



Vietnam (1965-1967)

2nd Lt Anderson
Kilo Company



Causes of the Vietnam War



- *Decolonization after WWII.*
- *Defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu (1954)*
- *Fear of a Chinese Communist pawn in South East Asia (Domino Theory).*
- *Just finished fighting the Chinese in Korea (armistice in 1953)*



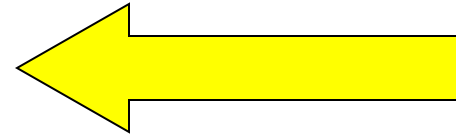
Troop Buildup in Vietnam



- *The U.S. and their allies deployed large numbers of troops to South Vietnam between the end of the First Indochina War in 1954 (defeat of the French) and 1973 (Paris Peace Accord).*
- *U.S. military advisers first became involved in Vietnam in 1950, assisting French colonial forces. In 1956, these advisers assumed full responsibility for training the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.*
- *President John F. Kennedy increased America's troop numbers from 500 to 16,000, and President Lyndon Johnson dispatched a large number of troops beginning in 1965.*



History of the Vietnam War

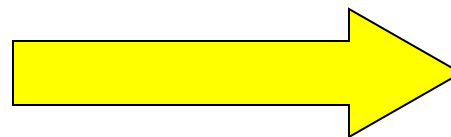


THEN...

1954-1975

NOW...

1975-2007





3/4 IN VIETNAM



Battalion Deploys To Vietnam (1965)



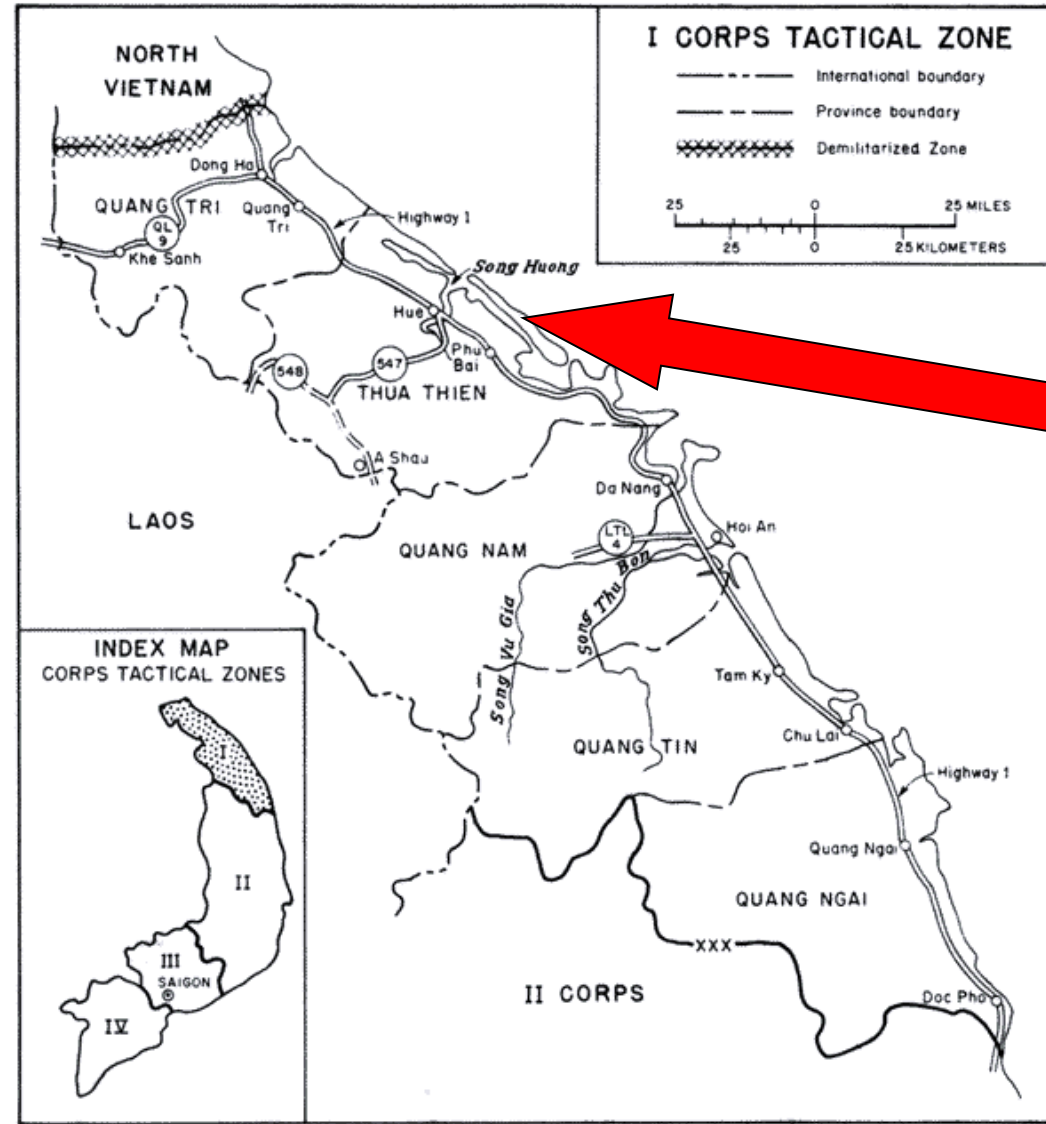


Landing in Hue





Hue Phu Bai Area





3/4 In "I" Corps Tactical Zone





So it begins...



- Landed in Hue and posted a battalion level defense.
- Defense included long range combat and reconnaissance patrols.





These initial patrols, along with EPW's taken during, led higher to believe that the North Vietnamese Army was infiltrating through the Demilitarized Zone North of 3/4's defensive position in Hue City.





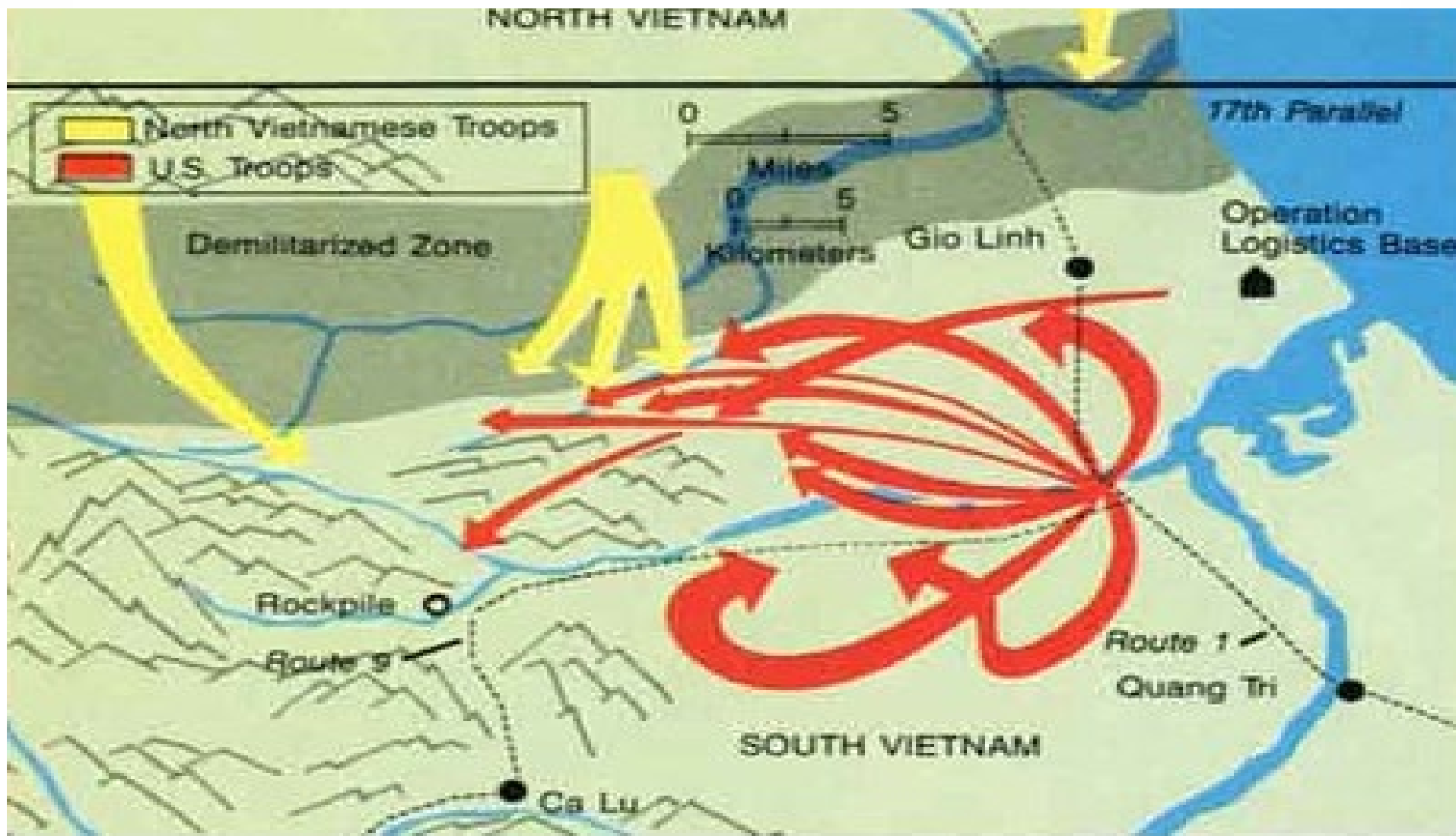
DMZ War



- 3/4 was called on, like it always has been, to take the fight to the enemy on the very front lines...
- The Demilitarized Zone was the area of infiltration for the North Vietnamese Army into South Vietnam. 35 Miles long, 4 miles wide.
- 3/4 was called on to block that entrance into South Vietnam in several Operations



OPERATION HASTINGS





Overview



- *A military operation aimed at driving all NVA forces out of the Quang Tri province. It focused on capturing dominating terrain throughout the area.*
- *8,500 Marines; 3,000 ARVN forces attempted to establish numerous forward bases in order to halt the North Vietnamese from coming into South Vietnam.*
- *Under the command of Brigadier General Lowell E. English, the operation continued on July 15th. His responsibility was to secure landing sites so that more U.S. Marines and ARVN soldiers could occupy the rear of the province. However, the major goal of the operation was to thwart the North Vietnamese 324 B Division's efforts to take control of Quang Tri Province.*



3/4 in **OPERATION HASTINGS**



First landings in LZ was made in peace, the next 3 helo's were shot down and the battalion found itself cutoff behind enemy lines.





Push South, Take the "Rockpile"!



- 3/4 pushed just north of the Ngan River with the mission to keep clearing south IOT allow follow on forces to occupy the area.
- There were several intense clashes throughout the 27 day operation and at one point Captain Modrzejewski's Company K destroyed an enemy platoon at a major trailhead, and then occupied their defensive position.





From the MOH Citation



In the first series of attacks, the enemy assaulted repeatedly in overwhelming numbers but each time was repulsed by the gallant Marines. The second night the enemy struck in battalion strength, and Major Modrzejewski was wounded in this intensive action which was fought at close quarters. Although exposed to enemy fire, and despite his painful wounds, he crawled 200 meters to provide critically needed ammunition to an exposed element of his command and was constantly present wherever the fighting was heaviest. Despite numerous casualties, a dwindling supply of ammunition and the knowledge that they were surrounded, he skillfully directed artillery fire to within a few meters of his position and courageously inspired the efforts of his company in repelling the aggressive enemy attack. On 18 July, Company K was attacked by a regimental size enemy force. Although his unit was outnumbered and weakened by the previous fighting, Major Modrzejewski reorganized his men and calmly moved among them to encourage and direct their efforts to heroic limits as they fought to overcome the vicious enemy onslaught. Again he called in air and artillery strikes at close range with devastating effect on the enemy, which together with the bold and determined fighting of the men of Company K, repulsed the fanatical attack of the larger North Vietnamese force.



Retrograde to Helo Valley



- The battalion is recalled from the southward push to consolidate around the LZ which is under attack. In the rear of the push North is 1st platoon, Kilo Company, led by their Platoon Commander, SSgt McGinty. They were covering the battalion's movement to the LZ.





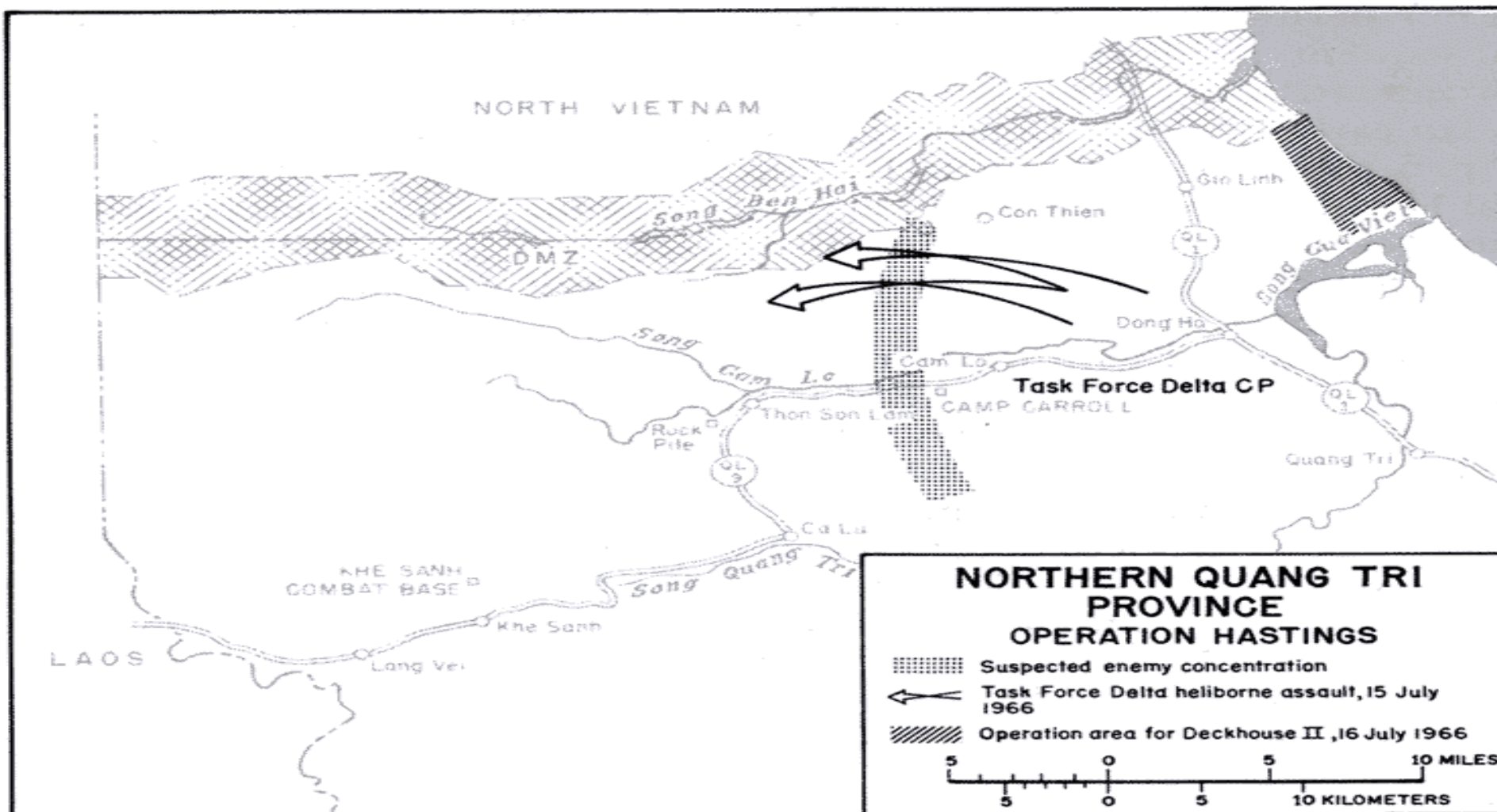
From the MOH Citation



2d Lt. McGinty's platoon, which was providing rear security to protect the withdrawal of the battalion from a position which had been under attack for 3 days, came under heavy small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire from an estimated enemy regiment. With each successive human wave which assaulted his 32-man platoon during the 4-hour battle, 2d Lt. McGinty rallied his men to beat off the enemy. In 1 bitter assault, 2 of the squads became separated from the remainder of the platoon. With complete disregard for his safety, 2d Lt. McGinty charged through intense automatic weapons and mortar fire to their position. Finding 20 men wounded and the medical corpsman killed, he quickly reloaded ammunition magazines and weapons for the wounded men and directed their fire upon the enemy. Although he was painfully wounded as he moved to care for the disabled men, he continued to shout encouragement to his troops and to direct their fire so effectively that the attacking hordes were beaten off. When the enemy tried to out-flank his position, he killed 5 of them at point-blank range with his pistol. When they again seemed on the verge of overrunning the small force, he skillfully adjusted artillery and air strikes within 50 yards of his position. This destructive firepower routed the enemy, who left an estimated 500 bodies on the battlefield.



The mission was a strategic success in terms of driving off the 324 B Division, but the NVA forces successfully withdrew across the DMZ. When the ease with which the NVA was able to move across the DMZ became apparent, the US military leadership ordered a steady build-up of U.S. Marines near the DMZ from 1966 to 1968.





Operation Prairie





Overview



Operation Prairie was a follow on operation to Operation Hastings to further enforce the Demilitarized Zone and to stop the NVA 324B Division from pushing through Laos and turning the Allied forces western flank.



War planners realized that the NVA were regrouping in Laos, to the west of Vietnam, and were staging follow on actions in response to Operation Hastings.





Immediately ordered Task Force Delta into “Operation Prairie” in order to prevent the recapture of key terrain such as “The Rockpile” and “Razorback Ridge”.





*MARINES OF 'M' COMPANY COME
UNDER GRENADE ATTACK WHILE
ASSAULTING HILL 484.*





*A MARINE FROM 'M' COMPANY MOVES
OUT WITH A 3.5 INCH ROCKET WHILE
THE OTHER TWO WORK A RADIO AND A
COMPASS*





HILL 400

As the enemy had moved back into the Quang Tri province after regrouping, 3/4 was instructed to move into the flank of the enemy in a location known as the Nui Cay Tre Heights in order to capture a forward artillery platform on a hill known as Hill 400.





HILL 400

The battle for Hill 400 was closely watched by the entire world. If the Marines failed, it would be seen as a sign of U.S. failure in South East Asia. However, if they succeeded, the DMZ would be secured and Hill 400 would become a symbol of the unbreakable will of U.S. military power. The possibility of the NVA coming back to the peace table lay in the balance.





HILL 400

For the two days of 27 and 28 September, Captain Carroll's Kilo Company endured the heaviest fighting of operation prairie. Reinforced by Company I and Company M, Company K fought through some of the thickest jungle in Vietnam and only through the most skillful employment of units, supporting fires, and shining examples of individual bravery was the artillery platform taken.





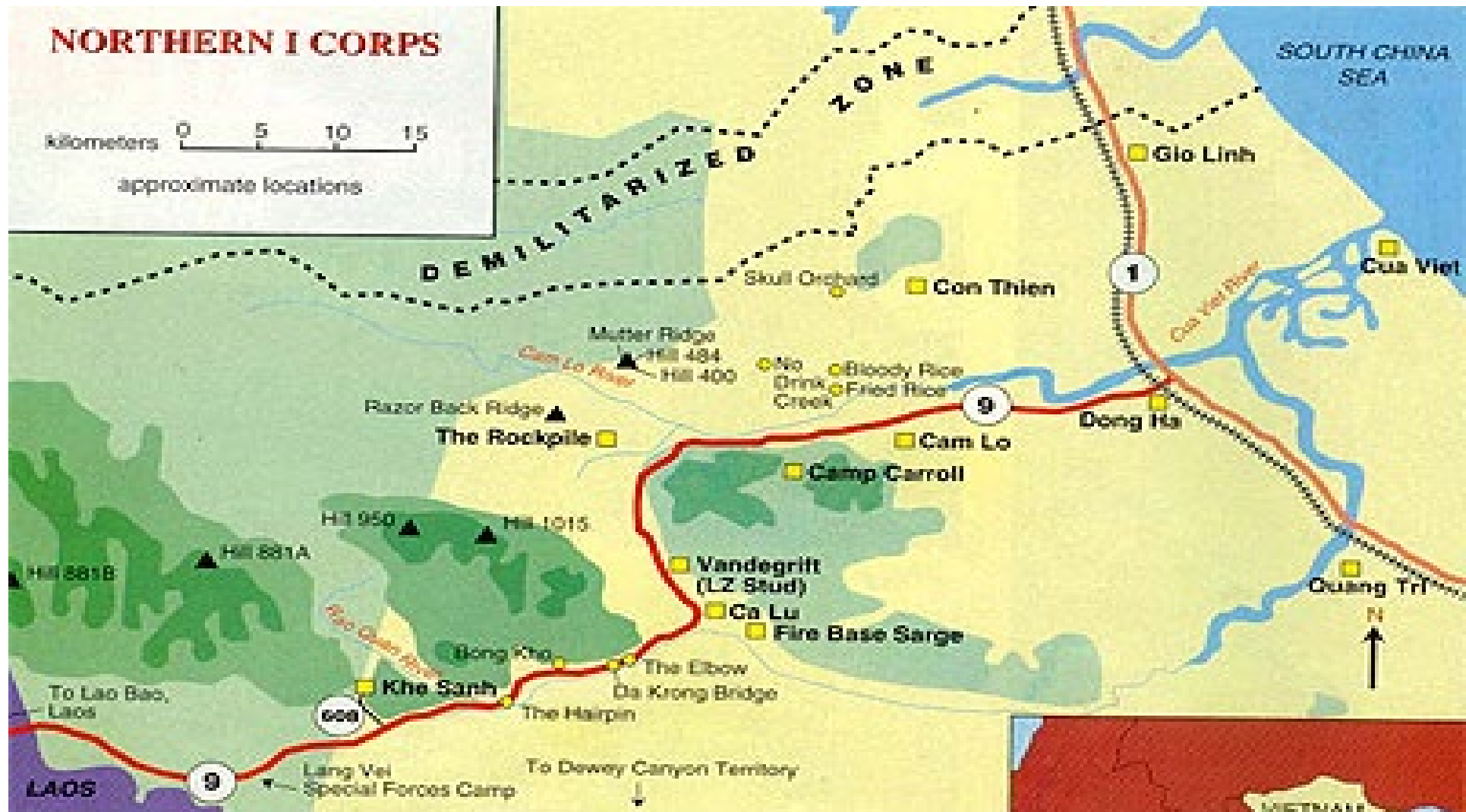
HILL 400

Due to this, the operation was able to push beyond where Operation Hastings left off and place indirect assets well within range of the enemy in the DMZ. Tragically, during this push for Hill 400 13 Marines were killed, 34 were wounded, and shortly thereafter Captain Carroll himself was killed. In their honor, the artillery base was renamed Camp Carroll and was a key base for all operations in the area of the DMZ.





Northern I Corps





*Khe Sahn was tuff...
But Con Thien was a
Mother Fucker*





The McNamara Line was a line very small fire bases that overwatched the DMZ. Only (1) Battalion at a time was able to be on the defense at these bases, and they were rotated every month. Of all of them, Con Thein was the worst.





Shellshock, paranoia, no enemy to fight, only artillery duals and fighting-holes to improve.





At one point, the base was being shelled 1200 rounds per day.

There was constant mud, bringing on trench foot, and supply was infrequent – at times 3/4 went multiple days without food or fresh water.





3/4 stood the post for over 30 days to include combat patrols and facilitating counter-battery operations.





No one was left untouched, and the outpost looked like the surface of the moon. Shell shock, immersion foot, and extreme hunger made this post “The Meatgrinder”.





Battalion Departs Vietnam



- Of all the battalions attached to the 3d Division, 3/4 spent the most time on the ground in contact with the enemy and prevailed in some of the most savage fighting.
- Lima Company, 3/4 holds the distinction of being the last unit of the 3rd Division to leave Vietnam.