City Encounters

It may once have been the 'Pearl of the Orient' but Vietnam's cities suffer from overcrowding and urban squalor. The policy of relocating large sections of the rural populace through the Strategic Hamlet Program adds to the problem. The swarming big cities of Vietnam offer a wealth of possible encounters.

The biggest, Saigon could have been called scooter city—everyone rides them, adding exhaust fumes to the heady mix of urban problems. The girls ride side-saddle in slacks and split overskirts and the buzzing of the tiny engines makes the place sound like a motorized beehive.

### City Encounters Table

d8	Result
1	Street walkers
2	Shoe-shine boy
3	Familiar face
4	Stolen possessions
5	Lost in the back streets
6	MPs
7	Brawl
8	Attack

**Street Walkers:** Charging anything from \$5 to \$50 (or higher in Saigon) the hookers are an ever present part of life in Vietnam. They are brazen in their approaches and there is never a shortage of clients. Perhaps the girl is a VC spy or an assassin, or perhaps a member of the unit will fall for her despite her line of work.

**Shoe-Shine Boy:** An enterprising young child hassles the soldiers for a shine. He does a good job for a reasonable price, only 50P, and is a friendly kid. Perhaps he knows all the VC in the area and has a knack of vanishing just before an attack or perhaps he is a VC and the shoe shine box is wired.

**Familiar Face:** The soldiers see a face in the crowded streets they have seen before. Perhaps it is a long-lost friend who has returned for a second tour, or an informer with information to impart. Maybe it's an old enemy or a Chinese adviser the soldiers have been hunting for months.

**Stolen Possessions:** Crime goes hand in hand with rampant poverty and Vietnam has both in spades. A passing kid or girl steals something from the soldiers and sprints for a scooter. The soldiers can give chase or kiss their possessions goodbye.

**Lost in the Back Streets:** The unit strays into the run-down slums by mistake. The squalid back streets may be a hostile and dangerous setting, or maybe they find hospitality and generosity from the poor Vietnamese refugees that live in these cramped quarters

**MPs:** US Military Police or Vietnamese "white mice" (so called because of their distinctive white helmets) arrive to police some minor infraction or to sweep for contraband. If the unit has anything to hide, now might be a good time to leave!

**Brawl:** A city full of intoxicated soldiers is bound to erupt into violence sooner or later. Whether it is just "blowing off steam", or a more serious fight—the MPs will come running if the fight gets out of hand. A soldier's buddies are expected to come to his aid in such a situation.

**Attack:** The VC decide to launch an attack on some area of importance to the military or to hit a bar or brothel in a terrorist-style attack. Whether an RPG attack or a human bomb, the destruction is sudden and shocking in the heart of the city.

## Weirdness

These encounters generally don't have the full impact of a Savage Tale, but do expose the characters to the warping effect that the Weird Wars produce on this tortured land. Roll on this table when you want to throw something a little different at your grunts to keep them on their toes.

### Table 8: Weirdness

dB	Result
1	Altered Animals
2	Degenerate Aboriginal Tribe
3	Undisturbed Ancient Temple Site
4	Living Jungle
5	Missing Patrol Remains
6	Terror in the Treetops
7	Graveyard
8	Abandoned Plantation
9	Magnetic Disturbance
10	Strange Weather
11	Temporal Distortion
12	Savage Tale

#### Altered Animals

The weirdness has warped the wildlife. The patrol is attacked by a mundane animal from the *Savage Worlds Bestiary* (pp. 129-135) altered in some strange way. Maybe a tiger has tentacles growing from its shoulders, or monkeys are covered in camouflaging moss. The extent of mutation is up to the War Master's evil imagination.

#### Degenerate Aboriginal Tribe

The patrol stumbles across what appears to be primitive Montagnards. They have no modern conveniences, and seem to live a subsistence lifestyle, but are very friendly (especially the women). Their headman speaks a little French and English, and invites the characters to stay the night. The tribe is actually a group of headhunters and cannibals, and want the characters for their great warrior spirits, which are gained through ingestion of their flesh! The tribe consists of 30 adults, armed with swords, knives, and crossbows. Strangely, no children are present.

#### Undisturbed Ancient Temple Site

The unit has discovered part of Vietnam's heritage. The ruins may be of a decaying Buddhist temple or a monument to the darker Champa kingdom, complete with disturbing carvings. Who knows what dark artifacts lie within?

#### Living Jungle

The jungle comes alive around the characters and their allies. It may be subtle, with vines snaking forward during a rest break to steal ammo and canteens, or it may whip into a lashing frenzy of vines and thorns, attacking as a swarm.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8, **Charisma:** 0

**Special Abilities:**

- **Thorns and lashes:** Swarms inflict hundreds of cuts and gashes every round to those caught within. They cause 2d6 damage to everyone in a Medium Burst Template.
- **Swarm:** Because living jungle is composed of hundreds of vines, piercing weapons do no damage, crushing weapons do half damage, and area effect weapons work normally.

### Missing Patrol Remains

The unit comes upon the remains of a lost patrol. Something terrible has happened to them, and it's obvious what they see is not just the ravages of the jungle's inhabitants. Weapons are shattered, gear destroyed, and the bodies are mutilated and desecrated beyond what anyone has seen before. Guts checks are required, at -2.

### Terror in the Treetops

As the patrol moves through a wooded area, a troop of 2d6 monkeys savagely attacks their more-developed cousins! These monkeys attack with thrown rocks, branches, and other arboreal weapons, as well as by swinging down and making hit and run attacks on the soldiers below. These animals almost seem rabid, as gunfire and other loud explosions do not drive them off. They fight until 75 percent of their numbers have been killed, then flee into the treetops.

### Weird Monkeys

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Throwing d10

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Climbing:** Pace 8. These monkeys add +2 to their Climbing rolls due to their prehensile tails and arboreal lifestyles.
- **Claw:** Str +1.
- **Hurl:** The crazed primates hurl fruits, nuts, coconuts, and whatever they can find in the treetops at speeds a major league pitcher would envy. These missiles cause Str+2 damage from the treetops. Range is 5/10/20.
- **Swing and Run:** The monkeys are adept at swinging down, attacking their prey, and swinging away before they can be attacked in return. Unless a hero has a Hold action or an Edge like First Strike, these monkeys can attack and swing back into the treetops as one action without suffering any free attacks.

### Graveyard

The patrol stumbles across the ruins of an old Catholic church and its graveyard. It may be long abandoned, or it might be the residence of a mad monk from the days of Indochina's glory. The graveyard might also contain restless spirits who resent the loss of their colony to the natives.

### Abandoned Plantation

A decaying mansion surrounded by crumbling outbuildings and untended groves of rubber trees looms out of the jungle. It might be long-abandoned, offering the prospect of some shelter for the night, or it might look as if the inhabitants just left, with warm food still on the table. Ghosts or inbred degenerates might lurk in the halls and within the walls of such faded grandeur.

### Magnetic Disturbance

The patrol's point man notices that his compass is spinning out of control. Whatever they have stumbled upon also seems to affect the electromagnetic spectrum, as radios are filled with squeals and garbled messages, basically becoming inoperable. If the commander decides to press on, treat the patrol as being *Lost* (Table 5US: Support). The effect has a radius of 5 kilometers. Any support aircraft used in this area automatically double their deviation rolls when dropping ordinance.

### Strange Weather

Weirdly colored clouds begin to fill the sky, and within 30 minutes a storm of Biblical proportions begins to hammer the countryside. Weird lightning dances among the clouds, and strange sounds of laughter and screams fill the air. The cacophony is like nothing the characters have heard, and requires a Guts check at -2 for each member of the unit. Busting on this check causes a loss of one additional Sanity Point.

### Temporal Distortion

The mission goes normally for the group, but when they report back to base they find they have lost or gained several hours or days. The patrol won't return to base before they left, but it may seem to the command that they shirked their mission without tangible proof. Characters must make a Spirit roll or lose 1 Sanity point trying to figure out the implications of time travel.

### Savage Tale

The characters have stumbled into one of the Savage Tales presented in the next section. If the War Master desires, re-roll this result.

# Savage Tales

Using the Mission Generator you can create pretty much any scenario you might need to play a long-running *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* campaign. The majority of these missions will be mundane military scenarios, patrolling, searching for and engaging the enemy and defending the US bases in-country. Occasionally, using the Mission Generator (or when you decide it's time), the unit will encounter something a little more out of the ordinary, perhaps a strange location or a weird opponent or artifact that they cannot really explain.

If you want to introduce the weird aspects of the Vietnam conflict into your campaign, presented here are a series of short scenarios intended to take your characters through their tours of darkness. Whenever you roll a 'Savage Tale' result on the Mission Generator, take the next Savage Tale from this list. When you have completed the Savage Tale, tick it off so you know which one your players' unit should tackle next.

It would take a special group of men to complete all of these Savage Tales in a single tour, so it is probable that some of the unit will be killed in action and have to be replaced. Those who do survive will almost certainly have to reenlist if they want to complete all of these scenarios.

As they progress through these Savage Tales, the adventures become increasingly more weird and difficult to explain in rational terms. As the soldiers become more experienced in the supernatural aspects they are certain to come to the attention of senior members of MACV-SIG.

As the men constantly prove themselves reliable and dependable, they are given more and more specialized missions. Probably by the time they have completed The Lost Patrol, the soldiers are aware that dark forces lurk in the jungles. Before they can undertake CAT Fight, the unit must have been inducted into Phoenix, or they will not understand what is going on and probably will not survive the encounter.

Obviously, the unit needs to undertake other, more normal missions as well as these tales of mind-bending horror so, in between these Savage Tales, so the War Master should insert any number of other ops created via the Mission Generator (or your own twisted imagination).

Keep an eye out for more stories of horror in the jungles of Southeast Asia online as well!

## Savage Tales Table

- \*Xuan Nhan
- \*Plain of Jars
- Dien Bien Phu
- Friend or Foe?
- The Lost Legionnaires
- Firebase Omaha
- Skull Cave
- \*Tet
- The Lost Patrol
- Hearts and Brains
- The Streets of Saigon City
- \*Phoenix Rises
- The Tunnels of Vinh Ho
- \*The Temple of Aran
- \*The Princess and the Dragon
- \*Son Tay
- \*The Book of Shan
- loup garou
- CAT Fight
- \*Operation BACKDOOR

\*These are the Plot Points that must be played to reach the final climax of *Tour of Darkness*. Each Plot Point should be played in order. Other Savage Tales may be played as desired, but the order listed above is chronological.

## \*Xuan Nhan

**Date:** Early 1953

The unit is assigned to a routine patrol in the coastal lowlands. The villain Vu Linh Pham and an attached band of soldiers are terrorizing a small village when the heroes arrive. The heroes defeat the soldiers, but Pham escapes into the night. Pham leaves behind several items of interest.

**Note:** If this tale is run with U.S. soldiers, run it in early 1967. The scene shifts to the unit's normal Area of Operations, though it is most appropriate in a coastal or lowland region.

### Briefing

*You're going out for a few days. There is increasing activity in this area, so be cautious. Take your unit and circuit through the village of Xuan Nhan. Check in and see if they've seen any VM.*

**Enemy Forces:** Scattered patrols.

**Support:** You can call on the 81mm mortars should you run into heavy resistance.

**Weather:** Cool and cloudy. Rather nice for here.

**Equipment:** Standard patrol gear.

## Mission

The mission proceeds normally through the first day. Roll on the Country Table to determine any encounters, or create a Viet Minh patrol or ambush to provide an early fight. As the night waxes, the unit makes its way to Xuan Nhan.

## Xuan Nhan

Xuan Nhan is a village of some 20 huts supporting perhaps 150 people. It is near a river and in the low country so it is mostly populated by fishermen and farmers.

If the team observes the village before entering, they immediately notice that something is unusual. Otherwise, the team is tipped off only on a Notice roll at -2. Only a few people are moving in what should be an active village. If the heroes don't notice anything or use appropriate caution, they walk right into an ambush.

A unit of Viet Minh soldiers is using the town for a base and grotesque recreation. The unit is roughly equal in strength to the Legionnaires. In addition to the soldiers, the sorcerer Vu Linh Pham is in Xuan Nhan. He is relaxing in the headman's hut and is conducting an experiment on the headman himself. Two of Pham's most trusted soldiers stand guard at the door of the hut, the rest are hiding in huts around the village. Use standard VM profiles for the guards and the troops. Pham's profile is on page 122.

Half of the twenty huts harbor Viet Minh troops, the other half provide refuge for the villagers. A handful of villagers are in the street, but they sprint to cover when the shooting starts. The heroes must be certain of their targets before using explosives and they had better hope there is no deviation if they call in support.

Pham does not want to die needlessly and makes every effort to escape into the jungle immediately, though he uses his powers to make certain he can do this safely. (Pham has a recurring role to play, so do your best to keep him alive.) The VM soldiers concentrate on aiding Pham in his effort to evacuate, and then make a fighting retreat.

## The Headman

Once the Viet Minh are defeated or driven away, the villagers take note of any medical aid characters are providing. They ask whoever appears to be a medic if he could also look at the headman.

The headman's hut stinks of incense. Pham has left disturbing evidence of his dark nature. The headman is in a trancelike state, sitting on a stool in the center of the hut. His eyes are wide open and he has six wooden nails driven into his forearms forming a line from wrist to elbow. The skin around the nails has a distinct green cast.

On a Notice roll, a character sees slow but steady growth of tiny shoots off the tops of the nails.

If all of the nails are removed, a Healing roll (-1 for the headman's effective Wound) stops all bleeding. Otherwise, the headman must roll his Vigor (d6) or die from shock and blood loss. If he survives, he thanks the medic before passing into a fitful, twitching sleep.

## Reading Material

Also in the hut are a small notebook and an ancient book. The notebook is in Vietnamese with some Chinese notes mixed in. Anyone who reads Vietnamese can decipher a few passages. They ramble about rituals and magic and power. One passage in particular stands out:

*In the jungle is the secret of life. I know I can find it. The ancient Book of T'ang Li tells of the forces. I can decipher it. I must have this knowledge.*

And later, the following is scrawled:

*I believe I have made advances, but the subject's life force slows the progress. Perhaps if the subject were already dead...*

Other passages talk of plants growing through the body, aiding immortality. A description of the procedure Pham was performing on the headman is in the text. Anyone reading this loses 1 Sanity.

The book, has no name but was written by T'ang Li entirely in Chinese. It is more difficult to decipher, even for someone fluent in Chinese. It is ancient and barely coherent. Ramblings about power and life and essence are mixed in with passages that are altogether impossible to comprehend. Anyone reading it also loses 1 Sanity.

## The Kiss of the Phoenix

If the heroes have been heroic in defending the villagers or saving the headman, they receive the blessing of the village's oldest resident. An ancient woman approaches the heroes as they prepare for some rest. She speaks French and says, "May you always fight with grace and strength as you did today." She then kisses her fingers and touches each man on the center of his forehead.

The woman retires to a hut. Later in the night, one of the heroes rises for watch or to use the latrine. Out of the corner of his eye, he spots what looks like a translucent bird with a snake's neck and a turtle's shell covering its back hovering over the woman's hut. The bird is gone before the soldier gets a good look and he cannot be certain he saw anything at all.

**Note:** Make a secret note of every player who received this kiss. It may prove to be beneficial later.

## Return

The Viet Minh may counterattack in the night, if enough were left or if you want another unit to be present in the area. Alternatively, the heroes may be ambushed on their return journey. In either case, Pham lurks—well back of the fighting—hoping to reclaim his lost books. Unless the heroes are decimated, Pham is denied.

The books are shipped to a museum in Hue.

## Aftermath

The unit returns to base and continues normal operations. Should they return to Xuan Nhan, they have thankful allies waiting for them.

## \*Plain of Jars

**Date:** Summer 1953

The heroes are mobilized to stop the Viet Minh drive to the Plain of Jars. They are given a strongpoint along one possible path. The Viet Minh send horrific opponents against them in several waves.

The unit is later relieved and the team marches to the spooky but silent Plain of Jars. They establish a second defensive position, but the main force holds and the drive is halted.

**Notes:** If this Tale is run with US soldiers, the mission occurs in July, 1967 and the team is told they are “near” Laos. A helicopter insertion places them close to their assigned strongpoint. Also, all VM forces are changed to VC forces.

Their assignment to this mission should strike the team as odd, unless the team is an Elite or Special Forces unit. It's outside their AO and potentially outside the legal limit of U.S. operations. Why are mere grunts being sent someplace like this?

## Briefing

*The Viet Minh are making a drive into Laos and we are sending troops into blocking positions. A strongpoint is ready for you. The position has a number of bunkers and foxholes.*

**Forces:** *The Viet Minh are advancing in strength. We don't know what might hit your position.*

**Support:** *General only.*

**Weather:** *Hot and rainy.*

**Equipment:** *Take heavy gear and rations. We don't know how soon relief might arrive. You could be on your own for a bit.*

## Mission

The troops arrive in area without incident and the unit makes its way to Pointe Buoneparte, their assigned location. The fortifications are well-designed and well-situated, with a good clear field of fire into a river valley that funnels down through the mountains toward the Plain of Jars.

The team sets up and begins their watch.

## Initial Assaults

The Viet Minh send a probing force down the valley to determine how much resistance there is here. The first force is a group of 3d6 soldiers. They break contact after a few rounds and retreat back up the valley.

That night, the position is attacked by a full platoon. Again, the assault breaks off after a few rounds of fighting.

There is little action during the next day, though a resupply plane drops additional food and ammunition. The following night, however, introduces something entirely new to Pointe Buoneparte.

When darkness falls, the heroes' position is attacked by five enormous lizards. The lizards scurry up to the fortifications to belch fire and incinerate those within. The lizards are supported by a platoon of Viet Minh.

## Fire Lizards

These creatures are controlled through arcane means by the Viet Minh sorcerers. They have bright red skin mottled with patches of black.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

## Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Fire lizards have thick, scaly hide.
- **Flame Belch:** The lizards can belch flame over the area of a Cone Template directly in front of the lizard's mouth. Targets in the area of the flames take 2d10 damage.
- **Size +3:** The lizards are 20 feet long. When all the lizards are down, the Viet Minh withdraw.

## Darker Days

During the next day, another resupply drop is made and the heroes receive a single squad of reinforcements.

That night, a strange chanting is heard down the valley. All the dead from the earlier battles rise up and attack the heroes. Shortly thereafter, a platoon of Viet Minh opens fire from long range. As before, if the position holds for a few rounds, the Viet Minh withdraw.

## Zombie Legionnaires

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Shooting d6, Notice d6, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+1.
- **Fear:** Zombie legionnaires force Guts checks.
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from Shaken; called shots do no extra damage; bullets and piercing attacks do half damage.
- **Weakness (Head):** Called shots to the head of a zombie do full damage.

Another resupply occurs the next day, while a sniper harasses the fortifications. The following night, the position is shelled by mortar fire for several hours. Each character must make four Spirit rolls as if under suppression fire. Any ones on the Spirit die result in 3d6 damage.

Just before dawn, the Viet Minh spring another attack, again a full platoon.

### Final Straw

Another resupply drop and another squad of reinforcements arrive the next day. The valley is strangely quiet.

That night, chanting begins again and any new dead rise and attack. Fifteen zombies also run out of the valley and attack one of the bunkers. On the heels of this attack are three fire lizards, a platoon of soldiers, and two Viet Minh sorcerers. The attack presses until it is broken (25% casualties to the soldiers) or it succeeds in overrunning the position.

### Retreat?

The heroes may find themselves in a position during any of the assaults where they must retreat or be overrun. Proceed to the next portion of the tale should this occur. If the heroes hold the position through the series of assaults, award them each an extra experience point.

### Relocation

The unit is relieved the following day and ordered to march some 20 clicks through the forest to a secondary line of defense.

The march is uneventful, though the weather is hot. Near the end of the march, the team steps out of the forest onto a rolling plain. On the plain are scattered many hundreds of clay jars. Some stand singly, others are in small groups. There is no pattern discernible or reason known for the jars' presence there. The plain is mysteriously quiet. Voices sound hushed and animal noises are

nearly nonexistent. The unit's path takes it through one end of the plain to a built up defensive position where they attach to a larger unit.

After a week on duty near the plain—during which time the soldiers all sleep fitfully and suffer a permanent state of Fatigue—word comes in that the advance of the Viet Minh has been halted elsewhere. The unit is reassigned to other duties. After a weeks rest away from the site the Fatigue level is regained.

## Dien Bien Phu

**Date:** May, 1954

Dien Bien Phu is under siege. The heroes' unit is dropped in and is the last of the reinforcements to make it into the area. They suffer the effects of the siege and the bombardment with their comrades.

When it is clear that Dien Bien Phu is falling, the commandant summons the team and assigns them the task of taking an artifact out of Dien Bien Phu during the night. The team escapes and moves to an airstrip across the border in Laos, from which they are evacuated.

**Notes:** This tale is not suitable for U.S. characters, though an intrepid War Master may choose to adapt some of the ideas to the U.S. era.

### Briefing

*Dien Bien Phu has been under siege since March 13th. We've been sending reinforcements steadily. Our goal in Dien Bien Phu is to disrupt the supply line from China to the Viet Minh. Obviously, they don't want this to happen.*

*The garrison there has been hard pressed. We didn't expect artillery, but somehow General Vo Nguyen Giap positioned several batteries on the surrounding hills. Lately, the VM have been extending their perimeter and shrinking ours and resupply has been more and more difficult. Dien Bien Phu must not fall.*

*The runways at Dien Bien Phu have been destroyed. You'll drop directly into the compound. Your drop date is May 6th.*

**Enemy Forces:** More Viet Minh than you want to know about.

**Support:** None. We can barely keep Dien Bien Phu supplied right now.

**Weather:** Hot.

**Equipment:** Take as much ammunition as you can carry. Share.



## Mission

The heroes are the last reinforcements to make it into Dien Bien Phu. The flight and drop are heavily contested. The plane flies higher than normal and the drop is less accurate than normal.

Each soldier must make a Smarts roll or end up landing in a position under enemy fire. In either case, the hero is required to make an Agility roll to avoid 1d6 damage from the landing.

Characters who come under fire are attacked by two Viet Minh soldiers each round until they reach safety. The range is long and it's dark, so the VM fire at -6. The attackers have two chances to shoot while the trooper is in the air. Once on the ground, the soldier is subject to four more rounds of attacks before he can make his way to cover.

Once assembled on the ground, the unit is assigned to the beleaguered lines. There are four rocket attacks through the rest of the night, each requiring a pair of Spirit rolls as if the character was targeted by suppressive fire, a roll of 1 on the Spirit die results in 3d8 damage.

In addition, the Viet Minh begin their final, frontal assault. The enemy moves steadily inward, squeezing Dien Bien Phu from all sides. The heroes roll twice on the 6th turn as if they are in a Mass Battle to determine how well they fight and if they take damage. Do not treat this as a Mass Battle, however, as Dien Bien Phu falls to the inexorable pressure on the following day no matter how well the Heroes do.

### Mission: Escape

As night falls on the 6th, the heroes are summoned away from their positions. Colonel Francois Foucalt brings them into a damaged building in the center of the compound. Colonel Foucalt is secretly one of the Sons of Solomon and is worried that a vital artifact may pass back to the Viet Minh with the fall of Dien Bien Phu. He does not tell the heroes everything he knows, only enough to—hopefully—commit them to the mission.

His story is a bit thin, and he knows it, but trusts that the heroes are soldiers and will obey orders. He says little more than what follows.

*There is an important, dangerous mission which must be pursued. When we took Dien Bien Phu we found a library of one of the priests. He had many books. This one tells a story of depredations that the world must know about.*

He hands the ranking member of the team an old, tattered book with a cover made of strange leather (human skin, but the light is too dim to see that clearly). It is titled *Die Schwärzung Leben* (*The Darkness Lives*, in German) by Doktor Derek Heiburg. A Knowledge (Arcane) roll at -2 recalls that

Heiburg was an occultist and physician, but nothing more is known about this obscure tome.

*This book must be taken out of Dien Bien Phu and returned to Paris. I do not trust that any of us here will survive to tell this story but it must be told or justice may never be brought to certain people in Indochina.*

He turns to a map.

*We have a route planned which may work for a small team. The Viet Minh have built trenches and tunnels during their assault though not all are still used. One with little activity is 50 meters from our defensive positions. It is possible that you could reach it.*

*The resistance in this tunnel is not known. I have seen no one there. You may be able to sneak or fight your way behind the lines. Across the border to the east, in Laos, we have several airstrips. This map shows the nearest one. Go there and radio for a plane. Take the book to Hanoi.*

The team is dismissed and told to leave immediately to maximize how far they can travel before daylight.

### Escape

On successful Stealth rolls, the team is able to make their way to the trench unnoticed. If they fail these rolls, they take fire at -6 for two rounds with each character targeted by three soldiers. The trench quickly turns into a tunnel which runs underground for 100 meters (50").

The tunnel is abandoned by the human Viet Minh, but there are a dozen predecessors to the Bac Cong (use Bac Cong profiles) guarding the escape route. These tunnelers are in two groups of six each and let the heroes pass in-between them before they attack.

Once the proto-Bac Cong are defeated, the group continues to the end of the tunnel. The team must now get beyond the perimeter. Viet Minh artillery is stationed on many of the hills, so slipping between them is the best chance for success.

The Viet Minh start an assault as the heroes begin their next stage of movement so their attention is focused on Dien Bien Phu. If the heroes make two successive Stealth rolls, they manage to sneak past the watch and between two of the hills. Any failed roll results in a firefight between the heroes and 3d6 Viet Minh. Because of the general assault, this group of Viet Minh is not reinforced. They retreat to the trees if they take casualties in excess of 25%, but

continue to harass the heroes until they take 50% casualties at which time they break.

### The Jungle

The heroes have escaped the immediate vicinity of Dien Bien Phu, but they still have a march of 60 kilometers through the jungle. Use normal encounter tables for moving through the country.

There is a squad of 13 Viet Minh and a moon tiger tracking the heroes. The tiger makes a Tracking roll twice each day. On a success, the pursuers keep pace with the team. On a raise, they gain ground. On a bust they lose ground. Should they gain ground three times, they catch up to the heroes. The next time the team stops, the Viet Minh ambush them. Regardless of the rolls, the pursuit catches the team at the airfield.

### Moon Tiger

These large animals are used as guards and trackers. The North Vietnamese sorcerers grant these beasts something a little extra in the way of intelligence and resistance to damage. They look like a cross between a dog and a panther and have a green and brown pattern to their fur which makes them difficult to spot in the jungle.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Tracking d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

#### Special Abilities

- **Animal Senses:** +2 Notice and Toughness.
- **Bite:** Str+3.
- **Low-Light Vision:** Moon tigers suffer no penalties for dim or dark lighting.
- **Unnatural Toughness:** +3 Toughness. Not reduced by AP.

### Laos

Once in Laos, the team continues to the airfield and calls for extraction. They are met at dawn the following day by an aircraft which takes them to Hanoi. If they have not encountered the pursuit by now, they are attacked during the night.

### Aftermath

Although the heroes have successfully completed their mission, Dien Bien Phu has fallen. The French chapter of the war closes with this defeat. The heroes hear nothing of the mysterious book ever again—if they're lucky.

## Friend or Foe?

**Date:** Anytime in early US war

While on a routine patrol, the soldiers hear nearby gunfire and strange radio transmissions. They are ordered to investigate as there should be no allied units in this AO. The unit finds a derelict ancient temple and evidence of a firefight. Before they have time to investigate too closely, gunfire erupts inside the temple and a cursing French or American voice rises amid the sound of shooting.

Entering the temple they come under heavy fire from the sole surviving French/US serviceman. He has killed all the rest of his unit and is utterly insane.

### Briefing

*This is a routine 8 hour patrol to the town of Ap Long, along the river to the abandoned church, south to the little village of Ap Vac and back to base.*

**Enemy Forces:** *There have been no reported movements through our AO for the last few days. This is a presence patrol so don't have your men pack too heavy a load.*

**Support:** *No dedicated support is necessary for such a routine operation, you'll be patrolling on foot.*

**Weather:** *Low cloud and heavy rain is expected for the next five days. Remember to take stuff like ponchos, wet-weather gear and dry socks; you'll be out all night.*

**Equipment:** *Standard gear only for this mission. One of the unit carries a PRC25.*

### The Mission

This is a routine patrol, so have village encounters at Ap Long as usual. As the unit turns toward the abandoned church following the river, there is a burst of unintelligible noise on the radio. Reaching the abandoned church, 4 hours into the patrol, the sound of distant gunfire erupts from across the river. The radio bursts into life again. Still only babbling but the sound of gunfire can be discerned which is in time with the shooting in the distance.

If the unit doesn't choose to investigate, they are ordered to find the source of the shooting. There should be no friendly units on that side of the river at this time and no units are reported missing.

Crossing the river without incident requires an Agility check (-2) from each soldier. Failure indicates the trooper has fallen into the fast-

flowing water and must make a successful Swimming roll or start to drown (see the *Savage Worlds* Drowning rules). Once on the far side of the river, the sporadic gunfire can guide the unit to a clearing in the light forest. There is no further contact on the radio.

### The Temple Clearing

Discarded ammunition and weaponry surround the clearing. A Notice check (-2) realizes that the equipment is all friendly issue. Five dead friendly soldiers lie around the area. As the unit moves in closer, they spot a derelict temple, all but hidden by creeping vines and vegetation. Many strange carvings cover the old building, which seems to have been a temple. The carvings, barely visible beneath the undergrowth, are lewd and graphic.

Several bursts of gunfire and the sound of shouting American voices come from inside the gloomy temple. The interior of the building is almost pitch black (-6 darkness penalty). Entering the forbidding temple requires a Guts check.

Inside the temple, four more bodies are found, riddled with automatic weapon fire. The last survivor of the doomed unit has been possessed by a Cham spirit that haunts the temple. He is completely deranged and opens fire with his rifle at any lights that approach. Everyone he sees appears as a hideous ape-demon and his constant screaming at the apes-things is the closest the heroes come to an explanation.

With some ingenuity, the soldiers may be able to take him alive. If the soldier is saved, he is catatonic and very difficult to get out of the jungle. If he is killed, the unit has some explaining to do when they realize they killed a fellow servicemember. If the unit attempts to find out what happens to the soldier, they are told he was on drugs and is in treatment. In actuality he has been taken for "observation" by BPMNE or MACV-SIG operatives and will not survive.

## The Lost Legionnaires

**Date:** Anytime in early US war

**Note:** This scenario should be used after an encounter with the enemy in which the heroes have called in an air strike (use a Huey Gunship).

As they prepare to return to base after a firefight, the unit is dispatched to find and rescue an airman shot down during an air strike called in by the players. As they near the location in which the pilot is reported to have crashed, the unit comes under sporadic fire from an

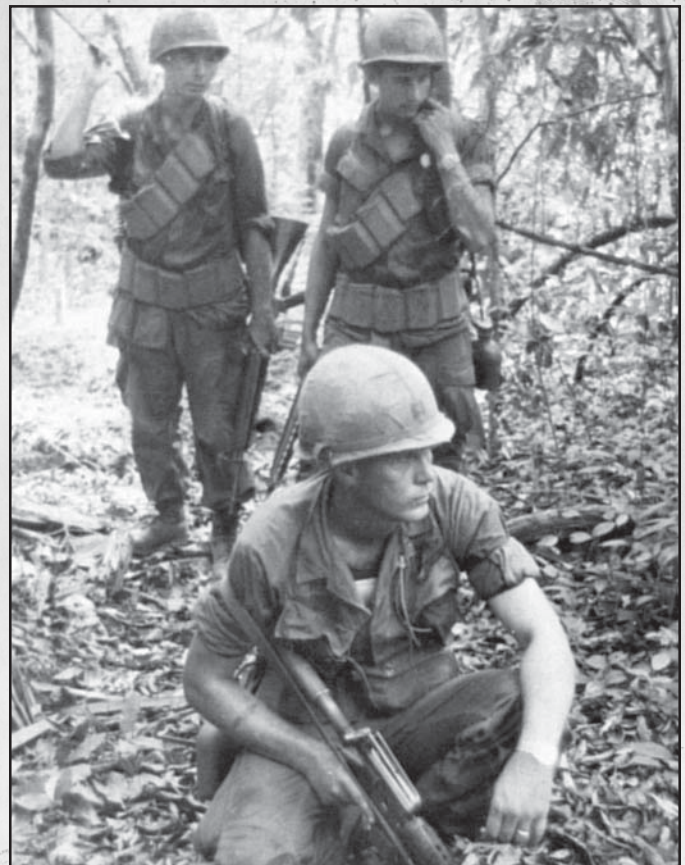
unseen foe who promptly seem to vanish. Upon finding the airman, the unit is again fired upon. This time they can see their attackers, but it appears that the enemy is wearing old pre-World War II French Foreign Legion uniforms and using stolen French weaponry. After a short firefight, the soldiers again melt away and the unit is left in the jungle with a strange tale to tell.

### Briefing

*This mission is a routine presence patrol across the paddy fields of Bien Dinh and into the thick jungle beyond. The 20 klick patrol is a long one, so be sure to have plenty of rations and extra water.*

**Enemy Forces:** Sustained contact has been made several times in the last couple of weeks and intel indicates that there is something close to a battalion of main force Viet Cong training in this province. Be sure to carry a full load of ammo in case you make contact.

**Support:** There is a strong likelihood of sustained contact on this mission, the company mortars are your dedicated fire support. 105mm howitzers are on standby at Firebase Sword and the weather is good enough for air missions.



**Weather:** Clear skies and good weather are expected, so air support and resupply shouldn't be a problem (+2 to support rolls for this purpose).

**Equipment:** You should take standard gear for this mission. One of the unit carries a PRC25.

## The Mission

The first part of the mission goes off without a hitch, and the unit reaches the tree-line of the jungle beyond Bien Dinh.

Once inside the thick jungle, the unit runs into a sizeable VM/VC force, 3d12 Regional/main force guerillas with AK47s, MGs, grenades and rocket launchers. Within four rounds of initial contact, a second force of equal size joins the attack and the soldiers come under very heavy fire. The artillery support from Firebase Sword is not forthcoming if called upon but an airstrike from a flight of Huey Gunships is available. The rocket and chain gun fire is sufficient to stop the VC assault and the guerillas fall back after it comes in.

Any FAC characters hear radio traffic from the outbound aircraft that they have been hit by groundfire and are going down. The chopper crashes in the jungle and the unit is instructed to find the downed aircrew and form a secure perimeter until help arrives.

The characters must move, with any dead and wounded, to the pilot's position (requiring a Smarts roll to locate his coordinates). Once there, they must make sure he is OK and secure the area.

### First Contact

As they make their way through the dense jungle (possibly struggling if many casualties were sustained in the initial attack), the unit comes under small-arms fire. A successful Notice roll (-2) spots shadowy figures moving noiselessly through the undergrowth. A couple more shots crack through the forest before silence once again prevails. Any character making a Smarts check notes that the gunfire was not automatic weapons fire.

Regardless of the amount of return fire the unit puts out, subsequent searches of the area reveal no blood trails or evidence of any enemy casualties.

After a short wait to see if the enemy is still out there, the unit must move on to find the pilot before nightfall.

### Warriors from the Past

The group finds the downed Huey in a twisted pile of metal. Unfortunately only the pilot seems to have survived, and is unconscious. He's still in

the wrecked bird but comes to as the heroes pull him out. The pilot thanks them for the help and introduces himself as Captain "Wildcat" Barnowe (see page 109). Wildcat is a friendly guy and even manages to crack a few jokes in spite of his obvious pain. He has a broken leg and is shaken by the experience but grateful that US forces got to him so quickly; he's in no shape to Evacuate and Evade (E&E) through this undergrowth. The unit should be equally grateful that the pilot's daring kept them alive. After some introductions and a little bit of conversation he passes out again. He is stable, but unconscious.

The unit is informed that their relief is on its way and they should hold their current position until help arrives.

Shortly before nightfall, as the unit settles in for an evening meal, a rifle shot rings out. Again, Notice rolls (-2) detect movement around the periphery of the unit's perimeter. Any trip flares and claymores that the soldiers put out are not triggered because these attackers are not of this world.

## The Lost Spirits

The unit is under attack by French Foreign Legion ghosts who perished years ago while defending France's colonial interests in the jungle.

### Foreign Legion Ghosts (8)

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Although these creatures are ghosts, they do not really accept their unlife. As such, these lost spirits have no physical bodies (so they cannot be tracked and do not trigger booby traps and mines) but they *can* be dispersed for a few weeks by physical attacks because they *believe* they can. Only magical attacks permanently destroy the spirits.

The ghosts converse with each other in heavily-accented French (because they actually of different nationalities in life, but converse in the common language of French). Any characters who speak the language (or failing that, a Common Knowledge roll at -4) comprehends the following snippets of complaints and instructions from the leader of the ghostly squad.

*"This god-forsaken country...I was happy in North Africa...Why must we endure this endless rain...The sooner we wipe the scum out, the sooner we'll be posted somewhere with a decent climate where they make*

*good beer... Wittman, Sabatini, flank them to the left and set up the machine gun."*

The characters are well-aware that the French pulled out of Vietnam years ago and this turn of events should get them thinking. If the characters realize they are fighting ghosts, have them make a Fear check.

If the unit can communicate with the ghostly legionnaires in French (only French speaking characters can make themselves well-enough understood) they can stop the attack, although the men are bitter over what they see as a betrayal by their higher headquarters. The Legionnaires have not realized that they are dead and still patrol the jungle looking for the Japanese. They refuse to accept the truth, so the US unit had better come up with a convincing story if they want to avoid hostilities.

Otherwise the French assume the soldiers are Viet Minh insurgents or mercenaries in the pay of the guerillas and the unit comes under rifle and machine gun fire. Luckily, the characters' return fire can wound the ghost Legionnaires who simply vanish as they "die." Wildcat comes in and out as the fight progresses. He isn't in good enough shape to add to the fight but can fire off a few rounds from his revolver from time to time.

If the firefight ends without the unit figuring out their assailants, there are no bloodtrails and no bodies. The only evidence the soldiers find are a few old French weapons and the diary of a French soldier. The last entry is dated 10 March 1945 and tells how the soldier left on a patrol into the jungle and returned to find his unit's outpost had been razed to the ground by the Japanese. All the supplies had been stolen or burned, his comrades tortured and mutilated, lay dead around the ruined fort. The patrol, with little water and few rations set off on an overland march to the nearest fort. No more is written.

### **Relief**

Shortly after this revelation, the unit hears movement in the jungle. The relief column radios in their position to prevent the two units from shooting each other up. It appears to the relief troops that the unit was in a hell of a firefight and they are eager to know what happened, why there are no trails and why there isn't a body count. What the soldiers choose to say is up to them. If they report their story no one will believe it but it is certain to end up in a BPMNE or MACV-SIG file back at the capital.

After the area is secure the relief unit calls in for a medivac. The choppers arrive and as Wildcat is being prepped for departure he says good bye to the team, and tells them if they ever need anything to give him a call, he'll remember what they did.

## **Aftermath**

Wildcat owes his life to the heroes and he knows it. He is fiercely loyal to his friends and will go out of his way to try and help them in the future. Anytime the unit is trying to call for emergency resupply ignore the -1 penalty to the Support Roll. Anytime a Huey Gunship is flying air support there is a 50% chance it will be Wildcat. He can lay down two strafe templates when he fires guns and anyone under them is hit on a Spirit roll of 1 or 2 instead of just 1. He will also stay for one extra round after a 1 is rolled on the bingo die. The CO may try to call on Wildcat specifically with a -2 to the Support Roll. The WM should also feel free to have him show up whenever it seems dramatically appropriate.

## **Firebase Omaha**

**Date:** Anytime in mid 1960's

Defending the firebase instead of being out in the bush can be restful and a welcome break. Sometimes, however Charlie comes looking for you. Usually at night and often as prelude to a major attack somewhere else within range of the base artillery. A VC assault on a firebase is intended to deprive troops of dedicated support. Sappers and human waves usually fail to penetrate the base defenses, but the determination of the enemy makes each assault a hard-fought battle.

**Notes:** This is a long and tough fight with the heroes under siege during intense fighting. It is quite possible that several of them could die.

### **Briefing**

*You have been given the task of providing firebase security, taking a break from missions in the field. Your unit must defend as much of the perimeter as possible as the force left to defend the firebase is understrength, depleted by high casualties following recent operations.*

*The battery of six 105mm howitzers here at firebase Omaha provides fire support to units conducting operations in the surrounding area, and so must be protected.*

**Enemy Forces:** *constant contact in the local area has kept the soldiers of your battalion very busy of late. The constant requests for fire missions have also made Omaha and the surrounding bases amongst the busiest in the country this month. It is thought there are at least two battalions of trained NVA regulars in this province.*

**Support:** In addition to the three 81mm mortars in the firebase, you can rely on the batteries at the mutually supported firebases Venice and Juno.

**Weather:** The next three days are expected to be fine and clear with a storm moving in on the evening of the third day. Intermittent rain is then expected for the rest of the week with low cloud cover.

**Equipment:** The numerous bunkers surrounding the base are heavily fortified and equipped with M60s. The smaller posts on either side of the main gates sport mounted .50 cal guns. All troops carry their usual personal weapons, and have plenty of ammunition. The ammo dump on the base contains an inexhaustible supply.

### Base Defenses

The tree-line 60 yards distant is rigged with claymores and tripflares to warn of approaching enemy units. Around the perimeter is a double row of barbed wire and several heavily sandbagged bunkers. Each bunker has claymore detonators for the area in front of it and a land line allowing instant communication with other elements in the firebase. Between each bunker are two foxholes, also sandbagged but not roofed.

The mortars can provide constant illumination

and close support, and the 105 battery has supplies of beehive and airburst rounds that can be used against human wave attacks. The surrounding firebases can also provide artillery support and the base command has access to air support.

Divide up the number of bunkers between all the players and tell them that, due to attrition from the recent operations, they have been put in charge of these bunkers. Make out ally sheets for the 5 soldiers in each bunker and give them to the players to control. They're in for a hell of a fight.

### The Mission

As the unit provides security for the firebase, rumors start that some VC have been captured with maps marked with the layout of Omaha's defenses and the distances between bunkers.

On the evening of the second night, a fire mission begins, supporting some of the unit's buddies on a patrol. The noise of the artillery is terrific and soldiers know their friends are catching hell out in the jungle, waiting for those rounds to impact.

The following night, as the weather starts to change, have the players make Notice rolls (-4) to detect movement in front of their positions. Success indicates shadowy figures are seen just inside the tree-line. Triggering claymores and opening fire has little effect on the assault to



come. The figures moving in the jungle are the scouts and sappers trying to clear the way for the main attack.

### **The Assault**

The first wave of VC are shadow sappers (stats on page 131) who crawl through the wire, cutting it and making a path up to the perimeter itself. Make an opposed Stealth roll against the heroes' Notice skill. If the sappers succeed, the main attack proceeds at full pace. If the heroes spot them and fight them off, the main attack comes through the unit's part of the perimeter at half pace. This could be crucial in inflicting casualties on the VC attackers.

The other parts of the perimeter are also being probed. Roll Id8 to see how many of the bunkers have their defenses breached allowing full speed attacks against them. Any sappers making it through the wire undetected, make a dash for the command bunker (usually the one with the most aeriels attached). If a sapper makes it to the bunker (25% chance if the players do not intervene), he or she dashes inside and detonates the explosives that are strapped to his or her body. This destroys the guaranteed communications to support elements and leaves the defenders reliant on comms to contact other units as usual.

Thirty minutes after the sappers clear the way, a human wave of VC irregulars charges the defenses from all sides. They run straight at the defenders, slowing only if the sappers failed to clear the defenses in front of a bunker. This wave lasts about ten minutes (though it feels like hours) and is used by VC commanders watching from the tree-line, to test the firebase's defenses and identify the most effective lines of attack. Bunkers that collapse or suffer high casualties are noted and become the target of the next wave of attackers.

As the attack ends, the VC pull back, taking their wounded with them if they can. The next half hour is a tense time as the VC maneuver their special third wave of attackers into position in front of the base's weakest points.

The third wave is made up of engineered supersoldiers (page 131), a legacy of the Nazi and Japanese experimentation during WWII. This wave is only targeted at the areas the VC leadership feels can easily be breached, knowing that getting troops inside the wire will cause confusion in the camp. If the comms bunker survived the first attack, the base commander calls in air support against the third wave, otherwise it is down to the heroes to organize the best defense they can. The third wave attack is likely to last no more than 30 minutes (depending whether the troops made it inside the wire).

The howitzers' beehive rounds should inflict heavy casualties on the supersoldiers, but the attack should be difficult to repulse.

### **Aftermath**

One hour after the assault stops, the procedure starts again with another wave of sappers, followed by irregular VC followed by supersoldiers. If the players repulse three consecutive attacks or if dawn comes, the VC break off the attack and the unit starts to count the bodies and repair the damage. Stories of the attack of the supersoldiers brings MACV-SIG officers to interview the survivors. Most other troops will not admit what they witnessed, for fear of being marginalized or institutionalized, but the heroes might feel differently.

### **Skull Cave**

**Date:** Anytime in the mid 1960's

The unit is on a routine patrol and passing the foot of cliff which slopes up to a natural cave in the cliff face. As they pass, they make chance contact with a sizeable unit of Main Force VC and a firefight breaks out. The obvious place to defend against numerically superior force is in the cave, which is an easily defensible position. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese are here for a specific purpose. This is the Cave of Skulls, the last resting place of an artifact of great power, and the VC aren't leaving without it. The fight is going to be intense and if the players abandon the caves, the VC score a major find for their supernatural experiments.

**Notes:** This tale is not suitable for U.S. characters, though an intrepid War Master may choose to adapt some of the ideas to the U.S. era.

### **Briefing**

*This is a standard patrol to the village of Quy Trung, around the base of hill 932 and out as far as the province boundary, then return to the camp following the highway*

**Enemy Forces:** *As you know, there has been some significant contact in the last few weeks resulting in a pretty decent body count. I want this to continue, it makes us look good. If you see any signs of the enemy, aggressively pursue the contact and get a good count.*

**Support:** *On a routine operation such as this, you'll be patrolling on foot and, though you may call on general support from the company, there is no dedicated support available to you. Remember that the highway runs along the edge of a free-*

fire zone, so there may be aircraft with unexpended ordnance passing that area you could call on as well.

**Weather:** Reports indicate that the weather will remain fine and warm. But you know how it is in this country, it's best to be prepared.

**Equipment:** Have your troops pack standard gear for this mission. One of the unit carries a PRC25. Given our desire for prolonged contact, you had better be sure they take a full load of ammo.

## The Mission

Again, the first part of this mission is pretty routine. The unit reaches the village of Quy Trung without incident. However, once there, the villagers are sullen and uncooperative. Several of the younger villagers are missing (recruited by a VC political cadre operating in the area) and, with VC in the area, the peasants are keen not to appear too friendly with the Americans.

Use the Village Encounters table on page 80 to resolve the meeting between the Vietnamese civilians and the US soldiers.

Leaving the village in their wake, the unit presses on for the next important landmark, Hill 932. After another 15 klick journey through forest, the ground starts to slope up in the foothills toward the base of the hill. The trees begin to thin out and the forest gives way to thick elephant grass punctuated with the occasional tall termite mound. Ahead of you the hill rears up steeply. This side of Hill 932 is a steep craggy cliff. At the base of the cliff the elephant grass is broken up by a rocky slope leading up to a dark cave.

## Contact

The patrol is not the only group of soldiers to be making their way to Hill 932, though the Vietnamese have an older name for this place. They call it the Cave of Skulls and the dark cavern holds a prize they intend to claim. The VC patrol is comprised of two squads of 1d12 guerillas and a member of Ho Chi Minh's circle of archaeologists with four VC main force bodyguards. Have the US patrol's point man make an opposed Notice roll against a group Stealth roll for the guerillas. If the unit succeeds, the heroes are aware of the VC patrol's approach.

The Viet Cong have scouts from Quy Trung and are aware there is a US patrol in this area, though not that they are so close. At the point the two patrols become aware of each other they are less than 100 yds away from each other, though each unit cannot see the other because

of the tall elephant grass (reducing visibility to 18" on the tabletop).

A sudden firefight breaks out at the first contact and the Viet Cong's natural reaction is to drop back and seek to flank the US unit. The two squads of VC have RPD machine guns, SKS and AK47 rifles. They can lay down a withering fire which should force the US unit to take cover.

## The Cave of Skulls

The cave is an ideal position, allowing good fields of fire and rocky outcroppings that afford excellent opportunities for cover and concealment. With large boulders for soldiers to hide behind, the unit should be encouraged to take refuge in the cave. If they do not, the VC continue to maneuver toward it until they can take up positions in the cave mouth, where they take full advantage of the available cover.

Artillery and airstrikes have a reduced effect on the VC if they reach the cave. As they hear the approach of the aircraft they retreat into the depths of the cavern. In the same way, the VC attempt to evade the US howitzers. Artillery barrages only affect the enemy on the first round. After that they retreat into the caves until the round after the barrage ends.

If the heroes take the cave, the VC become desperate to take it and call for further assistance. From the security of the rocky defensive position, the US artillery and air support can be used to devastating effect.

After five minutes of trying to storm the cave, the guerillas switch tactics and try to blast the Americans out, lobbing rifle-grenades and hand grenades toward the cave mouth. The soldiers should consider taking refuge deeper in the cave.

As they move deeper into the cavern, they discover why the Vietnamese call this place the cave of skulls. Stacked from floor to ceiling on both sides of the wide cavern are hundreds of human skulls. A Smarts roll (-2) can identify that the deeper into the cave the soldiers move, the older the skulls are.

The cave extends nearly one hundred feet back into the cliff under Hill 932. At the back of the cavern, the piles of skulls must be hundreds of years old. At the very back of the cave, there is a raised stone altar, crudely carved with unknown symbols and unintelligible writing. On the altar is a single skull, every inch of which is covered in strange carvings, the narrow channels apparently inked with dark paint.

## The Skull of Ho Nguyen

This ancient artifact is a powerful relic of the Cham religion and is steeped in the blood magic of the Champa kingdom. The dark "ink" is in fact blood and whenever fresh blood is poured into



the channels the skull's power is activated.

The blood that flows through the engraved symbols on the skulls surface seems to seep into the bone, at which point the skull's staring sockets start to glow with mystic energy. Anyone witnessing this strange sight must make a Guts.

Once per day, the bearer of the skull can hold it aloft and will the death of any living creature in sight. If the victim fails a Spirit roll, he dies.

### **Aftermath**

If Ho's archaeologist gets his hands on the skull, he uses its weird energy on the heroes, who should be spurred by such an attack to make sure the VC do not escape with the artifact. Failing to secure the skull results in increased enemy presence in the area and greater loyalty to the guerillas from the frightened population.

If the grunts hold off the VC attack and explore the cave, they find the strange artifact themselves. What they choose to do with it is up to them, but handing it in brings them to the attention of the MACV-SIG brass.

Capturing the archaeologist alive is a real coup for the unit. CIA agents and their partners are very keen to interrogate the man. Shortly after this operation they receive a visit from researchers belonging to the University of Maryland who are interested in knowing more about the location of the cave and the firefight that took place there. The heroes will be closely monitored in the future for possible selection for other special missions.

This scenario could lead the way to other expeditions with the University of Maryland brainiacs and greater involvement with the stranger aspects of the war.

## **\*Tet**

**Date:** January and February, 1968

When the Tet Offensive begins, the heroes are pressed on all sides at their station. On February 20th, the heroes are detached from their unit, flown into Phu Bai, and assigned to a team going through Hue on the heels of the recapture of the city.

They are given the assignment of clearing the French museum where they encounter a true nightmare.

After the museum, the survivors are approached by several young children who bestow a number of small pendants on them. The team makes its report and returns to its previous duty station.

### **Briefing**

*The Tet holiday normally brings a cease-fire but it doesn't look like there's gonna be one this year. All posts and garrisons are*

*on high alert. Look alive and be ready for anything.*

**Forces:** Unknown.

**Support:** Mortars dedicated to defense of the unit's position.

**Weather:** Hot, unless the unit is stationed north, where it's somewhat cooler.

**Equipment:** Keep plenty of ammunition at hand.

## **Mission**

The team's location determines what sort of opposition it faces starting on 31 January. In a city, super soldiers and sappers supporting the mundane troops are common. Some NVA also enter the cities ahead of the battle disguised as civilians.

In the country, sorcerers and ape demons support NVA and VC units.

In either case, the heroes are beset for several days. After the initial assault, things quiet down but the team is left on station and on alert. Then, on 19 February, the unit is ordered to prepare for a new assignment.

### **The Relief of Hue**

The heroes' unit is choppered in to Phu Bai, just south of Hue. They report to the MACV compound in the south part of Hue where a Lt. Colonel Lawrence Williamson gives them their mission. Lt. Colonel Williamson is a short man with iron-gray hair, a steely look in his eye, and a wry twist to his smile.

*We've secured the southern half of Hue, but we still need to police up some of the buildings. The NVA are nearly eliminated but there've been several snipers. The fighting across the river is too heavy to divert resources and we need to minimize the risk to our people in the back areas. You've been divided into teams of ten and I'll give each team a building. Clear it and check back here.*

The heroes are assigned to a single team, with other members of the unit filling out the number to ten. They are kept together and tasked with clearing the old French museum.

### **The Museum**

On the march to the museum, the heroes encounter a number of soldiers moving away from the fighting. Nearly all of them are injured or assisting the injured. Some of them babble incoherently. Others repeat themselves saying things like "I don't know what it was. I just don't

know what that was," or "There's monsters in this city, man! We gotta get out!"

An equally—if not more—disturbing sight is the excavation of a mass grave in a square near the museum. Men and women of all ages are thrown together in a heap. If they stop to ask about it, one of the engineers states, "Dunno. I guess they hated the Commies."

The museum has two stories and a basement filled with galleries and exhibit halls. The upper floor is half exhibits and half offices. The offices are empty (unless you wish to place a sniper in the building). The entire museum has a vaguely unsettled feeling in the air. The only sounds are the heroes' footfalls and the distant crackle and rumble of weapons from across the river.

The exhibits are dedicated to the ancient Champa empire. Many are typical archaeological displays including pottery, figurines, and tools. Some of the figurines in the upper floor are twisted and grotesque representations of the human figure, and some show figures that are crosses between humans and animals, or even humans and plants.

One particularly disturbing display on the main floor debates whether or not the Cham were truly cannibals or if that was merely a story told by later, surviving cultures.

## The Basement

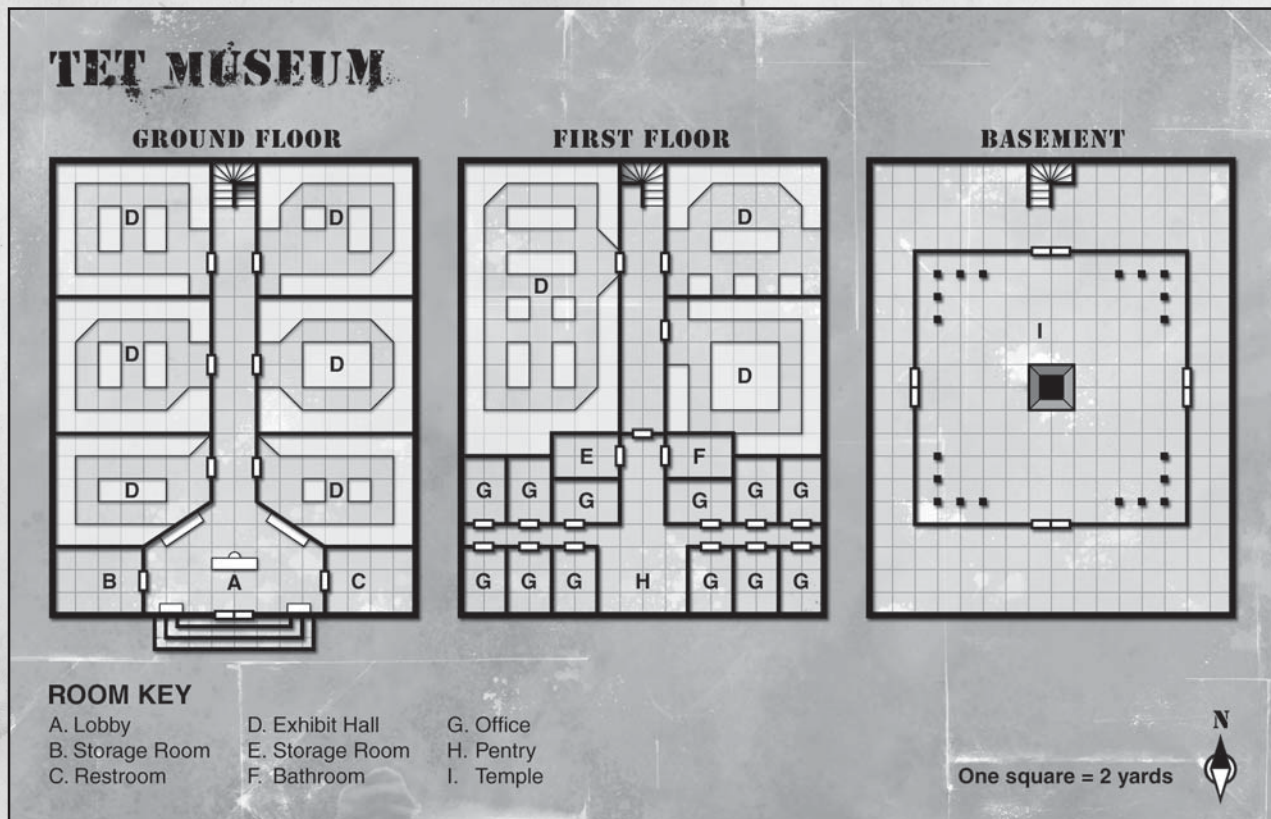
As the heroes descend the broad stairs near the back of the museum, the temperature drops perceptibly. The sweat on their bodies is suddenly clammy and cold. The lights in the basement do not work, and the soldiers must provide their own.

The basement features a walk around a central exhibit hall which displays a number of opinions on the nature of Cham religion. A hero who stops to read them notes that they all admit the source material is exceptionally sparse, but some inferences can be drawn. The more wild opinions are that the Cham were a culture of cannibalism, ritual sacrifice, and self-mutilation.

The central hall in the basement is 72 feet on a side (10") with a double-doorway in the middle of each wall. It once held religious artifacts in a mocked-up temple to an unknown Cham god. It now holds something much more dangerous. When the last hero enters, each of the doors slams shut. A low murmur begins, and the room temperature plunges so that the heroes can see their breath in front of their faces. Each must make a Vigor check or begin shivering uncontrollably (1 Fatigue level).

There are 20 pillars placed around the room, each of them five feet tall. On each pillar sits a human head. The heads are chanting in an ancient, unknown tongue.

In the center of the room, the building's



foundation has been broken away and a pit dug into the dirt below. The pit is 12 feet (2") square and about six feet deep. In the first round of the fight, the heads summon a Pit Horror which appears from the depths. On every subsequent round, a zombie is summoned for every five chanting heads (round all fractions up). The zombies wriggle out of the dirt from the side or bottom and climb out to attack the heroes. Zombies continue to arrive until all the heads are destroyed. A Shaken head does not chant.

The doors cannot be forced to open until the Pit Horror, the heads, and the zombies are destroyed.



### Pit Horror

A large, skeletal creature that once lived and guarded the inner sanctum of a Cham temple, the horror is even more frightening now that it is undead. The sorcerers spent what little time they had in the museum preparing this surprise for the Americans.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d8

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

#### Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+2
- **Fear -2:** The pit horror causes Guts checks at -2.
- **Fearless:** The pit horror is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Improved Frenzy:** The horror may make two claw attacks per round at no penalty.
- **Level-Headed:** The horror may act on the best of two cards in combat.
- **Mind-numbing:** If a hero makes a roll on the Psychosis Table after seeing the Pit Horror he makes the roll at +2.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from Shaken; no extra damage from Called Shots; bullets and other piercing weapons do half damage.

### Chanting Head

These heads were sacrificed to reenergize this site, the first since ancient Champa times, when a great temple stood on these grounds. The heads belonged to citizens of Hue who opposed the communists. Their bodies are in one of the nearby mass graves.

**Attributes:** Agility —, Smarts d4, Spirit d12, Strength —, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Notice d8

**Pace:** 0; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities

- **Fear:** Chanting heads force Guts checks.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Mind-numbing:** A soldier who must roll on the Psychosis Table after seeing a chanting head makes the roll at +2.
- **Immobilized:** Despite their small size the target number to hit these unmoving heads is only a 2, no called shot is necessary.

### Cham Zombie

Cham zombies exist to feed on human flesh. They are dirt-covered, fanged, clawed ravenous creatures from an ancient, dark past.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

#### Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+2.
- **Fear:** Cham zombies force Guts checks.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Ravenous:** If a cham zombie is within 3" of a dead or wounded character, it must stop to feed until it passes a Smarts check.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from Shaken; bullets and piercing attacks do half damage; no extra damage from called shots.
- **Weakness (Head):** Called shots to the head do normal damage.

### Exit

After the horror, heads, and zombies are destroyed, the doors fly open. As the heroes leave the museum, spectral figures of bloodstained people in ancient garb flood the halls and galleries. They cannot affect the corporeal world, but moan with a deep, soul-wrenching sound. The moaning becomes progressively louder the longer it lasts.

Each soldier must make a Guts roll as they escape. There are no physical impediments to their departure. Once the soldiers leave the building, the moaning stops. A character who does not leave the building immediately must make an additional Guts check at the WM's discretion.

### The Children

As the surviving soldiers exit the museum and stagger their way back to the MACV compound to make a report, they are approached by a gaggle of young children. There are six, two older girls and four small boys. The eldest girl says, "We give big soldiers presents!" and the children hand each soldier a pendant of a tortoise.

The eldest girl's expression then becomes very grave, and her voice seems to come from far away, almost as if it is not a child's voice. "You have done a great deed. Take these gifts," she says, "and you will have safety under the fire."

The girl then grins like a child again, the trance broken. The children laugh and run toward the safer districts of town. Childish laughter in the midst of this battered city is perhaps the most shocking element of the day.

### **Aftermath**

The team reports to Lt. Colonel Williamson. He listens almost without comment to anything they have to say. He asks the unit commander to file an after-action report with him before they leave the following morning. Even if they mention weirdness, Williamson says little other than, "I see."

The museum is destroyed by tank fire and napalm that evening.

The team is reunited with the rest of their unit and they are returned to their previous duty station by helicopter. The other ten-man teams undertook exactly the mission advertised: clearing snipers from buildings.

## **Lost Patrol**

**Date:** Spring of 1968

As the unit undertakes a routine patrol in dense jungle, it deviates from the patrol route and becomes lost. As the unit wanders, attempting to find landmarks or an LZ from which to be rescued, they become aware of something watching them in the jungle. Before they can get a good look at it, the thing is gone leaving just the swaying tree where it had been. As they move on, they come to realize that they are being hunted by something. No amount of random firing into the undergrowth is going to help; they must trap and kill their hunter as it stalks them. If not, it picks them off one by one until they are all dead.

### **Briefing**

*Your unit has drawn the short straw this mission. This routine patrol takes you deep into the dense jungle and will last for nearly ten hours. Normally we would use our LRRPs for this kind of mission, but they are engaged elsewhere and we feel you are more than capable.*

**Enemy Forces:** *The patrol route cuts through several suspected VC supply lines. The difficult terrain and unusual rout you'll be following should catch Charlie by surprise. Expect a series of small contacts at close range in the jungle. Mostly small units. Hit them hard and fast and move on. They won't expect it.*

**Support:** *No support is going to be able to reach you in the thick jungle. If you get into trouble make your way to a secure LZ and request extraction.*

**Weather:** *Intermittent rain is expected for the next few days. There will be no moonlight due to heavy cloud cover.*

**Equipment:** *Take your standard gear, make sure you have a working PRC25, then load up with ammo and water. Tape all your equipment to try and reduce the noise (+1 to Stealth rolls).*

## **The Mission**

This aggressive mission starts well, with the unit moving swiftly through the light undergrowth under cover of darkness. Soon however the jungle begins to get thicker and the pace slows as the soldiers have to pick their way more carefully.

In addition to checks for Fatigue based on the terrain, have the characters make Stealth rolls every hour to maintain noise discipline. Any failures should be played up but have no effect in the early stages of this scenario.

After a couple of hours of traveling through the dense vegetation, the unit comes to a narrow trail cut through the jungle. The trail looks well used and is completely covered by thick canopy so is well protected from air attack. It seems likely the VC use this trail extensively. If the unit sets an ambush they are quickly rewarded with a squad of unsuspecting VC militia.

### **Lost!**

As they move off away from the trail, the unit unwittingly becomes lost. Through no fault of their own, things start to look "wrong". The jungle goes silent, making it very hard to move quietly (-4 on Stealth rolls). The compass seems to give misleading readings, the terrain is not as portrayed on the map and, with heavy cloud cover and no landmarks, it proves very difficult for them to find their way.

In fact the unit is being stalked by a strange creature, the "Hunter." The thing emits a psychic wave, which has been subtly affecting the unit's minds, making them think the compass is faulty, that the terrain is not as it should be or that they are walking around in circles. The wave slightly unsettles all living things within 100', causing the jungle to fall silent as it approaches.



## The Hunter

This large humanoid beast has hunted in the jungles of Vietnam for thousands of years. Now one of the last of his species, it is feared and hated by the VC, who call it Dien Ma Dau. He stalks his prey, waiting for a single victim to become separated from the rest before striking. He uses the abundant cover and the tall trees to attack from above without warning. The only clue as to his presence before an attack is the silence caused by his psychic disturbance.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d10, Stealth d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

### Special Abilities

- **Armor:** +2
- **Massive Bite:** Str +1d6.
- **Invisible:** The creature is invisible when it stops moving (-4 to Notice checks to detect the beast). Attacks against it suffer a -4 penalty. A night vision scope reduces the penalty to -2.
- **Low Light Vision:** The Hunter ignores darkness penalties.
- **Psychic Wave:** The creature exudes psychic energy that confuses and subdues its victims as it approaches. Any character within 10 feet of the creature must make a Spirit roll. Those who fail are dealt two initiative cards and act on the worst.
- **Weakness (Bright Light):** Long-used to the gloom of its jungle home, any bright light causes the Dien Ma Dau to be Shaken if it fails a Spirit roll at -4.

### Hunter and Hunted

The Hunter identified the unit after its first firefight and watches from above as they debate how they became lost in the jungle. They must try to find their way out again while being followed. Whenever they try to make Smarts or Smarts-based skill checks, have them make a Spirit roll first. If they are successful, they have overcome the feeling of disorientation temporarily and may act as they wish. The compass again makes sense and the unit can continue their mission. Raises on this roll mean the hardy soldier has permanently shaken off the effects of the psychic wave and is no longer affected by the Hunter in that way.

Use the Country Encounter tables on page 79 to determine what happens to the players as they try to find their way out of the jungle. If one of the soldiers seems to be moving with purpose, as if unaffected by the psychic power, the Hunter

decides to pick off that individual first, leaving the others to wander aimlessly. The creature moves in spurts, jumping ahead of the unit and then standing still as they pass to make best use of his invisibility.

Occasionally he drops back to avoid being detected. It is easy enough in the silent forest for him to follow the unit unless they all manage to get raises on a Notice roll versus The Hunter's Stealth roll. Eventually, the unit may become aware that they are being hunted. Any allies with the heroes should be picked off first to hammer the point home.

The soldiers must come up with a clever plan to defeat the beast. All the while they are planning, the beast watches them, biding his time. In addition the unit has patrols of VC to worry about too. There is a chance that the enemy will stumble into the area as the heroes try to set their traps for the thing the Viet Cong call Dien Ma Dau.

### Defeating the Creature

The Hunter is a cunning creature, but not technologically aware, and the soldiers may be able to take advantage of this fact with all the equipment they carry. On the other hand, using explosives and lots of firepower is certain to attract attention and the unit may opt for a low-tech solution, trapping the creature or crushing it under falling trees instead. For players bent on overkill, no air support is available, they have to get out of this one alone.

Using smoke to mask themselves from the beast is effective and silent and causes the Hunter to move to look for the soldiers, nullifying his invisibility. Night vision equipment reduces his bonus as well. Finally, flares and white phosphorous can leave the beast Shaken, giving the unit a good chance of inflicting wounds if they can manage to strike quickly enough.

### Aftermath

However the unit manage to trap, trick or destroy the Hunter, once it is dead the jungle returns to noisy life again, almost deafening after the silence the unit has endured. They can travel unimpaired again and the ambient sound of the jungle masks the sounds they make as they move.

If the creature's body is returned to the scientists from the University of Maryland, they are very interested in the psychic power of the beast and its ability to become invisible. In this case each character receives an additional Experience point for the advances they have delivered to MACV-SIG.

# Hearts and Brains

**Date:** Spring of 1968

The Black CATs have heard of the heroes and are looking to turn them to their cause. If the heroes are receptive later Savage Tales only need to be changed slightly to accommodate. Chiefly, on supernatural missions, instead of Seek and Destroy the heroes will be tasked with Seek and Recover.

While escorting a Special Forces officer into the Central Highlands, the unit encounters a vicious man-eating tribe that has never before had contact with white men and are extremely suspicious. They are the direct descendents of the ancient Cham and are heavily tainted by the old evil that still covers the area like a heavy shroud. The Black CAT program uses this mission to gauge the heroes' willingness to sign up with them instead of Phoenix.

## Briefing

*You seem to be minor celebrities in Saigon! You have been specifically requested to provide an escort to a Special Forces Colonel into the Central Highlands. He's visiting a Montagnards tribe and you are to provide protection. Get your gear and meet him at the helicopter.*

**Enemy Forces:** *You are just there to escort the Colonel. This isn't a patrol, its a*

*baby-sitting operation, you shouldn't be encountering any enemy forces.*

**Support:** *What help can you need with this? The Colonel has his own chopper, this is going to be like R&R for you.*

**Weather:** *The weather here is going to be great. Up in the mountains, I don't know, expect rain!*

**Equipment:** *Just take what you need for a one-day mission.*

## The Mission

After quickly grabbing the gear they think necessary, the unit makes its way to a Huey standing ready, its rotors churning up a storm. A square-jawed green beret is waiting for the unit as they approach. The Colonel is straight off of a recruiting poster, his fatigues so sharply creased you could cut yourself on them. As they board the flight, the Colonel shouts to make himself heard over the sound of the Huey blades:

*"Good morning gentlemen, My name is Colonel Simons, but you can call me Bull. You were recommended to me by a friend in Saigon. Competent and discreet, he said. The mission is to travel up into the highlands and interact with an indigenous tribe in their mountain village. These people were pushed from their ancestral lowland homes hundreds of years ago and*



*oppressed by both North and South. As a result, they are filled with hatred for any Vietnamese. It's up to us to mold that hatred into a tool that can be used against the Cong."*

If asked about the tribe or why they have been selected to accompany him, the Colonel tells the unit:

*"You know how we're always talking about bombing Charlie back to the stone age? Well these guys never left. They are a very primitive people called the Cham and it is thought quite possible that they have never met any non-Vietnamese...ever. You were recommended to me as a team that could be relied upon if the situation gets a little tense. Normally we would use all green berets but with the recent spate of assaults against SF bases, we're a little thin on the ground!"*

The Colonel is telling the truth about the tribe, but is being evasive regarding the team. They are being tested to see how far they can be relied upon and their attitudes toward the arcane. If they can handle this mission, under the close observation of the Green Beret officer (a Janus operative), and prove themselves open to using the arcane against the enemy (rather than destroying it) the unit will increasingly be removed from routine missions and sent on more specialized, classified operations, with an eye toward enrolling them in the Black CAT program. He answers any general questions about Vietnam or the war (he has been in-country since '63). If the heroes try to press him about any weird events, or who recommended them, he isn't talking.

### **The Cham Village**

The village has stood on this mountain for centuries and its people have hunted in the jungles that surround it and fought to defend it for all that time. The villagers are among the last of the descendents of the evil kingdom of Champa. The village is made of numerous wooden huts with grass roofs built around a central clearing. Animals live in pens dotted around the settlement and a high wooden fence with sharpened tips surrounds the whole village.

As the helicopter approaches, it is easy to see how the village has remained so isolated. It is perched on the edge of a sheer drop, clinging to the mountain edge with only a single avenue of approach up the mountain. The chopper circles the camp before flying south from it toward a clearing about a kilometer away.

*"We are going to set down over there, then walk back up to the village. I think we will be less intimidating on foot. Keep your weapons handy but be certain not to frighten them. Remember, we need as many of these guys on our side as possible, they are fierce Commie haters."*

### **Ambush**

As the unit moves from the LZ and the chopper pulls pitch and soars away, a burst of small arms fire cuts through the clearing. A group of 2d6 VC regional militia just happens to be in the area. The enemy should prove no match for the unit and, after taking several casualties the guerillas melt away. As they try and break contact, a group of terrifying dark-skinned people appears from out of the jungle behind the VC and hacks them to pieces with machetes. The tribesmen take two prisoners. Impressed by the unit's firepower and their mutual hatred of the Vietnamese, the tribesmen escort the unit out of the jungle toward the camp.

### **Negotiations**

The group emerges from the jungle in front of the village to be met by a group of maybe fifty warriors all armed with bows and arrows and spears. The Colonel approaches the main group and says something in French. He is met with suspicious looks, so tries speaking in a different language. (If the heroes try speaking in Vietnamese, the villagers react in a very hostile manner). Eventually, the Colonel finds a dialect the Cham can understand and he starts to explain his intentions. The other heroes understand nothing of the conversation, but the village elders are soon laughing. A successful Notice roll spots the villagers' teeth have been filed to sharp points.

The discussions seem to begin well but there is little the unit can do to help. As they look around the village three successful Notice rolls discover the following things.

**Dinner Preparations:** One of the soldiers sees a group of women preparing a meal on a spit over an open fire. Something is strange about the scene but it takes a Healing roll to figure out that the cut of meat is a human torso. The villagers are a tribe of cannibals.

**The Back Gate:** Across the far side of the main compound, there is a break in the wooden fence that surrounds the village. Unlike the front entrance, there is no heavy wooden gate. Strangely this entrance simply opens onto the cliff edge and a sheer drop. The villagers throw captives off this precipice if they are not worthy of being eaten.

**Territorial Markers:** Outside each hut in the village is a large stake, on top of which is a human skull. Each skull is ornately carved and

decorated with narrow channels.

If the unit has survived the Skull Cave mission, they will know what these skulls can do. It may serve to link this tribe with those that lived lower down the mountain centuries before and to give them a clue why they were chosen for this mission. It also lets them know the artifact was not unique and that the Viet Cong must be trying to collect whatever strange relics it can to aid in the war effort.

Having looked around the village, the unit meets the Colonel as he strides toward them, smiling. His preliminary negotiations are complete and he seems pleased with the outcome. Dinner is served now and he and the heroes are guests of honor. If the players know they are dining on human flesh, they must make Guts check at -2.

Refusal to eat greatly offends the chief and the Colonel hisses at the balking soldier to eat before he ruins everything. Further refusal results in the chieftain storming off and one very unhappy Colonel. The tribe hastily escorts the unit out of their village. Tensions are high and a fight could easily break out during this scene.

### Aftermath

Once the negotiations are finished successfully and the meal eaten, the mission is a success. As they journey home, the Colonel asks what the soldiers make of the skulls. If they admit what they know, he tries to gauge whether their mindset lies more with the Sons of Solomon or Janus. If the soldiers seem favorable to the use of this type of artifact against the Viet Cong, the Colonel seems satisfied he made the right choice in selecting this unit for the mission.

If the heroes objected to the situation or made the meeting go awry, the Colonel will write them off as future Black CAT material.

## Streets of Saigon City

**Date:** Spring of 1968

Treated to a bit of well-earned R&R, the unit visits Saigon. Sooner or later they enter a bar with dancing girls everywhere; girls like they haven't seen for months! Eventually the heroes find themselves alone with the sultry ladies of the night! Whatever the soldiers may expect to happen next, they're in for a surprise. The hookers are vampires who lure servicemen to backrooms and get them drunk. Then they drain their blood and leave them unconscious in the streets.

Before they drink, they reveal their hideous true nature, sprouting ridges of horns down either side of their spines and large spikes from their foreheads and prominent cheekbones. The last thing many soldiers hear is "Me so horny!"

## Briefing

*You've earned a little R&R. Get yourselves on the next flight to Saigon, sink some cold beer, find some hot girl and stay out of trouble for a day or two. Come back here as tense as you are now and I will bust you to the ranks!*

**Enemy Forces:** *Are you kiddin' me?*

**Support:** *Just you and your buddies against a bar full of women. Think you can handle it?*

**Weather:** *It's going to be hot and sweaty during the day. What happens at night is your own concern.*

**Equipment:** *Units in Saigon on R&R are not permitted to carry weapons. No standard gear is necessary, so the soldiers are equipped only with their fatigues and the money in their pockets.*

## The Mission

R&R is a welcome break after the stresses of combat and the unit should be sure to make the most of their time in the city. The capital of South Vietnam is a vice city catering to the needs and wants of hundreds of thousands of servicemen far from home. The population is swollen by the refugees from the villages uprooted in the upheaval of war.

Use the City Encounter charts to keep the soldiers occupied for the first part of their excursion. Eventually, it is probable the unit will end up in a nightclub, brothel or sleazy dive and, at this point, their night starts to get interesting.

### The Bar

As the soldiers are relaxing in a bar, an equal number of beautiful women start to circle their table, leaning over seductively and blowing kisses. Their conversation is the typical patter of the professional girl, "We boom-boom good, I love you long time," and other such promises of illicit pleasure.

If the soldiers give in, the beautiful women lead them to a beaded curtain at the back of the bar. A long corridor stretches back into the darkness with a number of doors opening off to the sides. The girls each lead a soldier off to one or another of the doors, and with alluring looks over their shoulders enter the rooms beyond.

What follows in each room is the same. Inside, everything is illuminated with a dim red light. Heavy perfumed smoke hangs in the air and there is soft music playing; some soul number. The perfume of the girl and the pungent incense smoke are quite overpowering. Have the soldier



make a Vigor roll (-2) or be fatigued by the magical odors. The seductive lady moves in to kiss her client, putting her finger to his lips to silence him if he should try to talk. She takes a sip of a drink by the bedside before kissing him again. The liquid is a powerful sedative to which the dangerously beautiful woman is immune. The soldier must make a Vigor roll (-4) or gain another Fatigue level. After this kiss, something begins to play tricks on the soldier's mind.

Regardless of his current Fatigue state, his vision appears to become distorted and his hearing defective. The beautiful woman standing before him seems to shimmer and distort while her voice sounds rasping and unpleasant.

### **Vampire Harlots (Vamps)**

In fact the soldier's senses are not deceiving him, the hookers are all demonic vampires who hunt their prey in the Saigon bars. Their once beautiful faces are hideously disfigured and sprout horns and ridges, their skin becoming yellow and scaly. The revolting transformation takes three rounds, during which time any dazed soldiers can attempt to make a single Spirit roll to pull himself together and recover one fatigue state.

After the transformation is complete, the Vamps are ready to feed and any character unable to defend themselves will be bitten and have the blood sucked from the insides of his elbows. The creatures are quite capable of draining a human of blood. They prefer to leave their victims incapacitated on the streets of Saigon as this attracts less attention from the American military police. Nobody investigates why a serviceman has passed out in an alleyway and strange marks on his arms are dismissed as signs of drug use.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

#### **Special Abilities**

- **Bite:** Str +1
- **Blood Sucker:** Each round after the vampire bites successfully, the victim must make a Vigor check to avoid gaining Fatigue as his blood is drained.
- **Fear -2:** Once transformed, the vampires' horned faces and scaly skin are terrifying to behold.

Separated from each other and with no weaponry, the unit is very vulnerable, particularly if they succumbed to the heady aromas of the room and the harlots' drugs. If they manage to fight their way clear of the room, they may be able to make it out onto the street and raise the alarm.

Doing this could land the unit in the stockade, however, as the heroes are semi-naked and may appear drunk or doped up. When the MPs arrive, they are likely to assume the soldiers are intoxicated and take them into custody. They certainly don't believe the ladies of the night turned onto demons and tried to suck the soldiers' blood! The vamps have returned to their usual alluring form and act indignant, saying that the heroes are on drugs and they smashed up the girls' rooms. The innocent-looking vamps demand compensation for the damage and the MPs insist on the unit's cooperation.

The characters may decide, after escaping the bar to put the whole incident behind them and get on with their R&R. You should remind them that other servicemen may suffer the same fate (the players do not know that the girl-demons leave their victims alive). The next time it could be some REMF used to sitting in an air-conditioned office all day and not some lean green fighting machine fresh from the field.

The group can try to "liberate" some weapons from somewhere (all the MPs are armed as are some of the Special Forces "snake-eaters") or buy some black market weaponry to put an end to the vampire harlots' reign of delicious terror.

The creatures can transform to their monstrous state instantly. After that they are quite vicious and are ready to fight to the death. One of the most effective ways to deal with the vamps is to feed them drugged blood. There is no shortage of soldiers around Saigon and, likewise, no shortage of drugs if that's what you're looking for. Enlisted man is the vamps favorite meal and spiking the poor sap first leaves the vamps vulnerable and slow. Using this ploy gives the soldiers an edge in combat as the vamps draw two initiative cards each round and act on the worst. If they are dealt a Joker, they shake off these effects, otherwise they last for 8 hours.

### **Aftermath**

However the heroes deal with the Vamps, they have not had as much rest and relaxation as expected. Consequently, the heroes do not regain any Sanity for this "break" though they will pick up a couple of experience points. After an experience like this one, getting back into the boonies will be a welcome rest! Next time, maybe the soldiers should try Cam Ranh Bay!

## **\*The Phoenix Rises**

**Date:** July 1968

The team is taken under wing by Lt. Colonel Williamson and show a few truths. They are then offered a place in the Phoenix Program. Run this when your team averages at least Veteran Rank

and you are ready to have them openly join the battle against the darkness, take them to Saigon to meet the Lt. Colonel once again.

### **Briefing**

*You've got orders to report to Lt. Colonel Lawrence Williamson in Saigon, so get going. There's a bird waiting for you. It's been good having you with us out here.*

### **Mission**

Travel to Saigon is as uneventful or exciting as you choose to make it.

When the team reports to Lt. Colonel Williamson, he takes them into a secure conference room at the center of one of the U.S. command buildings. He has the team sit down then presents the following information to them.

*"Gentlemen, you've been in country for some time now. You've probably seen some pretty weird things. In fact, I know you have. I read some of your reports even before Hue and I can read between the lines pretty well. You've also been jerked around a little lately, like getting shipped up there just to clear that museum.*

*But that was no ordinary museum, was it?*

*Gentlemen, I work for a brand-spanking-new organization called the Phoenix Program. We are on the books as an intelligence-gathering anti-guerilla operation. Covert ops and assassination are expected to be part and parcel of this program's tasks.*

*We have some operatives for whom that is exactly what we are. We also have some operatives who understand what we're really up against. Men like you.*

*There is a darkness to this world, gentlemen. The Phoenix Program has the intelligence, the bookworms, the covert and combat operatives, and the commitment required to find and destroy that darkness.*

*Nowhere in the world is the darkness more active than it is right here in Southeast Asia. The North Vietnamese have been searching for arcane powers for more than ten years, and they've been finding it. You know that from what you've seen already.*

*Our soldiers are the finest in the world. They can stand up to any armed force, including China or the Soviets or maybe even both at the same time, but they can't face things they were never meant to fight; things that were never meant to see the light of day.*

*I'm inviting you to be a part of this organization. To take a stand against that darkness. You have a decision to make, gentlemen, but I want you to understand that your brothers in arms do not stand a chance without people like us protecting them from the darkness. If for no other reason, join us to give them a fighting chance."*

If the heroes accept, Lt. Colonel Williamson goes on to explain additional information about the Phoenix Program as outlined on page 65.

The heroes are shipped to the Philippines for a few weeks and given basic Phoenix training. They gain an extra die type in Knowledge (Arcane) and raise the lowest of their Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing by one die type. The characters may choose which to raise if more than one qualifies as the "lowest."

During this training period, any hero wearing jewelry—including the tortoise pendants—or any other items which might have arcane properties—is required to submit those artifacts for examination. The pendants are returned to the heroes as being mundane.

## **The Tunnels of Vinh Ho**

**Date:** Late 1968/Early 1969

After a Search and Destroy mission, the unit finds a way down into tunnels beneath a village. The unit is ordered down into the depths as there are no tunnel rats available.

Run this adventure immediately after the unit finishes a Search and Destroy mission, before they have time to return to base.

### **Briefing**

*Word has come down from the top that these tunnels must be searched ricky-tick, before Charlie has a chance to di-di with all the intel that might be down there. Tunnel rats are not available so your team had better strip down and get underground. Bring up any POWs and material that could be used to predict their strength and movements.*

**Enemy Forces:** *There is no telling how many troops could be underground or how extensive the tunnels are.*

**Support:** *You are on your own once you're underground. Just you and a rope.*

**Equipment:** *You'll be stripped to the waist and armed only with a pistols and a flashlight.*

## Mission

### The Tunnel Complex

There are four layers to the tunnel complex. The deeper the soldiers probe, the more important the discoveries they make. On the Chamber table below add the level number to the dice roll to determine the result (as they explore the 3rd level for example, add +3 to the roll).

For each new section roll a d6 and add the level number. If the total is 7 or higher, the heroes encounter a Bac Cong tunnel soldier (see page 130).

As they make their way through the tunnels, roll on the table below to discover what the heroes face on their next round underground.

### Tunnel Layout

d6	Layout
1	Dead end
2	Tunnel turns 90 degrees
3	Straight ahead 10'
4	Shaft leading down
5	Trap
6	Chamber

**Dead End:** If the hero comes up against a dead end, a Notice (-2) check can detect a hidden shaft down to the next level. Modify your next roll on the tunnel table by +2.

**Trap:** Roll on the table below to determine the kind of trap is encountered. Note that the modifier to the soldier's Notice roll to detect the obstacle is different on this table than regular traps table due to the poor lighting and cramped space.

### Traps

d6	Trap	Notice Mod.
1	Spider Cage	-1
2	Punji Pit	-2
3	Collapsing Tunnel	-2
4	Tiger Pit	-2
5	Snake pit	-1
6	Grenade	-3

**Spider Cage:** Once triggered this trap drops a swarm of venomous spiders on the victim. The poison causes paralysis for 1d6 hours if a Vigor roll at -2 isn't made. The spiders are easily crushed to death if the hero isn't paralyzed.

**Punji Pit:** See page 64.

**Collapsing Tunnel:** Use the rules for a Drop Fall (page 65). This result also creates a blockage in the tunnel that will have to be bypassed somehow to continue on.

**Snake Pit:** A covered pit containing 2d6 venomous snakes, see *Savage Worlds*.

**Grenade:** See page 64.

**Chamber:** The hero has entered a room. Roll 1d6 on the table below to find out what kind of chamber the troops have found. As you can see, the weird chambers can only be discovered in the lower levels of the complex.

### Chambers

d6	Chamber
1-2	Stores
3	Barracks
4	Armory
5	First Aid Post
6	Planning room
7	Factory
8	Cages
9	Torture Chamber
10+	Bound Demon

**Stores:** The VC stores contain rice, medical supplies, uniforms, sandals, and packs. Occasionally the store holds something truly astounding. Some contain entire tanks or artillery pieces, dismantled and carefully carried and maintained underground.



**Barracks:** A series of bunk beds is cut into the wall and the barrack room can house upwards of eight soldiers. The room is empty now, abandoned in a hurry. A Notice roll (-4) finds something of use to intel here.

**Armory:** The armory is stacked with Chinese and Russian weaponry, and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition, from grenades to artillery shells. Grenades should not be used in this room!

**First Aid Post:** This fully equipped medical centre has parachute silk covering the roof in an effort to stop the dirt from falling on the operating tables. 1d4 wounded VC lie in beds around the room, too badly injured to be moved when their comrades pulled out.

**Planning Room:** A huge map of the area on the wall marks this as a planning room. The enemy took what they could and started fires in the filing cabinets in an effort to deny information to the Americans as they left. There is plenty of intelligence that the soldiers can recover from this room, though it may take several journeys.

**Factory:** This room contains a series of tables covered with parts for the manufacture of various equipment. The factory could be creating booby traps from discarded US ordnance, or manufacturing uniforms for the VC that lived down here. Either way, the room is empty now.

**Cages:** The soldier has stumbled across bamboo cages that contain weakened and sickly US and ARVN POWs. They are unaware of what's going on around them and are extremely sensitive to the light and warmth of the outside world. They are so close to death that even a Shaken result will push them over the edge.

**Torture Chamber:** This room has a wicked array of implements of torture laid out on tables around the edge. A pair of manacles attached to the walls and dark stains on the floor are a grim testament to the purpose of this room.

**Bound Demon:** At the center of this room, crouching in the darkness is an angry ape demon (see page 124), magically bound by NVA sorcerers to attack anyone entering the room. If the soldier only has a pistol, he'd better get out of there!

## Aftermath

Whatever the players discover underground, they have to make an after-action report once they resurface. Unless they can produce Bac Cong tunnel soldiers or POWs to back up their strange tales, as usual, no one outside MACV-SIG believes them, but their exploits are being noted at the highest levels.

## \* Temple of Aran

**Date:** Late August and September, 1969

Operation FULL MOON has turned up a site of interest and excessive enemy development has been noted. Unknown to even the higher echelons of the Phoenix Program, Ho Chi Minh himself is at the site, presiding over a ritual which promises to deliver eternal life—something the aging leader is pursuing vigorously.

### Briefing

*FULL MOON has been researching a number of Laotian sites. One turned up in a number of documents and artifacts, a temple near the village of Ban Na Them in Laos. The high-altitude photos make it clear that something is happening at this temple. You are going to go take a look. Ban Na is west of Dien Bien Phu, so you're going to do a high-altitude drop as near to the site as we can risk, then you'll have to hump it about 20 clicks through Laos to the temple. It's rough territory and the choice of trails into the area isn't a picnic—you can march through a cave, which is no doubt guarded, or you can scale a mountain and come in from the high side.*

*It's your call.*

*Once on site, evaluate the temple and destroy it. Air America will come get you once you're done, if you can find a place for them to put down. Radio silence is required until then.*

**Enemy Forces:** *You are going to be walking right into the middle of Charlie's territory. There's no telling what you're going to run into. Expect heavy troop formations given the activity we've noted. Avoid contact whenever possible.*

**Support:** *You'll be on your own in Laos, no support is available.*

**Weather:** *It's September in the North, which means rain. Probably lots of it.*

**Equipment:** *Take enough rations for a week, satchel charges to destroy the site, and a PRC25 to coordinate your extraction. Soviet weapons are recommended to ease your resupply problem.*

### Mission

The mission requires a HALO drop—High Altitude, Low Opening—to place the team as close to the site as possible without risking the aircraft unnecessarily.

## The Drop

The team is dropped at 02:30 AM on August 31st. An Agility check is required to avoid 1d6 damage upon landing. There are no hostiles near the drop zone.

The terrain between the drop point and the village is rough mountains covered in tropical forest. Roll on the Country Encounters Table for this journey, but treat the following results as no encounter: Blood Trail, Bunker, Ambush. These results are more appropriate to the high-combat areas in Vietnam.

On the first day, have the team make Notice rolls. A success spots on old airfield, probably from the French era. (In fact, the airfield at the end of the Dien Bien Phu adventure.) This is a potential extraction point once the mission is complete. It sits 15 clicks from the village.

Once on location near the cave entrance (clearly marked and easily found via the team's map), they must decide whether to hike and scale the rugged mountains, or risk the very-probably watched cave.

## The Cave

The entrance to the cave is wide and low, though a person can walk through standing. There is no light inside the cave, so the team must create its own, adding to the danger of discovery.

The cave entrance is also filled with hip-deep water and the unit must wade for 50 yards to get to a point where they can begin to climb into the galleries toward the exit. Each soldier must make a single Agility roll or slip, dousing all of his gear, causing a loud splash, and placing the guards ahead on alert.

The path ascends through two galleries, the first of which is guarded by a pair of NVA regulars. The rest of their squad (14 soldiers), however, sits around the exit above and any cries or gunfire bring them all—cautiously but quickly—into the cave.

The last section of the cave is a narrow crevasse only wide enough for a single person to walk. It emerges into the high, protected valley that contains both the temple of Aran and the village of Ban Na.

The temple stands a few hundred yards from the cave exit, the village about a click beyond the temple.

## The Mountain

A sweeping ridge and rugged cliffs protect the bowl the village sits in from any easy entry. If the team chooses this path, they hike much of the distance, but three different times reach a point where they must climb. A failed Climbing roll results in a fall of 15" (2d6+15 damage).

Once the cliffs have been scaled, the team is free to make their way down into the bowl. From their elevated position, they can see some of the landscape below through the forest. The village is near the base of the slope which provides their current vantage. About 30 huts stand on stilts in a clearing. A stream flows nearby, swollen from the rains but still small this high in the mountains. There are NVA soldiers and civilians moving around in the village, but they do not appear to be on alert.

Further to the west, near where the cave exit is marked on their maps, another set of buildings can be seen in a second clearing. It's impossible to see any activity given the intervening forest.

There is a path down the slope to a point near the village with enough tree cover to allow the team +1 to their Stealth rolls. Another successful Stealth roll allows the team to skirt the village undetected. On a failed roll, they must avoid alerting a platoon of NVA.

## The Temple

The temple is 60 feet (10") square with a stone pillar standing off each of the four corners. The vegetation has been cleared away to a distance of 30 feet (5") and the buildings have been restored. Fresh, arcane carvings and weird symbols painted over the entrance are evidence of the nature of this place.



Two more squads of NVA soldiers are on duty here. One outside the temple, the other inside. Neither group is active.

Inside the temple are several potent sorcerers and Ho Chi Minh himself! Minh hopes to imbue himself with immortality through this ritual.

The temple's interior has a single large room with altars built into each of the corners, mirroring the positions of the pillars outside. The altars are covered in strange, glowing carvings. Numerous candles stand burning on each of them, providing Dim (-1) light inside the temple.

The soldiers squat around the perimeter of the room, taking no active part but concentrating on the ceremony. Inside the square of the altars is a circle made of salt, approximately 15 feet (2.5") in diameter. Around the perimeter of the circle sit five NVA Sorcerers. At the center of the circle, and apparently the focus of the ritual, is Ho Chi Minh, kneeling and holding a strange, carved snake.

The sorcerers are also chanting, their voices rising and falling in a strange cadence—strange even to those who speak Vietnamese. The language is from the distant past, brought forward from the mists of time by the arcane researches of the sorcerers.

## The Ritual

Gunfire outside the temple alerts the soldiers and they move to cover the door. Otherwise, they may be taken by surprise. The circle of salt creates a barrier to all physical objects, including bullets, that extends in a dome to a point just under the ceiling. Ho is safe so long as the circle is unbroken and at least one of the five sorcerers continues the chant. The ritual is nearing completion when the heroes arrive and the candlelight dims. To disrupt it, the team must put down all the sorcerers and break the circle. When this happens, a number of things occur.

The candles flare into brightness for one round (no penalties) then burn out (-2 for darkness). A round later, the snake figure begins to glow, rapidly brightening and casting weird shadows around the building. A jagged gash of light rips the floor open and Ho is sucked into it, screaming to the last. The idol, energized but not channeled, has opened a rift to another world. The whole ordeal is Mind-numbing and players must make a Guts check to deal with it.

The intense light fills the temple. Any people—or their bodies—are sucked toward the bright core at the center of the vortex. If any team members remain inside the temple for longer than one round, they must make a test against each of their Attributes or be sucked into the vortex—and die. The order is as follows:



**ALL RIGHT MAGGOT I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKIN'. THIS COLLAPSING PORTAL THINGY COULD BE AN ABSOLUTE MEAT GRINDER FOR YOUR HAPLESS GRUNTS. WELL YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT IT'S THE DEATH OF THE BIG HO HIMSELF AND YOU CAN BET THAT GUY'S GOIN' OUT WITH A BIG OL' BANG!**

**IF YOUR PARTY'S ALL TORN TO PIECES ALREADY, OR YOUR SOFT HEART CAN'T KEEP FROM CRYIN' FEEL FREE TO CUT THEM A LITTLE SLACK. GIVE THEM A BONUS HERE OR THERE DEPENDING ON WHAT THEY DO, OR CUT OUT A FEW OF THE ROLLS ALL TOGETHER.**

**WHATEVER YOU DO REMEMBER THIS IS INTENSE AND DRAMATIC! IT'S ONE OF THE MAIN PLOT POINTS OF THE STORY, DON'T JUST RUN DOWN A LIST OF FIVE ROLLS AND SEE WHO MAKES IT. GET IN THEIR HEADS AND MAKE THEM FEEL THE TERROR. LET 'EM KNOW THAT THERE'S A RIP IN SPACE AND IT'S TRYING TO SUCK THEIR MIND AND SANITY RIGHT OUT OF THEIR SKULLS!**

**ONCE IT STARTS, KEEP IT MOVIN' FAST! DON'T GIVE THESE PANSIES TIME TO THINK OR FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON. DETAIL THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO EACH OF THE ROLLS AND BEFORE THEY HAVE TIME TO RESPOND GET THOSE BONES A ROLLIN'!**

**WHEN THE DUST SETTLES YOU CAN TAKE STOCK OF WHICH UNLUCKY BASTARDS ACTUALLY MADE IT THROUGH TO FACE THE NEXT SET OF HORRORS WE'VE COOKED UP!**

1. Smarts, to realize he must hold on to something to avoid the fate.
2. Agility, to grab an altar or doorpost.
3. Strength, to hold against the pull of the vortex.
4. Vigor, to maintain the grip for a full two rounds.
5. Spirit, to not despair as the evil tugs at his soul.

After two more rounds, the vortex subsides leaving only the surviving members of the team and the snake idol, sitting quietly in the center of the temple. The candles, salt, and any bodies are gone. The team may collect themselves, set their charges (if they haven't already) and blow the building. The team can take the snake figure (Common Knowledge at -2 identifies the snake as a daboa, one of the deadliest snakes in the world) or destroy it with an explosive. The explosions will bring the attention of any troops still alive at the cave mouth or the village.

### The Airfield

If the team returns to the airfield, they have some grunt labor ahead of them. It requires 12 man-hours of work to clear an area sufficient for a plane to land as the jungle has begun to reclaim the strip. They can radio ahead so the planes can be ready for the pickup

During their efforts, the team disturbs the resting place of a Viet Minh unit that died attacking the French after Dien Bien Phu. These are zombies armed with vintage—but fully operational—weapons. There are 15 zombies.

### Viet Minh Zombie

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

**Gear:** PPSH-41, 1 fragmentation grenade.

#### Special Abilities

- **Fear:** Zombies cause Guts checks.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken. No extra damage from called shots. Half damage from bullets and piercing attacks.

### Old Friend

**Note:** Add this vignette if the heroes played the Lost Legionnaires Savage Tale and successfully rescued Captain "Wildcat" Barnowe.

If the fight with the zombies goes quickly keep the pressure high on the players with more undead Viet Minh, or pin them down with a unit of NVA that has tracked them from the

temple. Keep them under siege and unable to work on clearing the airstrip. Radio chatter with base should reconfirm that they can't send support in and they need to clear that runway for pickup.

When things are looking grim the heroes hear the faint sound of helo blades approaching fast, and a familiar voice from the radio calls out, "Somebody looking for a pickup?" It's Wildcat, the pilot the team rescued. "Looks like we took a wrong turn at Albuquerque. So we happened to be in the neighborhood and heard you boys were in a spot. Lucky for you I can put this bird down anywhere, stay low we're comin' in hot!"

Wildcat touches down fast and hard a mere 20 yards from the team. There is a door gunner on each side of the Huey firing the 60s to cover the extraction. They both have shooting of d8 and Hose 'Em Down. Ground fire peppers the Huey from all directions, each round the Huey is in range, roll damage from 8 AK hits (keep in mind that Wildcat has the Ace Edge so he can spend bennies to soak Wounds done to the chopper). As soon as the whole team is onboard Wildcat jerks the chopper into the air and starts to climb to safety.



### Captain "Wildcat" Barnowe

Cpt. Barnowe is an excellent helicopter pilot who has served in Vietnam for over two years. His service record is less than perfect and he's had several clashes with his superiors, but he has also been awarded several medals for bravery and actions above and beyond the call of duty. Wildcat is a good natured man with a smirk always on his face. He is very loyal to his friends and will do anything to help them out, even disobey his superiors if need be.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Piloting d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Charisma:** +2

**Hindrances:** Loyal

**Edges:** Ace, Charismatic

**Gear:** Flight suit, flight helmet, S&W .38, aircrew flak vest (+3/+6).

### Aftermath

Once they are picked up by Air America or extracted by Wildcat, they return to base with their findings. The eggheads are fascinated by the idol, if it is returned. The buzz over Ho Chi Minh's death is difficult to keep under wraps. Eventually, it comes out in the news that Minh died in his home.

# \*The Princess and the Dragon

**Date:** December 1970.

**Notes:** Phoenix mission.

Contacts have led Phoenix to believe a shaman in the central mountainous region may have information of an arcane nature critical to understanding the nature of things in the jungle. The team is sent to interview him.

## Briefing

*We've been investigating everything we can find on the history—arcane and mundane—of this region. You know about the violence that's been here since as long as humans have recorded history, well, it seems the locals do, too. There's a man in one of the remote villages who told one of the officers he could tell us the secret of the jungle. The officer included that in his report and it came to our attention. We're sending you to talk to this guy and figure out if he's real or just a crackpot.*

**Enemy Forces:** *The area has light activity. It's not a free fire zone, so be certain of your targets. Avoid contact if you can. You're not on a body count.*

**Support:** *General support only. We're under the radar on this one.*

**Weather:** *Hot and humid. Have fun.*

**Equipment:** *Whatever you think you need for a week or so in the bush.*

## Mission

The team is dropped into a secure LZ in the central highlands near the border with Cambodia. They have a two-day march to reach the village in question. Use the normal rules for travelling in the country.

## The Village

This village is getting used to contact with Americans, though it first saw white people less than a year before. The headman—an extremely old, wizened man—is brought as soon as the GIs are spotted. He speaks French and Vietnamese, but no English. He invites the team to join the village for their community dinner. The food consists of rice and the entrails of a pig cooked into a stew. It would be rude of the heroes to refuse to participate in the meal.

After dining, he asks if the heroes have any "happy smoke" (marijuana) with them. If so, the

headman offers to join the team in enjoying a smoke. If not, he expresses disappointment, but invites the team to join him around a fire. The headman tells the following tale.

*"Long ago, after the world began and the dragon and the princess separated to the sea and the mountains, an even more ancient spirit saw the world and desired it. The dragon saw the spirit's evil and forbade it, and the princess saw her husband's choice and also denied it. The spirit struggled, but the dragon and the princess were mighty, and their word forestalled it*

*But the spirit never gave up. It could not come here, but it could touch the people and the land. Many have fought and died in this place for many, many monsoons. Even the ancient word of the dragon and the princess cannot hold back the evil in the face of so much hate and death.*

*Last monsoon, I dreamed of white faces fighting this ancient spirit. Then white faces came to my village. I told the white men's headman that I am of the sons of the dragon and can provide ancient protections for those who would fight the evil. Is that what you desire?"*

If the team says yes, the headman tells the team to wait and walks to one of the huts. He returns with a set of needles and ink pots.

"Ancient protections to fight an ancient spirit."

He shows the team a tattoo on his upper arm and says, "This is the symbol of the dragon, who has great strength and wisdom. If I give you this symbol, you will gain some of the dragon's strength." The tattoo is a traditional Vietnamese dragon.

If the team does not object, the headman burns incense and chants quietly as he inscribes the tattoos on the soldiers, one on each of their upper arms. As the tattoos are completed on the last soldier, the entire group falls asleep.

They awake the next morning with clear heads and, strangely, no anxiety at having slept without a watch. The village and the villagers are gone, but the headman is squatting and tending the fire. As the team picks themselves up, he looks each of them in the eye, nods once, smiles, then rises from his crouch and walks into the jungle. No amount of pursuit turns up any sign of the headman.

## Aftermath

The team may return to the LZ, with encounters generated as normal. Extraction and a return to base are without incident.



## \* Son Tay

**Date:** November 20, 1970.

A Top Secret mission has been prepared to rescue POWs from Son Tay prison, just 23 miles from Hanoi. The heroes' team is attached to the unit conducting the raid as there is reason to suspect their unique experiences and talents may be required.

The raid proceeds as expected, and at first it is believed there are no POWs. Then the real fate of the prisoners is uncovered as the heroes examine the compound...

### Briefing

*Colonel "Bull" Simons is leading a team of Special Forces troops in a raid against Son Tay, a suspected POW camp near Hanoi. Very near Hanoi. About 23 miles away, in fact.*

*This mission is Top Secret. A SpecOp team—the Blueboys—has been training for this mission for months, and they don't even know where they're going. We're sending you as an attached unit. They're going to bust in and open the walls, then you're going in. We want the specialized intel only you can provide.*

*Vu Linh Pham, one of the top men in the arcane arts in North Vietnam, was spotted at this camp scant days ago. If he's got an interest in this camp, so does Phoenix. Go in and see what's there. Simons' team believes they are there to rescue POWs, and they are, if any are still alive. You're going to be there to get the whole story.*

**Enemy Forces:** *Heavy. This close to Hanoi, there are a number of NVA divisions. The element of surprise is on your side however and you don't have to bear the brunt of the fighting. The SpecOps team is there for that.*

**Support:** *You'll have air support standing by. An A1 Skyraider is standing by overhead. Make sure you don't get in his way.*

**Weather:** *Clear skies and a quarter moon. The rainy season is over, so conditions should be near ideal.*

**Equipment:** *Gear up for a raid. There's no chance of walking out of North Vietnam, so don't plan for it. Take only what you need for the operation.*

## The Mission

The helicopters are slated to land in and near Son Tay. The Special Forces team (the Blueboys) is deployed in three helos, the heroes in a fourth, an HH-53. One of the helicopters begins the mission with a crash landing inside the compound walls. The heroes must fight their way in from outside the camp.

### Son Tay POW Camp

Son Tay is a collection of about 20 low, single-story buildings surrounded by a 7' high fence and clustered amidst a number of tall trees. At each of the four corners of the compound is a 20-foot guard tower. Rice paddies stand to all sides of the camp, giving guards a clear view of all approaches. The Song Con river runs nearby, just over the fields from the camp.

After a long, night-time helicopter flight, the team approaches Son Tay.

*Your pilot flies you in behind the other helicopters and you see the flares from the C-130 light up the night sky. For a moment you squint against the brightness as your eyes adjust.*

*The miniguns of all the helicopters begin firing and suppress the guard towers. Soon, two of the towers have burst into flames. Moments later, a third follows suit. You watch the helicopter assigned to land inside the compound as its rotors get fouled in the tall trees. It drops like a stone.*

*Moments later, your helicopter descends and you feel the thump as it contacts the ground. You deploy immediately, looking left and right.*

*Something's wrong. One of the choppers should be just to your right, about 50 yards from the camp. It's not there. Then you hear the zip of a bullet passing near your head. One of the guard towers is apparently still intact.*

The heroes must deal with one sniper and an MG in the tower, both under Heavy Cover. If they are unable to take out the enemy in five rounds, one of the Blueboys hits the tower with an RPG, putting an end to the threat.

One of the helicopters—Simons' in fact—landed near a collection of buildings across the fields from Son Tay. The soldiers on that chopper do not participate in the raid as they are engaged by the panicky forces housed there. This means the heroes are going to carry a heavier fighting load than expected.

## The Field

The team is assigned to stay in the paddie field until the Blueboy element blows the wall, then they are to move inside the mostly-secure compound and perform their intel operation.

Allow each character a Notice roll at -2 as they wait. Success notes that the field they are in is dotted with freshly planted seedlings. A Knowledge (Occult) roll indicates that the seedlings are moon plants, which are often mentioned in writings associated with transformations triggered by the moon.

There are two marsh lurkers hiding under the water among the plants, protecting Pham's new garden. If the characters poke around too much they spring into action. Let the characters make opposed Notice rolls with the creatures' Stealth. The lurkers have the drop on any who fail.

Any amount of digging through the muck reveals that the plant has been buried in the mouth of a fresh corpse—the corpse of an American POW. A quick count shows around 80 plants in the field. This realization requires a Guts check.

A second Knowledge (Occult) roll at -4 allows a character to realize they must uproot each of the plants to prevent the formation of some kind of plant-zombie hybrid. This effort takes one minute per plant.

As the team waits, a truck careens down a nearby road, headed for the camp. It has six NVA soldiers on it, armed, but Fatigued (-1) by a long day of travel. They have an RPD and one of the soldiers works as an assistant gunner. They spot the heroes' helicopter and deploy against a small embankment—giving them Medium Cover—at a range of about 30". They harass the heroes with fire until they are rendered ineffective. If the grunts have not yet dealt with the Marsh Lurkers, they will attack a round or two after the firefight begins.

Other nearby units are similarly engaged, though none heavily. The heroes are on their own with these opponents.

## Fighting in Son Tay

The wall blows as expected after a few minutes. The team from the chopper who landed near the heroes immediately runs for the opening and the Phoenix agents can pick their way through the field of horror and do the same.

Once inside, the commander of BlueBoy is assigning incoming elements to specific tasks. The team is given the Lab while the rest of the soldiers keep the barracks under steady fire and work to clear the other buildings.

The lab is staffed by three Vietnamese Sorcerers and a four Super Soldiers. They have standard equipment, are under Light Cover in the doorway and behind an overturned table, and fight to the death.

Once the team defeats the defenders, the base is secured by the rest of the force.

## Camp Locations

**1) Guard Tower:** Each corner of the camp is guarded by a tall watch tower manned by two sentries with a mounted MG. A large spotlight is mounted in each tower powered by the camp generator.

**2) Stores:** The camp's supplies are kept here. Barrels of gasoline and crates of ammunition are stacked against the west wall. Medical supplies and a couple of boxes of US tinned food stand on shelves lining the other walls, while two sacks of rice are stacked on the floor. The northeast corner of the room is dominated by an ancient generator, which hums noisily day and night, providing the camp with its feeble supply of electricity.

**3) Kitchen:** The small kitchen has a field stove and several large pans. The smell of fish sauce pervades the room.

**4) Barracks (4 different buildings):** Rows of bunk beds fill the long rooms which comprise these buildings. The Blueboy team has cleared the barracks before the heroes arrive.



**5) Interrogation Room:** This room contains a single simple folding metal table and a pair of chairs. A simple device hooked up to the camp's electricity supply allows shocks to be administered to the POWs.

In a sack hanging from a nail pounded into the door frame, there are a number of wooden nails similar to those found at Xuan Nhan.

**6) HQ:** On the east wall of this room is hung a gigantic flag of the People's Republic of Vietnam. A simple desk and chair stand in the south end of the room.

**7) Lab:** This building smells of rich soil but with an undercurrent of death and decay. There are several cots, a desk against one wall, and a table under a long window which holds dozens of moon plants.

The desk contains many pages with Vietnamese writing on them. Anyone who reads Vietnamese understands quickly that they are experimental records. A Smarts roll for such a character reveals the following procedure:

*Subject must be deceased. Best results from slow, painful death with a minimum of damage. Bury subject with plant specimen in mouth. Subject must be in a vertical position. Do not disturb the plant. It must remain inside the subject's mouth while growing. At next full moon, animation begins. Subject quickly become fully functional. Full analysis of results in journal MPL-0031.*

*Resulting subject compliant to occult controls.*

The window under which the moon plants sit allows them to catch the moonlight. The flickering of the parachute flares outside causes the plants to cast weird, disturbing shadows on the table and floor.

## Aftermath

The team is pressured to leave as soon as possible. No obvious sign of Vu Linh Pham's presence is found, though the experiments at Son Tay certainly bear his mark.

Should the team recover the papers, the full details of the moon walkers are analyzed by the brain trust and the team is given complete information on the abominations.

The discovery of the moon walkers is immediately classified. All official documentation and reports regarding the Son Tay raid report that no POWs were found and they are assumed to have been moved prior to the raid.

Whether or not the heroes dug up the moon plants will impact the forces they face in Operation BACKDOOR.

## \*The Book of Shan

**Date:** Winter 1970

The NVA has an operation under way in the Quong Nam province which was discovered by an LRRP. The team is sent to join an ARVN company and cross a river with them in amphibious APCs.

Once across the river, the team faces patrols and ambushes on their way to their destination. The heroes discover a massive earthen construction under way in the midst of an area cleared of jungle growth. The Vietnamese sorcerer Vu Linh Pham and a company of NVA are here, and Pham has the Book of Shan.

## Briefing

*We're sending you north to meet a company of ARVNs to investigate a site flagged by an LRRP. You'll cross the Song Thu Bon river about 5 clicks upriver from Liberty Bridge. Your target is 5 clicks on the other side of the river. Something big is being constructed there. Find out what it is and then blow it to Hell.*

**Enemy Forces:** Heavy. There's lots of activity in this area.

**Support:** We have howitzers dedicated to this mission and you can call on general support if you need it.

**Attachments:** One Company of ARVN infantry.

**Weather:** Hot. What did you expect?

**Equipment:** Whatever you like. The ARVNs are moving in M113s and you'll be joining them.

## Mission

The team arrives at the LZ and rendezvous with the ARVN unit as expected. The company is ready to go as soon as the team is. The team can deploy itself in the APCs however it wishes. There are 15 total vehicles with approximately 120 soldiers.

## River Crossing

There is no contact prior to the river. They are forced to cross in a double-line at most as the far bank is too steep for the M113s outside a stretch about 30 feet (5") wide. The river is 40 yards (20") wide at this point. When the lead pair of vehicles is 5" from the shoreline, a force of NVA opens fire. They have two RPK machine guns built into bunkers and 2 RPG-7 teams with a half-dozen RPG-7s each. In addition, there are another 20 riflemen hidden in the trees and

behind makeshift bunkers scattered over the slope leading up from the river. The goal of the ambush is to disable some of the vehicles. The NVA soldiers fall back once one of the vehicles reaches the near shore.

As the final vehicle crosses the river, a marsh lurker floats in behind it, looking for any stragglers or hoping to pluck a soldier off the back of one of the APCs. If everyone is locked up tight, they may not even notice the lurker and it goes away hungry.

### To the Site

Another ambush is set up for the unit with whatever was left from the ambush at the river, reinforced with 10 additional riflemen and another dozen RPG-7s. This ambush uses the terrain for fortification but does not have the established bunkers. Once again, this group falls back if pressed.

The remainder of the travel to the site can be as difficult or as easy as desired. Once they have a chance to scout the enemy position, recon reveals a reinforced company of NVA dug in at the site. Vu Linh Pham is also there, overseeing the construction.

The site itself at present is a collection of a few huts in a cleared area 100 yards on a side, and the beginnings of a wood foundation dug into the jungle floor.

### The Battle

The heroes and their allies must take the construction site in order to investigate it. They must drive the NVA soldiers away. Because there are potentially 250 combatants, it is best to run this using the Mass Battle rules from *Savage Worlds*.

**Tokens:** Count the number of ARVN left after the ambushes and treat them as 1:1 equivalents to the NVA troops. There are 180 NVA. Figure tokens normally.

**Modifiers:** The NVA are dug in pretty well, so the allies have a -2 to their Battle rolls. The APCs are equivalent to light cover—the NVA suffer a -1. The 105s count as +2 artillery.

**Characters:** Any of the character may act as the commander, or they may permit the ARVN captain to lead the battle. The captain has Knowledge (Battle) d6 and Spirit d6.

The NVA have three characters: Vu Linh Pham and two sorcerers. Pham is a Legendary character for the purposes of Mass Battles, so rolls his Faith with a +4. The other two sorcerers use the standard profile and are considered Seasoned. The NVA commander has Knowledge (Battle) d6 and Spirit d8.

**Support:** If the heroes call in support, a pair of Spectres are sent and arrive the next round (or

the first round if the call went out before the battle starts). The Spectres add +2 to the US' battle rolls, and can stay on station for two turns.

**Retreats:** Pham is not willing to die for this project. He is the first to bug out if the results are Retreat or Rout.

**Timing:** Each round represents an hour of fighting.

### The Site

Pham was unable to clear his arcane trinkets when he exited and the heroes can gather up a number of small idols and odd daggers.

There are two items of particular interest: Pham's notebook (or one of them) and the Book of Shan.

Heroes are permitted Common Knowledge rolls or Knowledge (Occult) rolls at +1 to recognize that the Book of Shan is a truly rare find, and that it was previously in the hands of the Japanese. The brainiacs back at base would probably rather retrieve this than destroy it.

Pham's notebook is only decipherable to a character with Knowledge (Vietnamese) on a successful roll. Of note is the following passage:

*The promise is too great to ignore. We can follow the lines to the Schroeder point. Must sacrifice on lines to seek direction.*

The rest of the arcane sketches, notes and random comments support the idea that Pham is seeking out a Schroeder point.

### Aftermath

The demo work is done and the site is blown sky high. More importantly, the Book of Shan is no longer in Pham's hands. Orders come in to abandon the site and retreat back across the river. The NVA are no longer there, but the marsh lurker can still be floating around if you wish.

### Loup Garou

**Date:** Early 1971.

The unit is undertaking a standard Search and Destroy mission when they come across a Vietnamese village in upheaval. The villagers have found two of their young men mutilated in the jungle. The villagers tell the soldiers this is not the first time this has happened and that a terrifying jungle spirit is haunting the village. They say it is a punishment for supporting the ARVN and beg the soldiers to investigate.

### Briefing

*Your unit is assigned to take part in a battalion-scale search and destroy mission, sweeping down the eastern side of the*

river to the town of Binh Giap and into the jungle beyond. A blocking force of the 1st Air Cavalry has been moved into position. You should attempt to initiate contact and drive them toward the blocking force.

**Enemy Forces:** The area you are to operate in is known as a regional stronghold for the enemy and main force VC units have been encountered here as recently as yesterday. With such a large operation, contact is inevitable and must be maintained long enough to bring decisive firepower to bear.

**Support:** The company mortars are dedicated to your unit. You will ride to the area in Hueys and an ARVN interpreter has been assigned to your unit to help communication with the locals. Remember that this is a search and destroy mission, but that doesn't mean burn down every village you come to. Search the place, then move on—it's the enemy we want to destroy!

**Weather:** Fine dry weather is expected for the next week. Temperatures are expected to reach 110 today and tomorrow so carry plenty of water. Platoon leaders, make sure your men take regular short breaks, but ensure they keep their helmets and flak jackets on. We don't want casualties from sloppy discipline.

**Equipment:** Metal detectors are available; mines have been a problem in this area.

## The Mission

The unit's role in the Search and Destroy quickly becomes unimportant as other participating units at the other end of the advancing line make heavy contact. The soldiers' part of the operation is straightforward and uneventful until they discover the legend of the werewolf.

As the unit reaches the village of Binh Giap, they discover the locals are very distraught. Two bodies lie in the center of the settlement, horribly mutilated. If questioned, the headman claims the villagers are ARVN supporters and say they are being terrorized by a 'forest demon' and ask for help. In fact there is a European werewolf at large in the jungles and he is stalking the people of the village.

The loup garou is an old French soldier named Jean Mauvoisin. He was mauled by a surviving Nazi "wehrwolf" in '47, and after several years managed to get his curse mostly under control.

He enlisted in the French army and ended up in Indochina. One day, his unit was ambushed on

patrol and Jean was horribly wounded. He knew the only way to live was to transform into the beast. Unfortunately, the pain and carnage caused him to lose control. When he came to, not only were the enemy soldiers dead, but so were what was left of his own squad.

Jean knew he could not return to his comrades but still wanted to serve his country. He carries on a private guerrilla war against the Viet Minh and now the Viet Cong. Jean no longer feels able to control the beast within, so if encountered in his human form he attempts to lose or drive off any who may offer to help him. He feels he is too much of a liability to any group and cannot be convinced otherwise.

Jean has discovered the peasants of Binh Giap are in fact VC supporters and is picking them off a few at a time. The VC headman tries to push the heroes into killing the 'demon' as quickly as possible and then tries to hurry them on their way with stories of VC nearby. If the soldiers get suspicious, the villagers turn on them and the village erupts in a vicious firefight.



### Jean Mauvoisin

Jean appears as anyone who has been living in the jungle on his own for years would; he looks like hell! Jean's clothing is tattered and dirty. He



may be found with any VC firearm or other equipment. In his loup garou form Jean is half-man, half-wolf, standing upright with nasty fangs and claws. When running as a loup garou, he drops to all fours like an animal.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidate d6, Notice d10, Streetwise d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

- **Alertness:** +2 Notice
- **Danger Sense:** Just before an attack, ambush or surprise he gets a Notice roll at -2. If successful, the character knows something is up and may take appropriate actions.
- **Lycanthrope:** Under stress, Jean changes to the powerful form of the loup garou, but this is a blessing and a curse, as he is left with only crude animal intelligence in a powerful body. Under the influence of fear or stress, Jean will transform. To resist the change, Jean must make a Spirit roll each round modified by -2 each consecutive round (-4 if Jean is wounded), until he is out of the situation. To willfully cause the change, Jean must make a Vigor roll at -4, with a +2 each round he attempts to trigger the change.

Nights of the full moon automatically cause Jean to change at sunset. The transformation back to Jean will only occur with a -6 Spirit roll, or sunrise after a night of the full moon.



## The Loup Garou

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidate d10, Notice d10, Stealth d10, Tracking d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite or Claw :** Str +2
- **Fleet Footed:** The werewolf rolls a d10 when running instead of a d6
- **Regeneration (Fast):** The werewolf makes a natural healing roll every round, except on wounds inflicted by silver weapons.
- **Superior Nose:** As a loup garou, Jean possesses the keen sense of smell of a wolf and so receives a +4 to track prey if he can use scent.
- **Fear:** Seeing a real-life werewolf tends to shake most soldiers. Anyone who sees the werewolf must make a Fear check.
- **Weakness:** Silver weapons do double damage to the loup garou, and he cannot regenerate that damage, it must be healed normally.

- **Mind-Numbing:** The truly horrific appearance of these things causes rolls on the Psychosis table to be +2.

If the unit heads off into the jungles to find the "forest demon", the villagers send one of their young trappers out, who leads the soldiers out to the spot where the last two victims were found.

Jean immediately picks up the scent of the VC and tracks the group. He holds off attacking at first, confused by the presence of US soldiers with the VC villagers. But his self-control cannot last for long. If the unit do not attack the village, he assumes they are traitors and resolves to destroy them as well.

## Aftermath

If the unit kills Jean, they have managed to make their time in this province more difficult. The fear caused by the werewolf had kept the VC sympathizers in check. With Jean out of the way, enemy activity in the area increases greatly, despite the otherwise successful S&D operation.

If the unit finds out the truth about the loup garou and leaves Jean to continue his work in the jungle, they have a valuable ally. If they keep him in food and clothing, they may be able to convince him to come in from the wilds. In this case, their destruction of the village is a valuable part of the S&D operation and each of the soldiers receives an additional point of experience.

## CAT Fight

**Date:** Early 1971

The unit is sent to a site thought to be of great significance to the VC and are ready to destroy it when a Black CAT team arrives with instructions to defend it. Someone is going to fail to complete their mission. The players have the easier mission to fulfill but the Black CATs are not opponents to be messed with lightly.

**Note:** If the group has joined the Black CATs this mission can be flipped so the Phoenix unit becomes the antagonists.

## Briefing

*Kit Carson scouts have indicated that the target of today's mission is a site of great supernatural interest. Two B52 missions have been launched but several recent LRRP missions have shown the site wasn't destroyed. We believe that if the VC were aware of this site, it would unlock some major energy and give them access to more supernatural power than we have*

seen them use to date. The LRRP teams think they were assessing possible LZs for a routine Search and Destroy mission, the location of the site must remain a closely guarded secret until you arrive there and destroy it.

We can get you within twenty five klicks of the site by Huey; from there you're on foot.

**Enemy Forces:** The LRRPs report minor patrols and no significant camps anywhere nearby.

**Support:** The site is out of range of any Fire Support Bases so artillery is out of the question. There may be air support available, as the site is in a Free Fire Zone.

**Weather:** The weather is changeable this week, with a tropical storm sweeping in off the coast. Heavy rains are likely. If this storm does move inland, the number of sorties flown will drop off dramatically. Don't rely on air support.

**Equipment:** This mission could take three days. Resupply is unlikely, so make sure you pack sufficient rations and ammo for a long mission. You might consider Soviet weaponry to allow you to pick up ammo as you go. Pack a lot of explosives, you are going to have to destroy the site once you get there. You'll have to carry around 200lbs of C4 to make a good job of the demolition so you're going to be pretty heavily laden.

## Mission

The Huey taking the unit on the mission makes several false landings to disguise the true LZ and, after dropping the unit in a small clearing, makes several dummy drops before returning to base. As the rotor sounds fade, the soldiers are alone in the jungle.

The 25 klick walk through the dense undergrowth is taken at a painstaking pace. If the unit travels at full speed, they sacrifice some of their noise discipline. At half speed, they can move quietly. Each hour, roll once on the Country Encounter Table. When the unit approaches the site, the find an ancient and elaborately carved temple, covered with tangled jungle vines.

## The Temple

A central circular building, topped with a crumbling pointed dome, the sides of the temple are almost invisible under the centuries of jungle growth. Around the outside of the main building are four tall partially collapsed towers, each with the remains of a tall stepped steeple. The

undergrowth has tried to claim this site over the years and the damage caused by the B52s is visible but not substantial.

Inside the temple, great holes in the domed roof allow shafts of light to stream in, throwing the delicate carvings into stark relief. The cavorting figures on the walls depict hideous rituals and strange creatures. A Smarts roll from a soldier who has seen ape demons will allow him to recognize the crude figures as the foul beasts. A large stone chamber in the center of the room is sealed with a heavy circular stone, carved with mystical symbols.

## New Arrivals

As the heroes explore the temple, the Black CAT team arrives. Having got wind of the unit's mission, Janus dispatched a rival team to see that any artifacts are removed from the site intact. They intend to secure the area and take their time as they explore the ruins and determine its importance.

If the unit left any sentries, have them make an opposed Notice roll against the CAT team's Stealth. Failing to detect the approaching Americans could cause the two units to open fire before they identify each other. If the heroes didn't leave any sentries, they are surprised to find themselves surrounded and ordered out of the temple by the CATs.



What happens next is very much up to the players. The heroes' task is the easier mission to complete. They must demolish the site, which can be done relatively quickly, provided they have their explosives with them. However, the CATs are not going to let the soldiers set the explosives and it is likely a tense stand-off will occur as the two teams size each other up. One team is going to fail in its mission.

### Survival of the Fittest

The Black CAT team leader tries almost everything to avoid shooting the heroes (not out of any sense of camaraderie, but rather because he doesn't want to bring the local VC down on them, revealing the location of the site to the enemy). He will not, however, permit the heroes to set their explosives; if they persist in trying, a firefight will ensue.



### Black CAT Team

The team consists of the same number of members as the heroes' unit. The operatives are highly trained spooks and are all "clean" with no US markings. All use Vietnamese-issue weaponry. One member has an RPD and one has an RPG7, with team members carrying extra ammo for both.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidate d6, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Live off the Land (Always find food).

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty

**Equipment:** Each Black CAT carries an AK47, two rockets for the RPG7, four grenades, 300 rounds for the AKs and a 100 round belt for the RPD.

If the unit thinks to call for it, they may be able to get hold of close air support. Whether they choose to bring it in or not depends on their attitude to their fellow Americans. One alternative would be to direct an air strike from the ground onto the temple. If they can arrange two air strikes, the main building and the secrets it hides can be destroyed utterly.

### It Ain't Over

The fighting should be hard and furious, with these well-trained units making full use of cover and concealment. If it looks as though they are beaten, the Black CATs fall back into the jungle and observe. If the unit believes them gone and plants its explosives before fleeing the area, the CAT survivors creep back to the site and

dismantle the demolition before it can destroy the temple. The first the heroes know of this is when their expected pyrotechnics fail to detonate.

If the firefight lasts very long, the CATs know it is certain to alert the VC, particularly if there are airstrikes called in, and they bug out at the earliest opportunity. Sure enough, soon after they leave, the VC arrive, a squad at first but soon in force. The unit must make a thorough job of destroying the site and then escape into the forest, evading any arriving Viet Cong. Roll on the Country Encounter Table and add +2 to the roll. If the team go three rounds without any kind of contact, they have successfully evaded their VC pursuers. All they have to do is put some distance between them and the ruined site.

### Aftermath

Following the mission, the unit must still return to a secure LZ and be picked up. The local VC are swarming the site, so the trip out is easy. If the site was completely destroyed, the soldiers each get one additional experience point.

## \*Operation BACKDOOR

**Date:** Spring 1971.

**Notes:** Phoenix mission.

**Hooks:** Vu Linh Pham, Ho Chi Minh, Plain of Jars, Phoenix Rises, The Temple of Aran, The Princess and the Dragon, Son Tay, Epic climax

### Overview

Observation patrols have determined that another major concentration of arcane activity is occurring in Laos, this time at the fabled Plain of Jars. Worse, the CASSANDRA GLASS indicates that this is the location of the Schroeder Point where ley lines cross. Given the exceptional amount of activity and the potential for arcane breakthroughs at this location, the heroes are sent to prevent any current and future activity, and are given a tactical nuclear device to ensure success.

Once on site, the team discovers a hornet's nest of sorcerers, demons, and NVA. Worse, the body of Ho Chi Minh—thought lost to another dimension—is also on the scene and appears to be the focus of the ritual. The heroes must prevent the destruction of the world and are certain to learn at least part of the secrets of the Plain of Jars.



## Briefing

*We've had an operation called CASSANDRA GLASS going for several months. We've brought in researchers to evaluate the information we've been retrieving from the field and other sources. Some of them lost their minds, but the mostly-sane ones have made a breakthrough. There are lines of force between this world and another called ley lines and they crisscross all over the globe. Where they intersect a nexus forms—called a Schroeder point after one of the Nazi psychos. The eggheads say there's a sort of...weakness in the fabric between the worlds at those points. I've had glimpses of that other world and so have you. It's not a nice place.*

*There is a nexus in Laos at a place called the Plain of Jars. Charlie may have something big in the works, because he's there in force. We had a team in close and they spotted Giap. Even better—you'll love this—they have Ho Chi Minh's body there. Don't ask me how, 'cause I don't know. They called in B-52s, but the strike didn't damage Charlie's temple, even on a direct hit, so the team did it back to base.*

*We're sending you in. You've gotta take that temple down.*

*Take a pack-carried nuke with you. We want to make certain this gets done. It looks like you'll have to take it inside the temple to guarantee its destruction. With luck, you'll be able to detonate the nuke remotely. Detonate it either way.*

*This trip's courtesy of Spec Ops Air so get your gear together and may God go with you.*

**Enemy Forces:** *Heavy. They've committed more to this than they did against the French back in '52. Even without this concentration, you're walking right through a main thoroughfare of the Ho Chi Minh trail and can expect to see plenty of Charlie. Do your best to see that he never sees you.*

**Support:** *Once again, you'll be in Laos, so you're on your own. I'll say a prayer for you, though.*

**Weather:** *Hot, but probably not rainy. Thank goodness for small favors.*

**Equipment:** *Standard gear plus one B54 Special Atomic Demolitions Munition (58 pounds). Be ready for several days in the jungle.*

## Mission

The LZ is secure and the team hits the ground safely. The Plain of Jars is some 75 klicks to the northeast. During the subsequent journey, roll on the Country Encounters Table twice each day and once each night. One encounter is required and occurs when the team is a day away from the Plain of Jars.

### The Perimeter

The NVA has a number of patrols in the area around the Plain of Jars. While the team is no doubt adept at avoiding these patrols, there is one patrol that they cannot dodge, because chances are they can't see it coming.

### Jungle Lurker (10)

These creatures are a blend of plant, animal and...something else. The creatures hide in the jungle and move slowly so they don't give themselves away. They also work together to restrain and attack more dangerous prey, showing more than just animal cunning.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Notice d8, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

#### Special Abilities

- **Camouflage:** A jungle lurker that is not moving blends into the surrounding vegetation. If it succeeds on a Stealth vs. Notice roll, it gains the drop for the first round of a fight.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken; no additional damage from called shots; bullets and other piercing weapons do half damage; immune to disease and poison (though not defoliants).
- **Claws:** Str+2.
- **Fear:** Jungle lurkers, once seen for what they are, force Guts checks.
- **Size +1:** Jungle lurkers are several hundred pounds of animal and vegetable matter.
- **Vines:** +4 to Grappling attempts.
- **Weakness (defoliants):** A jungle lurker takes 2d8 damage per round of contact with any defoliant.

### The Pickets

The plain is relatively open, though there are a few stands of trees. Much of the terrain around the plain is forested, however, and the NVA has pickets established about 25 yards inside this perimeter. Wherever the heroes approach, they must bypass or otherwise circumvent a platoon of regular NVA soldiers on guard duty.

## The Plain of Jars

The team arrives at the edge of the Plain of Jars and sees a number of troops between them and the temple. A stand of trees near the temple would permit them to move to within 50 yards (25") if they circle around to get closer, they encounter more pickets.

The temple is a simple, wooden structure built without stilts on a raised area of the rolling plain. On the roof is a statue of a snake, quite similar to the artifact the team discovered at the temple of Aran. Glowing arcane symbols are carved on the pair of pillars flanking the door and on the door frame itself.

Once the team is in position to move, a bolt of lightning comes out of the clear sky and forks to strike each and every jar on the plains. Heroes must make a Vigor roll or become Shaken.

After the lightning strike, a low buzzing arises from around the entire plain. The characters can feel the sound more than hear it. It rattles in their sternums and they can feel it in their feet. Moments later, each and every jar across the plain begins to glow. There are jars near the team, and it becomes clear as the volume of the buzzing increases that the jars are the source of the sound. On a Notice roll, any soldier with a dragon tattoo notices it is warm, though not painful. From this point onward, any soldier with the tattoo raises his Strength and Vigor one die type.

One round after the lightning strike there is a loud crack and a sudden burst, and a vague, shadowy form flies from each of the jars. These forms circle in the air momentarily then dart toward the nearest human host. Everywhere on the plain and along the pickets in the forest, the forms fly into the soldiers and merge with them. The eyes of the possessed soldiers glow a burning yellow.

At the beginning of each round, each hero must make an opposed Spirit roll against the shadows, who make a group roll using a d10 for their Spirit. The hero may add +4 to this roll if he received the Kiss of the Phoenix at Xuan Nhan. On a raise, the hero is immune to possession by these spirits. On a raise by the spirits, the hero is possessed. On any other result, the contest continues the next round. The hero is free to act during these rolls.

The possessed soldiers use a d10 Spirit and have +2 Toughness but are otherwise identical to normal NVA soldiers. They open fire on the heroes the round after they are possessed.

Two rounds later, a bolt of lightning strikes the idol on the temple roof. It begins to move.



### Daboia Idol

The arcane energies of the Plain of Jars and

the rituals inside the temple bring the idol on the roof to a sort of life.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d10(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d12+2, Notice d10

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 18 (5)

#### Special Abilities

- **Armor +5:** The idol's hide is made of stony scales.
- **Bite:** Str+3.
- **Fear -2:** The idol causes Guts checks at -2.
- **Mind-wrenching:** A soldier who must roll on the Psychosis Table after seeing the daboia idol makes the roll at +4
- **Poison -4:** Anyone who is Shaken or Wounded by the bite of the Daboia Idol must make a Vigor roll at -4 or die in six rounds.
- **Size +5:** The daboia idol is 60 feet long.

In addition to the daboia and 20 possessed soldiers, there are two North Vietnamese sorcerers who stand just inside the temple door. They also defend the temple against the heroes' approach.

There are more soldiers scattered around the plain who can turn their attentions toward the players, should you want or need more opposition.

**Note:** If the heroes did not dig up the moon plants in the Son Tay raid there are also 12 moon walkers under the control of the NVA sorcerers.

## The Temple

Inside the temple is General Giap, Vu Linh Pham, the supposedly-lost body of Ho Chi Minh, and thirteen sorcerers. (That number does not include the two who stood guard.) The ritual has just completed. Read the following to the team:

*You enter the temple and your eyes quickly adjust. The body of Ho Chi Minh lies on an altar at the front of the temple. General Giap stands at his head and Vu Linh Pham at his feet. Arrayed around the outside of a the floor stand 13 sorcerers. They all stare transfixed at the center of the room, where a Chinese symbol 15 feet across has been painted.*

Any hero who succeeds on a Knowledge (Chinese) roll, or a Common Knowledge roll at -4 recognizes the symbol as that of a portal or gate.

*A bolt of lightning crashes through the roof into the center of the symbol. You shudder from the shock and the air stinks of ozone, but much, much worse than that is what you see through where the floor used to be. You are looking into...somewhere else.*

*Another world. Another universe.*

*There are beings there. Thousands. Maybe millions. And they are crawling, loping, and flying toward you at an alarming speed. At the forefront of this mass is a great, dark shadow; a shadow that seems to suck the light in from the universe around it. Only its eyes defy the darkness, and they flicker with red, malevolent flames.*

The shadow crosses the barrier into this world first. As it does, the winds outside the temple begin to howl and rain falls, increasing in intensity until it is a torrent. The shadow makes contact with Ho Chi Minh's body, and disappears inside. Minh sits up and looks directly at the heroes, his eyes now flickering flames.

Observing the entry of the Ancient One and the demons is a Mind-wrenching event. The heroes must roll Guts at -4 or lose 2 points of Sanity. Any roll on the Psychosis Table generated by this event is at +4.

If the heroes are inclined to activate their nuclear weapon, they are welcome to do so at any time. Move ahead to Ground Zero. Otherwise, the fight is against the sorcerers, Giap, Pham, the Ancient One. The Ancient One is impervious to attack, has any power you choose, and unlimited Power Points. In short, the heroes can't win.

The Ancient One is here to turn our reality into a living Hell and he brought his friends with him. Five demons climb out of the rift between the dimensions every round. Use stats for ape demons even though each demon has a frighteningly different appearance.

Should the team run, the world is lost. The only option is to blow the nuke.

### **Ground Zero**

If the nuke is detonated, it incinerates. Minh, Pham, Giap, the demons, sorcerers, and the temple itself. This closes the gateway and seals it once again.

The heroes *may* survive the blast if they had the tortoise pendant or have been true to the Phoenix Program (your call). The former surrounds him with a protective blue glow, the latter the fiery glow of a spectral bird. In either case, the heroes clothing and weapons are *not* protected.

It's time to battle the last vestige of the Ancient One—while wearing their birthday suits.

### **To Battle an Ancient One**

The last remnant of the Ancient One rages, trapped in a temporal pause as the nuclear firestorm rages. The spirit envelops one of the soldiers at random and initiates an opposed Spirit test (it has a d12 with a d10 Wild Die). The hero adds the following to his roll:

- The character's Charisma

- Half the hero's current Sanity (round up)
- +2 if he has the Kiss of the Phoenix
- +2 if he has the Dragon Tatum
- +2 if he has the Tortoise Pendant
- Subtract any wounds or Fatigue

If the hero wins the contest—even by a single point—the Ancient One can no longer attempt to possess him.

If the Ancient One wins the opposed roll, the hero takes a Fatigue level but is otherwise ignored. On a raise, the hero is possessed.

A possessed hero feels his soul ripped from his body. It is the last thing he ever feels. Add two die types to all the hero's traits other than Spirit. Use the Ancient One's Spirit in its place (d12+2 with a d10 Wild Die).

The Ancient One attacks the other heroes with his bare hands. A fight to the death ensues. Should the body possessed by the Ancient One be killed, the shadow reappears and it again begins to attempt to possess anyone not yet immune.

If a hero thinks of it, he may attempt to rip the tortoise pendant from the neck of the possessed soldier. This is successful on a Fighting attack at -2. The body of any soldier who loses his pendant is instantly incinerated.

### **Banishment**

Should the Ancient One find itself without a potential host among the heroes, it fades with a final tooth-gnashing cry. A shock wave emanates from the Ancient One as it disappears, throwing the heroes out of the blast.

Regardless of how many rounds the fight consumes, only seconds pass outside the nuclear fire storm. Any surviving heroes find themselves thrown beyond the devastation into the jungle. They are without clothes and gear, and there are still hazards in the wilds, but the great threat is now gone.

### **Aftermath**

The heroes pick themselves up and make their way back to the LZ for an Air America flight back to base. Arcane events recede to near-normal levels in Vietnam, so the team is sent back to the World for extended R&R. Perhaps one day they will be fit to reenter normal society. Thanks to them, the portal has been closed and our world remains safe.

The United States President and his advisors recognize that the true danger in Southeast Asia has been destroyed and slowly orders the evacuation of Vietnam.

The country is distracted by Watergate and soon at peace.

For now.

# Hearts of Darkness

During their tour of duty, the usual enemy a unit faces is the Vietnamese in the form of VM, VC or NVA but there are other evils to fight. This chapter deals with the kinds of things your player characters may meet in the steaming jungles.

## Free World Forces

### Regular ARVN Trooper

Conscripted from his local village to fight for a government that meant nothing to him, the typical ARVN soldier is barely literate and ill-trained. Many of his officers are political appointees who were rarely, if ever, present. Equipped with World War II vintage weapons, it's little wonder that many ARVN soldiers fought poorly early in the war. With American training and better equipment, however, the quality of the ARVN forces improved, although their morale remained brittle if not properly supported.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Equipment:** Helmet, M1 rifle, 2 frag grenades.

### ARVN Airborne Trooper

Officially formed in 1948 by the French, ARVN paratroopers have a proud reputation as elite, fire-brigade troops, and were known as "Angels in Red Hats." This reputation was soured, however, due to their occasional use against anti-government protests.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Acclimated.

**Equipment:** Helmet, M1 rifle, 2 frag grenades.

### Montagnard Fighter

These primitive tribesmen live in the Highlands and mountains of Indochina, having been pushed out of their ancient homes by the ancestors of the present-day Vietnamese. Scorned and looked down upon by the lowlanders, the Montagnards are a natural paramilitary force recruited by American Special Forces to help wage a counterinsurgency campaign. Accustomed to living on little or nothing, these men are superb guerilla fighters and fierce warriors who neither expect nor offer quarter.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Acclimated, Woodsman.

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty.

**Equipment:** M1 rifle, knife.

### RF/PF Soldier

The irregular militia units raised by the Special Forces such as the RF/PF soldiers or the CIDGs. These troops were usually fiercely anticommunist and Special Forces leadership forges them into an effective force of irregulars.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Equipment:** A mix of US WWII small arms.

### Australian/New Zealand Soldier

Beginning in 1962, Australia began sending troops into South Vietnam in the form of advisors. By 1965, ground units began engaging in combat with tier numbers eventually peaking at 7,672 troops in-country. By late 1967 Australia had deployed an infantry regiment and battalion, medium tank squadron, SAS detachment, and a host of other supporting units, mainly based in III Corps CTZ. Australian troops served a one year tour, but entire units rotated in and out of the country, unlike the US policy of individual replacements. At the height of the war Australian units were issued US weapons to facilitate resupply.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Equipment:** M16 rifle, bayonet, 2 grenades.

### South Korean Soldier

Beginning in 1965, South Korea made a substantial contribution to the Free World Forces operating in South Vietnam. Two infantry divisions, a marine brigade, and a variety of support units formed the bulk of Korea's forces in the South. Based primarily in II Corps CTZ, the Korean soldiers and marines gained a fearsome reputation among their Viet Cong foes, and were the last of the Free World Forces to leave the South.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidate d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Equipment:** Helmet, M16 rifle, bayonet

## The Enemy

The Vietnamese guerillas fought fiercely in operation typified by clever and meticulous planning. After slow and painstaking preparation, the operation is executed in four lightening quick phases. Movement to the area (usually in small units that would regroup at the last minute), the attack itself, clearing the wounded and any salvageable weapons from the field, and retreating along previously agreed routes (again in small groups to aid concealment). So it is that when the US forces find the VC, they are either a large attack force executing a carefully planned assault or in multiple small units moving rapidly to or from an operation.

### VM Regional Forces/Main Force VC

Organized into actual formations such as companies and battalions, the VM Regional Forces and later the Main Force VC were the hard-core guerillas. Having received more training than their militia comrades, the Main Force units could be used as augmentation to VM Regular and NVA units.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Acclimated.

**Hindrances:** None.

**Equipment:** A mix of French and American World War II era small arms, as well as some AK-47s (for VC). RPGs and light machineguns (RPD, PK, M24/29s) are also be found at the rate of one per 12 men.

### VM Popular Forces/VC Regional Militia

These Viet Cong troops are part time soldiers, but have served weeks at a time and received rudimentary training and battle experience. Not as green as village militia, they are still not much of a match for regular military units unless present in overwhelming numbers.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Acclimated.

**Equipment:** A mix of World War II era small arms, as well as some AK-47s (for VC).

### Village VM/VC Militia

Farmers by day and guerillas by night, these men and women can only serve for limited periods of time. Not well trained, they serve as cannon fodder for the cause, and are relegated to laying booby traps and mining roads and other infrastructure. Rarely do they put up a fight against a military unit, preferring to melt away into the surroundings in order to come back out of the wood work and continue operations when the coast is clear.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** None.

**Equipment:** A mix of World War II era small arms, although each has at least 2 hand grenades.

## VM Regular/NVA Soldier

The VM Regular is Chinese-trained and equipped, and is a disciplined and effective opponent. Capable of prodigious feats in horrendous conditions, the NVA soldier makes up for a lack of technology with a jungle savvy that constantly stymies his enemies.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8,

Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Shooting d, Guts d8, Sneak d6, Notice d10

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Acclimated.

**Equipment:** PPSH-41 (VM) or AK-47 (NVA), 2 fragmentation grenades. 12-man squads are equipped with support weapons such as RPGs, RPD MGs, or even mortars or recoilless rifles. At a base or on a larger operation, a company may be equipped with a DShK heavy MG.



## Vu Linh Pham

Vu studied the occult for many years in the jungles of Vietnam. He met Ho Chi Minh at a young age and took the aging occultist as a mentor. He has grown in power and is fascinated with the prospect of extending and controlling life, even after death.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10,

Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Faith d12, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Healing d8, Knowledge (Chinese) d6, Knowledge (English) d4, Knowledge (French) d8, Knowledge (German) d4, Knowledge (Arcane) d12+1, Notice d8, Shooting d6

**Hindrances:** Quirk (unconcerned by human suffering), Ugly.

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Miracles), Extra Power Points x 5

**Powers:** *deflection, fear, obscure, puppet, stun, zombie*

**Power Points:** 35

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Gear:** various occult items and an MI911A1 he took from a dead American officer in 1965.

## Bestiary

The war in Indochina, coupled with its proximity to the ancient sites of power that dot with antediluvian energies, caused a number of unexplainable phenomena. These manifest themselves through the constant release of dark energy before and during the war years. The following section provides a glimpse of some of these entities. Of course, the numbers of such creatures were beyond cataloging, and some appeared only briefly before returning to the hells from which they spawned.

## Ape Demons

The ancient Cham Empire summoned and bound demons to guard their temples and treasure repositories. Originally bound to the will of the priests, the North Vietnamese have found some of the sacred stones that allow the possessor to awaken and control these beasts. Some have been set loose from the Champa temples they originally guarded deep in the jungle. The NVA are trying to train these things to be guards for bases and tunnels.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8,

Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

**Special Abilities**

- **Bite:** Str +1
- **Claws:** Str +2
- **Fear -2:** The vicious features of these ancient horrors is truly a terrifying sight.
- **Mind-Numbing:** The truly horrific appearance of these things causes rolls on the Psychosis Table to be +2.
- **Size +2:** Ape demons weigh over 500 pounds.

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit arrives at an ancient temple to find a group of North Vietnamese archaeologists who have discovered an almost intact set of tablets giving them the power to control the Ape Demons bound to guard the temple. If the unit can seize the tablets, Janus would be very interested to know what they can do.

## Blights

The US reaction to the increasingly frequent stories of sentient plants and living trees that attacked patrols was Operation Round-up. The countryside was doused with massive doses of herbicides in an effort to kill these supernatural manifestations. Of course, MACV-SOG needed a cover story, and defoliation to expose guerillas who hid in the thick growth was the perfect story. What the planners never expected was the insult to the land would itself give rise to "blights." These entities arose from the devastation wrought on the landscape by the herbicides.

When dormant, these creatures appear to be a pile of dead trees, twigs, brown grasses, and dust. When American or ARVN troops approach, however, the blight rears up and attacks. Strangely, they do not attack VC or NVA troops, or local villagers.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8,

Strength d10, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d10

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

## Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str +1
- **Construct:** These creatures are immune to all fear effects and called shot, and take half damage from piercing attacks such as bullets.
- **Fear:** The terror of facing a jungle come alive causes a Fear check as vines and foliage strive for payback.
- **Large:** These creature's size gives attackers +2 to hit.
- **Size +5:** Blights are massive creatures.
- **Slow:** Blights lumber along, and can't run.
- **Toxic Soup:** The residue of Agent Orange and the other herbicides lingers in the blight's components. Characters successfully struck by the blight must make a Vigor roll. Those who fail are Shaken as the toxins course through their system. Any soldier rolling a one on a Vigor die gains the Anemic Hindrance.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Blights are bone dry, and suffer double damage from flame attacks (including WP grenades).

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit is sent into the deep jungle to find the aircrew of a downed C130 flying defoliation missions. The soldiers walk through the devastated countryside but find no sign of the aircrew. At the crash site, the mangled airplane itself is covered in dead-looking vegetation as if the jungle was trying to obliterate the aircraft that poisoned it. As the unit investigates the crash site, the blights attack.

## Chopper

These horrors, summoned by NVA sorcery, resemble giant beetles with tentacles that dangle far beneath them. They are typically found over the trees near a clearing. The rapid beating of their wings sounds deceptively like helicopter rotors, so GIs under fire often move to the trees to await extraction. The choppers' tentacles reach through the foliage to snatch them up and haul them into their toothy maws.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

### Special Abilities

- **Deception:** The chopper's wings sound like the rotors of a Huey. A Notice (-2) roll means the character realizes it doesn't sound right.
- **Large:** The chopper's large size gives attackers +2 to hit.
- **Motion Detection:** The chopper detects motion through sensory nodes on it's tentacles to detect prey beneath the canopy. This is an opposed Notice roll against the target's Stealth if it's trying to hide.
- **Size +4:** Choppers are as big as Hueys.
- **Tentacles:** The chopper's long tentacles receive a +2 to grab their victims. They have a Reach of 4".
- **Fear -2:** Seeing a buddy yanked into the treetop shakes even hardened vets.



**Adventure Seeds:** The PCs are ordered to assist a unit under fire, which cannot be evacuated by air. As they double-time it to the aid of their comrades, the unit hears the beleaguered soldiers report they hear helicopters inbound and have popped smoke. When they arrive at the battle site, there is no sign of the unit, just the last of the smoke wafting away. They must figure out the mystery quick, as they soon come under fire and the choppers await.

### Crying Spirits

These eerie creatures are the spirits of soldiers who died long, agonizing deaths on the battlefield after being abandoned with disabling wounds. Left to be eaten by jungle insects, they seek revenge. Their cries for help can beguile soldiers, to come to them. They look like wounded soldiers, until they reveal themselves to be bug-infested corpses, who then roll over to embrace their prey.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

#### Special Abilities

- **Choke:** Str +1
- **Fear:** Crying spirits cause a Fear check when they reveal they are not ordinary corpses.
- **Help Me!** The piteous cries of these undead creatures can lure even the most hardened soldier to his doom. Non-Wild Cards hearing the wails must make Spirit (-4) rolls each round or move toward them at full speed until they reach the creature or make a successful check.
- **Mind-Numbing:** The truly horrific appearance of these things causes rolls on the Psychosis Table to be +2.
- **Swarm:** These creatures can fling handfuls of maggots, insects, and snakes from their rotting wounds. These act as Small Burst Template swarms. A Spirit can generate 1d4 swarms per encounter.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken. No extra damage from called shots. Half damage from bullets and piercing attacks.

**Adventure Seeds:** If the unit had to leave a dead buddy behind for any reason, have him turn into a crying spirit when the heroes go out looking for him.

### Moon Walkers

Known for a harsh brutality toward their prisoners, the NVA have discovered a Cham ritual that allows any prisoner who dies under torture to be raised from the dead. Prisoners are killed, have a seedling of a moon plant placed in their

mouths, and then buried standing during a new moon. When the full moon rises, the corpses clamber out of the ground, now half plant and half animal.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

#### Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str +1
- **Fear:** Seeing these undead horrors forces a Fear check.
- **Mind-Numbing:** Any rolls on the Psychosis table as a result of these creatures are at +2.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken. No extra damage from called shots. Half damage from bullets and piercing attacks.
- **Weakness:** Defoliants cause the moon walker to make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- **Mulch:** Their plant-like nature means the moon walker does not bleed. When killed, it turns into a pile of vegetable matter, leaving no body to be counted.

**Adventure Seeds:** If the unit lost any soldiers to NVA units, there's a chance they recognize him amongst a group of attacking moon walkers.

The characters may also be tasked to rescue a POW camp. When they arrive, they find the camp deserted, but a large field beside the camp has been planted with moon walkers and may be ready for harvest.

### Hsia Thung

A primordial race who have ruled the jungles of Indochina since time immemorial, the Snake men (Hsia Thung in their own tongue) have dwindled during the millennia and suffered greatly under the persecution of the Champa kingdom. Now they are all but unknown to the modern world, but may be a supernatural ally against the NVA revival of evil Champa sorcery.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +1
- **Chameleon Skin:** Hsia Thung gain +2 to Stealth rolls when moving. Motionless, they are almost invisible (-4 to hit if a soldier knows the creature is there).
- **Fear -1:** A Hsia Thung is a fearsome sight.
- **Low Light Vision:** Pits under their eyes give the Hsia Thung a form of infrared heat sensors, allowing them to "see" by sensing body heat in dim and low light conditions.



All modifiers due to poor lighting are ignored.

**Adventure Seeds:** MACV-SIG has determined from its researches that Hsia Thung are likely to side with the US against those who would bring the magic of the Champa back to Vietnam. All the heroes have to do is convince the snake-men that they are better than the NVA and VC and that they have no interest in the magic the Thung wield. Success could have very far-reaching implications. How hard could it be?

### Jade Golem

These small statues are only about 6 inches high. They were carved out of jade many years ago by a craftsman named Lo Pao who also dabbled in sorcery. He was able to imbue the golems with magic, making them come to life and obey simple commands when the right words are spoken. They follow simple commands (in Vietnamese) but are not terribly intelligent. They cannot talk and only follow commands of up to 3 simple instructions (e.g., "walk over to the tree, look behind it, and come back"). If given more than 3-step commands, jade golems only follow the first 3. Players must find this out the hard way!

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d10, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10

#### Special Abilities:

- **Armor:** +4 due to being made of jade.
- **Small:** The Golem's size gives attackers a -2 penalty to hit.
- **Infra-vision:** Golem's can see heat and suffer no penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- **Construct:** These creatures are immune to all Fear effects, disease, poison, and called shot results. They cannot be Intimidated, and take half damage from piercing attacks such as bullets.
- **Size -2:** The creature is 6" tall.

**Adventure Seeds:** One of the heroes is given a Jade Golem as a gift by a grateful villager for some reason. They are told it is magical, and given the words to make it come to life and become inanimate again. Unless they speak good Vietnamese, there is little they can make it do.



### Lac Viet Monster

Lac Viet is a lake in Vietnam rumored to have its own monster. While Americans call it the "Loch Viet Monster", the locals know that it is named Cau Dau Son. This creature has lived in the lake for hundreds if not thousands of years. It periodically comes out of the lake to kidnap locals, and drags them back to a watery grave. It stands 10' tall and has dark green scaly skin, a frog-like head, and webbed hands and feet. It supposedly lives in a sunken sampan full of treasure that was sacrificed to the creature long ago in a failed attempt to appease it.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d12, Throwing d8

**Pace:** 6 (12); **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8

#### Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** native to the water
- **Fear (-2):** anyone seeing the monster must make a Fear check at -2.
- **Large:** +2 to be hit
- **Low Light Vision:** The monster ignores all penalties for bad lighting.
- **Mind-Numbing:** Any rolls on the Psychosis table as a result of the Lac Viet monster are at +2.
- **Regeneration (Slow):** Cau Dau Son makes a healing roll once per day.
- **Size +4:** The creature is over 20' long.

**Adventure Seeds:** Lac Viet can be placed anywhere that is convenient to your campaign. The monster is terrorizing local villagers, and the unit is dispatched to investigate the problem. According to HQ, the VC are likely to be the actual cause. When the heroes discover the monster actually exists, they must defeat it and convince the locals it was not paranormal. They may also reason that if the creature is real, the rumored treasure must also be there.

### Laos Lice

Dr. Seng Sayavong, a biologist from a wealthy Laotian family who embraced Communism in the early 1960s, breeds Laos lice in a secret laboratory in the Laotian jungle. He originally offered his services as a scientist to Russia but was dismissed as a crackpot.

Returning to Laos, Sayavong constructed a lab to engineer new creatures to help the war effort. His only real success has been the development of huge lice now known by SpecFor as Laos Lice.

The Lice grow to 3" to 6" long and are particularly attracted to humans, crawling inside

helmets left on the ground. When a soldier puts on his helmet the louse crawls down to the scalp. The soldier can make a Notice (-2) roll to realize something is happening. If the louse is not removed, it burrows under the scalp and begins to feed. As it swells, allow a Notice roll due to the increased pressure on the scalp.

Laos lice do not cause damage, but are disgusting. When they are discovered, the victim must roll Guts or "freak out" for d6 rounds, yelling and clawing at the lump on his head.

A Healing (-4) roll is required to remove a Louse without proper medical equipment. While most of the body can be dug out, if the head remains it re-grows its body in a few days. Dousing the afflicted area in gasoline or a similar substance for a few minutes kills Laos Lice.

If left undisturbed, a louse lays 2d6 eggs after 3 days. Babies are about 1" long, and begin to burrow under the skin after living on the scalp for 24 hours—which kills the victim instantly.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Climbing d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 1; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2

**Special Abilities:**

- **Regeneration:** See description.
- **Size -3:** Laos lice are 3" to 6" long.
- **Very Small:** Laos Lice are -3 to be hit.

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit is sent to investigate rumors of a laboratory in the Laotian

jungle near the Vietnam border. On a converted plantation they find Dr. Sayavong has Viet Cong troops and mutated animals serving as guards.

### Long Xi

Long Xi are large spider-like creatures, which hide in the triple canopy of the jungle. They drop on unsuspecting prey, sting them with a paralytic poison, and drag them into the treetops. There they encase the victim in a sticky resin-like secretion. Some are kept for food, while others have new eggs implanted inside them. After gestating for three weeks the lurkers devour their host and burst out to begin the life-cycle anew.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities**

- **Bite:** Str +1.

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit discovers a small LRRP camp, recently abandoned. C-rations and weapons lie scattered about. The LRRPs are up in the canopy above. If the heroes manage to save the Rangers, they have all been impregnated.

### Marsh Lurker

A marsh lurker looks a lot like a large, upside-down octopus with a big mouth in the middle of the top of its head. They hide in marshes and



wait for prey to come to them. Marsh lurkers are dark gray or black and have a number of long tentacles. They lay under the water with their tentacles spread out (up to a 30 foot diameter in some cases) and their heads mostly buried in the muck, leaving just the maw and tentacles near the surface. They wait for unsuspecting prey, grab them with their tentacles, then drag them toward their deadly maw.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d12

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (+2 if a bullet must travel underwater to hit the creature)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** A lurker can only move underwater.
- **Fear:** Seeing a marsh lurker forces a soldier to make a Fear check.
- **Mind-Numbing:** Any rolls on the Psychosis table as a result of these creatures are at +2.
- **Low Light Vision:** Lurkers ignore all penalties for bad lighting.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 5". Marsh lurkers can make up to three attacks each round. On a raise, the Lurker has grappled the target. An entangled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the Lurker moves the prey to its mouth and begins to devour it, automatically doing its Strength damage every round.

**Adventure Seeds:** The heroes are under orders to capture one of these creatures and bring it back for study. Hauling it out of the marsh and getting it back to base unseen is a logistical nightmare.

### Napalm Horrors

People who died a horrifying death due to napalm. They seek to wrap their arms around an enemy and burst into flames, engulfing their victim. They both then rise, phoenix-like from the ashes, to seek others to burn into their brotherhood.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities**

- **Flamer:** Any character hit by a Napalm Horror bursts into flames.
- **Immunity:** Napalm Horrors are immune to all flame-based attacks.
- **Fear -2:** The blackened appearance and flaking skin are terrifying to behold.
- **Mind-wrenching:** Failing a Guts check caused by this monster results in the loss of 2 Sanity.

Any Psychosis rolls caused by Napalm Horrors are at +4.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken. No bonus from called shots. Half damage from bullets and piercing attacks.
- **Weakness (water):** Dousing the Horrors in water does 2d6 damage to the creatures.

**Adventure Seeds:** Villagers report seeing lights floating out in the jungle or delta at night, but are too afraid to investigate. The soldiers' command instructs a sister unit to check, but they never return. The unit must find what happened to their friends and deal with the shock of seeing their fellow soldiers reincarnated in the flames.

### Nhan Diep (Texas Skeeters)

Deep in the jungle, patrols have reported attacks by giant mosquitoes. Local villagers tell of the legendary Nhan Diep - giant, blood-sucking insects that are sometimes said to guard ancient ruins. The creatures typically grow to around a foot in length. They seem to cluster in groups of 2d12. Americans call them "Texas Skeeters."

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 2

**Special Abilities:**

- **Stinging Bite:** Str +1.
- **Size -2:** Laos lice are 3" to 6" long.
- **Small:** The creatures' size gives attackers a -2 penalty to hit.
- **Low Light Vision:** Nhan Diep ignore all penalties for bad lighting.
- **Wall Walker:** Texas Skeeters can walk on horizontal surfaces or even upside down at normal Pace.
- **Paralysis:** A target who is Shaken or Wounded by the sting of a Texas Skeeter must make a Vigor roll or fall prone and be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Blood Sucker:** Each round after the skeeter bites, the victim must make a Vigor check or gain Fatigue from blood loss.

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit is ordered to try to locate an ancient ruin rumored to lie in a jungle. When they arrive, they are attacked by a horde of Nhan Diep guarding the ruins and must fight their way through.

### Vampire Leech

Nobody knows how these massive leeches came to be. At over one foot long before feeding, these beasts are capable of draining several pints of blood from a man. If two or more of these

creatures latch onto the same victim, there is a very real danger of death.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d10, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Leeches live in the water and can be found in any river, stream, or pool.
- **Blood Sucker:** Each round after the leech bites, the victim must make a Vigor check or gain a fatigue as the blood is drained from his body.
- **Bite:** Str +1.
- **Size -2:** Vampire leeches are one foot long.
- **Small:** The creatures' size gives attackers a -2 penalty to hit.
- **Tenacious:** Leeches cannot be detached forcibly without causing 1d8 damage to the victim.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Leeches release their grip on a victim if burned. They take double damage from fire-based attacks.

## VC Hybrids

In addition to the militia employed to conduct guerilla raids, the VC have made extensive use of supernaturally modified soldiers.

### Bac Cong (Tunnelers)

The extensive tunnel systems house some VC who have not been above ground for many years.



Some never leave the confines of the VC burrows and are forever altered. Their eyes grow to compensate for the gloom, their fingers have fused into claw-like appendages, their skin is almost translucent and they walk with a shuffling gait.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities

- **Burrowers:** Pace d4. They can erupt from the ground and attack on a successful opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice, receiving a +2 to attack and damage.
- **Claws:** These creatures have developed badger-claws to better dig their warrens. In combat they do Str+1
- **Fear:** These creepy degenerates prompt a Fear check from all who see them.
- **Low-Light Vision:** Tunnelers ignore Dim and Dark lighting penalties.
- **Mind Numbing:** Failing a Guts check and Spirit roll costs the soldier 1 Sanity point.

## NVA Super Soldiers

The result of decades of research by the Nazis and Japanese biological engineers, the serum that creates the super soldiers is a rare commodity. Initial tests prove these soldiers are immensely strong and can withstand great pain, but the gains are usually outweighed by the soldiers' over-aggressiveness so they can only be used in limited actions.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Nerves of Steel.

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty.

#### Special Abilities

- **Fear -2:** Seeing the relentless attacks of these determined warriors forces a soldier to make a Guts check at -2.
- **Mind-Numbing:** Any rolls on the Psychosis table as a result of these creatures are at +2.
- **Super Serum:** +2 steps in Strength and Vigor; Nerves of Steel; Bloodthirsty Hindrance.

**Adventure Seeds:** The unit discover a tunnel complex which hides a factory producing batches of the serum. If they can fight their way underground and rescue samples, they may have a new weapon to aid the US war effort.

## Shadow Sappers

Shadow sappers are VC who can slip through the US concertina wire with supernatural ability thanks to the mystic symbols tattooed into their skin and the charms they wear.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities

- **Explosive:** Sappers can detonate themselves, placing a Medium Burst Template centered on them. This explosion causes 2d10 damage (and of course kills them instantly).
- **Fleet Footed:** These VC roll a d10 when running instead of a d6
- **Slippery Devils:** Shadow sappers ignore movement penalties for difficult ground, seeming to slither through obstacles with supernatural ease.
- **Nimble:** Shadow sappers weave and dodge as they run, seeming to be able to duck out of the way of the most withering fire directed against them. All ranged attacks (but not area attacks or weapons such as shotguns or beehive rounds) are at a -4 to hit them, in addition to any range penalties.

# Appendix

## French Formations

The French military of this period was still recovering from the trauma of World War II and the Nazi occupation. By law, French conscripts were not allowed to serve in Vietnam, so instead Foreign Legion and African Colonial units made up the bulk of the French forces in Indochina.

To help you to organize the heroes' place in the chain of command for a typical company structure is presented here.

### Foreign Legion Infantry Company

As the main striking force in Indochina, many Foreign legion units were set up as airborne parachute units, while others had their strength dissipated among a series of small, squad or company size outposts along the Chinese border, where they were easy picking for the growing Viet Minh military forces.

The rifle company is typically organized into a company HQ, three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon. Each rifle platoon is usually comprised of an HQ section, and three rifle sections. Four such rifle companies are then organized into a battalion along with an HQ company and a large number of support elements. The chart below

shows the troops needed to make up a typical company, their ranks, and personal weaponry.

Colonial troop companies would follow roughly the same pattern, but replace the listed weapons with the older weapons from the French list, such as Lebel 1886M93, Berthier M1907/15 rifles, Reibel M1931A Fortress Gun / FM 24/29 machineguns, and halve the number of specialists such as gunners, RTOs, and medics.

### Company Headquarters

- 1 Company Commander (O3) (MAT-49)
- 1 Executive Officer (O2) (MAT-49)
- 1 First Sergeant (E8) (MAT-49)
- 3 RTOs (E1-E4) (No 4 Lee-Enfield)
- 1 Runner (E1-E3) (No 4 Lee-Enfield)
- 2 Medics (E4+) (Enfield no. 2)
- 2 Gunners (E2-4) (.30 cal MG)
- 4 Assistant Gunners (E1-E3)
- 2 Gunners (E2-E4) (90mm Recoilless Rifle)
- 2 Assistant Gunners (E1-E3) (No 4 Lee-Enfield)

### Rifle Platoon (x3)

#### Headquarters Section

- 1 Platoon Leader (O1) (MAT-49)
- 1 Platoon Sergeant (E5-E7) (Thompson SMG)
- 1 RTO (E1-E4) (No 4 Lee-Enfield)
- 1 Medic (E4+) (Enfield no. 2)
- 1 Gunner (E1-3) (60mm mortar)
- 2 Assistant Gunners (E1-3) (Sten)

### Rifle Squad (x3)

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (Thompson SMG)
- 1 Corporal (E4) (Sten)
- 1 Gunner (E1-E3) (Bren or BAR)
- 12 Riflemen (E1-E3) (MAS-36)

## US Formations

The US military of this period was undergoing a transition from the 1950s "atomic" formations designed to fight on the nuclear dominated battlefields of that time to a more traditional formation. The terrain and enemy faced in Vietnam means that a force that was predominantly armor and mechanized infantry needs to be reconfigured to a lighter, more infantry-intensive style of warfare.

To help you organize the heroes' place in the chain of command a typical company structure is presented here.

### US Army Light Infantry Company

The Army went through several iterations of its TO&E, and units had a lot of latitude in the field to find out what works for them. Combine this with a chronic shortage of soldiers and the introduction of new weapons throughout the period and the units in the field could differ

radically. The TO&Es shown below give the WM a general idea of what these units look like on paper. Modify them as you see fit, especially for special missions.

The rifle company is typically organized into a company HQ, three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon. Each rifle platoon is usually comprised of an HQ section, three rifle squads and a weapons squad. Three such rifle companies are then a battalion along with an HQ company and a large number of support elements. The chart below shows the troops needed to make up a typical company and their ranks and personal weaponry.

Although the numbers below show a strength of almost 200 men, in actuality most companies averaged 100 to 150 men. Some companies might drop as low as 50 men after prolonged action.

#### **Company Headquarters**

- 1 Company Commander (O3) (M-16)
- 1 Executive Officer (O2) (M-16)
- 1 First Sergeant (E8) (M-16)
- 3 RTOs (E1-E4) (M-16)
- 1 Runner (E1-E3) (M-16)
- 2 Medics (E4+) (.45 pistols)

#### **Rifle Platoon (x3)**

##### **Headquarters Section**

- 1 Platoon Leader (O1) (M-16)
- 1 Platoon Sergeant (E5-E7) (M-16)
- 2 RTOs (E1-E4) (M-16)
- 1 Medic (E4+) (.45 pistol)

##### **Rifle Squad (x3)**

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (M-16)
- 1 Corporal (E4) (M-16)
- 2 Grenadiers (E1-E3) (M-79 and .45 pistol)
- 6 Riflemen (E1-E3) (M-16)

##### **Weapons Squad**

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (M-16)
- 2 Corporals (E4) (M-16)
- 2 Gunners (E1-E3) (M-60, .45 pistol)
- 2 Assistant Gunners (E1-E3) (M-16)
- 2 Gunners (E1-E3) (90mm Recoilless Rifle)

#### **Weapons Platoon**

##### **Headquarters Section**

- 1 Platoon Leader (O1-O2) (M-16)
- 1 Platoon sergeant (E5-E7) (M-16)
- 2 Forward Observers (E5-E7) (M-16)
- 3 RTOs (E1-E4) (M-16)
- 1 Runner (E1-E3) (M-16)

##### **Weapons Squad (x3)**

- 1 Squad Leader (E4-E5) (M-16)
- 1 Grenadier (E1-E3) (M-79 and .45 pistol)
- 4 Mortarmen (E1-E3) (M-16s, .45 pistols)

Remember that, in addition to their personal weaponry, the mortarmen of the weapons platoon must carry the platoon's three mortars and that every soldier in the company carries a share of the ammunition for the heavy weaponry.

The recoilless rifles are a problem in the field. Many units did not take them along, instead preferring to either boost the size of the machinegun crews to three men or add an extra machinegun.

Due to the weight of the support weapons, the weapons platoons are often kept back at a base camp, or set up in temporary firebases to support the sweeps of the remainder of the company. Some units actually converted the weapons platoon into a reduced strength rifle platoon and did away with the 81mm mortars, switching them out for the more portable 60mm mortars, or parceled out the platoon members as replacements for the rifle platoons.

#### **Marine Infantry Company**

Marine units used the M-14 rifle and the M-14A1 until 1968, with some units keeping the M-14A1 for its additional firepower. Often the M-60s and bazookas from the weapons platoon are parceled out to the rifle platoons for additional firepower when in the field. The structure is much the same as for the US Army unit except for the larger squad size.

#### **Company Headquarters**

- 1 Company Commander (O3) (M-14)
- 1 Executive Officer (O2) (M-14)
- 1 Gunnery Sergeant (E7-E9) (M-14)
- 3 RTOs (E1-E4) (M-14)
- 1 Runner (E1-E3) (M-14)
- 2 Corpsmen (E4+) (.45 pistol)

#### **Platoons (x3)**

##### **Headquarters Section**

- 1 Platoon Leader (O1) (M-14)
- 1 Platoon Sergeant (E5-E8) (M-14)
- 2 RTOs (E1-E4) (M-14)
- 2 Corpsmen (E4+) (.45 pistol)

##### **Rifle Squad (x3)**

- 1 Squad Leader (E4-E7) (M-14)
- 3 Fire Team Leaders (E4) (M-14)
- 1 Grenadier (E1-E3) (M-79 and .45 pistol)
- 3 Riflemen (E1-E3) (M-14A1 SAR)
- 6 Riflemen (E1-E3) (M-14)

##### **Weapons Platoon (x1)**

##### **Headquarters Section**

- 1 Platoon Leader (O1) (M-14)
- 1 Platoon Sergeant (E5-E7) (M-14)
- 2 Corpsmen (E4+)
- 1 RTO (E1-E4) (M-14)

### 1st Squad (Mortar)

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (M-14)
- 2 Corporals (E4) (M-14)
- 3 Mortarmen (E1-E3) (60mm mortar, MI911)
- 4 Mortarmen (E1-E3) (M-14)

### 2nd Squad (Anti-tank)

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (M-14)
- 3 Fire Team Leaders (E4) (M-14)
- 3 Gunners (E1-E3) (Bazookas, MI911)
- 6 Assistant Gunners (E1-E3) (M-14)

### 3rd Squad (Machinegun)

- 1 Squad Leader (E5-E7) (M-14)
- 3 Fire Team Leaders (E4) (M-14)
- 6 Gunners (E1-E3) (M-60 MG, MI911)
- 12 Assistant Gunners (E1-E3) (M-14)

## Special Forces A-Detachment

Special Forces units are typically organized into 12 man teams, each a specialist in a particular area, operating in the field with a detachment of CIDG or RFPF soldiers. Operating from permanent camps, the A-Detachments were responsible for their own areas of operation and were expected to be largely self-sufficient.

### A-Detachment

- Detachment Commander (O3)
- Detachment Executive Officer (O2)
- Operations Sergeant (E8)
- Heavy Weapons Leader (E7)
- Light Weapons Leader (E7)
- Intelligence Sergeant (E7)
- Medical Specialist (E7)
- Radio Operator Specialist (E7)
- Assistant Medical Specialist (E6)
- Demolition/Engineer Sergeant (E6)
- Combat Demolitions Specialist (E5)
- Chief Radio Operator (E5)

Depending on the missions the unit is assigned, different specialties may be called for (intelligence or psy ops, for example). Weaponry is not listed as the Special Forces have great flexibility in their choice of small arms. Often times Special Forces elements that are operating across borders in Laos or Cambodia will take no insignia and enemy equipment such as AK-47s and RPDs only. If these units are captured all knowledge of their operations are denied.

Four to ten A-Teams are grouped together in a B-detachment under the command of a Major (O4) and two to five B-Detachments are organized into a C-Detachment under the command of a Lieutenant Colonel (O5).

The Phoenix Program and the CIA Black CATs have even more leeway with picking their gear than regular Special Forces.

## US Marine Ranks

### Enlisted

E1	Private	PVT
E2	Private First Class	PFC
E3	Lance Corporal	LCPL
E4	Corporal	CPL
E5	Sergeant	SGT
E6	Staff Sergeant	SSgt
E7	Gunnery Sergeant	GySgt
E8	Master Sergeant	MSgt
E9	Master Gunnery Sergeant	MGySgt

### Officer

O1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt
O2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt
O3	Captain	Capt
O4	Major	Maj
O5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt Col
O6	Colonel	Col
O7	Brigadier General	Brig Gen
O8	Major General	Maj Gen
O9	Lieutenant General	Lt Gen
O10	General	Gen

## US Navy Ranks

### Enlisted

E1	Seaman Recruit	SR
E2	Seaman Apprentice	SA
E3	Seaman	SN
E4	Petty Officer Third Class	PO3
E5	Petty Officer Second Class	PO2
E6	Petty Officer First Class	PO1
E7	Chief Petty Officer	CPO
E8	Senior Chief Petty Officer	SCPO
E9	Master Chief Petty Officer	MCPO

### Officer

O1	Ensign	ENS
O2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	LTJG
O3	Lieutenant	LT
O4	Lieutenant Commander	LCDR
O5	Commander	CDR
O6	Captain	Capt
O7	Rear Admiral Lower Half	RAdm
O8	Rear Admiral Upper Half	RAdm
O9	Vice Admiral	VAdm
O10	Admiral	Adm

## US Air Force Ranks

### Enlisted

E1	Airman Basic	AB
E2	Airman	AMN
E3	Airman First Class	AIC
E4	Senior Airman	SrA
E5	Staff Sergeant	SSgt
E6	Technical Sergeant	TSgt
E7	Master Sergeant	MSgt
E8	Senior Master Sergeant	SMSgt
E9	Chief Master Sergeant	CMSgt

# Glossary

## Officer

O1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt
O2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt
O3	Captain	Capt
O4	Major	Maj
O5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt Col
O6	Colonel	Col
O7	Brigadier General	Brig Gen
O8	Major General	Maj Gen
O9	Lieutenant General	Lt Gen
O10	General	Gen

## US Army Ranks

### Enlisted

E1	Private (PV1)	PVT
E2	Private (PV2)	PVT
E3	Private First Class	PFC
E4	Corporal/Specialist	CPL/Spec 4
E5	Sergeant	SGT
E6	Staff Sergeant	SSG
E7	Sergeant First Class	SFC
E8	Master/First Sergeant	MSG/ISG
E9	Sergeant Major	SMG

### Officer

O1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt
O2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt
O3	Captain	Capt
O4	Major	Maj
O5	Lieutenant Colonel	LTC
O6	Colonel	Col
O7	Brigadier General	BG
O8	Major General	MG
O9	Lieutenant General	LG
O10	General	Gen

## French Military Ranks

### French Officer

General de Brigade  
Colonel  
Lieutenant-Colonel  
Commandant  
Capitaine  
Lieutenant  
Sous-Lieutenant

### US Army Equivalent

Brigadier General  
Colonel  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Major  
Captain  
First Lieutenant  
Second Lieutenant

### Enlisted

Sergent-Major (Obsolete)  
Sergent-Chef  
Sergent  
Chef  
Caporal  
Legionnaire de 1re Classe  
Legionnaire de 2em Classe

First Sergeant  
Sergeant First Class  
Sergeant  
—  
Corporal  
Private First Class  
Private

**Actual:** Radio callsign indicating the unit commander himself is transmitting and not his RTO on his behalf.

**AO:** Area of operations.

**Arc Light:** A B52 bombing mission. These planes delivered their payloads from such a high altitude that they were neither seen nor heard until their bombs landed.

**ARVN:** Abbreviation for Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Usually pronounced as the word "Are-ven."

**Bac-Si:** Vietnamese term for a doctor sometimes used to refer to US medics by savvy troops also.

**Beaucoup:** French for many. A legacy of Vietnam's past, many French words were used by the Vietnamese and by US soldiers long after the French occupation was over

**Beehive:** An artillery round filled with steel darts or flechettes. Designed for antipersonnel use.

**Boom-Boom:** Term used by Vietnamese prostitutes to advertise their product!

**BPNME:** The Bureau des phénomènes mystérieux non expliqués (Bureau of Unexplained Mysterious Phenomenon, a French "special" organization.

**Brain Bucket:** GI slang for a helmet

**Broken Arrow:** Code word given when an American unit was in danger of being overrun. Issuance of this would give that unit priority for fire support and air missions.

**Canister:** Basically a large shotgun round for an artillery or tank gun, this round fired steel balls instead of the darts that a beehive round fired.

**CAT:** Covert Action Team

**CIDG:** Civilian Irregular Defense Forces. Tribesmen in the hinterlands of Vietnam who were recruited into a special military force that patrolled the highlands in an attempt to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail. These forces were not a part of the ARVN.

**"Charlie":** GI slang for the Viet Cong. Also called Charles, Chuck, and Victor Charlie.

**CO:** Commanding officer

**Crachin:** French slang for "spittle," this is what Colonial forces called the heavy morning fog that coated everything from September to December.

**Daisy-cutter:** GI slang for a BLU-82 30,000 pound bomb. These monstrosities were pushed



# Deployment of US Forces

## US MACV

HQ  
5th Special Forces Group  
97th Artillery Group

Saigon  
Nha Trang  
Tan Son Nhut

23rd Artillery Group  
54th Artillery Group

Phu Loi  
Xuan Loc

20th Engineer Brigade  
34th Engineer Group  
(Construction)  
79th Engineer Group  
(Construction)  
159th Engineer Group  
(Construction)

Bien Hoa  
Vung Tau

Long Binh

Long Binh

11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Long Binh

## I Field Force

HQ  
**4th Infantry Division**

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
3rd Brigade

Nha Trang

Pleiku  
Dak To  
Ban Me Thuot  
Pleiku

173rd Airborne Brigade  
17th Aviation Group

Bon Son  
Nha Trang

41st Artillery Group  
52nd Artillery Group

Phu Cat  
Pleiku

18th Engineer Brigade  
35th Engineer Group  
(Construction)  
45th Engineer Group  
(Construction)  
937th Engineer Group (Combat)

Dong Ba Thin  
Qui Nhon

Phu Bai  
Pleiku

## XXIV Corps

HQ  
**1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)**

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
3rd Brigade  
11th Aviation Group

Phu Bai

Phong Dien  
Phong Dien  
Phong Dien  
Phong Dien

### Americal Division

HQ  
11th Light Infantry Brigade  
196th Light Infantry Brigade  
198th Light Infantry Brigade  
16th Aviation Group

Chu Lai  
Duc Pho  
Tam Ky  
Chu Lai

## II Field Force

HQ  
**1st Infantry Division**

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
3rd Brigade

Long Binh

Lai Khe  
Quan Loi  
Di An  
Lai Khe

### 9th Infantry Division

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
(US Army Mobile Riverine Force)  
3rd Brigade

Dong Tam  
Tan An  
Dong Tam

Can Giouc

### 25th Infantry Division

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
3rd Brigade

Cu Chi  
Tay Ninh  
Cu Chi  
Dau Tieng

### 101st Airborne Division

3rd Brigade

Cu Chi

199th Light Infantry Brigade

Long Binh

### 1st Aviation Brigade

HQ  
12th Aviation Group  
164th Aviation Group

Long Binh  
Long Binh  
Can Tho

### 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)

HQ  
1st Brigade  
2nd Brigade  
160th Aviation Group

Phu Bai  
Phu Bai  
Phu Bai  
Phu Bai

### 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized)

1st Brigade

Quang Tri

### 82nd Airborne Division

3rd Brigade

Phu Bai

108th Artillery Group

Dong Ha

## III Marine Amphibious Force

HQ  
**1st Marine Division**

HQ  
1st Marines  
5th Marines  
7th Marines

Da Nang

Da Nang  
Gio Linh  
Da Nang  
Da Nang

### 3rd Marine Division

HQ  
3rd Marines  
4th Marines  
9th Marines

Dong Ha  
Cam Lo  
Khe Sanh  
Cam Lo

out of the back of cargo planes rather than dropped like more conventional bombs. Usually used to clear large swathes of jungle to create firebases or landing zones, these enormous bombs could alter the landscape with a single detonation.

**Dai Uy:** Vietnamese term for a Captain sometimes also used by experienced US troops for their officers

**Dinky Dau:** Vietnamese term for mad.

**Dust off:** Aeromedical casualty evacuation mission

**E&E:** Evade and Escape. The primary aim of downed aircrew.

**"Fire in the Hole":** Expression used to alert other soldiers in the area that an explosive charge was about to be detonated. Generally not used in combat.

**Five:** Radio callsign for the unit Executive officer (see XO).

**Flare Ship:** Aircraft that dropped flares at night in support of troops.

**FNG:** Freaking new guy, the new replacement who got stuck with the worst details.

**Frag:** GI slang for killing an unpopular officer or NCO, derived from the use of a fragmentation grenade.

**Free Fire Zone:** An area where the civilian population had been removed or relocated, uninhabited areas, or areas totally under enemy control. Any people encountered in this area would be considered the enemy and could be fired on.

**Free World Forces:** Term used to describe the coalition of western allies, SEATO troops, and their affiliated groups in South Vietnam. Typically this term includes US, Australian, New Zealand, South Korean, Thai, and Philippine troops.

**Hog:** A Huey helicopter converted to the gunship role, or an M60 machinegun

**Indigs:** Indigenous people

**Klick:** GI slang for a kilometer, 0.62 miles

**Land of the Big PX:** GI slang for the United States.

**LBE/LCE:** Acronym for Load Bearing/Carrying Equipment. This was the set of suspenders, pistol belt, and other web gear that a soldier carried his equipment in or on.

**LLBD:** Abbreviation for ARVN Special Forces. Elite troops with better equipment, food, and pay, their officers were occasionally political appointees who hampered the units' effectiveness. Officially, the LLBD were in charge

of the CIDG program, and were advised by US Special Forces troops.

**LP:** Listening post

**LRRP:** Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol

**LZ:** Landing zone. Also called a Lima Zulu

**MACV-SIG:** Military Assistance Command-Vietnam, Special Intelligence Group. A sub-unit of MACV-SOG, SIG was a direct descendent of the OSI of World War II. This organization researched and responded to reports of supernatural or occult activity anywhere with Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on denial of these events to Communist forces.

**MACV-SOG:** Military Assistance Command-Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group. A joint service unconventional warfare unit tasked with highly classified operations in Southeast Asia.

**"Marvin":** GI slang for soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Usually used in a derogatory manner.

**"Ma Deuce":** GI slang for the M2 .50 caliber machinegun.

**MFG:** Mobile Group Force. These small task forces, numbering 150 to 200 men, operated in VC safe areas, and took the guerilla war to the guerillas. Most troops were specially trained, hand-picked Vietnamese, with Special Forces troops providing leadership.

**Mike Force:** Slang for Mobile Strike force. Mike Forces were designed to provide the Special Forces camps with a three company size reaction force and limited special operations capable force. There was one MIKE Force unit for each of the four Corps Tactical Zones. In theory the Mike Forces were only to assist the Special Forces camps, but in practice they carried out their own missions as well.

**MWD:** Military Working Dog. In Vietnam, the majority of dogs used were male German Shepherds, classified as either sentry dogs (trained in base defense) or patrol dogs (trained in attack and detecting the enemy).

**NLF:** National Liberation Front. The umbrella organization that encompassed the main force Viet Cong, regional militias, and village militias.

**Number One:** Slang for the best. Number ten was the worst (for emphasis, sometimes number one thousand).

**NVA:** North Vietnamese Army, "Nathaniel Victor", these were the most conventional, best trained and armed troops the Free World Forces encountered on the battlefield.

**PF:** Popular Forces, also called "Ruff Puffs" by the GIs. As part of the fortified hamlet program,

these were basically local militia units in RVN who goal was to provide local protection to villages. Often a day job for VC.

**Pig:** One of the many names for the M60 machinegun.

**Pibber:** GI slang for a river patrol boat, so called because its acronym PBR (Patrol Boat, River)

**RC:** French abbreviation for Colonial Route, the major roadways in Indochina and often the only means of vehicular traffic for the vast majority of the country.

**REMF:** Rear Echelon Motherf\*\*\*\*r. Generally this refers to one of the support troops who sat the war out in the rear. A term of derision (and occasionally some envy) used by combat troops.

**RTO** Radio Telephone Operator, the guy who carried a radio in the unit. As the platoon's link to the awesome firepower that the US could bring to bear, an RTO was one of the first targets of the opposition.

**Six:** Radio callsign of the unit commander.

**Slick:** GI slang for a troop-carrying helicopter

**Snake:** GI slang for the AH-1 Cobra gunship

**Snake-eater:** GI slang for a Special Forces soldier.

**Spooky:** An Air Force fixed wing cargo aircraft converted into a gunship with the addition of gatling guns, flares, and even cannons.

**Thumper:** GI slang for the M-79 grenade launcher, so named because of the distinctive sound it made when fired.

**Three:** Radio callsign of Operations officer

**Track:** Any tracked vehicle, but usually used for an M113.

**Trung Uy:** Vietnamese term for a First Lieutenant sometimes also used by experienced US troops for their officers.

**Two:** Radio callsign of the Intel officer

**Two-Oh-One:** A soldier's 201 file is a personnel record detailing his qualifications, training, experience and abilities.

**VC:** Slang for the Viet Cong, the guerilla force that the NVA sponsored in South Vietnam.

**VNAF:** South Vietnamese Air Force

**"Willie Pete":** GI slang for White Phosphorus.

**World, The:** GI slang for the United States

**XO:** Executive officer. The assistant to the commander of the unit.

Player handout: French Indochina 1947-1954

## Bienvenue vers le Indochina

Welcome to Vietnam, you unlucky bastards. You're here to help reclaim the Republic's glorious holdings here in Asia. Indochina is vital to the well-being of France, for its resources and for the prestige it brings in the world community. Don't forget, we're also here to bring the light of French culture and civilization to these poor savages.

Let's get down to business. The enemy here are a bunch of bandits called the Viet Minh, led by a Communist by the name of Ho Chi Minh. These self-styled heroes of the peasants like nothing better than to ambush French columns, intimidate the locals, and generally make life miserable for the poor polios here in Hell's own heat. Intelligence tells us our friends in the jungle are generously supplied by those bastards in China, while we scrounge for weapons and ammunition. Those damn Amis have an embargo on what they will sell us over here, so we make do with leftovers from the World Wars.

Wherever your post, your ordeal is likely to begin long before you get there. The roads are few and far between, and the bandits know the best places for ambushes. If you arrive without major losses, you can thank your lucky stars. The Viet Minh generally don't take prisoners, and if they do it's only to provide sport over the campfire that night. If you're wounded or look to be overrun, your best friend is your last bullet. Always save one for yourself, and for God's sake put the barrel in your mouth to give yourself a clean end.

What would this greeting be without a mention of the wonderful flora and fauna of your new home. This is truly a hell on earth. Expect your clothing to rot off your back, fungus to grow in places on your body you didn't know existed, and maladies unknown to Western medicine to strike down at least half of you before you ever see the beauty of France again. Those piss-ants back in Paris have declared this war will be fought by the Legion and the colonial troops for a reason. It's too dirty a job for those soft Frogs back home. So only the best for Indochina and the Republic!

## Welcome to Vietnam

### A Brief History of the Conflict

Welcome to the Republic of Vietnam, trooper. As you probably know from your pre-deployment briefings back in the States, we're here to help support the South Vietnamese government against a Communist guerilla movement. These rebels are supported by their Commie friends in the North. Seems the reds have learned their lesson from their defeat in the Korean War. Rather than charge across into their democratic neighbor and attempt an armed takeover, this time the bad guys are trying a more subtle approach. As the Chinese premier Mao said, "Be a fish in the sea of peasants" or somesuch bullpucky. Basically what we have here is a bunch of lightly armed guerillas who farm their fields by day and come out and play soldier at night. They're called Viet Cong, or VC for short, but you'll also hear them called a whole bunch of other names like Victor Charlie, Charles, or Chuck.

Our mission here has evolved from one of guarding airbases to actively going out into the countryside and denying these guerillas their sanctuaries. General Westmoreland calls this "search and destroy." Your duties here will consist of a lot of perimeter guarding and "humping in the boonies." No, don't get that stupid grin on your faces. Out here in Vietnam that means trudging through some rice paddy or jungle and looking for the enemy.

Now some of you college boys might have read about how bad the French got their asses kicked when they were here in the forties and fifties. You might have even read that book "Street without Joy." I'm here to tell you we've got a lot of advantages over the French. For one thing, we've never lost a war. Secondly, our airpower is a whole hell of a lot better than anything those Frogs had. Thirdly, our secret weapon is the helicopter. Most of you probably have never been in one back in the States. Well boys, you'll get to ride in them plenty here. The First Cav Division has pioneered their use. Basically it works like this. One unit will move to contact on foot, and when you bump up against the VC you'll fix them in position. Now these VC, like most Asians, don't like to fight too hard against us in a stand-up fight, so after about 30 minutes they'll start slipping away. The French couldn't hold them, but our helicopters let us drop a few companies in their rear and do the ole anvil and sledge hammer to them. With the helicopter on our side these Commies shouldn't last too long.

Up in the mountains and in the hamlets you might run into guys wearing funny hats. These are the Special Forces troops, or Green Berets. The brass has got the bright idea to get some of the indigenous folks on our side, and it's the Special Forces guys' jobs to do just this. Up along the Cambodian border they've got their own units of hill and mountain people. I've even heard some crazy stories about some of them going native, but they're probably just stories.

You might also run into some American civilians out in the boonies. There are a lot of Peace Corps do-gooders running around. They're OK, but the ones you have to watch out for are all the CIA paramilitary spooks that have their own ideas about how to win a war. Just stay out of their way and let your officers and NCOs handle them.

One other thing before I turn you loose. Watch out for the ARVNs. That's Army of the Republic of Vietnam, but most GIs call them Arvins or Marvin the Arvin. Before we got here they were getting their butts kicked pretty good by the VC. Now that we're here they see the smarts in laying back and letting us fight. While there are a few good units, they mostly stay in the rear and guard the President's palace and other "war-essential" places. I wouldn't trust any ARVN unit to stay on your flank when the crap gets hot and heavy.

Now grab your gear and lets saddle up. We've got some hamlets to pacify.

## Welcome to Vietnam

### A Brief History of the Conflict

Welcome to The 'Nam. Just think, only 365 days and a wake-up until you kiss this tropical craphole goodbye and get on that freedom bird to take you back to the land of the Big PX.

Anyhow, here's how it is. You'll be sent to a gaining unit, where they'll probably put you on point for the first few weeks. Hey, don't look like that. It's a favor to you. Better you get killed or maimed early before you suffer like those guys in your squad who have been here for almost a year. Once it looks like you might survive, they'll accept you, unless you seem like one of those gung-ho motherfuckers who are likely to get themselves and their squadmates killed. Do your best to fit in. The men in your platoon have been here a lot longer than you and have seen stuff you really don't want to see. Cut them some slack if they seem to drink too much or use some of the local dope—as long as they don't do it on patrol its all good.

You'll likely go to an infantry unit, unless you're slated for the 101<sup>st</sup> or 173<sup>rd</sup>. Even then, you'll most likely never jump, but you will see plenty of countryside from the back of a helicopter. No matter if you're on foot or in the back of an armored personnel carrier, you'll learn fast that mines are a fact of life around here. Mines, booby traps, ambushes. What a crappy way to run a war. Occasionally you'll run into a North Vietnamese Army, or NVA, unit. You'll be in for a hell of a fight then. Those gooks are well armed and well equipped. A friend of mine was in a firebase that got wave attacked by them for hours before the Spooky gunships and Skyraiders drove them off. Hundreds of dead in the wire and they kept coming!

Anyway, you'll hear two big things while you're in-country. The first is hearts and minds. The brass has decided that the only way to win this war is to get the South Vietnamese on our side. After all, most villagers you see are so poor that Commie crap sounds good to them. This program is designed to help them out of the crap they live in. You go into villages, make nice, maybe escort a civil affairs team of doc, dentists, and engineers to give them shots, build a school or well, or some other BS like that. Sounds good to the eggheads in DC and Saigon, but I've never seen the boobytraps in the areas we visit get any better.

Vietnamization is the other big catch-phrase. This means getting those piece of crap ARVNs to pull their own weight so we can get the hell out of here. We've been replacing their World War II style weapons with modern stuff, and even given them tanks, APCs, and aircraft. Those Special Forces guys have been training up their natives, and MAC-V has advisers in the field also, along with the CIA. All in all, some of the Marvin units are getting better, but I still wouldn't trust most further than I could throw them. Our other allies in this war are a bit more reliable in a fight. The South Koreans are good guys to have around. I hear tell they collect heads, and when they show up in an AO the VC all di-di mau. The Aussies and Kiwis are pretty tough also, and good soldiers. The Thais hold their own, and while they might not be as fierce as the Koreans, I'd much rather have them beside me than the ARVNs.

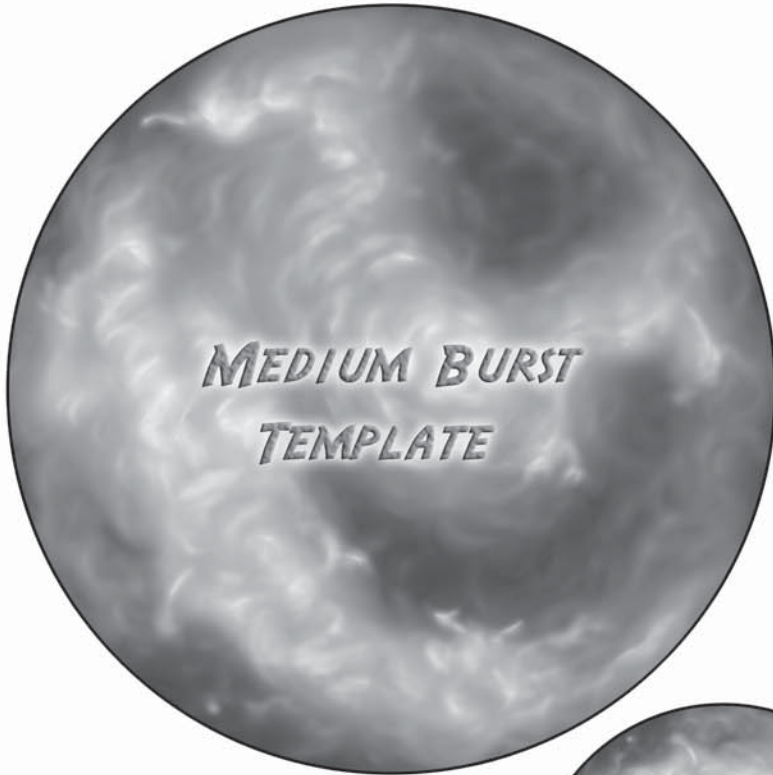
Speaking of the CIA. Watch yourself when you run into civilian men in the field, or guys that are dressed in uniforms without insignia. The spooks are out and about doing their own thing, and sometimes it conflicts with what the military is doing. I've heard tell of all kinds of weird stuff they're involved in, but some guys say they have the best dope, so maybe they're not all bad. The Phoenix Program is another "black" operation that you might hear of. No one knows for sure what they're up to, but I've heard rumors they're assassins sent after the VC leadership. Hey, that's cool with me as long as they leave me and my platoon alone.

Reporters are another thing you'll see in the field. They'll get in your face, and the coverage I've seen back home ranges from good to poor. While it may be cool for your family to see you on the television back home, don't get too wrapped up in your 15 seconds of fame. Some of these pukers have pretty loose lips, and unfortunately I'm not talking about the female reporters.

Well, that's the 'Nam in a nutshell. Keep your head out of your ass, listen to your NCOs, and you just might live to tell your grandkids how you were too stupid not to move to Canada when you turned 18.



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# Squad Sheet

Agility   
 Smarts   
 Strength   
 Spirit   
 Vigor

Service Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Pace   
  Parry   
  Toughness   
  Sanity

Edges: \_\_\_\_\_

Hindrances:

Rank	Name (Last,First)	Notes

Fatigue

## Skills

Climb  
 Fighting  
 Guts  
 Intimidation  
 Repair  
 Notice  
 Shooting  
 Stealth  
 Taunt  
 Throwing

Gear	range	ROF	damage (AP)	Notes

Ammo Track

## FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT

70-DOT-00030

### SPECIAL OP ORDERS

### 7) RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

- 1) Mission Type \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Support \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Attachments \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Opposition \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Complications \_\_\_\_\_

### 6) DISTRACTIONS

### 8) WEIRDNESS

Notes:





# GET THE LEAD OUT, SOLDIER!

Looking for miniatures for your *Weird Wars: Tour of Darkness* game? Look no further than Old Glory's complete line of Vietnam miniatures, including US and Vietnamese soldiers, vehicles, and even scenery! Visit [www.oldgloryminiatures.com](http://www.oldgloryminiatures.com) for a complete list!



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## LOOKING FOR MORE WEIRD WARS ADVENTURE?

You've come to the right place! The original *Weird Wars* Roleplaying game covers *Weird War II*, and was written for the D20 System. It's available at our website ([www.peginc.com](http://www.peginc.com)) NOW! You'll also find free adventures, updates, and more on our site and with our licensors!

And yes, a *Savage Worlds* version of *Weird War Two* is on its way!



## WEIRD WARS: THE COMPUTER GAME!

From Techland® and Strategy First® comes the first computer game set in the macabre world of *Weird Wars*! *Weird Wars – The Unknown Episode of World War II* is a classic RPG in every sense of the genre. Loaded with action and set during the Second World War, the story submerses the player in a world of strange mysteries and unexplainable happenings as they quest to discover the secrets behind Nazis Germany's obsession with the occult.

Lead your hero through the dark continent of Africa and the stranger sites in Europe as they hone their skills and acquire some truly weird abilities that will most definitely help them on their way. It's a game packed with adventure and humor. The quests are exciting, clever and often very odd; permeating the storyline and game play with a tongue in cheek overtone

that will make any hardcore RPG fan smile again and again!

The game combines the atmosphere of the classic game from Pinnacle, adventure elements like that found in "Raiders of the Lost Ark" with a unique brand of humor all its own. All these elements combine to create a refreshing and bizarre perspective of "Weird War II." The gameplay is similar to classic RPGs such as *Baldur's Gate*®, *Arcanum*® or *Fallout*®, allowing RPG fans to feel right at home and enjoy an original storyline in a classic gaming environment!

