

# Vietnam War Military Slang

February 13, 2014



If, as Emerson said, language is the archive of history, then U.S. soldiers in Vietnam were writing history with words as well as weapons. So many slang terms, Vietnamese words and specialized usages were used by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam that language posed a bit of a problem to the new men arriving. Until they picked up the current slang, they stood out as recent arrivals. With the Vietnam-bound replacement in mind, Army Times compiled the following list of non-standard terms used in Vietnam. The intent was to enhance newcomer's adjustment to Vietnam. Terms listed below were common among Army soldiers, Marines, and Artillerymen.

**NOTICE: MANY WORDS USED WITHIN THIS POST ARE CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE...READER BEWARE**

**Jack Benny plus 10:** Mr. Benny always claimed to be 39 years old. Pilots, when wanting to adjust a radio frequency may reference JB and a number. i.e. Jack Benny up 10.5 would reference frequency 49.5...same would apply for down plus a number to subtract.

**50 foot roll of flight line:** Non-existent item that chopper groups usually send new recruits to look for.

**Ao dai** ("owzeye"): the native costume of Vietnamese women. It has a mandarin collar and is very tight in the bodice with the skirt split to the waist. Worn over loose silk pants.



**AO:** Acronym for Area of Operations – terrain assigned to specific units – their responsibility to locate and kill enemy soldiers within that area.

**APC:** Armored Personnel Carrier – tracked vehicle used by mechanized units for squad sized patrols.



**Arc-Light:** Code name for B52 strike missions – used as close air support against enemy base camps, troop concentrations and supplies. Releasing their bombs from high in the stratosphere, the B-52s could neither be seen nor heard from the ground. B-52s were instrumental in nearly wiping out enemy concentrations besieging Khe Sanh in 1968 and An Loc and Kontum in 1972.



**Aussie:** Australian Soldier and America's ally



**Baby San** – GI reference to village children (male and female)

**Ba muoi lam** (“baa-mooee-lahm): Vietnamese for the number 35. Means the same as “butterfly;” a playboy.

**Base Camp Commando:** Soldiers assigned to the main base camp

**Beaucoup:** from the French. In Vietnam it can mean many, much, big, huge, very, etc.

**Betel nut** (“beetle nut”): the leaves or root of the betel palm, which are mildly narcotic and are chewed by many Vietnamese, especially aged women, to relieve the pain of diseased gums. The cumulative effect of years of betel nut chewing is to totally blacken the teeth.



**Birds:** Helicopters or choppers



**Blooper:** M79 Grenade Launcher. also referred as **Thumper**



**BOHICA:** Acronym meaning – Bend Over Here It Comes Again

**Bong Son Bomber** – Giant sized marijuana cigarette

**Boom-boom:** Slang for having sex

**Boom-Boom Girl:** Prostitute



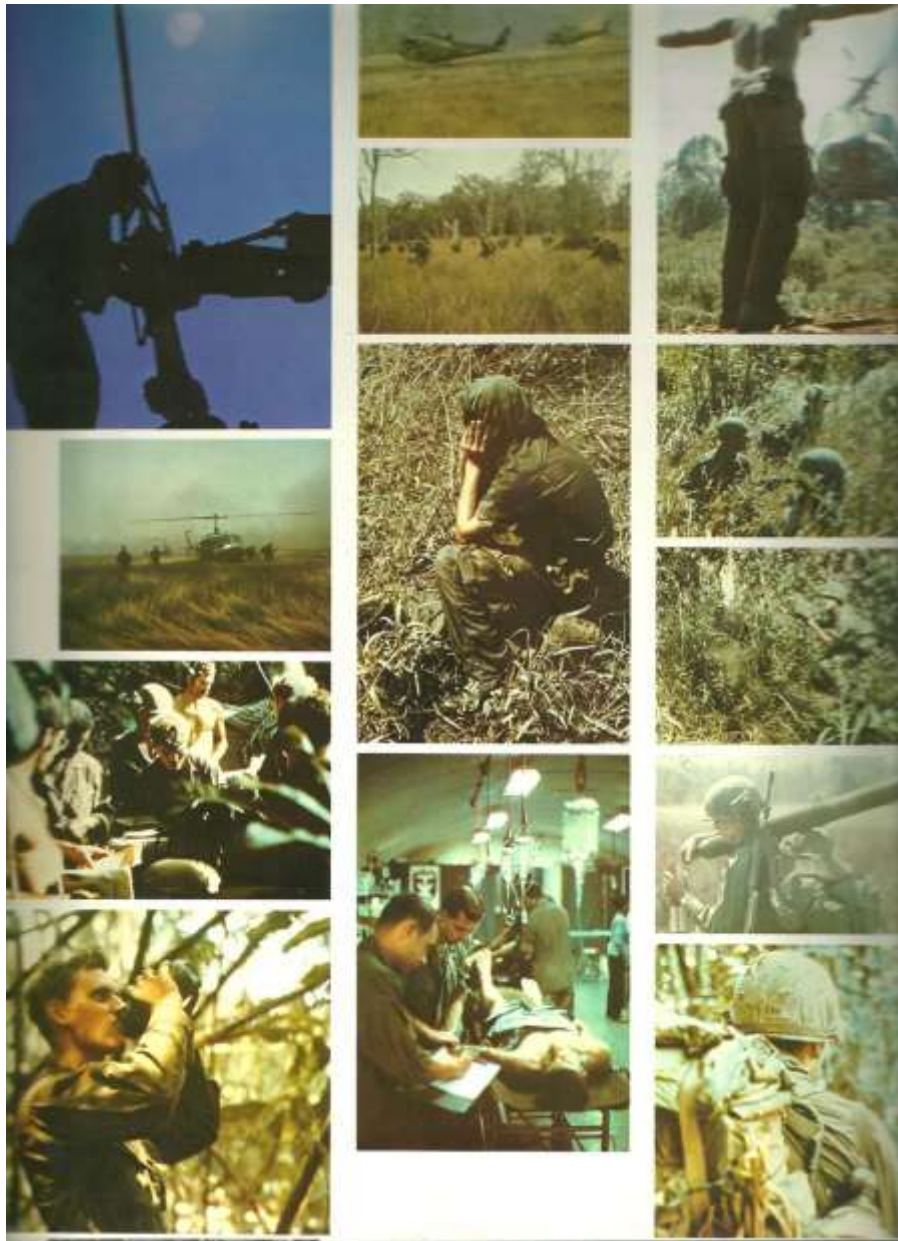
**Broken arrow:** Universal code meaning that a ground unit or camp is being overrun and to send all available assets. Also referred as a serviceman who tried to be a straight arrow and failed. (See straight arrow.)

**BUFFS:** Big Ugly Flying Fat Fuckers – ref. B52 bombers. Also referred as “Dumptrucks” in northern I-Corps.



**BULLET CATCHER**- A safety device for mini guns that were removed before flight. Slang for the front seater in a Cobra.

**Bush: field, jungle, boonies, Indian country** - any combination of these words describes hostile areas outside of firebases and basecamps



**Butter Bar**: Slang reference for a Second Lieutenant – also called **LT** (ell-tee)

**Butterfly**: playboy.

**Buy the farm**: to be killed. Sometimes “buy the six-by-three farm.”

**Bravo-Zulu (BZ)**: Well Done!

**Cam on** (“cahm oon”): Vietnamese for “thank you.”

**Canh Sat** (“cahn zaht”): White mice. (which see.)

**CAN KUK OR CON KUK** – Civilian ID card

**Care package:** box of goodies sent to soldiers by their family or friends – usually containing cookies, candy, condiments to flavor c-rations, home newspapers, coffee, gum and any other treats that can be thought of. Infantry soldiers in the field do not receive these because of the added weight and are stored at the firebase supply upon their return.



**Chao co (ong) (em)** (pronounced “chow coh (ohm) (em)”): Vietnamese for hello or good-bye, Miss (Sir) (to a child, animal or very close friend).

**Cheap charlie:** anyone, especially a U.S. serviceman, who does not waste his money. (See “plenty cheap charlie.”)

**Chieu Hoi** (“chew hoyee”): the Vietnamese-administered “Open Arms” program for defecting enemy soldiers. (See “Hoi Chanh.”)

**Cherry:** designation for new replacement from the states. Also referred as **FNG** (fucking new guy), **fresh meat** and **new citizens**



**Chop-chop:** food, or eat – used primarily by Vietnamese. Some troops used the words to ‘hurry up’.

**CIDG:** Civilian Irregular Defense Group. Friendly indigenous forces, usually organized and led by Army Special Forces teams

**Cluster Fuck:** Nothing is going right, congested or bunched up.

**Coka:** Vietnamese pronunciation of “Coke.”

**Coup qualified:** very old Viet hands, and only those who served in Saigon during a violent overthrow of a Vietnamese government, are said to be “coup qualified.”

**Cowboy:** a Vietnamese ruffian – usually riding a motor bike and swiping jewelry from those they pass by.

**Crow’s foot:** a four-pointed booby trap device which, when thrown, will land with one point up.

**C’s:** “C” rations. Typical package shown below



**Cyclo:** three-wheeled motorized conveyance with a seat on the front.



**DAP:** greetings involving hand contact, dap is best known as a complicated routine of shakes, slaps, snaps, and other contact that must be known completely by both parties involved. Dap greeting sometimes include a [pound hug](#)



**Day off:** see “khong lau.”

**Dep lam** (“dep lahm”): Vietnamese for “too pretty (or handsome).”

**Dep qua** (“dep whah”): Vietnamese for “pretty.”

**Dep trai** (“dep cheye”): Vietnamese for “handsome.”

**Di di (mau)** (“dee-dee (maow)”): Vietnamese for “go away (fast) or “haul ass”

**Dien cai dao** (“dee-in-kee-daow”): Vietnamese for “crazy in the head.”

**Diddy-bop**: term used to criticize the way a person or group is walking, (i.e. shuffling to a tune, not paying attention, too carefree), swagger

**Diggers**: Australian infantry soldiers



**Dinky Dau**: Slang for crazy or completely nuts

**Disneyland Far East**: Hq building of the U.S. Military Assistance Comd Vietnam. Name is derived from “Disneyland East” (the Pentagon).

**DMZ**: Demilitarized zone – Neutral area separating North Vietnam from South Vietnam

**Donut Dollies**: Young women from the Red Cross who are stationed in many of the rear areas and manage service clubs for the troops. Their jobs were to motivate and entertain...some were known to visit troops in desolate areas out in the bush.







**Dolphin:** a five-ton tractor. (See “guppy.”)



**Don't mean nuthin':** Coined by G.I.'s in Vietnam. A reverse coping expression indicating that it means everything and I'm about to lose it. Usually used to dismiss witnessing or experiencing something so horrific that it can't be comprehended by the psyche. Alternately used as an expression of relief that one has avoided being killed even if they are injured or maimed.

**Dung lai** (pronounced “zoong lye”): Vietnamese for “halt” or “stop.”

**Duster:** a 25-ton tank armed with twin 40mm cannon.



**Dustoff:** the medevac helicopter system. These brave pilots often placed themselves at risk by landing during a firefight with the enemy to pick up wounded soldiers.



**FAA-Q Lizard:** The Tokay Gecko is the second largest Gecko species, attaining lengths of about 11–20 inches (28–51 cm) for males, and 7–19 inches (18–48 cm) for females, with weights of only 150–400 grams (5.3–14.1 oz). They are distinctive in appearance, with a bluish or grayish body, sporting spots ranging from light yellow to bright red. The male is more brightly colored than the female. They have large eyes with a vertical slit pupil. Eyes are brown to greenish brown and can be orange or yellow. Their mating call during the night sounds like...**faaa-cue** repeated every 15 seconds or so.



**FAC:** forward air controller. A light plane pilot who directs air strikes and artillery fire from the air.



**Fast Mover** – Slang for a Jet Fighter. Aptly named due to the rapidity of a Jet Fighter’s movement.



**FIGMO:** acronym for “Finally I got my orders.” Especially in “figmo chart,” a shorttimer’s calendar, usually a drawing of an undraped female form, with numbered sections which are filled in, one each day, as the shorttimer keeps track of days to go.

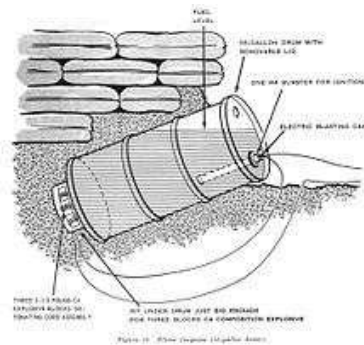
**Fini:** from the French. Vietnamese meanings include through, finished, depart (as in, “When you fini Vietnam, GI?”) and even kill (as in, “She fini him with knife.”).

**First Light** – The time of nautical twilight when the sun is 12 degrees below the horizon.

**Flower seeker:** a term used, especially in the Vietnamese press, to describe a man in search of a prostitute.

**FNG:** (Fucking New Guy) designation for new replacement from the states. Also referred as **Cherry, fresh meat** and **new citizens**

**Foo Gas:** (sometimes contracted to **fougasse** and may be spelled **foo gas**) is a type of mine which uses an explosive charge to project burning liquid onto a target



**Frag:** fragmentation grenade. Also refers to the murder of fellow soldiers in retaliation for an action or order that resulted in somebody getting hurt or killed. This usually happened by tossing a live grenade into a latrine or barracks occupied by the individual.



**Freedom bird:** a jet aircraft which flies returning servicemen to the U.S.



**FSA:** forward support area (or activity); one-stop service base established by logistical units near an operation or forward base camp.

**FSB:** Acronym for Fire Support Base. A fire support base was originally a temporary firing base for artillery, although many evolved into more permanent bases. Their main components varied by size: a typical FSB usually had a battery of six 105 millimeter or 155mm howitzers, a platoon of engineers permanently on station for construction and maintenance projects, at least two landing pads for helicopters (a smaller VIP pad and at least one resupply pad), a Tactical Operations Center(TOC), an aid station staffed with medics, a communications bunker, and a company of infantry serving as the defense garrison. Large FSBs might also have two artillery batteries, and an infantry battalion. Under the original concept of the artillery fire support base, a six-gun battery set

up with one howitzer in the center to fire illumination rounds during night attacks and serve as the base's main registration gun. The other five howitzers were arranged around it in a "star" pattern. Smaller FSBs tended to vary greatly from this layout, with two to four howitzers of various calibers (usually 105mm and 155mm at battalion level) located in dispersed and fortified firing positions. These smaller bases arranged their guns in square or triangle patterns when possible. As the war continued, firebases evolved into small forts with all the defensive measures those required.



**FUBAR:** Acronym for Fucked Up Beyond Any Recognition

**Fugazi** – Completely out of whack, \*\*\*\*ed up, screwy. This term originated during the Vietnam War and experienced limited use by civilians.

**Grunt:** *noun*, an infantryman, also called “**Ground pounders**”



**Gooks:** Derogatory term referencing VC or NVA soldiers. Also called: “Chuck“, “Charlie”, “Dinks” and “Slopes”



**Gooks in the wire:** Alarm for Enemy soldiers trying to infiltrate a basecamp or firebase.

**Greased:** killed also referred as **zapped** and **bought the farm**

**Gunship:** armed helicopter with the primary mission of fire support.



**Guppy:** a stake-and-platform trailer of the type pulled by a five-ton tractor. (See “dolphin.”)

**Hanoi Hannah:** the Tokyo Rose of the Vietnam war.



**Hard Truck / Gun Truck:** provides support to convoys traveling through known hostile territory



**Headman:** the boss man of a local community. His word is usually law.

**Hero:** Reference to those having served in Vietnam, circa 2014

**Ho Chi Minh sandals:** sandals made from worn-out truck tires. Also referred to as “**Ho Chi Minh Road Sticks**”



**Ho Chi Minh trail:** the complex of jungle paths through Laos and Cambodia which serves as the principle Viet Cong and NVA supply route.



**Hog / Pig:** M60 Machine Gun primarily used by Americans. Uses 7.62 x 51 NATO rounds which are longer and similar to the enemy's Russian made AK-47 (7.62 x 39) these rounds are not interchangeable and can not be fired from the opposing weapon.



**Hoi Chanh** (pronounced “hoyee cahn”): a returnee. An enemy soldier who voluntarily gave himself up. Many are employed by the Vietnamese government or the U.S. Army. Referred to as “**Kit Carson Scout**” by infantry units.



**Hong Kong rubber:** the variety used by many Vietnamese girls to help them put on a good front. Standing joke among Vietnam-based servicemen: “And to think I could have bought stock in Hong Kong Rubber when it was down to 31.”

**Howard Johnson's:** any of a multitude of pushcart vendors selling food in the street.





**Humping:** Walking from one location to another while carrying full rucksacks and supplies -routes can be through dense jungle, along paths or trails, through streams and rice paddies and sometimes uphill / downhill on very steep slopes. To march; to carry; to be burdened with.



**Idiot stick:** 1, a rifle 2. the curved yoke used by Vietnamese, usually old women or children, to carry two rice baskets, water buckets or what have you, one hung from each end of the yoke. Sometimes referred to as a “**Dummy stick**“.



**Incoming!** (always exclamatory): “Hit the dirt!” Warning for aerial barrage (mortars, artillery, rockets, etc.) from enemy soldiers.



**Incountry:** in Vietnam.

**Jody:** make believe person who is said to be romancing your wife or girlfriend while you are training or stationed overseas.

**Khong lau** (pronounced “kohng laow”): Vietnamese for “nevah hoppen.”

**Lai day** (pronounced “lye dye”): Vietnamese for “come here.”

**Lam on** (pronounced “lahm oon”): Vietnamese for “please.”

**LBFM:** Has to do with indigenous females and the sexual favor they provide (use your imagination on this one)...SF guys don't want to spill the beans.

**LBJ:** 1. Long Binh Jail; the USARV Stockade, 2. Camp Long Binh Junction, home of the 90th Replacement Bn, through which most individual replacements are processed.



**Left Handed Monkey Wrench** – A non-existent tool. Often the object of fruitless searches undertaken by recruits at the behest of more experienced servicemembers.

**Lifers:** Career soldiers

**Lima charlie:** international phonetic alphabet words for “LC,” short for “loud and clear” in Army radio parlance.

**Loach:** The nimble little Hughes OH-6 Cayuse served extensively with US Army forces in the Vietnam War



**LT:** pronounced ell-tee which was short for lieutenant...most infantry officers accepted this out in the bush.

**LRRP:** Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (4 – 8 men) that worked deep in enemy controlled areas to gather intelligence.



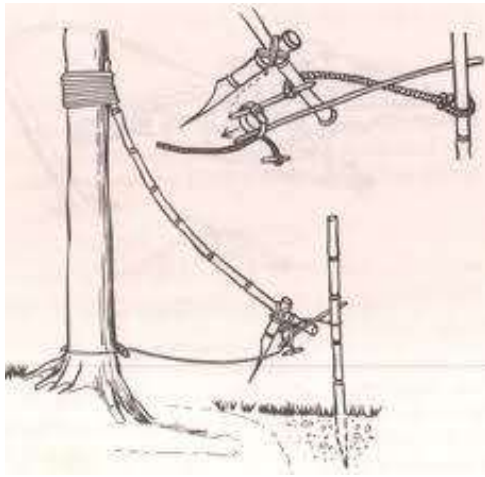
**LZ:** landing zone...anywhere a helicopter can land



**Mad Minute:** Order given for all bunkers to shoot across their front for one minute...used to test fire weapons and also enemy harassment. Out in the field, the leader may order the troops on line and have them shoot into a suspicious area they plan to enter – called **Recon By Fire**



**Malayan gate:** a booby trap device which depends on a ful-crum for action and usually employs spikes as the killing device. Devised by Malay communists during their unsuccessful 10 year fight against the British.



**Mama San** – GI reference to all older Vietnamese women

**Mau len** (pronounced “maow len”): Vietnamese for fast, or speed. As in, “Let’s mau len it up a bit, Papasan.”

**Meat Wagon** – Slang for an ambulance, or any other medical emergency vehicle

**Medevac:** short for medical evacuation.



**Mike Boat:** landing craft, mechanized (LCM8) used to carry troops.



### **Military General Orders (11):**

1. To take charge of this post and all government property in view.
2. To walk my post in a military manner, keeping always on the alert, and observing everything that takes place within sight or hearing.
3. To report all violations of orders I am instructed to enforce.
4. To repeat all calls from posts more distant from the guard house than my own.
5. To quit my post only when properly relieved.
6. To receive, obey, and pass on to the sentry who relieves me all orders from the commanding officer, field officer of the day, officer of the day, and officers and petty officers of the watch.
7. To talk to no one except in line of duty.
8. To give the alarm in case of fire or disorder.
9. To call the petty officer of the watch in any case not covered by instructions.
10. To salute all officers and all colors and standards not cased.
11. To be especially watchful at night, and during the time for challenging, to challenge all persons on or near my post, and to allow no one to pass without proper authority.

**Mine Magnet:** Any armored vehicle (APC, tank, etc.)



**Monopoly Money:** MPC – Military Payment Certificates used by the military in Vietnam. Greenbacks were illegal.



**M.U.L.E. :** Multi Utility Light Equipment – small motorized cart used to carry equipment and supplies within firebases



**Numbah-one GI:** serviceman who spends a good deal of money on the Vietnamese economy.

**Numbah-ten GI:** serviceman who spends little money on the Vietnamese economy, or one who refuses to make a proposed purchase.

**Numbah-ten thousand:** Absolutely the worst of the lot

**Nuoc mam** (“noouk mom”): the Vietnamese national dish; fermented fish sauce.

**Old Boots / Old Timers:** Those soldiers who have been in country for a while – others look to them for advice and direction due to their experience

**Papa San** – GI reference to all older Vietnamese men

**Pedicab:** a foot-powered cycle.



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**Plastic:** type of explosives favored by sappers. As in, “I was in the middle of a steak at the Hoa Lu BEQ when they found 200 pounds of plastic behind the bar, so I stuck my fork in my steak and di-di-maued.” (which see)

**Plenty cheap charlie:** one who wastes even less money than an ordinary cheap charlie.

**Prairie Fire:** the code word used by MACVSOG to identify recon ops into Laos (previously known as Shining Brass) and it was also used by helicopter pilots flying in support of SOG’s Recon A team was in imminent danger of being overrun, or was compromised and on the run – the exfil of SOG-assets in an emergency.

**P’s:** piasters; basic Vietnamese monetary unit. \$1 equals 118 piasters, as this is written.



**PSP:** Perforated Steel Planking – standardized, perforated steel matting material originally developed by the United States shortly before World War II, primarily for the rapid construction of temporary runways and landing strips. First Use in November 1941. The material was also used in the Korean and Vietnam Wars where its common name is pierced (or perforated) steel planking or PSP. A runway two hundred feet wide and 5000 feet (1500 m) long could be created within two days by a small team of engineers.



**Puff:** originally “Puff the Magic Dragon”; a C-47 armed with miniguns or other rapid fire weapons. It is said that if firing while flying over a football field, a bullet will hit every square foot of the field. Also called “Spooky”.



**Punji stick:** sharpened stake, usually bamboo, planted in the ground with the point sticking up. Often used in booby traps and often employed with the point smeared with feces as a poisoning element.



**Quan Canh** (pronounced “kwuhn kein”): Vietnamese military police.

**RA:** Acronym for Regular Army (those who joined voluntarily)

**Rats:** an “in” term used by some Saigon warriors for “white mice.”



**REAL LIFE:** (always capitalized): civilian life. As in, “What do you do in Real Life, Jonesie?”

**Redball:** 1. the system used in Vietnam to expedite delivery of critical supplies and repair parts. 2. Camp Redball, a small base camp near Go Vap, a Saigon suburb.



**Re-Up Bird:** Blue Eared Barbet – bird whose song sounds like “Re UP” to those soldiers in the jungle.

**REFRAD:** Acronym for Released From Active Duty

**REMF:** Acronym for Rear Echelon Military Force...derogatory designation is Rear Echelon Mother Fucker

**RF/PF:** Acronym for Regional Forces/Popular Forces.





**Rice wine:** an alcoholic drink, very inexpensive, made from rice. Usually tastes like kerosene.

**Rog** (pronounced “rahj”): short for “Roger,” the radio term for “I read (understand) your transmission.” Also, in the expression, “That’s a Rog, Baby” (That’s right).

**ROK / ROCK:** Marines from Korea – allies with U.S. to fight communism



**Rotor Wash:** non-existent item. New troops are sent to supply to look for a can of this.

**Round eye:** Caucasian woman.



**RPG:** Rocket Propelled Grenade. Weapon of choice by VC / NVA for attacks on armor and against sandbagged bunkers.



**Ruff-Puffs:** Derogatory term used by Americans to the RF/PF troops. South Vietnamese Regional Forces were roughly akin to militias. Recruited locally, they fell into two broad groups – Regional Forces and Popular Forces. During the early 60’s the Regional Forces manned the country-wide outpost system and defended critical points, such as bridges and ferries. There were some 9,000 such positions, half of them in the Mekong Delta region. In 1964, the Regional Forces were integrated into the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and placed under the command of the Joint General Staff.

**Saigon Tea:** colored water (sometimes soda) purchased in thimble-size glasses as the price of a hostess' company in a bar or nightclub. The hostess gets a commission, and she can drink as many as the customer can buy, as fast as he can buy them.

**Saigon warrior:** drugstore soldier, especially one who serves or has served in Saigon.

**Same-Same:** I first heard it during the Vietnam War in the 60s. It's still used quite extensively throughout Vietnam by Vietnamese as well as Australian and US ex-servicemen. Having said that, I am noticing younger generations of tourists becoming quite enamoured by the same same.

How do you feel?

Same same yesterday. What's the difference between these two beers.

Same same. All Vietnamese same same... black hair, brown eyes.

**Shake 'n Bake:** Soldiers who earn sergeant stripes after specialized training prior to arrival in Vietnam. Program was established to help fill-in leadership holes within the ranks during the war.



**FT. BENNING**  
**1967 - 1972**

**Shaming:** Goofing off or getting by with the least amount of effort.

**Shit on a Shingle:** Slang for a piece of toast with chipped beef and gravy.



**Shitters:** outhouse like enclosures – usually 3 or 6 holes (3 and 3 across from one another) cut in a wooden plank and suspended over 55 gallon half barrels. Usually in firebases – no place for modesty



**Shit burning:** day-long ritual at firebases where filled half-barrels are pulled out from the enclosures and replaced with empties. A soldier or Vietnamese is assigned to burn all the waste with a mixture of kerosene and diesel fuel – continuously stirring the contents during the 10 hr. process.



**So mot** (“sah maht”): Vietnamese for “numbah one,” the best.

**So mudi** (sah mooee"): Vietnamese for "numbah 10," the worst.

**Sapper:** a soldier, especially an enemy soldier, whose job is to blow things up.

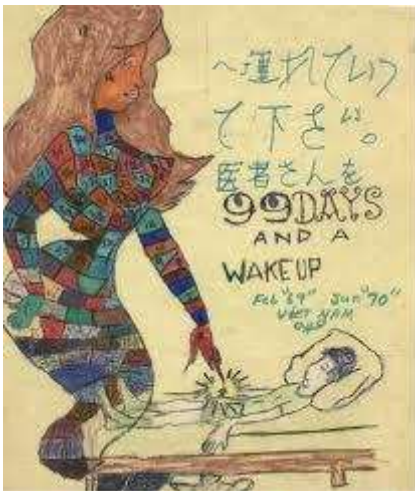


**Shithook:** Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopter



**Siesta:** Vietnam quits from noon to 2:30 p.m. This period of each day is known as siesta.

**SHORT:** Term signifying that the individual's tour of duty is almost completed – usually less than 100 days. Short timers carry notched walking sticks, colorful calendars...most compare the last 30 days in country with their Cherry days and become extremely paranoid and not wanting to take risks anymore.



**Sit-Rep:** Short for Situation Report. Field units and firebase bunkers are normally contacted on an hourly basis by the company / battalion radio operator. If nothing is going on, we normally answered – negative sit-rep. If we were in hostile territory, a negative response is interpreted as breaking squelch twice in a row on the radio.

**Slick:** transport helicopter.



**SNAFU** - Situation Normal All Fucked Up

**Steam and Cream:** Steam room or massage parlors operated by prostitutes...pay for happy endings.



**STIF:** acronym for “Saigon Tea Is Fini,” a now-defunct organization formed to combat increases in the price of Saigon Tea. Members would fill a bar which had raised its prices and sit sipping beer without buying Tea. Their “drink-ins” met with limited success.

**Straight arrow:** serviceman who remains faithful to his wife or Stateside girlfriend throughout his Vietnam tour. (See “broken arrow.”)

**TARFU:** acronym for Things Are Really Fucked Up

**Tarmac:** Material used for surfacing roads or other outdoor areas, consisting of crushed rock mixed with tar. It is often used to describe the apron or runway of an airport. Picture below shows the Saigon Airport falling in 1975.



**The country store:** any one of thousands of village shops catering to U.S. servicemen.

**The ‘Nam:** Vietnam.

**The Pill:** any one of several types of tablets taken weekly by all servicemen in Vietnam as a defense against most types of malaria.

**The WORLD** (always capitalized): the U.S.A. As in, “Where you from back in The World, Sarge?”

**Thunder Road:** Highway 1 – main north / south highway (note black outline on map)



**Ti ti** (“tee-tee”): Vietnamese for “small.”

**Toi khong biet** (“toy kohng bee-ech”): Vietnamese for “I don’t know” or “I don’t understand.”

**Toi yen em (nhieu lam)** (“toy you em (nyoo lahm)”): Vietnamese for “I love you (too much).”

**Tomorrow**: never make a date for “tomorrow” with a Vietnamese girl. “‘Tomorrow’ nevah come in Vietnam, GI.”

**Tracks**: Vehicle with tracks that carry howitzer or other large guns ([see picture of APC](#)).

**Troi oi** (“choyee oyee”): an emphatic expression in Vietnamese which can mean just about anything the user wants it to mean. Troi duc oi (choyee duck oyee) is the same expression more emphatically stated.

**Tube of Super Torque**: Non existent article – newbies are sent to locate this item within chopper groups

**Two-Stepper**: Bamboo pit viper – said to kill a person within two steps after being bitten.



**Un-Ass**: To move immediately or leave one’s current position.

**Upcountry**: any place north of the Saigon-Long Binh-Bien Hoa area.

**US**: – Acronym meaning Unwilling Service (referring to Draftees)

**U.S.Army**: Acronym for U Sonsabitches Are Ruining My Youth

**U.S. ARMY**: Acronym – Uncle Sam Aint Released Me Yet

**USELESS**: homonym pun on USIS, the United States Information Service.

**“V”**: V-100 Armored Car made by Cadillac and used as convoy escort



**White mice**: the Canh Sat; the Vietnamese national police force. Its members wear white shirts.



**White space**: the most prevalent element on the front pages of the best Vietnamese newspapers when censorship is in effect, which is usually.

**Wickham trolley**: an armored railroad locomotive of the type developed by the British during the Malayan rebellion.





**Willie Pete:** White phosphorous

**Xau lam** (“saow lahm”): Vietnamese for “numbah ten thousand” (indescribably bad).

**Xin loi** (“sin loyee”): Vietnamese for “Sorry ’bout that.”

**Yard:** short for Montagnard, a French word meaning; “mountaineer.” Member of any one of a number of semi-nomadic, aboriginal tribes which live in the mountains of Vietnam.



**Zap:** to kill or seriously wound.

**Zippo:** Brand of lighter most commonly carried during the war. Soldiers engraved them to show their personality



**Zippo:** Any tracked vehicle or boat that has an attached flame thrower.



**Zoomie:** jet jockey.

*Compiled by By Wayne Draper, Times Staff Writer and John Podlaski*

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## Marine Corps Speak in Vietnam

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**Aboard:** on base; with us.

**Actual:** radio talk for unit commander.

**All hands:** everyone...all y'all

**Amtrack:** amphibious tractor; landing craft.



**As you were!:** resume what you were doing; correction.

**Assholes and elbows:** in a hurry; quickly.

**Ba mui ba** (“33”): vietnamese beer. Rumored to be spiked with formaldehyde.



**Bac si (viet.):** doctor, used for corpsman.

**Bam:** broad ass marine; derogatory name for woman marine.

**Barracks cover:** garrison (frame) cap.

**Battle pin:** necktie clip.

**Be Advised:** Warning given prior to making an important statement

**BCD:** bad conduct discharge.

**Belay:** stop; quit.

**Billet:** assignment or job; place of residence.

**Blouse:** n. jacket; v. tuck in, secure.

**Blousing bands:** elastic bands used to secure utility trouser cuffs.



**Blues:** dress blues.



**BLT:** Acronym for Battalion Landing Team.  
**Boondocks (boonies):** rugged isolated backcountry.  
**Boondockers:** low-topped work boots issued to reservists.  
**Boot:** recruit.  
**Brain housing group:** your gourd, mind, brain, or head.  
**Brass:** officers.  
**Brig:** jail.  
**Brig rat:** jail inmate.  
**Brig chaser:** MP assigned to escort prisoners.  
**Brother:** black marine (also splib).  
**Brothers-in-Arm:** All Veterans united – having a special bond between them



**Brown side-out:** desert camouflage pattern.  
**Bulkhead:** wall.  
**By-the-numbers:** in sequence.  
**Cannon cockers:** artillerymen.  
**Carry on!:** resume what you were doing; as you were.  
**Casual company:** unit of marines awaiting reassignment.  
**CC:** corrective custody; jail, the brig.  
**Chuck:** derogatory term that Black soldiers used to refer to white soldiers.  
**CG:** Commanding General.  
**Chieu hoi (viet.):** freedom; safe conduct pass; program whereby VC who surrendered were assured safe conduct.



**Chit:** written authorization or receipt.

**Chow:** food.

**Chow hall:** mess hall.

**Click:** one notch of adjustment on a rifle.

**Cinderella liberty:** time off which ends at midnight.

**Co (viet.):** girl, woman.

**Colors:** n. the flag; v. ceremony of raising or lowering the flag.

**Con biet?** (viet) do you understand?

**C-rats:** c rations, canned field rations.



**Com rats:** commuted rations; in lieu pay for meals eaten off base.

**Corpsman:** navy medic serving with marines.

**Cover:** hat.

**Cover ass:** take precautions to avoid blame.

**The Crotch:** derogatory term for the Marine Corps.

**Cruise:** period of enlistment; tour of duty.

**Deck:** floor.

**Deuce-and-a-half:** 2 1/2 ton truck.



**Di-di (viet.):** leave, go, move out.

**Di-di mau (viet.):** emphatic of di-di.

**Diddy bag:** cloth, drawstring bag for small items.



**Dinky-dau (viet):** crazy.

**Dog-and-pony-show:** special presentation put on for visiting dignitaries.

**Double time:** quickly; at a run.

**Dry fire:** practice.

**Dry run:** practice.

**Du-dit (viet):** fuck you!

**Eighth & eye:** headquarters Marine Corps.

**Entrenching tool (e-tool):** small folding field shovel.



**Every swinging dick:** all hands, everyone.

**Eye fuck:** scrutinize; inspect closely.

**Fartsack:** mattress cover or flight suit.

**Field day:** general cleanup of barracks.

**Field scarf:** necktie.

**Field strip:** disassemble; take apart.

**Fire in the hole!:** warning that explosives are about to be detonated.

**First shirt (also top):** first sergeant.



**Float phase:** sea deployment of a marine unit.

**FMF:** Fleet Marine Force.

**Four-by:** light truck.

**Front leaning rest position:** pushup position (“the position”).

**Galley:** kitchen.

**Gang way!:** stand back! move away!

**Gedunk** – Refers to snack foods, such as candy and chips, as well as the place they’re sold. Associated with the Navy, and can be used in the phrase “gedunk sailor” as a pejorative remark for inexperienced sailors.

**Gear:** equipment.

**Gican:** garbage can.

**Gizmo:** gadget; anything that defies description.

**Gourd:** head; where you hang your cover.

**Green side-out:** woodland pattern camouflage.

**Grab a hat:** leave.

**Grinder:** parade ground.

**Guidon:** pennant bearing unit designation.



**Gung ho:** lit. work together; (from chinese) highly motivated.

**Gungy:** gung ho.

**Gunny:** gunnery sergeant (E7)

**Grabass (organized grabass):** play; sports, frivolous activity.

**Green machine:** marine corps.

**Gyrene:** Short for G.I. Marine

**Ham:** hairy assed marine; male marine.

**Ham and mothers:** “ham and motherfuckers;” generally detested c-ration meal posing as ham and lima beans.



**Hatch:** door.

**Hard charger:** motivated marine.

**Head:** toilet.

**High-and-tight:** standard marine haircut; shaved sides and short on top.

**Hollywood marine:** San Diego MCRD graduate.

**Hooch (jap.):** any kind of shelter, residence.

**Honcho (jap.):** boss; man in charge.

**House mouse:** drill instructor's go-fer.

**Huss:** a favor; a break e.g., “gimme a huss;” archaic name for hu34d helicopter.

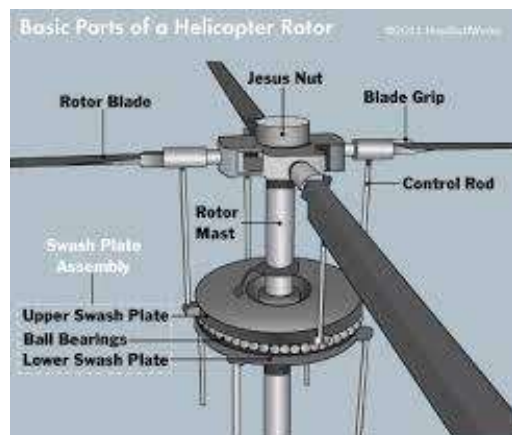
**Irish pennant:** string dangling from clothing indicating unkempt appearance.

**IDS:** Acronym for “In Da Shit”.

**ITR:** infantry training regiment.

**Jarhead:** slang for marine.

**Jesus Nut:** Main connector which holds rotor in place



**Jibs:** teeth, esp. front incisors, e.g., “i’ll bust your jibs.”

**Jing (also jing-wa, jap.):** change; money.

**Joe shit the ragman:** bad example, un-squared-away marine, boyfriend of rosy rottencrotch.



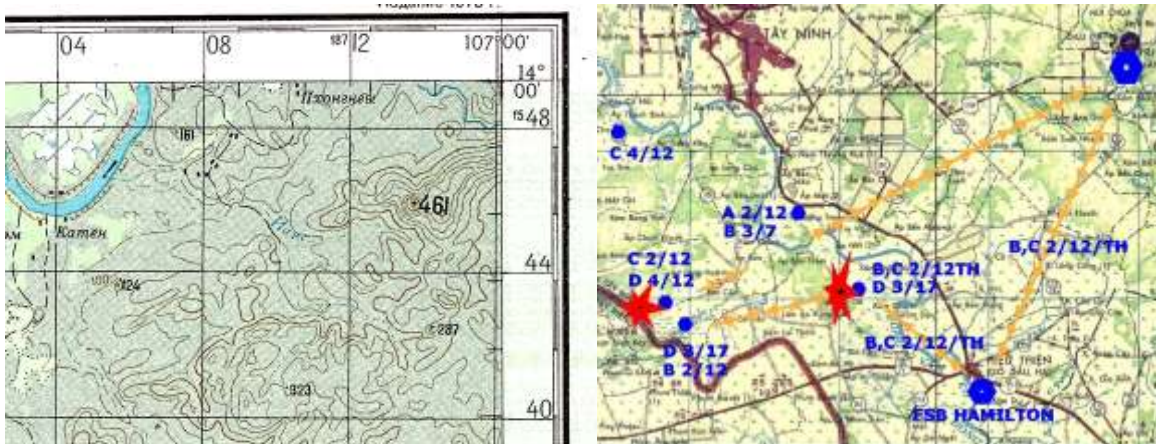
**Junk-on-the-bunk:** complete clothing and equipment inspection (also things-on-the-springs) laid out on the rack.



**K-bar:** marine-issue fighting knife.



**Klick:** kilometer – 6/10th of a mile. On a topographical map, each outlined grid is considered 1km x 1km



**Ladder (or ladderway):** stairs.

**Lai day (viet.):** come here!

**Leave:** authorized absence of more than 24 hours.

**Liberty:** authorized absence of less than 24 hours.

**Lock and load:** arm and ready your weapon; get ready!

**Make a hole!:** stand back! gang way!

**Maggie's drawers:** red disc used on the rifle range to signify missing the target.

**MOS:** assigned job specialty.

**Mustang (mustanger):** enlisted man who becomes an officer.

**Non-qual:** marine who fails to fire a qualifying score at the rifle range.

**Office hours:** summary court martial, official inquiry or reprimand.

**Office pogue:** desk-bound marine.

**Ontos:** armored tracked vehicle mounting six 106 mm recoilless rifles.



**Outstanding!:** exceptional; well done!

**Overhead:** ceiling.

**Over the hill:** absent without authorization.

**Over the hump:** more than halfway through enlistment.

**Passageway:** corridor; hallway.

**Piece:** rifle.

**Piss cutter:** envelope-shaped overseas cap.

**Piss-and-punk:** bread and water punishment.

**Piss tube:** field urinal; rocket launcher (bazooka), which resembles one.



**Pogue:** lazy individual, also office worker.

**Pogey bait:** candy, sweets.

**Police call:** time allocated to clean up an area.

**Police up:** clean up.

**Poop (also dope, scoop):** information.

**Pop-flare:** hand held and launched aerial illumination flare. The cap is removed and placed over the opposite end...hold center of flare with left hand and point it upward, then using the heel of your right palm, come up and hit the bottom...a firing pin will engage the explosive and send the flare into the air.



**PT:** physical training; exercise.

**Quarters:** living space.

**Rack:** bed, bunk.

**Rappel:** descend from cliff or helicopter by rope.



**Recon (also force recon):** force reconnaissance marine.

**Romp 'n' stomp:** to drill, march.

**Round:** bullet or artillery or mortar shell.

**Rubber lady:** inflatable air mattress.

**Salt:** experience; an old-timer marine.

**Salty:** smart-mouthed; opinionated.

**Scoshi (or scosh):** small, short, a little bit.

**Scuttlebutt:** rumors; a drinking fountain.

**Seabag:** duffel bag.

**Sea duty:** billeted aboard a ship.  
**Sea going bellhop:** derog. for marine, from marines assigned to the bridge of a vessel.  
**Sea story:** a lie or an exaggeration.  
**Sea lawyer:** self-appointed expert.  
**Secure:** tie down or make fast; also to recycle or dispose of; to put something in its proper place; to desist.  
**Seven-eighty-two gear:** field equipment; canvas web gear.  
**Shit bird:** messy or undisciplined; a fuck up.  
**Shit can:** (v) to dispose of; (n) garbage can.  
**Short round:** ordnance, which is landing short of the intended target.  
**Short time:** a very brief love affair.  
**Shorttimer:** marine nearing the end of an enlistment period.  
**Sick bay:** clinic or hospital.  
**Six-by (six-by-six):** standard three-axle truck.  
**Six-six-and-a-kick:** the ultimate general court marshal punishment consisting of six months forfeiture of pay, six months hard labor, and a dishonorable discharge.  
**Skipper:** captain; commanding officer.  
**Skivvies:** underwear.  
**Skivvie honcho:** a lothario; a ladies man.  
**Skivvie house:** brothel.  
**SLICK SLEEVE:** Navy personnel on active duty that has not served 4 yrs. in the service and hasn't earned a hash mark for his sleeve.  
**Slopchute:** diner; restaurant.  
**Smoking lamp:** authority to smoke when it is lit.  
**Snap in:** practice, esp. on the rifle range.  
**Snoopin' and poopin':** reconnoitering.  
**Snot locker:** nose.  
**Sound off!:** assertively voice.  
**Sorry 'bout that!:** assertion of mock apology.  
**Spud locker:** pantry.  
**Squad bay:** barracks.  
**Squared away:** neat, orderly, organized.  
**Squid:** (derogatory term) sailor.  
**Stack arms!:** command given to place 3 rifles in a pyramid.  
**Stacking swivel:** appendage near muzzle of rifle allowing stacked arms; neck.  
**Stand by!:** prepare.  
**Standby:** waiting status.  
**Starchies:** starched utilities.  
**Stroke book:** porno magazine.  
**Survey:** dispose of; recycle.  
**Swab:** mop.  
**Swabbie:** sailor.  
**Ti ti (viet.)** (pron. tee-tee): little, small.  
**Top:** sergeant major.  
**Topside:** upstairs; on deck.  
**Trops:** khaki tropical summer dress uniform.  
**Turn to:** begin work.  
**UA:** unauthorized absence.  
**UD:** undesirable discharge.  
**USMC:** Acronym Uncle Sam's Misguided Children  
**Utilities:** olive drab field uniform.

**Willie peter:** white phosphorus. Units in the field request marking rounds which explode in the air at a set of coordinates – when shooting an azimuth with a compass and estimating the distance (using sight and sound -counting the seconds before hearing the explosion) their location can be verified on a grid map.



**The word:** confirmed official information; the straight scoop.

**Zero-dark-thirty:** pre-dawn; early.

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*I was a machine gunner (infantry, mos 0311) in Vietnam with the 2nd battalion, 4th marines, 3rd marine division from June of 1965 until the end of 1966.*

*Semper Fi,*

*Nicholas Del Cioppo*

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#### **ARTILLERY (ARTY):**

Large caliber, crew served firearms (cannon), launching projectiles (usually explosive) against distant targets. Typical field artillery weapons include howitzers (short barreled), guns (long barreled), mortars (high angle firing).

#### **ORGANIZATION AND TACTICS:**

Arty weapons were grouped by caliber and type into “batteries” of 3-6 weapons. Howitzers had calibers of 105mm, 155mm, and 8inch. Guns were 175mm. Mortars were 4.2inch caliber. Smaller mortars (81mm) and ‘direct- fire’ weapons (106mm recoilless, tanks and ‘Dusters’) were classed as Infantry weapons and not included in the Field Artillery.

Each battery included the necessary gun-crew for aiming (FDC), firing, handling ammo and maintaining the weapons. Gun-crew members were slanged as ‘gun-bunnies’, ‘lanyard-pullers’, ‘cannon-cockers’, and ‘ammo-humpers’.

Batteries were grouped into Battalions, supporting a particular AO within the Division. Batteries included weapons of a single caliber, thus an Arty battalion might consist of several 105mm batteries, a couple each of 155mm and 4.2inch batteries and one or two 8inch batteries, totaling about 60 cannon supported by about 600 personnel.

Each Arty battalion reported to a Division level unit (DivArty) for tactical and strategic coordination within the Division AO. The main task of the Arty in Vietnam was to provide support for the infantry in the field. This task was chiefly thru executing 'fire missions' called for by the infantry. Each field unit typically had an Arty-FO (Forward Observer) to provide coordination between the infantry and the supporting arty battalion. Battalion FDC coordinated and formed the liaison between the infantry on the ground and the assigned covering artillery battery or batteries.

### **FIRE MISSION TACTICS:**

Fire missions in Vietnam might be routine, such as marking rounds, nighttime defensive target zeroing (DTs), or harassment and interdiction missions (H&Is). The highest priority was given to the 'Contact Fire Mission' in support of an infantry unit in actual contact with the enemy.

When the FO called for a fire mission, he also radioed the target's map coordinates, which the Bn-FDC plotted against his last known position. For routine missions the coordinates were encoded or "Shackled" to prevent any tip-off of the troops' location. Contact coordinates were sent "in the clear" since the enemy troops knew where the friendlies were anyway. In addition, the FO called for a particular shell/fuse combination to best engage his target, and a fire-pattern.

Should he want to shoot within about 70 meters of his own location, he was advised that the rounds would land "Danger Close". The Bn-FDC also assigned a particular battery to fire and confirmed that their take-down of the target coords, shell, fuse and fire pattern were correct. The Bn-FDC gave clearance for the battery to fire and advised any aircraft near the Gun-Target (GT) line to avoid the target area as well as the direct line from the battery to the target.

In the battery FDC, the target coords were plotted and the Deflection (azimuth) and Quadrant Elevation (vertical barrel angle) were calculated using the range to target and recommended powder charge. The latest MET (meteorological) message was consulted to adjust the aim point for temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction.

When the FDC had determined the powder charge to use, the gun crews went into action, pulling the proper shell/fuse combo, 'cutting' the proper powder charge, and setting the fuses if the fuse was a VT or Time fuse. When the guns were ready to fire the crew signaled the FDC, and the FDC ordered "Battery...Fire" and announced to Bn-FDC and the FO: "...SHOT!" indicating that the rounds were in flight.

Knowing the time-of-flight, 10 seconds before the rounds were due to impact, the battery FDC called "...SPLASH!" signaling the FO to watch for the explosion in order to adjust the impact point on subsequent volleys.

Typical firing patterns might be "One Round", followed by "Battery One" if the initial impact was on target. In contact situations the pattern was often "Battery One, Fire For Effect" at the outset to bring large amounts of ordnance onto the enemy quickly. "Battery One" means that the 6 cannon fire one round in unison, while "Fire For Effect" means that the battery will fire continuously at it's maximum sustained rate, adjusting on the fly, until the FO calls "Cease Fire".

Special missions included “Zone And Sweep” patterns or “Time On Target” tactics for preparing an LZ prior to insertion of assault forces, usually by helicopter.

Zone And Sweep directed the battery to fire a Battery One pattern on the target and also one kill radius beyond, below, left and right of the target, expending 30 rounds, patterning an “X” on the target and surrounding area. Typical kill radius was 30 meters for a 105mm or 4.2inch round, 50 meters for a 155mm and 80 meters for an 8inch round.

“Time On Target” (TOT) was a surprise tactic for devastating a particular target area almost instantaneously. Suspected “hot” LZ’s were often prep’d with a TOT mission while the assault forces hovered or circled overhead at altitude. Troops were then inserted into the ‘sanitized’ LZ before the smoke cleared.

TOT missions involved timing the firing of multiple batteries so that all fire on the same location, with the firing times adjusted to cause the rounds to all impact at the same time. A typical TOT might involve 4 batteries (24 guns), of different calibers; some firing rounds fused for ground burst, some for airburst. The effect is that a particular jungle clearing might be quiet and peaceful one second and in the next second be totally enveloped and saturated with explosions in the air and on the ground. Bombardment may cease after the initial volley or be maintained in Fire For Effect mode, creating a sustained saturation of the area with detonations.

Artillery missions also included the firing of parachute flares (Illumination or ‘Illum’) to provide light at night, Marking Round missions to provide an airburst over a designated map location in order to allow the infantry to take a compass reading and verify their own map location. Harassment and Interdiction missions entailed firing on known enemy trails, hangouts, etc at random times to keep the enemy off balance. Precision fire missions usually involved one gun firing to destroy a single small target, such as a bunker, abandoned vehicle, or any object to be denied to the enemy. The 8inch howitzer was usually employed for precision missions, being the most precise and accurate weapon in the arty arsenal.

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## ARTILLERY TERMS:

**AMF:** Adios Mother Fucker

**ARTY:** ‘Artillery’.

**AIRBURST:** Explosion in the air, used with Shell-HE to increase the anti-personnel effect of shrapnel thrown off by the explosion, or with Shell-SMOKE to provide a visible ‘marking round’ in the air above a designated point.



**BATTERY:** The primary artillery unit, consisting of 3-6 cannon of a single caliber.



**BATTERY-ONE:** a method of fire wherein the cannon of a battery fire each volley in unison.

**BREECH KEY:** non-existent article – newbies to artillery units are sent out to look for this

**BEEHIVE:** An anti-personnel, direct-fire shell carrying several thousand small steel darts or ‘fleshettes’. Each fleshette is about one inch long and has the appearance of a 1” finishing nail with the nail head stamped into the form of 4 fins, similar to an arrow. A typical 105mm BEEHIVE has 6000 darts, 3000 of which are loaded pointing forward, 3000 pointing backward. The shell is fired directly at advancing enemy formations similar to an aimed shotgun. At about 50 meters from the muzzle, the round ejects the darts toward the enemy with a medium hard ejecting charge. The forward-loaded darts spread into a 45-degree fan traveling forward, while the rear facing darts are forced by their fins to flip around in flight. As the darts flip, they loop away from the GT line, forming a fan of about 60 degrees. Thus 6000 darts fly in a 60-degree fan at about 2000 feet per second toward the enemy. The effect on troops in the open is devastating. Enemy troops about 100 meters from the firing cannon may be pierced by 10-20 darts, those closer may receive 100 or more penetrating stab wounds similar to those inflicted by an ice pick.

**Biscuit Bitches:** Derogatory term referencing Donut Dollies

**C-4:** Plastic explosive

**CHECK-FIRE:** a signal for the artillery to immediately halt firing.

**DARMA:** Defense Against Rocket Mortar Attack. Artillery tactic to fire against enemy rocket or mortar positions during an enemy attack. Coordinated with Q4 Counter Mortar Radar when available and operational.

**DELTA-TANGO:** Defensive target, designated by an FO for quick attention if his unit comes under attack. Usually called into Bn-FDC/battery as the infantry established its NDP (Night Defensive Perimeter).



**DAISY CUTTER:** shell or bomb fitted with a fuse extension to provide detonation 1-6 feet above ground, minimizing the cratering effect and maximizing the blast effect. Used with large bombs (2000 lb) and 6-foot daisy cutter fuses to create an instant clearing in dense jungle for an LZ.



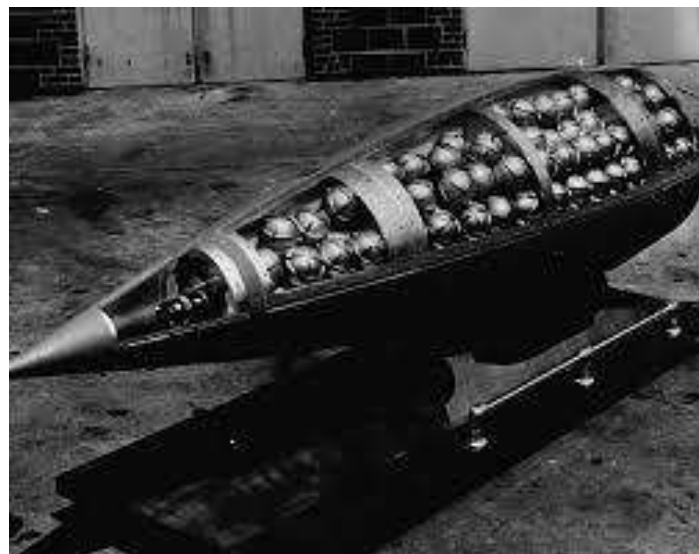
**DANGER CLOSE:** Calling in artillery support exceptionally close to friendly lines.

**FAC:** Forward Air Controller, a Forward Observer in an aircraft.

**FAG:** Acronym for field artillery guy

**FDC:** Fire Direction Control. The arty unit, which at battery level, calculated the adjustments of the cannon to cause the shells to impact on target. At Battalion level, the FDC operated from the TOC (Tactical Operations Center) and provided liaison between the infantry, artillery and local ARVN authorities with regard to artillery operations. The TOC often contained an Air Warning group, which kept aircraft advised of artillery flight thru the local airspace.

**FIRECRACKER:** A 155mm or 8inch shell carrying a large number of golfball sized bomblets, which it ejects at altitude over the target area. Upon ejection each bomblet opens canted 'umbrella-like' fins and floats spinning to earth. The fluttering, spinning fall has the appearance of a butterfly in flight. Upon impact a spring on the bottom of the bomblet reacts, throwing the bomblet back into the air and starting a time delay mechanism. When the bomblet rises back to about 6 feet above the ground the delay expires and the bomblet detonates with energy slightly less than an M26 frag grenade. The effect is that of a low altitude TOT, delivered by one shell. The bomblets exploding in quick succession has the sound, at a distance, of a string of firecrackers.



**FIRE-FOR-EFFECT:** the continuous firing of a battery's cannon, sustained until a 'cease-fire' or 'check-fire' is called.

**FO:** Forward Observer, traveled with the infantry and coordinated arty missions, or an airborne FAC.

**FOD:** Foreign Object Damage

**FUZE:** Mechanism, which causes an arty projectile to detonate (explode). Various fuses were available in Vietnam to provide detonation above ground, on the ground, or below ground at the discretion of the FO in the field.

**FUZE-QUICK:** Point-detonating nose-fuse, explodes within .002 seconds after impact, aka: 'instantaneous'. The 'standard', most often fired artillery fuse.

**FUZE-DELAY:** Point-detonating nose-fuse, explodes about .010-.015 seconds after impact, allowing the shell to penetrate the target and detonate inside it. Used to attack 'below-ground' targets such as bunkers and tunnels.

**FUZE-TIME:** Nose-fuse, detonates after a pre-set time delay; used to obtain an airburst, but will also detonate on impact. Used in Vietnam with Shell-HE for antipersonnel effect, or with Shell-HE or Shell-SMOKE as an aerial 'marking round', or with Shell-ILLUM. Not as reliable as FUSE-VT for antipersonnel effect.

**FUSE-VT:** Nose-fuse, VT designates "Variable-Time". A self-contained radar triggered proximity fuse; detonating within 20 meters of any object in its flight path. Used for reliable 20-meter airburst against personnel targets, although it could trigger on tree foliage or flocks of birds (bird burst). Had adjustable "arming time" to prevent triggering on objects close to the firing battery. Was used for "direct-fire" against ground attack on the battery or FSB by setting a zero-second arming time, causing the shell to detonate within .2 seconds of firing, usually at a distance of 60-100 meters from the muzzle. Also detonated on impact should the radar mechanism fail.

**GT-LINE:** the direct line on a map from the firing battery to the target. Most ground units avoided travel on the GT-Line since the most common 'mistake' of an arty projectile in flight was the "Short-Round" which fell short of the target, invariably on the GT-Line.

**GUN:** an artillery cannon with a long barrel. The 175mm gun (M107-SP) was self-propelled, weighed 62,100 lbs and could fire 1 round every two minutes to a range of 32,700 meters (20.3 miles). A long-range weapon, it could only fire 400 rounds before its barrel had to be replaced, as opposed to the howitzers, which could fire 5000-7000 rounds between barrel refitting.



**H&I:** Harassment and Interdiction – artillery fire into random areas prior to shutting down for the night

**HAND CRANK:** Used to raise artillery tube when hydraulics fail

**HANG A LIGHT:** Call for artillery to fire a flare round overhead



**HIGH ANGLE FIRE:** artillery trajectory wherein the shell travels higher than its distance down range. Used for firing over intervening mountains, etc, inherently less accurate than low angle fire (standard) due to shell ballistics and wind effects.



**HOWITZER:** an artillery cannon capable of both High-angle and Low-Angle fire. The 105mm howitzer was the most commonly deployed type in Vietnam, weighed about 5,000 lbs, and could fire a shell 11,500 meters (7 miles) at a rate of 3 rounds per minute. The 155mm howitzer was either a 2-wheeled, towed

cannon (M114) or a tracked, self-propelled weapon (M109-SP), weighed 12,700lbs (M114) or 52,460lbs (M109-SP) and could fire its shells 14,600 meters (9 miles), at 1 round per minute. The 8Inch howitzer was a self-propelled cannon weighing 58,500lbs and could fire 16,800 meters (10.4 miles), at 1 round every 2 minutes.

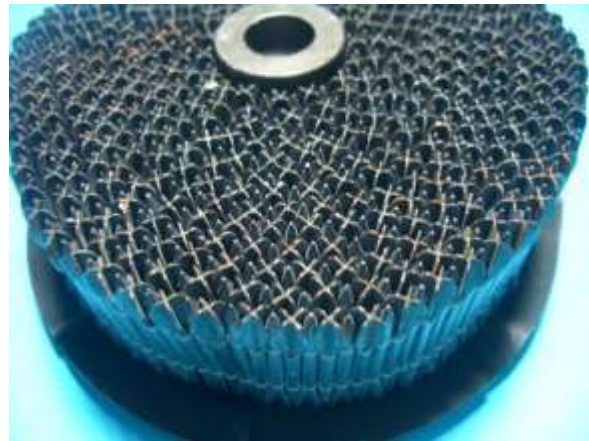


**JOE:** Name for rounds within the artillery group

**MORTAR:** crew served, muzzle loading, high angle cannon. 4.2 Inch mortars fired projectiles similar to the 105mm howitzer, HE, WP, Illum, etc. Used primarily for fire missions at ranges too short for howitzers (2-3 Km).



**NAILS:** Hardened steel flechette darts used in 105 mm howitzers antipersonal beehive rounds. Also used in 40 mm, grenade launcher and 2.75 FFAR Rockets fired from helicopter gunships. Also referred as “Satan’s toothpicks” or “Pins”



**PDQ:** Acronym for “on the double: or “in a hurry”

**RIKKI-TIK:** To do quickly...”move out rikki-tik”

**ROUND:** Before firing, the assembly of shell projectile, powder charge, and case (105mm), ready to be fired. After firing, refers to the projectile only.



**SHELL:** The projectile, which carries a ‘payload’ to the target; fitted with a fuse on its nose to trigger its explosion. Payloads included high explosive, white phosphorus, illumination flares; smoke mixture, ‘butterfly’ bomblets, or anti-personnel flechettes.



**SHELL-HE:** Shell carrying High Explosive. Explodes on the target causing damage by blast effect and by high velocity fragments (shrapnel). Typically the explosive was cyclonite (RDX), comprising about one half the weight of the shell.

**SHELL-WP:** Shell carrying white phosphorus. Explodes and scatters burning pieces of phosphorus over the target to cause fire damage, or may be used for the screening effect of the dense white smoke produced by burning phosphorus.

**SHELL-SMOKE:** Carried a grey smoke mixture; used almost exclusively as a marking round with an airburst fuse. Produced a ball of smoke on detonation.

**SHELL-ILLUM:** Shell carrying a parachute flare for lighting up an area at night. ILLUM always burst at altitude with a 'soft' ejection charge igniting and pushing the flare out of the rear of the shell body. The flare fell slowly on its parachute, providing illumination, while the shell body traveled downrange and the base plate of the shell fell somewhat backward along the flight path. Firing ILLUM required the FDC to predict all three-impact points in order to prevent injury to friendlies due to falling metal.

**SHORT ROUND:** artillery round which falls short of its target.

**"SHOT!"** radio signal from battery to FO that his shells are in flight.

**SHRAPNEL:** high velocity metal fragments thrown off by an exploding shell. The Beehive round which projected steel darts superseded the older shrapnel or 'canister' shell, which ejected steel balls toward the enemy, in Vietnam.

**SLICK SLEEVES:** Bare armed privateer

**SOFTEN UP AN LZ:** Artillery fire on a potentially dangerous LZ prior to troops arriving by helicopter

**"SPLASH!"** radio signal from battery to FO that his shells will impact in 10 seconds.

**TREEBURST:** Explosion above ground, usually unintentional, due to a shell striking and detonating on trees or other above-ground-level objects.

**TS CARD:** Tough Shit Card – issued within artillery units and used when somebody begins complaining

**VOLLEY:** the firing of each cannon in a battery.

**WALKING BARRAGE:** firing between friendlies and the enemy to provide protection while moving the impact point toward the enemy in order to drive him back.

**This section was revised on 01 September, 1999, by DGSB**

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[Source: <https://cherrieswriter.wordpress.com/2014/02/13/military-speak-during-the-vietnam-war> | John Podlaski | April 2015 ++]