

Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) Chronology

JANUARY 1972

2 - In an interview on CBS President Nixon said that the US withdrawal from Vietnam was contingent only on PW releases in Southeast Asia.

10 - Communist terrorists damaged three multi-million dollar US 8-52 aircraft in a predawn raid at U-Tapao Air Base, Thailand.

13 - President Nixon announced 70,000 troops were to leave Vietnam during Increment XI, reducing US strength to 69,000, the lowest in seven years.

22 - President Thieu offered the NLF political representation in the South Vietnamese government -if they would renounce violence.

25 - A US helicopter gunship reported firing on two enemy PT-76 amphibious tanks in Military Region 3. This was the first report of enemy tanks in the Republic of Vietnam since May 1971.

29 - Defense Secretary Melvin Laird announced that US troops would not be reintroduced into Vietnam in case of an emergency.

31 - The US troop strength was reduced to 136,505, as Increment X withdrawals were completed.

FEBRUARY 1972

4 - The last Thai combat troops left South Vietnam as the final elements of the Black Leopard Division departed.

9 - Communist gunners slammed 24 rockets into Da Nang Air Base, wounding ten Americans.

24 - The 5th ROK Marine Battalion and the 2d ROK Marine Brigade Headquarters redeployed to Korea.

25 - BG Phon Dinn Site. DCG, Military Region 1; four Americans, including COL Albert W. Smarr Jr., FRAC DCG; and two Vietnamese were killed in a helicopter crash. The helicopter was returning to Da Nang from the destroyer USS CRAIG when it crashed in Da Nang Harbor.

29 - The US troop strength was reduced to 119,606.

MARCH 1972

5 - A powerful explosion near Saigon sank three barges loaded with 300 tons of ammunition.

7 - The 1st Australian Task Force stood down, ending the combat role of Australia in Vietnam.

26 - The U.S. broke off the Paris Peace Talks because the Communists refused to negotiate seriously.

30 - The NVA offensive was launched across the Demilitarized Zone in Quang Tri Province.

31 - the US troop strength was reduced to 95,500

APRIL 1972

1 - South Vietnam's northern quarter erupted, and the Republic of Vietnam commander said more than 30,000 North Vietnamese troops had invaded Quang Tri Province in Military Region 1. Enemy attacks also began in Tha Ninh Province in Military Region J.

3 - MACV announced that American troop withdrawals were continuing despite the enemy offensive.

3 - A powerful US air and naval strike force of 200 warplanes and five Navy destroyers spearheaded a counter assault to drive three North Vietnamese divisions back from South Vietnam's northern cities and towns.

4 - North Vietnamese forces including tanks, opened a third major attack, in Long Province, 60 miles from Saigon, around Loc Ninh and An Loc.

6 - The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), officially returned home from Vietnam when the division colors arrived at Camp Campbell, Ky., after more than four years in Vietnam.

10 - GEN John W. Vogt Jr. assumed command of the 7th Air Force as Commander, DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations.

14 - South Vietnam reported 18 Soviet built tanks destroyed in An Loc.

15 - Hit targets near Hanoi and Haiphong ending a four-year suspension of air strikes in that area

16 - Three MiG-21s shot down in dogfights over Hanoi.

6 - The USS WORDEN and the USS BUCHANAN were hit by enemy fire, killing two US Navy men and wounding several others.

17 - Secretary of State William P. Rogers announced that Nixon administration would commit everything short of ground troops and nuclear weapons to repel the NVA invasion of the south.

19 - The HIGBEE was damaged by a North Vietnam MiG attack off the coast of North Vietnam.

26 - President Nixon announced a further withdrawal of another 20,000 US troops, reducing US strength to 49,000 by 1 July.

27 - Dong Ha fell, as the NVA offensive was resumed in Quang Tri Province.

30 - All ARVN forces north of the Han River were withdrawn in order to defend Quang Tri City from more tenable positions south of the river line.

30 - The US troop strength was reduced to 68,100 personnel as Increment XI withdrawals were completed.

MAY 1972

1—Quang Tri was abandoned, the only provincial capital to fall to the enemy. Sections of Highway I between Quang Tri and DaNang were cut by the enemy.

4 - M48 tanks began arriving aboard C5A transports to replace tanks lost during the Quang Tri fighting.

4 - Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheun announced that 72 F-4s would be sent from CONUS to Southeast Asia.

5 - US announced plans to reopen Takhli Air Base, Thailand, for use by the F4s from Holloman AFB. New Mexico.

9 - President Nixon, in a radio and television address to the nation, announced the mining of North Vietnamese ports, CO include Haiphong. Other lines of supply would be cut by air strikes. The two criteria for ending the blockade were: (1) the return of all US PWs and (2) an internationally supervised cease-fire.

10 - Navy and Air Force pilots shot down a total of ten MiGs, the largest single day total of the war.

10 - Lt Randal Cunningham and Li (jg) William Driscoll became the first Americans during the Vietnam War to down five enemy aircraft and earn the status of 'ace'.

10 - The first mission in the LINEBACKER operation against North Vietnam was flown against the Paul Doumer Bridge and the Yen Vien Railroad yards, both targets near Hanoi.

11 - NVA troops and tanks entered the provincial capital of An Loc and were met by 70 B-52s dropping 1,700 tons of bombs in the war's heaviest bombing concentration.

13 - Seventh AF announced the destruction of the Thsnn Hoa "Dragons Jaw" bridge, 80 miles south of Hanoi. by an F-4 aircraft. The bridge stood for seven years despite repeated attacks to destroy it. In addition, several spans of the Paul Downer bridge on the northern edge of Hanoi were collapsed. The ordnance used was 2,000- and 3,000-pound laser guided bombs

13 - USAF turned over Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, the largest USAF installation in South Vietnam, to the South Vietnamese.

18 - The aircraft carrier USS SARATOGA joined the 7th Fleet, bringing to six the number of carriers operating off the shores of Vietnam for the first time in the war. The total number of Navy personnel offshore rose to approximately 46,000 in some 64) ships.

19 - USAF aircraft using "smart" bombs destroyed over 5.5 million gallons of fuel 3½ miles northeast of Hanoi.

24 - The Defense Department announced that more B-52s were en route to SEASLA and added to the target list all facilities used to support the enemy war effort.

23 - US F-4 Phantoms, using 2,000-pound smart bombs, destroyed the Lang Chia railroad bridge. 65 miles northeast of Hanoi. linking North Vietnam with China.

27 - An American Embassy, Bangkok, spokesman announced the US and Thai governments had agreed to reopen Nuan Phung Air Base for US air operations over SEASIA.

30 - The heaviest air raids since 1968 struck Vinh. the second largest port in North Vietnam.

31 - The US troop strength was reduced to 631,000.

JUNE

7 - Radio Hanoi reported China and the Soviet Union pledged continued aid to North Vietnam and the Viet Cong on the occasion of the third anniversary of the founding of the PRG.

8 - MACV reported 95 Americans killed and 266 wounded in air and ground action since the offensive began on March 30.

9 - The ASW carrier TICONDEROGA joined the 7th Fleet off North Vietnam, raising the number to seven carriers.

11 - US aircraft destroyed the Lang Chi hydroelectric power plant, 63 miles northwest of Hanoi (capable of producing 75 percent of the North's power requirements), using "smart" bombs to avoid damaging the adjacent dam.

17 - MACV announced the stand down of the last two US infantry brigades in South Vietnam, the 196th at Da Nang/Phu Bai and the 3d Brigade. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) at Bien Hoa.

21 - GEN Creighton W. Abrams was named by President Nixon to replace William C. Westmoreland as Army Chief of Staff.

23 - B52s flew a record 33 missions in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces in the 24-hour period ending at noon.

23 - MACV announced the deployment of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing from Da Nang AS, the last F-4 squadron in South Vietnam. Three squadrons of the 366th moved to Takhli AB Thailand, to join another F-4 squadron from the US.

23 - South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Trw Van Lam rejected any in place cease-fire agreement and said that the North Vietnamese must withdraw their forces from South Vietnam as prelude to a cease-fire.

28 - President Nixon announced the withdrawal of 10,000 additional US troops by 1 September. He also announced that draftees no longer would be sent to Vietnam unless they volunteered.

30 - US troop strength was reduced to 48,000 as Increment XII withdrawals were completed.

JULY

3 - A South Vietnamese marine reconnaissance team entered Quang Tri City. They raised the South Vietnamese flag for the first time since the city fell on 1 May.

9 - The USS AMERICA replaced the USS CORAL SEA in the 7th Fleet off Vietnam.

10 - The Republic of Korea Defense Ministry announced that ROK forces would be withdrawn from Vietnam as soon as possible after the current offensive.

15 - MACV revealed that Communist forces were using a new antiaircraft weapon, the SA-7 Strella heat-seeking missile.

25 - MACV announced that the phase-out of the previous week included the last 3,000 US combat forces in the Saigon region. Only one US ground combat unit remained in South Vietnam.

31 - US troop strength was reduced to 46,000 with one ground combat battalion remaining in Vietnam.

JULY 1972

1 - MACV announced that USAF fighter-bombers attacked the Haiphong shipyard for the first time in the war.

9 - Seventh Air Force announced that laser-guided bombs destroyed the newly repaired Thanh Ho bridge in North Vietnam for the second time in three months.

11 - The last US ground combat unit in South Vietnam, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, stood down.

16 - US aircraft flew 400 sorties against North Vietnam in the heaviest raids since the April resumption of the bombing.

28 - President Nixon announced that he would end the draft by July 1973.

28 - USAF CPT Steve Ritchie downed his fifth MiG over North Vietnam and became the third US ace and the 1st USAF ace of the war.

29 - President Nixon announced a 12,000 man cut in US troop strength by December 1.

31 - US troop strength was reduced to 36,800 as Increment XIII withdrawals were completed

AUGUST 1972

1 - MACV announced five Americans were killed and three wounded for the previous week, the lowest weekly casualty toll since 1965.

2 - North Vietnam announced the release of three US PWs in celebration of National Day. They were Lt (jg) Markham L. Trtfey, USN, captured August 17, 1968. Lt (jg) Norris A. Charles, USN, captured December 30, 1971 and Major Edward K. Elias, USAF, captured April 20, 1972.

10 - Admiral Noel Gayler, CINCPAC, arrived in Saigon for a ten day familiarization visit throughout Vietnam.

11 - USAF jets again destroyed the Paul Dournier Bridge in Hanoi, just as repairs were nearing completion.

15 - Units of the Vietnamese Marine Division retook the Quang Tri Citadel, the only provincial capital captured during the offensive.

18 - North Vietnam released the three American pilots to US peace group in a Hanoi ceremony.

25 - The three American PWs, whose release had been previously announced, left Hanoi for the US.

28 - The released US PWs arrived in New York, having traveled via Peking, Moscow, and Copenhagen.

30 - US troop strength was reduced to 35,500.

OCTOBER 1972

8 - Bombers struck a supply buildup near Vinh in the deepest B-52 raids into North Vietnam in six months.

12 - GEN Fred C. Weyand, USA, assumed command of MACV.

23 - For the first time in 18 days B-52s did not bomb North Vietnam: tactical air strikes were at their lowest level in three weeks.

27 - Defense Secretary Melvin Laird announced a halt to US bombing above the 20th parallel in North Vietnam.

27 - Dr. Henry Kissinger announced that "peace is at hand".

27 - President Thieu declared that he would accept no settlement which did not provide for withdrawal of NVA troops from South Vietnam.

31- - B52s staged the heaviest raids in three months over North Vietnam, south of the 20th parallel.

31 - US troop strength was reduced to 32.200.

NOVEMBER 1972

10 - The North Vietnam panhandle was subjected to heavy B-52 raids in an effort to disrupt the increased movement of troops and equipment South.

20 - Dr. Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho resumed their talks in Paris.

22 - The first B-52 combat loss of the war occurred when one of the giant bombers was hit by a SAM missile near Vinh. The aircraft limped back to Thailand, where the crew parachuted to safety and was rescued.

25 - Dr. Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho broke off their talks without agreement.

30 - US Troop strength in the Republic of Vietnam fell to 25,500 men, the troop ceiling remained at 27,000 as Increment XIV was completed.

DECEMBER 1972

6 - Dr. Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho resumed their talks in Paris

6 - Tan Son Nhut Air Base was hit by 43 122mm rockets, killing nine (1 US), wounding 54 (2 US) destroying one helicopter and a quantity of POL.

13 - The Paris peace talks were broken off without agreement.

14 - The New Zealand government withdrew its liaison element from South Vietnam.

18 - The Australian government withdrew its liaison element from South Vietnam.

18 - President Nixon ordered a resumption of the bombing north of the 20th parallel. suspended on 27 October.

26 - The US resumed heavy bombing of North Vietnam after a 36-hour Christmas pause.

27 - MACV announced that from December 18 to 25. the US flew 147 8-52 missions and more than 100 tactical fighter strikes against 68 specific targets in North Vietnam north at the 20th parallel. Twelve 8-52 bombers were lost primarily to SAMs—over 600 of which were launched against the aircraft.

30 - President Nixon announced a halt to the bombing above the 20th parallel.

31 - A total of 15 B-32s and 13 other aircraft were reported shot down during Operation LINEBACKER 11 (a 12-day period from 18 through 29 December).

31 - US troop strength in South Vietnam was reduced to 24,000.

JANUARY 1973

2 - Meetings between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States technical experts resumed in Paris.

3 - US planes on a tactical strike inadvertently bombed Da Nang Air Base setting fire to a POL storage area and wounding several people.

15 - President Nixon directed that the bombing, shelling, and mining be suspended above the 17th parallel.

23 - President Nixon announced that the cease-fire agreement had been initialed by Dr. Kissinger on behalf of the United States and Le Due Tho on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

27 - Formal signing of the cease-fire agreement and protocols took place in Paris.

28 - The Vietnam cease-fire officially began at 0800 hours (2400 hours, 27 January, GMT)

2 - The implementation of the cease-fire was mired by widespread fighting in South Vietnam

31 - US troop strength in South Vietnam was reduced to 21,821

FEBRUARY 1973

5 - GEN John W. Vogt, USAF, DEPCOMUSMACV and Commander, 7th Air Force, arrived at Phnom Penh from Saigon for talks with President Lon Nol and other officials.

6 - US military strength in South Vietnam was reduced to less than 20,000.

8 - Four US Navy minesweepers began clearing an anchorage 35 miles off Haiphong Harbor to serve as a base of operations for the sweeping of mines from North Vietnamese ports.

8 - Dr. Henry Kissinger began his trip to Peking and Hanoi.

12 - The first exchange of PWs involving eight American civilian and 19 military personnel was mtdc at Loc Ninh. 316 more Americans were released in Hanoi

12 - MACV announced that it had withdrawn about one-fourth of its troops from Vietnam since the cease-fire began.

13 - North Vietnam agreed to allow the International Red Cross to help search for the 1,328 missing US servicemen in Indochina

14 - The US and North Vietnam announced plans to create a joint economic commission to oversee the rebuilding of North Vietnam

16 - ARVN recaptured the coastal town of Sa Huynh, denying the NVA a port of entry for war materiel.

17 - US military strength in South Vietnam was reduced to less than 15,000.

17 - The four elements of the PPJMC issued a joint appeal to the "High Command" of the parties in South Vietnam to implement the provisions of the cease-fire agreement.

18 - In the wake of Henry Kissinger's visit Hanoi released 20 American military PWs as an expression of "good will".

20 - Dr. Kissinger returned to Washington to brief President Nixon on his talks with the leaders of China, North Vietnam and Japan.

21 - Route I was opened from the Military Region 2 bottler to Quang Tri as ARVN elements cleared the road in Quang Ngai Province.

24 - The Navy ordered two aircraft carriers the USS MIDWAY and the USS AMERICA. from Asian waters, the first significant cutback in US seapower since the Vietnam cease-fire

26 - The international conference on Vietnam opened in Paris.

28 - The US placed a hold on US troop withdrawal in response to Communist delays in releasing American PWs.

MARCH 1973

1 - In Paris the foreign ministers of 12 governments, including all the world's superpowers, initialed a nine-point declaration endorsing the Vietnam peace agreement said establishing a procedure for examining violations.

APRIL 1973

1 - US Consulates General were officially established at DaNang, Nha Trang, Bien Hoa, and Can Tho.

MAY 1973

1 - The office of the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) was terminated.

2 - The last Thai element in South Vietnam departed.

2 - The last Philippine element in Vietnam redeployed.

4 - Withdrawal of US troops was resumed.

4 - 106 prisoners of war were released in Hanoi and flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

5 - US troop strength in South Vietnam was reduced to less than 10,000.

5 - Twenty-seven military, three US civilian, and four third country prisoners, the second group of increment two, arrived at Clark Air Base after being released in Hanoi.

10 - Withdrawal of US troops was again halted.

14 - 107 military and one civilian prisoners of war, the first group of the third increment, were released at Hanoi's Gia Lam airport.

14 - US troop withdrawal resumed.

14 - The US Army Hospital, Saigon (formerly the 3d Field Hospital) became the Saigon Seventh Day Adventist hospital.

15 - Military payment certificates were discontinued and converted to US dollars.

16 - Twenty-seven military and five civilian US prisoners of war, the second group of the third increment, arrived at Clark Air Base after being released at Hanoi.

16 - The US again halted the troop withdrawal pending the release of PW's held by the Pathet Lao.

23 - The final group of Korean forces departed, ending eight- and one-half years of military assistance to South Vietnam.

26 - The last advisors from the Republic of China departed.

27 - US troop strength in South Vietnam was less than 5,000.

27 - Twenty seven military and five civilian US prisoners of war, the first group of the fourth increment, held by the Viet Cong, were released in Hanoi.

27 - US troop withdrawals resumed concurrently with the prisoner release in Hanoi

28 - Seven US military, two US civilian, and one Canadian prisoners were released by the Pathet Lao in Hanoi.

28 - Forty prisoners of war arrived at Clark Air Base from their captivity in North Vietnam.

28 - The last US ships departed Vietnam with retrograde cargo. Over 150,000 MT of cargo were retrograded.

29 - The final group of 67 American prisoners departed Hanoi.

29 - US Army, Vietnam was disestablished effective 1800 hours,

29 - The Military Assistance Command Vietnam, (MACV) was disestablished effective 1900 hours

29 - The US troop withdrawal was completed

APRIL 1973

1 - CPT Robert T. White, USA. the last known US prisoner held by the Viet Cong was released at Xom Tien, Vinh Binh