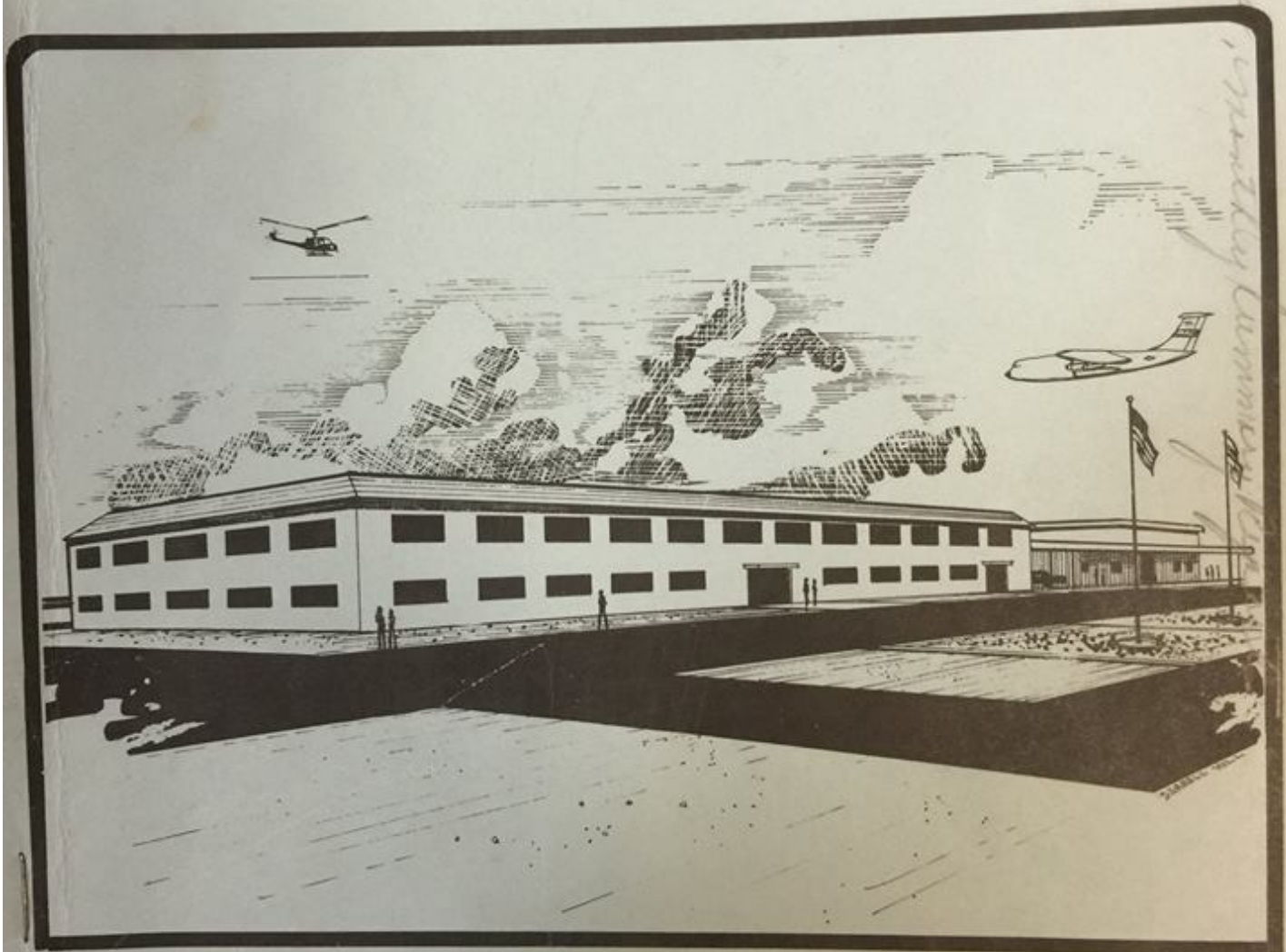


**headquarters
u.s. military
assistance command
vietnam**

**monthly
summary**

*Spec 3A1 - Vietnam
May 1*



Monthly Summary

MAY 1969

UNCLASSIFIED

GENERAL

I CTZ

Enemy activity was light until the night of 11 May when the enemy conducted 92 indirect fire and 21 ground attacks. The majority were directed against US military installations and troop units. Although indirect fire attacks were experienced throughout the CTZ, all enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred in the southern three provinces. In the northern provinces, attacks-by-fire remained at a relatively high level, totalling 70 for the remainder of the month.

In Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue, enemy activity continued to be primarily in reaction to friendly operations.

In western Thua Thien Provinces, friendly units engaged elements of the 29th NVA Regiment, identified by PWs and documents during Operation Apache Snow. Documents from the 29th NVA Regiment reveal that the regiment relocated from South Vietnam to Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, in July 1968 for replacements and retraining and returned to South Vietnam in February 1969. Its current mission is to protect supply depots and to restrict Allied incursions in western Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue. On 20 May US and ARVN elements occupied Hill 937 after overcoming stiff enemy resistance. The enemy sustained over 600 KIA. Most of the casualties belonged to the 29th NVA Regiment; its combat effectiveness was seriously reduced.

On 22 May, Fire Support Base Erskine received incoming enemy artillery rounds. The enemy was unidentified, but they were probably elements of an NVA artillery regiment. This is the first use of tube artillery since Operation Dewey Canyon in March.

In central I Corps, indications that the enemy was preparing for offensive activity became available several days prior to 11 May. On 9 and 10 May, USMC elements near An Hoa cordoned a 400 to 600-man enemy force which was moving north. There were 23 friendly KIA and 58 WIA, and the enemy lost 233 KIA and 5 PWs. The PWs were from three NVA regiments. In the 11 enemy-initiated ground attacks in the area on 11-12 May, PWs were captured who identified the attacking forces as elements of an NVA Sapper and a VC battalion and the 36th NVA Regiment.

In southern I CTZ significant enemy-initiated activity was limited to

the week of 11-17 May, in which a total of 37 indirect fire and 10 enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred. The ground attacks primarily took place around Tien Phuoc, Quang Tin Province, where elements of the 1st VC and 3rd NVA Regiments, 2nd NVA Division, were identified in contact with US and ARVN forces. There were 3 friendly KIA, 23 WIA, and the enemy suffered 181 KIA and 2 PWs.

No major incidents occurred in Quang Ngai Province; however, a PW captured on 28 May confirmed the presence of the 21st NVA Regiment in northern Quang Ngai Province.

During the last two weeks of the month, a low level of enemy-initiated activity was experienced throughout the CTZ, with the exception of an increase in indirect fire attacks north of Highway 9.

II CTZ

The number and intensity of enemy attacks in II CTZ increased sharply on 8 May and continued through the month at a level substantially higher than that of April. Attacks were concentrated near the Ben Het-Dak To area in Kontum Province where the enemy has several maneuver battalions, with artillery and engineer support. The 66th and 28th NVA Regiments, and an element of the 24th NVA Regiment, were all reported to be in this area. Also elements of the 40th NVA Artillery Regiment were probably in the area.

Artillery support in the area included 120mm mortars, 122mm rockets, and 85mm and 105mm conventional artillery.

A series of ground contacts in the Ben Het-Dak To area through the end of May resulted in approximately 1,000 enemy killed. To the south, several contacts north of Plei Mrong, probably with elements of the 24th NVA Regiment, resulted in over 250 enemy killed.

On 11 May, 22 kilometers north-northwest of the Plei Me Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp, Landing Zone Oasis received over 300 rounds of mixed mortar, rocket, and recoilless rifle fire, followed by a ground attack. Later the same day, artillery and gunships were employed against unknown-sized enemy forces eight to nine kilometers west of the landing zone. Friendly casualties were 1 KIA, 25 WIA, while the enemy had 102 KIA. The enemy force was a sapper battalion supported by an artillery battalion.

In eastern Pleiku Province, elements of the 95B NVA Regiment were believed to have been responsible for indirect fire attacks and ambushes along Highway 19.

In the southern B-3 Front, enemy activity was restricted to indirect fire attacks and ground action of company size and smaller.

In coastal II CTZ on 12 May, Phu My City was attacked by an estimated enemy company. Friendly forces had 11 killed (10 civilians), 20 wounded (19

civilians), and 87 houses destroyed, while the enemy suffered two KIA. The enemy force was unidentified, but it may have been an element of a NVA sapper battalion.

On 16 May, nine kilometers northeast of An Khe, US elements attacked an unknown-sized enemy force. Friendly forces suffered 1 KIA, 12 WIA, while the enemy had 13 KIA. The enemy forces were probably elements of the 18th NVA Regiment. Most of the activity in the southern corps occurred on 11 and 12 May. The most significant action occurred on 12 May when the Song Mao District Headquarters received 80 rounds of unknown-type mortar, followed by a ground attack by an unknown-sized enemy force. On the same day, there were two other contacts six kilometers southeast of Song Mao. There were 7 friendly KIA (two civilians) and 10 WIA (two civilians), and the enemy lost 20 KIA and 4 detained. PW statements identified the enemy force as a Main Force battalion.

At the end of the month, enemy forces in the Ben Het-Dak To area did not appear to be withdrawing despite their heavy losses.

III CTZ

In III CTZ, enemy-initiated attacks increased to a moderate to heavy level during the nights of 11 and 22 May. Elements of the 9th VC Division remained deployed along the western Tay Ninh Province border; however, a regimental resubordination was evident. Documents and PWs indicated that the 88th NVA Regiment is now subordinate to the 9th VC Division, and the 273rd VC Regiment has deployed to Chau Doc Province in IV CTZ. The 271st VC Regiment sustained heavy casualties in two attacks against ARVN positions in southwestern Tay Ninh Province. The 272nd VC Regiment sustained light casualties in a contact with US forces. One element of the 88th NVA Regiment was contacted in Tay Ninh Province on 23 May.

The 1st NVA Division continued to operate in Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the three 1st NVA Division Regiments were identified in their usual areas of operation.

A 7th NVA Division's regiment sustained moderate casualties during three contacts in central Binh Long Province.

Elements of all three regiments of the 5th VC Division were deployed in an area north of Xuan Loc in central Long Khanh Province. Sapper elements from the three regiments and the division's sapper battalion were identified in the 18 May attack on Allied positions in the Xuan Loc area. One of the 5th Division's regiments sustained heavy casualties during a series of contacts and air strikes north to northeast of Xuan Loc.

In the subregions surrounding Saigon, enemy-initiated activity was at a low level. One VC regiment was identified in one of a series of contacts in northern Hau Nghia Province in which the enemy sustained more than 250 KIA. NVA elements sustained moderate casualties in an engagement in south-central Long An Province. In Saigon, the National Police arrested over 80 individuals

associated with VC terrorists and sapper cells. These arrests may have pre-empted plans for extensive terrorist activity in the city.

In general, during May the enemy forces in III CTZ emphasized attacks-by-fire and small ground attacks by sapper-trained units.

IV CTZ

In IV CTZ the level of enemy-initiated activity during May reflected the trend of March and April. There was a high point in enemy activity on the night of 11 May, when there were 78 indirect fire attacks reported. Enemy activity decreased toward the end of the month. The majority of the attacks were low in intensity and harassing in nature. The use of 107mm rockets in IV CTZ was noted during the week of 11-17 May, when the Chi Lang Training Center north of Tri Ton in Chau Doc Province received four attacks by 107mm rockets and the Ben Xoai CIDG camp received two attacks.

On 21 May, Dong Tam Base in Dinh Tuong Province received two indirect fire attacks in which 107mm rockets were also used. Operations in the northern corps on 22 May resulted in 101 enemy killed.

There were 146 enemy KIA in an operation which continued from 13 to 18 May in the An Giang-Kien Phong Province border area.

The 273rd VC Regiment relocated from Tay Ninh Province in III CTZ to the Chau Doc Province area in IV CTZ. PWs have been captured from all of the unit's infantry battalions. In addition, during May, 1,968 VC rallied to the GVN, bringing the total for the first five months of 1969 to 9,927.

+ + +

MAY

"HIGHPOINT"

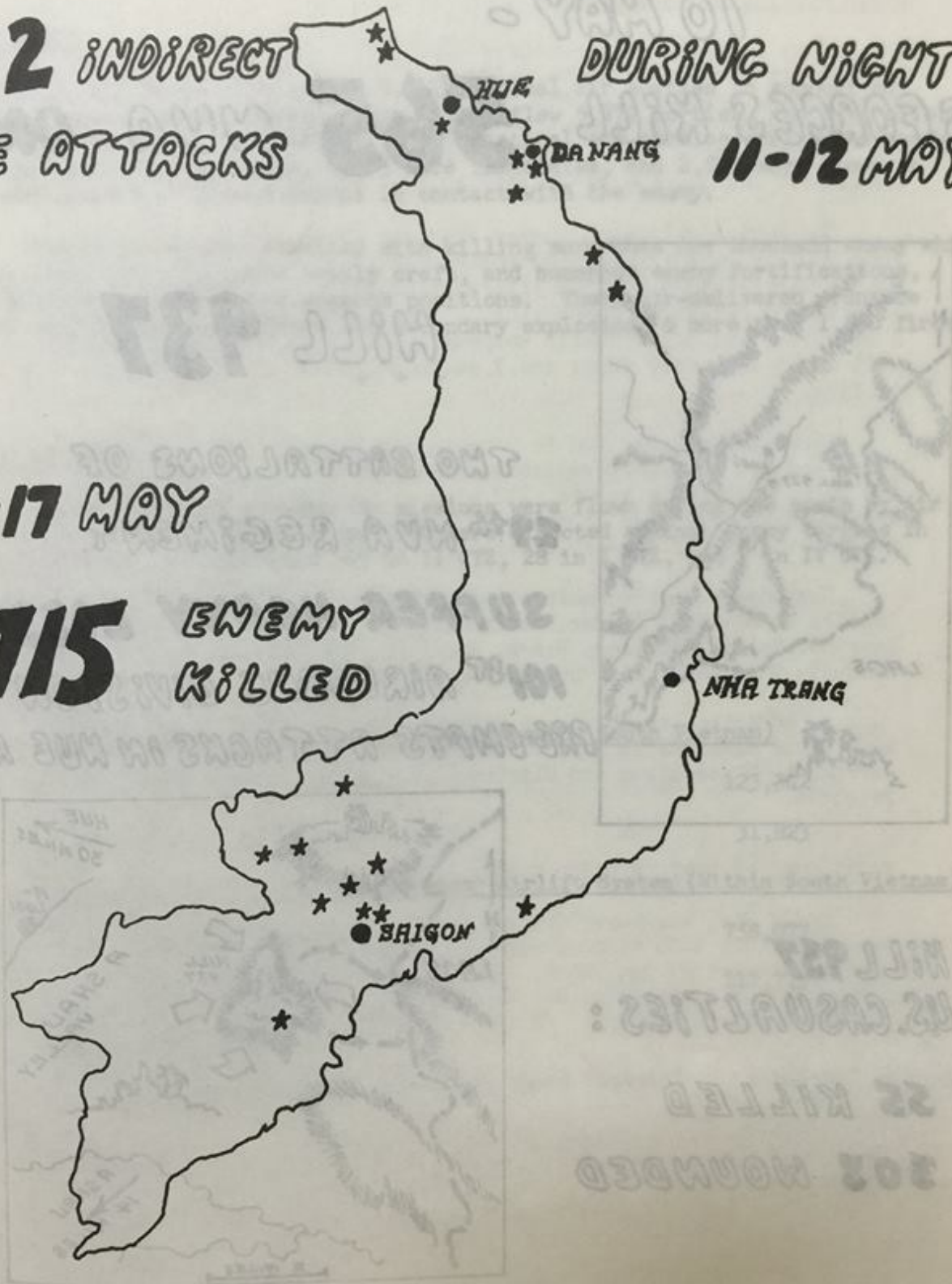
212 INDIRECT
FIRE ATTACKS

DURING NIGHT

11-12 MAY

11-17 MAY

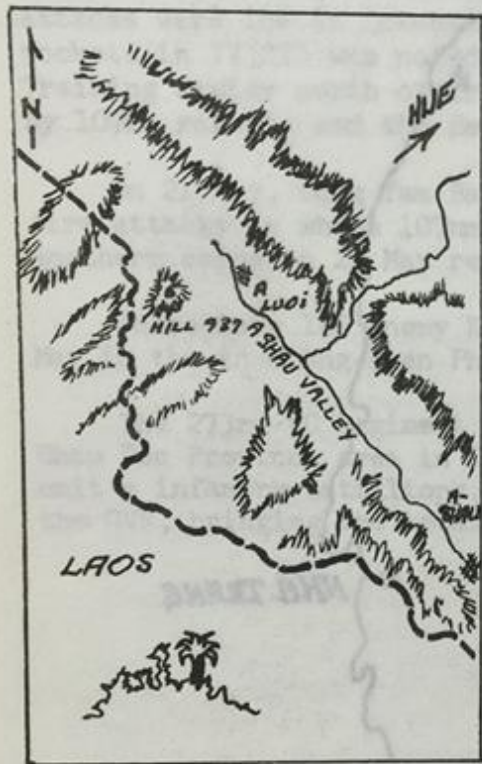
5,715 ENEMY
KILLED



OPERATION APACHE SNOW

10 MAY -

U.S. FORCES KILL **565** NVA ON



HILL 937

TWO BATTALIONS OF
29th NVA REGIMENT
SUFFER HEAVY LOSSES
101st AIRBORNE DIVISION
PRE-EMPTS ATTACKS IN HUE AREA

HILL 937
U.S. CASUALTIES :

55 KILLED

303 WOUNDED



CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

May

- 1 - Lieutenant General Rosson assumes duties as DEPCOMUSMACV, General Goodpaster departs the Republic of Vietnam for Europe to assume duties as Commander, USEUCOM.
- 2 - Operation Maine Crag, a multi-battalion search and clear operation under the Operational control of the 3rd Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, and centered 6 miles south of Khe Sanh terminates.
- 5 - An element of the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in night defense 7 miles south of Katum in Tay Ninh Province receives a ground attack from an unknown size North Vietnamese Army force. An unreported number of enemy penetrate the perimeter but are driven out. One-hundred and one enemy are killed.
- 6 - President Nixon nominates Major General Melvin Zais for promotion to Lieutenant General and announces he will succeed Lieutenant General R.G. Stilwell as XXIV Corps commander.
 - A U.S. Army CH-47 helicopter transporting ARVN troops crashes 3 miles SW of Phuoc Binh in Phuoc Long Province, killing 32 ARVN soldiers and injuring 34 others. Two U.S. personnel are killed and one is injured.
- 8 - Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER, a clear and search operation which commenced on 1 March and was conducted in Thua Thien Province ends.
 - Operation PURPLE MARTIN, a clear and search operation which commenced 23 February and was conducted in Quang Tri Province terminates.
- 9 - The Government of Vietnam announces it will observe a 24-hour cessation of offensive operations on 30 May in observance of Buddha's birthday.
 - An element of the 5th Regiment, 1st Marine Division, engages an estimated 400 to 600 enemy in an area 6 miles NE of An Hoa in Quang Nam province, supported by artillery and tactical air. Enemy losses are: 233 killed, 5 detained, and 47 weapons captured. Friendly losses are 23 killed, 58 wounded.
 - Elements of the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division engage an unknown size enemy force 5 miles SE of Dau Tieng in Binh Duong Province, killing 102 enemy and capturing a 24-ton rice cache.

- General R.E. Haines Jr., CINCUSARPAC, arrives in Vietnam for a six-day visit.
- COMUSMACV departs for Washington for consultation with President Nixon.
- The number of indirect fire harassing attacks by the enemy greatly increase with 212 attacks reported during the night of 11-12 May. Of these, 105 are considered significant. Several of the indirect fire attacks against U.S. forces are followed by ground attacks or probes.
- Elements of the 39th ARVN Ranger Battalion and 21st ARVN Ranger Battalion are attacked by an enemy force 11 miles NE of An Hoa in Quang Nam Province. Enemy losses are 116 killed, one detained, and 39 weapons captured. Friendly losses are 6 killed, 15 wounded.
- An element of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in night defense at a fire support base 14 miles SE of Katum in Tay Ninh Province receives more than 200 rounds of 82mm mortar and 107mm rocket fire, followed by a ground assault by an unknown size enemy force. Some of the enemy penetrate a portion of the perimeter but are killed or repulsed. Seventy-two enemy are killed.
- A mechanized infantry element of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, engages an estimated enemy battalion while sweeping 4 miles NW of Tan An in Long An Province. The troopers are supported by helicopter gunships, artillery, and tactical air. Enemy losses are: 83 killed, and 18 weapons captured.
- Elements of the 3rd Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division, find 71.6 ton cache 30 miles SE of Khe Sanh. It includes one 122mm howitzer, 20 tons of mixed small arms ammunition, eight 60mm mortars, eight Molotova trucks, 50 bicycles, and 78 individual weapons.
- 13 - Elements of the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, make contact with an unknown size enemy force in fortified positions 9 miles NE of Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province, killing 50 enemy, and capturing 26 weapons. Friendly losses are 3 killed.
- 14 - Secretary of State William P. Rogers arrives in Vietnam for three-day visit.
- 16 - Two 82-foot Coast Guard cutters, the Point League and the Point Garnet, are transferred to the Vietnamese Navy in ceremonies in Saigon. These are the first USCG ships to be turned over to the RVN.
- 18 - An element of the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), engages an unknown size NVA force occupying fortified positions 30 miles WSW of Hue, killing 125 enemy soldiers.
- A Marine F-4 Phantom collides in-air with a Marine MC-130 refueler transport aircraft refueling two other Marine F-4s over the South

China Sea about 8 miles NW of Phu Bai. One of the F-4s disengages and returns safely to base. The other is damaged by fragments from the collision but disengages and the crew ejects and is rescued. The KC-130 and the F-4 that collided both crash.

- 20 - Secretary of the Navy J.F. Chafee arrives in Vietnam for a seven-day visit.
- Elements of the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), and an element of the 3rd Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division, seize Hill 937 in A Shau Valley after three major engagements on 18, 19, and 20 May.
- 22 - An element of the 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, engages an estimated enemy battalion while sweeping an area 9 miles west of Cai Be. They are supported by helicopter gunships and artillery, and kill 117 of the enemy, and capture 21 weapons. U.S. casualties are 4 wounded.
- 23 - Secretary of the Air Force R.C. Seamans Jr. arrives in Vietnam for a three-day visit.
- 24 - An element of the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, engages an unknown size enemy force 5 miles WSW of An Loc, killing 96 enemy, and detaining one.
- An element of the 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, engages an estimated enemy company 6 miles NW of Ben Tre. An infantry element of the Brigade reinforces and helicopter gunships support. Ninety-one enemy are killed, U.S. casualties are 4 wounded.
- 25 - Major General J.M. Wright Jr. assumes command of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).
- The National Liberation Front announces a 48-hour ceasefire for Buddha's birthday commencing 290700 hours.
- An element of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) discovers a cache 15 miles SE of Katum in Tay Ninh Province. It contained over 60 tons of food and seven tons of ammunition.
- 26 - The 22nd ARVN Ranger Battalion, the 2nd Battalion, 42nd ARVN Infantry, and the 1st and 2nd MSF Battalions engage the enemy in five separate actions during the period 19-26 June, killing 209 of the enemy.
- While sweeping an area 6 miles SW of Dak To, the 11th ARVN Ranger Battalion attacks an estimated reinforced enemy company. Artillery, gunships and tactical air support. Enemy losses are 262 killed, and friendly casualties are light.
- 29 - Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS, a multi-battalion search and clear operation centered in an area 21 miles SW of Da Nang, terminates.

- 30 - The Government of Vietnam announces that a 24-hour cessation of operations commenced at 0600 hours.
- 31 - The 6th Battalion, 77th Artillery, which turned its equipment over to the ARVN on 26 April, is deactivated.
- The Government of Vietnam announces that the 24-hour cessation of offensive operations terminates. A total of 158 incidents (85 significant) are recorded during this period.
- The National Liberation Front announces 48-hour ceasefire terminated at 0700 hours.
- Regional Force elements, supported by U.S. helicopters, attack an estimated enemy company 9 miles NW of Kien Binh in Kien Giang Province, killing 45 enemy and suffering no casualties.
- Elements of the 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, engage an unknown size enemy force 6 miles NW of Plei Mrong, killing 88 enemy.
- Operation SPEEDY EXPRESS terminates. It commenced 1 December 1968.
- U.S. military strength in the Republic of Vietnam is 538,500.

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