

CHAPTER V

The Six Day War

From Hq USA COMZEUR's new home in Worms, Germany I transferred back to Pirmasens, Germany to await further developments. Most of the units work was routine and it was a relatively calm period after the mad scramble from France. The majority of the people who had formed the Relocation Planning and Coordinating Group at HQCOMZ were absorbed into the G3 division and work was under way to prepare the official After-Action Report and I had lost interest in supply history! During the relocation, events in the mid-east were getting worse as were events in Vietnam. In March, 1967, Vietnam the Viet Cong launched rockets against the air base at Danang and while this made the newspapers, it was quickly forgotten by people in Europe. I was never more aware of the truth in Bill Mauldin's cartoon of WW II, "The hell this ain't the most important hole in the world, I'm in it!"

By May 1967, I had received a branch transfer to the Army Intelligence and Security Branch and orders to return to the United States to attend a Military Intelligence Officer's orientation course starting in mid June of 1967 at Fort Holabird, Maryland. As an interim step, I inquired about the possibility of attending the 7th Army training course on combat intelligence but the request was not honored. I had nothing but time on my hands and to stay busy, I managed to obtain several items of communication equipment from the property disposal yard which I began to tear apart and repair. These were eventually sent back to the states and donated to the Citadel's Military Museum. It was an extremely difficult time for me as my car had been broken into during the move from France and important papers, documents and firearms had been stolen. Since I was on my way to Vietnam, I felt I should attempt to learn as much as I could about Vietnam, the conflict and the enemy. Information on the subject was limited. Finally in June I began the process of packing up, once again and getting ready for another move, the fourth in 9 months!

Suddenly, our operations sections began to receive a series of classified messages regarding events in Europe. The news media advised that war had broken out between Israel and the Arab world. The exact cause of the conflict was not immediately clear nor was the future but located on the extreme southern flank of NATO it could not help but have an impact on events taking place in NATO. Within 6 days the conflict ended and was almost forgotten by personnel in Europe. The first public account of the war that I had a chance to read was the book "Strike Zion" published almost a year later. The 1967 mid-east war, commonly referred to as the "6 day war" is worth noting in more detail, especially the background events.

The series of mistakes and misapprehensions leading directly to the 1967 war began in 1966. In that year, incursions into

Israel by Palestinian raiders from Syrian territory noticeably increased, putting at risk the lives of the inhabitants cultivating the soil of that part of Israel adjoining Syria. Israel actually appealed to the Soviet government to use its influence with the Syrians to discourage these incursions, but the Soviet reply was to suggest that frontier incidents were being contrived by Western intelligence services in order to provoke bigger conflicts. This might well have reflected a genuine Soviet belief; having established their influence in Syria, the Russians would have expected the Western powers to seek to damage the Syrian regime, and the easiest way of doing so would have been to encourage the Israelis to attack, and even invade, Syria. But whatever the degree of Soviet sincerity, a satisfactory Russian response to Israeli appeal was obviously unlikely at the time, and the appeal was made not with any hope of success but to prepare the way for later Israeli action, which was diplomatic as much as military.

Israel's position worsened in that year because Egypt and Syria, having quarrelled at the time of Syria's departure from union with Egypt, were repairing their relationship. In fact, in November they made a new military agreement which appeared to strengthen the military capability of both partners and to present a threat to Israel of two-front conflict. This agreement was applauded by Moscow, which was well aware of how cooperation and coordination between what it regarded as progressive Arab states (by that time Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria) would increase their, new sense of nervousness, leading to the decision to make a demonstration of strength, that persuaded the Israeli government to carry out a very strong retaliatory raid on a Jordanian village, combined with a more emphatic artillery and small-arms response to attacks from Syria. Then, in early April 1967, Israeli aircraft attacking Syrian artillery positions found themselves in battle over the Sea of Galilee with Syrian aircraft. This resulted in a clear victory for the Israeli side. That the Syrian fighters were the very latest supplied by the USSR, MiG-21s, would alone have caused disquiet in Moscow, for the battle suggested that the latest Soviet weapons were inferior to those supplied to Israel by the West (in this case, Mystere fighters obtained from France).

Having reflected on all this, and evidently concluding that both Soviet and Egyptian influence needed a boost in the Middle East, the Soviet government condemned Israel, suggesting that it was playing the American game and that the USSR was very concerned at the Israeli-launched disturbances so close to the USSR. This geographical inexactitude suggests that the Soviet condemnation was more of a gesture than an expression of genuine alarm. It was followed by Soviet assertions that Israel was concentrating troops near the Syrian border, in what looked like preparations for an invasion. This assertion was false, and UN observers later made clear it was false and in May the Soviet ambassador to Israel refused an invitation to visit the area to see that there was no

Israeli concentration there. Whether the USSR was misinformed, disinformed or was deliberately fabricating the evidence it needed is immaterial, for the result would have been the same in any case. The most likely explanation of Soviet behavior is that misinformation began the affair, and the concept of Israeli concentration so fitted Moscow's preconceptions that it was difficult for the Soviet government to abandon the idea.

Whether or not the Russians believed this story, it had the effect they wanted, of compelling Nasser to assert himself as leader of the progressive Arabs. Helped perhaps by Israeli Arabic broadcasts, Arabs began to wonder whether Nasser, secure behind the cover provided by the United Nations peacekeeping force (UNEF), was leaving the Syrians to their fate. To maintain his prestige, and therefore his own position, it was necessary for Nasser to assert himself against Israel. This had been the Soviet aim, but before long Nasser ran out of control so far as Russian diplomacy was concerned.

At the end of April, Anwar Sadat, who was paying a visit to Moscow as a close associate of Nasser, was told by the Soviet prime minister that Russian intelligence had clear information that the Israelis were massing close to the Syrian frontier. Evidently, at this stage the USSR was persuading Nasser to assert himself, and when on 14 May Nasser put his forces on the alert and moved large formations into Sinai, it was probably with Soviet approval. But Nasser's next move probably was not.

What Nasser did two days later was to request the UN to remove its peacekeeping troops from some points of the Egypt-Israel frontier, the request later being amended to include the UN presence at Sharm El-Sheikh. The UN Secretary-General, U Thant, in a decision for which he was savagely criticized at the time and later, decided to withdraw all UN forces. Subsequently, this was held to have opened the way for the 1967 war, and U Thant has been variously condemned for cowardice and ineptitude. This judgment remains general, although it is possible that one day U Thant's action will be seen as rational and courageous. It was rational because it recognized what world statesmen and their spokesmen refused to recognize, that in the absence of agreement from both sides the UN force would be too weak to prevent war. It was little more than an observer force in any case, and had been accepted in 1956 because both Israel and Egypt wanted a peace settlement and a simultaneous assurance that the other side would observe that agreement. With Nasser already having 100,000 troops in Sinai and apparently on the warpath, the UN force became an irrelevance. U Thant recognized this, and those statesmen who later chose him as a suitable scapegoat showed no enthusiasm, at the time or earlier, for installing a UN force which would actually have some fighting capacity. U Thant's acceptance of reality was not an act of cowardice.

Concentration of Egyptian troops in Siani, ejection of the UN force, Egyptian resumption of their strong point at Sharm

El-Sheikh, from where they again blocked shipping attempting to reach the Israeli port of Eilat, were moves which Israel obviously could not ignore. The rest of the world, including Moscow, was also apprehensive. A few weeks before Nasser had been passing through a period of relative unpopularity and insecurity. With his seemingly never-ending campaign in the Yemen and his needlessly vituperative relationships with the kings of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, he had seemed impotent. From this feeling of impotence the USSR had pushed him into an aggressive posture and Nasser suddenly discovered he was once again the idol of the Arab masses. With this change in his fortunes he would, once again, be tempted to push his luck too far.

The Soviet and US governments were in contact during April and May, and their exchanges were not especially acrimonious, as both wished to preserve the peace, without, however, weakening their own positions in the Middle East. The perceived need to support Nasser publicly, and to a certain stage in private, made it hard for Moscow to restrain him. It does seem that Soviet efforts were made to persuade Nasser not to blockade the Strait of Tiran from Sharm El-Sheikh, and not to concentrate his army on Israel's frontier, but these appeals had no success. Nasser further bolstered his position when his recent arch-enemy, King Hussein of Jordan, having calculated that Egypt was on the brink of defeating Israel, decided it would be politic to swallow his pride and join in on Egypt's side. The result was a Jordanian-Egyptian military agreement reached at the end of May. This made Israel's survival beyond a few more weeks seem even more questionable.

From 17 May, when Nasser's troop moves to Sinai were actually announced, the Israeli government abandoned its previous nonchalant poise and sought ways to avert the threat. Dayan, who at that time held no military post, was one of those urging immediate violent action on the grounds that the IDF could still beat the Egyptians, but that time was not on Israel's side. In his memoirs Dayan suggests that Prime Minister Levi Eshkol lacked boldness at this point, but Eshkol was probably intent on exhausting diplomatic action before embarking on military gambles. However, diplomacy produced nothing concrete from Washington, while Paris decided that a pro-Arab attitude was more advantageous; possibly the end of the Algerian war, which had provoked tension between Egypt and France, was one reason for this change of tack. Keeping its reserves mobilized over a long period was damaging to the already fragile Israeli economy, but the Eshkol government was unable to decide whether or not to launch a pre-emptive attack on Egypt. Egypt, apart from enrolling Jordan to join the Egypt-Iraq-Syria alliance, had also been promised detachments from other Arab states, including Algeria. It is said that the Israeli Chief of Staff (Yitzhak Rabin) collapsed at this point from excessive cigarette consumption, being temporarily replaced by Ezer Weizman. The main significance of this two-day disablement is that the Israeli command was in a state of high tension at this time, being preoccupied not only by the actions of neighboring

Arab governments, but also by what seemed like lack of action by its own. Certainly the Israeli public at large, and its press, began to show signs of impatience with Eshkol, who finally formed a new multiparty government which included the former leader of the opposition (Menachem Begin) and, more important, a new Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan.

With Dayan as Defense Minister the decision to make a pre-emptive attack was finally confirmed. Dayan was right, insofar as Nasser had done two things which Israel had always regarded as justifying armed action. He had once more closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping, and he had formed an offensive military alliance with states bordering Israel. Nor had he made any secret of his intentions. Indeed on 26 May he made a speech to Arab trade unionists in which the destruction of Israel was clearly envisaged. The agreement with Jordan was followed by the dispatch of the Egyptian General Abdal Riadh to take over the Jordanian forces. In the conditions of Arab material preponderance, it seemed to the Israeli command that a pre-emptive strike, facing the Egyptians and their allies with an unexpected circumstance right at the beginning, was the only way out.

The war that started on 5 June 1967 has since been named the Six Day War; logically enough, in view of its duration. In fact, its outcome was decided in just one day, the first. At breakfast time on that day almost the entire Israeli Air Force was dispatched against Egyptian military airfields in Sinai, along the Suez Canal and Red Sea, and certain Nile Delta and Nile Valley sites. Most of the Egyptian Air Force officers seem to have been caught between home and base in these attacks; pilots who managed to reach their aircraft were for the most part killed or injured when they were struck as they sought to take off. These Israeli attacks were the result of meticulous planning by the Air Force, headed by its commander Mordecai Hod, and were provided with excellent intelligence about Egyptian dispositions. In three hours that morning the entire Egyptian medium bomber force was destroyed, and most of the light bombers were put out of action too. This onslaught on the Egyptian TU-16 and IL-28 squadrons must have been a great relief for the Israelis, who no longer needed to devote resources for protection against bombing raids on cities. In addition, a high proportion of the SU-7 aircraft were eliminated. Of the Egyptian MiG-17,-19 and -21 aircraft, more than half were destroyed. In total, of about 500 firstline aircraft, the Egyptians lost about 300.

There was an element of gamble in the Israeli onslaught. Counting on initial inaction on the part of Egypt's allies, only 12 of the Israeli fighters were left behind to defend the airspace over Israeli territory. Taking a precaution that the Egyptians had failed to take, these defending aircraft during those vulnerable hours were deployed so that two-thirds were always in the air while the remaining four were being refueled at the ends of their runways.

The few Egyptian aircraft that managed to get into the air were soon shot down, but a few Israeli aircraft were lost also, and the Egyptian pilots were not lacking in boldness. It is usual for attacks on airfields to produce greater losses in aircraft than in pilots, and this was the case on 5 June. Egypt suddenly found itself with considerably more pilots than aircraft. If the USSR had acceded to Egyptian requests for immediate replacement aircraft the war might, just possibly, have ended differently, but Moscow refused to help in this way. As in the days preceding the war, Moscow wanted peace, and realized that supplying replacement arms to Egypt would only prolong the war.

Factors which contributed to the destructiveness of the Israeli Air Force's early-morning visitation included the circumstance that the Egyptians had neither dispersed their aircraft on the airfields nor placed a suitable proportion of their machines in safe rear airbases beyond the effective range of their enemy. It is unlikely that their Soviet advisers would have neglected to recommend these procedures; after all, at Port Arthur in 1904 and along the Soviet-German frontier in 1941 the Russian forces had already experienced the destruction of surprise onslaughts, and indeed the 1941 disaster of the Red Air Force had much in common with the 1967 experience of the Egyptian. So there is probably some truth in the Soviet assertion that the Egyptians refused to take good advice. On 5 June 1967 there was not the slightest advantage in having the Egyptian bombers so close to Israel and the advanced fighters were more numerous than was required to deal with an Israeli bombing attack on Egyptian territory.

It is likely that those Egyptian pilots who at the time of the attack were actually on duty had just returned to their airfields from night patrols. Air bases that for one reason or another were not attacked by the Israelis did not dispatch their aircraft to the aid of those that were. Whether this was a procedural shortcoming or a result of communication problems is not clear, but it certainly eased the work of the Israeli pilots. Furthermore, even in the absence of these factors the discrepancy between Israeli and Egyptian numbers would have been irrelevant in this morning's activities in view of the thoughtful design of Israeli aircraft and weapon systems, and their proficiency in refueling, rearming and turning around their machines. Most Israeli aircraft were ready for action within 15 minutes of returning to their bases, whereas Egyptian ground crews needed about two hours. Hence the Israeli Air Force seemed several times stronger than it actually was, and this may have persuaded the Egyptian command that American aircraft, from US aircraft carriers, were also engaged. Later, Nasser and Hussein concocted a story that American aircraft had indeed been responsible for the Israeli success. However, after Israeli intelligence sources published a transcript of the radio conversation on this subject between Nasser and Hussein, the latter admitted that the allegation was false.

Hussein's air force seems to have been the first to come to the aid of Nasser, making light but symbolically valuable raids on Israeli airfields at Natanya, Kfar Sirkin and Kfar Sava. Much later the Syrians managed to dispatch bombers to the Haifa oil installations and another Israeli airfield. The next day, a solitary Iraqi TU-16 reached Israel, dropped a few bombs on Natanya, and was then shot down. It seems clear that there was no effective defense co-ordination between the high commands of the warring Arab states. Lack of co-ordination was a result of Inter-Arab suspicions and rivalries, and closer relations were probably not encouraged by the Russian advisers, for political reasons.

Considerable time separated the beginning of the Israeli air attack on Egypt and the moment when the Israeli command felt that the Egyptian Air Force had suffered enough, and that the time was right to turn attention toward the air forces of Egypt's allies. By the end of that first day almost the entire Jordanian Air Force (whose main force had been about 20 Hunter Fighters) had been destroyed, as had the bulk of the Syrian Air Force. Strikes against the Iraqi Air Force were limited to one airfield, known as H3. Henceforth the Israeli Air Force was able to concentrate its attention on ground support, and this determined the fate of the Egyptian and Syrian troops. In the course of the war it would seem that fewer than 50 Israeli aircraft were lost, mostly from ground fire. The SAM-2 missile installations of the Egyptians and Syrians proved ineffective, for Israeli air operations were conducted so close to the ground that these surface-to-air missiles could not be used with any hope of success.

After 5 June, therefore, the war settled down to a rapidly moving series of ground battles whose course was determined by Israeli air superiority. This superiority not only permitted destructive air attacks on Arab formations, but prevented similar attacks being made on Israeli troops. The speed of Israeli advances, especially in Sinai, owed much to the security in which supplies, especially of fuel, could be brought up to the advancing units. In turn, the rapidity of the advance threw the opposing command completely off balance so what started as an Egyptian retreat ended as a rout. Throughout this week, efforts to restore peace were being made in the United Nations and elsewhere. Both the USA and the USSR wanted peace (and used their new 'hot line' for the first time in exchanging ideas), so the available time was short for an Israeli victory which would provide the foundations for a peace which, better than the 1956 agreement, would guarantee the country's basic needs for survival. Once again the IDF was engaged in a triumphant but anxiety-fraught race against time. Meanwhile, Russian advisers in Syria and Egypt were withdrawn out of harm's way, leaving their proteges to proceed as best they could. Contrary to press statements of that time, no Soviet personnel, dead or alive, fell into Israeli hands.

At sea, despite the naval craft at Egypt's disposition, the war brought little excitement. The main event occurred at the

same time as the final ceasefire, when a US electronic intelligence vessel, the Liberty, placidly gathering information off the Israeli coast, was attacked by Israeli aircraft and suffered many casualties. The Liberty was presumably listening to the transmissions of both sides, with a view to obtaining information about the real situation, as opposed to what the belligerents claimed was happening. The suggestion that it knew rather too much about various Israeli deceptions (largely aimed at confusing Israel's enemies with fake transmissions appearing to emanate from Cairo and other Arab communication centers) was probably true, but the suggestion that this is why the Israelis attacked seems unconvincing. As always in military puzzles, muddle is the most likely explanation. The incident did little to disturb US-Israeli relations; Israel eventually offered compensation but did not admit to any feeling of guilt. Elsewhere at sea, Egyptian submarines appear to have approached the Israel coast and been scared off by depth charges, but there was no effective action by surface ships.

The land war resolved itself into three theaters, the campaign in Sinai, and the operations against Syria and Jordan. The Sinai operations had first priority for Israel, and it was only after the Egyptians were safely in flight that the other theaters were opened up. Nevertheless, the campaign against Syria finally absorbed more Israeli effort, at least from the air, than the Sinai campaign. This was partly because Israel wished to build a position in this region that would prevent a recurrence of the Fedayeen and official Syrian attacks and incursions that had preceded this war. The capture of the Golan Heights, from which Syrian guns had frequently shelled Israeli farms, was a significant Israeli war aim. The need to win the required victory over the Syrians delayed Israel's acceptance of a ceasefire and thereby aroused a flurry of half-veiled threats from the USSR.

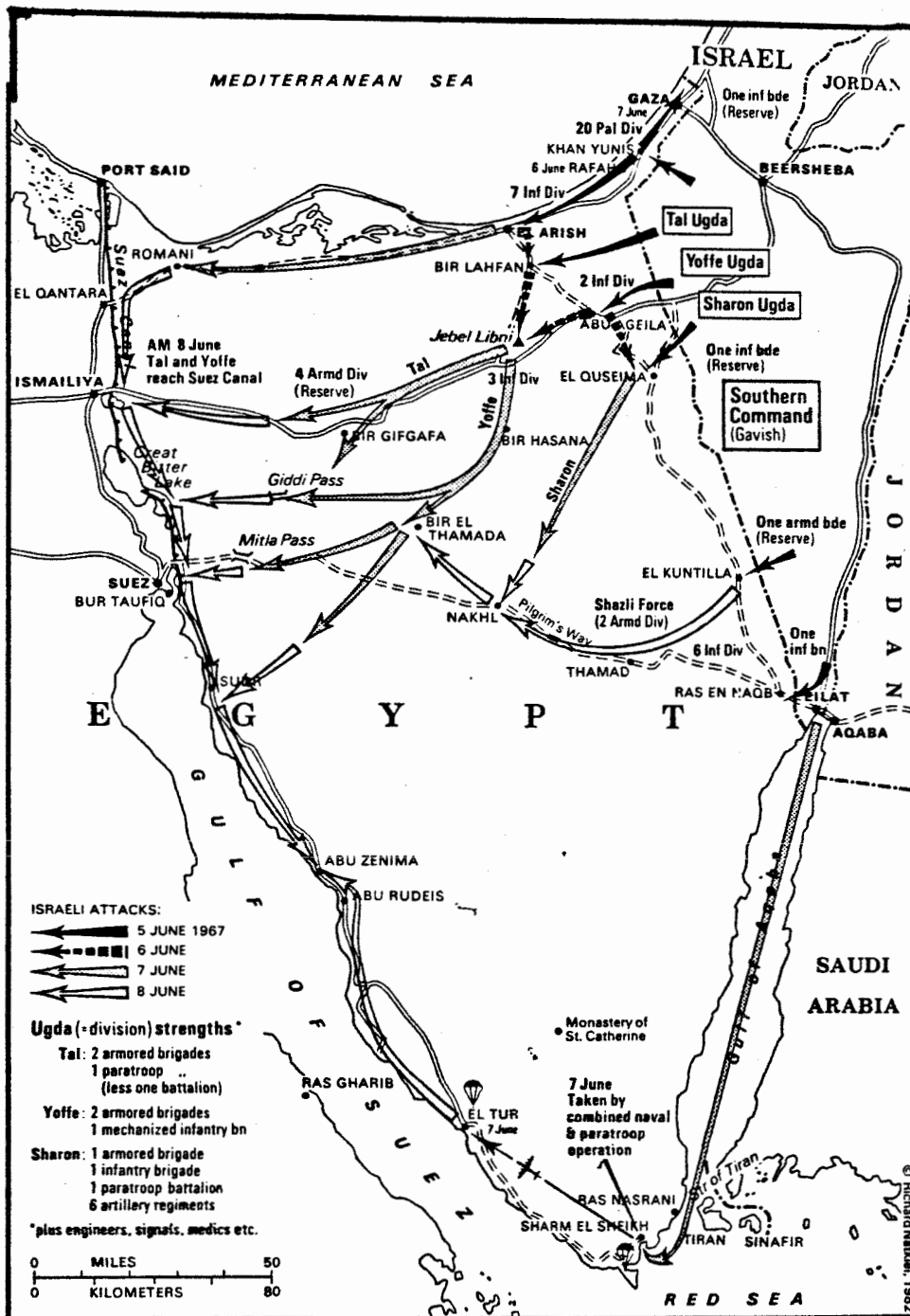
Thanks to air strikes, the occasions on which Arab and Israeli tank forces got to grips were less frequent than had been anticipated. In general, the Israeli's better training and the superior operating qualities of most of their tanks gave them a battle-winning advantage. The Centurions in particular proved their worth, being able to engage the Egyptian T54 and T55 tanks outside the latter's gun range. The Arab antitank guns were served by well-trained troops, but they lacked the mobility required to deal with the wide-ranging Israeli tanks. The Shmel' antitank missile supplied by the USSR did not achieve good results.

The largest tank encounters occurred in the first day or so, before the Israeli aerial preponderance was brought into play. In Sinai the Egyptians had two armored divisions in support of their five infantry divisions. Intended eventually to lead an Egyptian offensive, at the time of the Israeli pre-emptive strike one of these two divisions was stationed in the rear - the elite 4th Armored Division located near Bir Gafgafa. 'Force Shazli,' a division-size armored formation was poised along the frontier between Kuntilla and Kusseima, its eventual aim being a thrust right

across to the Jordanian frontier so as to cut off the southern Negev and Eilat from the rest of Israel. On the whole, though, the Egyptian deployment was similar to that of 1956, while geography determined that the Israeli movements were largely a repetition of that earlier campaign. However, the Egyptian command mistakenly anticipated that the Israelis would simply duplicate their 1956 plan of operations. In fact, the infrastructural improvements that the Egyptians themselves had made during the intervening years were sufficient to ensure that this campaign could not be exactly like that of 1956. Apart from constructing camps and supply depots, and fortified areas stronger than those of 1956, the Egyptians had improved the road system so that connections between the main west-east routes were more numerous. They had also opened up the Gidi Pass, north of the Mitla Pass, to provide an alternative route for vehicles proceeding to and from the Suez area.

In Sinai, Israel's troops were commanded by Yeshayahu Gavish, and his men were divided into three task forces of divisional size. Israel Tal's force was in the north, ready to move along the Mediterranean coast while at the same time taking care of the Gaza Strip. A little to the south was Abragam Yoffe's force, which was to advance over soft desert (regarded as virtually impassable by the Egyptians) to Bir Lafan, where it would be in a good position to assist either the northern or the southern task force by attacking the Egyptians from an unexpected direction. To the south, Arik Sharon's force was to tackle the fortified zones centered on Um Datef and Abu Ageila, while making a supplementary thrust southeastward to the key road junction of Nakhle. Briefly, the Israeli intention was to crack the hard nuts represented by the Rafah and Abu Ageila defenses, throwing the defenders off balance by attacking from unanticipated directions. Having thereby created safe gaps through which to advance, the Israeli forces would destroy Egyptian formations in the rear before they had time to organize themselves. Then, without wasting time over the capture of strongly defended bases, the Israelis would move rapidly toward the Suez Canal, spread themselves along its length so as to cut off the Egyptian retreat and force the Egyptian armor to fight in unfavorable conditions. On the whole these objectives were achieved, although casualties were heavier than in 1956. Israeli casualties were about 1400 in Sinai, of which about 300 were fatal. However, Egyptian casualties were about 10 times larger than this, and their material losses were enormous.

The initial, breakthrough, phase of the Israeli plan was completed in two days. It was here that the heaviest casualties were suffered, for the Egyptian soldiers fought gallantly and effectively, aided by their long-prepared defense systems. A few minutes after the Israeli Air Force appeared over Egypt's airfields, Tal's 7th Armored Brigade, skirting minefields, struck at the junction of the two infantry divisions defending Rafah, while a parachute brigade under Eitan with tanks in support made an outflanking sweep in the south of Egyptian positions, and then



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Mitla Pass

swept into the defending gun batteries. This reduction of the Rafah defenses took the best part of the day, but before nightfall on 5 June the 7th Brigade had captured Sheikh Zuweid to the west, where its Patton and Centurion tanks had little difficulty in overcoming a battalion of T34 units. During the night of 5/6 June, Tal's forces consolidated positions at El-Arish preparatory to a final occupation of that town the following morning. After this part moved toward the Suez Canal around Dantara, while a tank force was sent south to secure the El Arish airfield and Bir Lahfan, a settlement commanding the road to Abu Ageila, which at that time was being occupied by Sharon's task force.

Sharon's force had both the most essential and the most difficult task in these two days. It was required not only to defeat the defending concentrations, but also to ensure Israeli control of the west-east highway from Ismailia to Nitzana. On 5 June, after crushing an outer Egyptian defense position at Tarat Um-Basis, Sharon advanced on to the Um-Katef and Abu Ageila fortified zones. While his artillery executed a prolonged bombardment, a strong armored reconnaissance was made to the north, again over soft desert sand that the defenders had regarded as impassable. Despite some heavy fighting, this group managed to pass to the north of Abu Ageila and take the road junctions controlling the routes toward El Arish and Jebel Libni. Sharon had dispatched another force to cover the road from Abu Ageila to Kusseima, so Abu Ageila was completely cut off from reinforcement. Still on the first day, after dark, helicopters carried paratroopers to the Egyptian rear with the aim, successfully achieved, of dealing with the defending artillery. Sharon's main force of tanks and infantry attacked from the east and by dawn the whole complex was in Israeli hands, although fighting in and around the Egyptian trenches had been bitter and heavy .

Meanwhile Yoffe's task force, plowing over soft sand dunes between and parallel to Tal's and Sharon's advances, was achieving its main objective of preventing any north-south movement (that is, lateral to the advance) on the part of Egyptian reinforcing units. If the Egyptians had been able to swing formations between the Tal and Sharon fronts in accordance with the hour-by-hour situation, the Israeli task would have been considerably more difficult. By reaching Bir Lagfan late on the second day, Yoffe's men commanded a road junction which enabled them to achieve their object. When an Egyptian armored force moved from the Ismailia area toward Jebel Libni it was confronted by Yoffe's tanks ensconced in protected positions alongside the Bir Lahfan junction, and routed.

It was toward the end of the second day that the Egyptian nerve showed signs of breaking. This was not simply a consequence of the perilous tactical situation in which the Egyptian forces were placed in Sinai, but resulted also from the psychological strain of not knowing exactly what was going on while being increasingly aware that something disastrous was happening. Field

Marshal Amer committed suicide after the war rather than face a trial in which it was evident he would be portrayed, rightly or wrongly, as the main cause of defeat. He did not leave behind fellow-officers willing to defend his reputation. Earlier, he had enjoyed the trust of Nasser, and had been entrusted with the conduct of the war in the Yemen, a campaign which hardly covered him with glory. In the Sinai operations of June 1967 he is said to have lost his nerve and issued conflicting and confusing orders which turned Egyptian discomfiture into a military catastrophe. He is said, too, to have been addicted to drugs. No doubt many of these allegations came from the army's and government's obvious need for a scapegoat, but there were certainly some pointed questions that needed to be asked about his conduct. One of these concerns the information he was sending back to Cairo about the first day's fighting. In Cairo, and in other Arab cities, crowds assembled to cheer the great Egyptian victories that were being reported. When, a couple of days later, the truth became obvious, both the Army and Nasser himself felt a backlash of disappointed fury on the part of the public. This was not an irrecoverable situation for Nasser, for as the situation worsened the public's feeling that he was the only man likely to turn defeat into victory ensured him continuing support, but the popular feeling against the Army continued, and no doubt was a reason for the courts-martial of leading officers afterward. Meanwhile, Nasser was telling his allies in Damascus, Amman, and Baghdad that the Israelis were being defeated and that his Shazli Division was even then approaching the Israeli-Jordanian frontier. It was this optimistic assessment that persuaded King Hussein, despite his misgivings, to throw his forces whole-heartedly into battle.

On 6 June Gaza was captured by an Israeli reserve infantry brigade against stiff and prolonged resistance; most of the remainder of the Gaza Strip had been overrun earlier the same day, with infantry and paratroops combining to capture the hill dominating Gaza town. On 7 June, with Israeli Air Force ground-attack operations were getting into full swing, Tal's men pushed westward, with one arm assisting Yoffe's men to capture the supply base of Bir Gafgafa and one brigade pushing toward the northern end of the Suez Canal. It was in defense of Bir Gafgafa that the Egyptians launched their last substantial counterattack by tanks; this was defeated. Yoffe's force moved on toward the Mitla and Gidi passes, through which it seemed likely that the cut-off Egyptian formations would seek to withdraw westward. An advance unit of nine Israeli tanks made a rush to the eastern end of the Mitla Pass so as to block it. In doing so, four of its tanks ran out of fuel but were towed to their destination by the others. Here they were emplaced in defensive positions and succeeded in holding up the Egyptians for several crucial hours; they were eventually relieved by other tanks after having let pass only one Egyptian tank during their lone battle.

The movements of other Israeli formations had the effect of pushing the escaping Egyptian formations toward the two passes,

the eastern approaches to which became a killing ground for Israeli armor, guns, and especially aircraft and napalm. Hundreds of Egyptian tanks and thousands of other vehicles met their end here.

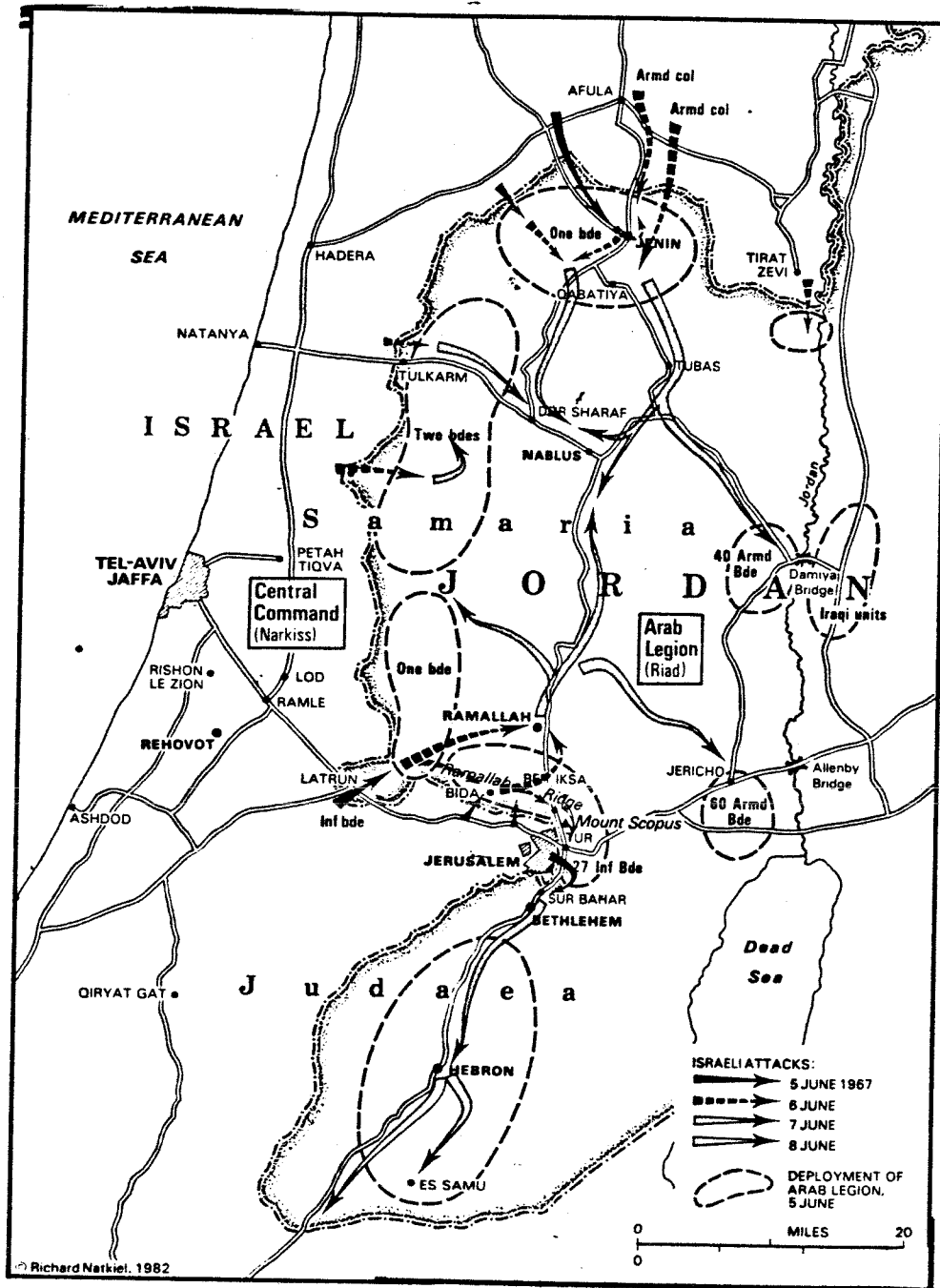
Meanwhile an Egyptian attempt to launch an armored counterattack so as to hold back the Israelis from the Canal was disturbed by Tal's leading formation of French AMX tanks. The latter, being lightly armored, wisely did not press an attack against the opposing T55 tanks, but maintained contact until heavier Israeli tanks arrived. The latter engaged in a long-range bombardment over the sand dunes and after a four-hour battle virtually destroyed the Egyptian formation.

On 8 June the two prongs of Tal's force, after passing, respectively, Kantara and Ismailia, linked up on the bank of the Canal. Together with Yoffe's forces, which had finished the Mitla engagement, they then went south to Suez. On 7 June, a combined attack by the Army and Navy on Sharm El-Sheikh had proved something of an anticlimax. The troops were duly landed, but found Sharm El-Sheikh abandoned by the Egyptians. On 8 June the ceasefire brought the Sinai operations to a formal close. In those few days, in this theater, the Egyptian had lost four-fifths of its equipment, including perhaps 800 tanks and thousands of vehicles. The Israelis captured enough serviceable Egyptian tanks to emerge from this war with a net gain for their tank inventory of a hundred or so units.

Operations on the Jordanian and Syrian fronts developed to their full intensity only some days after the start of hostilities. A carefully timed message was sent to King Hussein by Israel on 5 June. Dispatched so as to reach him while the Egyptian airfields were being attacked, it offered to spare Jordan any hostile acts so long as Jordan refrained from entering the war against Israel. Hussein's reply is said to have conveyed the message that Israel had, after all, attacked Egypt and that the Jordanian official reply to the Israeli message would be delivered by air; Hussein's Hunter fighters which attacked nearby Israeli airfields were Jordan's answer. At the same time, Jordanian artillery opened fire on Israeli airfields and towns. Israel's small size, and her convoluted frontiers, meant that Jordanian long-range guns could reach as far as Tel Aviv.

The small Jordanian Air Force was destroyed on its airfields within hours, but the land forces were not so easily dealt with. This sector, which the Israelis termed the Central Front, witnessed a week of determined fighting, both sides and for, ancient land and towns that had been the cultural and spiritual nucleus of both nations. Biblical settlements like Bethlehem, Jericho and Jerusalem itself were all encompassed in the Central Front.

That the Israelis hardly expected Hussein to make any other reply does not imply that their olive branch was hypocritical.



They desperately wanted peace on this front, feeling that they could hardly fight Jordan at the same time as Egypt and Syria. However, it was soon clear that this is what they had to do and before that first day had passed Israeli units were in action against Jordan's Arab Legion. One of the first acts of the latter was an incursion into the demilitarized zone of Jerusalem, where it occupied Government House, the residence of the British High Commissioner in the days of the Palestine Mandate. Government House had been serving as the HQ of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, which was still in operation in this sector, and its capture by the Jordanians would seem to confirm that the UN forces had no chance of playing any effective role as soon as just one of the potential belligerents they were intended to supervise decided that it no longer wanted their services.

It had long been assumed that any hostilities with Jordan would be concerned exclusively with the West Bank, and the general Israeli plan had been worked out well in advance into Samaria from two directions (south from Nazareth and north from Jerusalem) while the Arab Legion in the west would be pinned down by holding attacks. Any Jordanian troops in Judea were to be pressed toward the Dead Sea by Israeli forces moving south from Jerusalem. However, the initial Israeli move was directed toward expelling the Arab Legion from Government House, on the Hill of Evil Council. This was soon achieved by the Jerusalem Brigade, which then continued onward to capture Sur Bahir, commanding the road to Bethlehem, and thereby cutting off the Arab section of Jerusalem from Hebron as well as Bethlehem.

A reservists' armored brigade commanded by Uri Ben-Ari moved to the northern edge of the Israeli salient providing access to Jerusalem (the 'Jerusalem Corridor'), where it broke into Jordanian positions threatening the salient, capturing Maale Hahamishah and Sheikh Abdal-Azziz. After Beit Ikksa was overrun by the Israelis they continued northward toward Ramallah. Just south of that town, they encountered Jordanian armor and the resulting battle did nothing to discredit the Jordanians, even though in the end the Israelis prevailed. However, the Israelis had to engage in more severe fighting before they could take Ramallah, with its vital crossroads.

On the night of 5/6 June the police post at Latur, which commanded the quickest route from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and which had resisted capture in 1948, was taken by an Israeli infantry brigade which then moved on to assist in the capture of Ramallah. Elsewhere in the Samarian sector, the key towns of Nablus and Jenin were captured toward the end of the week, following a number of heavy engagements which the Israelis won only thanks to their air superiority. Even though the Jordanian Patton tanks were inferior to the Israeli Shermans (rearmed with British 105mm guns) the Israeli armored units would have suffered considerably more had the Jordanians' communications and formations been less disturbed by air attack.

Meanwhile a reservist paratroop brigade which had been preparing for a drop in Sinai was diverted to the Central Front where, under Mordechai Gur, it was to capture the Arab sections of Jerusalem. Its successful redirection is a telling example of the flexibility and spontaneity which the IDF could display at this period. However, when Gur's men went into action during the night of 5/6 June, they did suffer from inadequate preparatory reconnaissance. Their first objective was the Jordanian Police School, which had been fortified and formed a strongpoint on the boundary separating the Jewish and Arab suburbs. Having to cut through four wire obstacles under fire, and then storm the Jordanian trenches, the paratroopers suffered quite severe casualties at this time. After overcoming this strongpoint they continued toward Ammunition Hill. This strongpoint was defended with well emplaced machine guns, with the Jordanians in well-protected bunkers, and it was only at the price of another large casualty list that the Israelis were finally able to capture it at dawn. Twenty-one paratroopers were killed at Ammunition Hill, and most of the other soldiers were wounded; as things turned out, this was the hardest-fought engagement on the Central Front. The Jewish enclave on Mount Scopus, which had been isolated ever since the departure of the British, was once more made accessible by these paratroop night operations.

After this success, the Israelis prepared to cut the Jericho road, and thereby isolate Arab Jerusalem from the east. To do this it was first necessary to capture the Augusta Victoria building (between Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives). However, despite the virtual impossibility of moving Jordanian reinforcements to Jerusalem (several relieving columns on the march were shattered by Israeli air attacks) the Jordanians in the around Jerusalem were still numerous and still battleworthy. Because of their effective resistance, the Israeli seizure of Augusta Victoria did not occur on 6 June, being postponed until the following day after the blocking Jordanian unit had withdrawn. Once taken, Augusta Victoria completed the isolation of the Arab sector of the city (the Old City). Gur's paratroopers rushed the Lions' Gate, giving access to the Old City, and moved through the Old City to the Western Wall. Meanwhile, from the other direction, the Jerusalem Brigade entered the Old City through the Dung Gate. This meant that Old Jerusalem, including the Wailing Wall so dear to Jewish tradition, was in Jewish hands once more.

The same day Ben-Ari's armor, after capturing Ramallah, pushed east and the next day captured Jericho, where the Jordanian resistance was slight; the city was so full of Jordanian troops and armor waiting their turn to approach the Allenby Bridge, giving access to the East Bank and therefore the possibility of regrouping, that it was impossible to organize a defensive posture at short notice. Some Israeli armor actually crossed the Jordan bridges, although there was no serious intention of moving on to Amman; Israeli interest was in the West Bank, and no further. Meanwhile the Jerusalem Brigade moved south from Jerusalem and

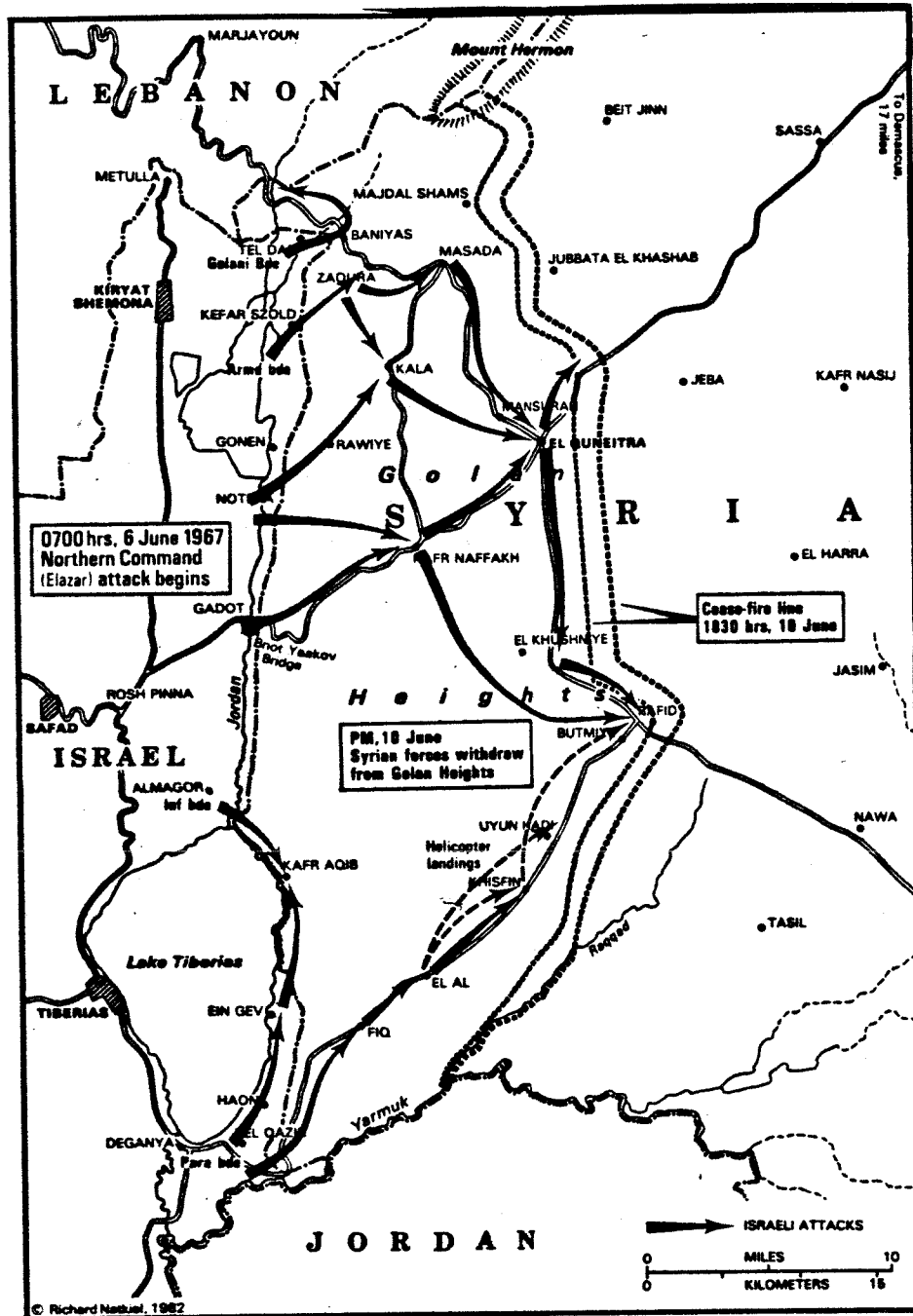
took Bethlehem and Hebron without trouble, for the Arab Legion had already withdrawn from these centers. By this time all the Jordanian forces were across the river, apart from a few isolated units, and the West Bank was in Israeli hands. Chaim Herzog, a brigadier who was subsequently to write the most detailed account of the Arab-Israeli wars, was appointed military governor of this newly acquired territory.

Among the settlements occupied by the Israelis in the West Bank were those known as the Etzion Block, which up to 1947 had been Jewish villages on which much much toil and blood had been spent, and which after 1947 had been razed by the Jordanians and re-created as Arab settlements. The emotion which their recapture (and subsequent resurrection as Jewish settlements peopled by the children of the 1947 families) aroused among Israelis was very deep. It symbolized the deep feelings which most Jews had for the territory, thereby creating a 'fact' of Jewish occupation which would make less likely its restitution to the Arabs.

In all, on the Central Front Israel lost about 550 dead, and 2500 of its troops were wounded. Largely because of their vulnerability to air attack, the Jordanian losses were much heavier, probably amounting to 6000 in dead and prisoners. Thousands of Arabs living in the West Bank accompanied the Jordanian Army in its retreat to the East Bank, and many more followed when the Israeli occupation was seen to be a long-term affair. This exacerbated the Palestinian refugee problem, a problem which Israelis still vainly hoped would disappear of its own accord.

On the Northern Front, facing Syria, it was the Israeli command's hope that heavy fighting would be postponed. This was because Syria was very much a Soviet protege, and Russian intervention, though not considered likely, was something to be avoided at all costs. Secondly, with its hands full in Sinai, Israel simply could not spare forces for a full-scale war against the Syrians, at least not for the first few days. Syria's activity in the first days of the war corresponded so closely to the Israeli desires that subsequently some Egyptians and Jordanians (including King Hussein) could talk about a 'betrayal' by Damascus. True, the Syrian government issued highly aggressive declarations and stirring communiques about the successes of its armed forces, but actual activity was at a very low level. The severe damage brought on the Syrian Air Force after it had attacked Haifa on the first day of the war was one inducement to a quiet campaign, but habitual Syrian caution and reluctance to move from words to deeds was probably the main factor. Syrian guns did bombard Israeli forces, but ground fighting was confined to a few reconnaissances which were terminated as soon as stiff resistance was encountered. Despite previous promises, Syrian troops were not sent to help Jordan during this war.

The Golan Heights, on which the Syrian artillery was stationed, was a plateau ranging from 500-9000 feet in height, suf-



ficient to give the gunners a great advantage in range and target-finding. The plateau is about 45 miles long, stretching south from Mount Herman. The drop toward the Israeli lowlands is very steep, making it a natural frontier which is difficult to assault. Having occupied the Heights for almost 20 years, the Syrian Army had considerably fortified them, and these fortifications stretched back in depth to protect the few highways leading toward Damascus. In summer of 1967 the bulk of the Syrian Army was deployed here, especially around the town of Kuneitra. It was near the town of Kuneitra that the striking force of the army was located, consisting of two armored and two mechanized brigades. Additional armor, in the form of armored battalions, was attached to each of the infantry brigades that were in position nearer the frontier. Israel's Northern Command, headed by David Elazar, was somewhat weaker than the opposing Syrians, consisting of three armored and five infantry brigades; moreover, some of Elazar's forces were sent to help the campaign against Jordan by attacking and capturing Jenin.

Because of the intensity of the Syrian bombardment, the Israeli staff was under considerable popular pressure to attack the Golan Heights immediately, but it was not until 9 June that a serious offensive was launched. This was directed toward the north, the object being to gain the use of the road passing through Banias and leading toward Kuneitra. The escarpment here was very steep, and for this reason the Syrians had deployed fewer guns than in the easier terrain of the south. The key defensive position for this advance was Tel Faher, whose capture would permit the Israelis to attack an even stronger fortified area, Tel Azaziat, from the rear. The 'Golani' Brigade was entrusted with the Tel Faher attack, which consisted of a sequence of assaults on successive Syrian positions. Minefields, wire obstacles, intensive trench systems, gun and machine-gun positions behind concrete all had to be taken in hand-to-hand fighting that sometimes resulted in positions being captured and then held by just one or two Israeli soldiers who had escaped serious injury. By evening on 9 June Tel Faher was in Israeli hands and the Golani Brigade moved toward Tel Azaziat. With the advantage of attacking from an unexpected direction, and having a few tanks as stiffening, the Brigade captured that position soon after dark. Meanwhile, an almost equally desperate struggle was being fought by Albery Mandler's armored brigade as it climbed upward to Na'mush and Q'ala. Led by bulldozers to find and clear a way, the tanks overcame successive Syrian positions, but only with considerable loss; it was the bulldozers and their unprotected crews which suffered most.

In general, in the northern part of the Golan Heights, the Israelis had captured the first ridge by the end of 9 June. Further south, Israeli infantry, in less intensive operations, advanced from Mishmar Hayarden, crossed the Jordan, and captured sufficient positions to clear a route for reinforcements to pass from the Central Front, where operations against Jordan were vir-

tually complete. Soon Uri Ram's and Bar-Kochva's armored brigades arrived from the West Bank. By 10 June Kuneitra appeared to be threatened from two directions, from Mansoura by the Golani Brigade and Bar-Kochva's armor, and from Wasset by Mandler's Brigade. With this, and the intensive Israeli air attacks (which were more intense than any the Egyptians had suffered), the Syrians began to lose their nerve. Strong defensive positions were demolished by their withdrawing defenders, and in places retreat developed more or less spontaneously into a rout. Probably because fuel supply had been interrupted by air strikes, many Syrian tanks were abandoned. When the UN ceasefire entered into effect at 1830 on 10 June, the Israelis were in clear control of the Golan Heights, having occupied Kuneitra and Mount Herman. The ceasefire line represented a reverse of the previous situation; now it was the Israeli troops who could look down on the Syrian lowlands, the Plain of Damascus.

It is indicative of Israel's strong diplomatic position that the ceasefire, in effect, was timed to come into force at a moment convenient to it rather than to its enemies. The Arab side had been considerably weakened by the refusal of the USSR to supply replacement weapons so long as the war continued. Moscow had not wanted this war, wanted it to end as soon as possible, and did not feel inclined to offer more support than was necessary to the Arab governments who had been foolish enough to provoke a war. On the other hand, the Russians wished to maintain their influence in the Middle East, and every military reverse suffered by Egypt and Syria seemed to show the risks of relying on Soviet friendship and Soviet Weapons. At the UN, the USSR representative pressed for a ceasefire as soon as Egypt had indicated that a ceasefire would be acceptable. But when Syria announced her acceptance of the ceasefire on 9 June the Israelis had not yet reached the positions they intended to occupy, and they pressed on despite the ceasefire bid. At this point the Russians became uneasy, and began to hint that should a ceasefire fail to materialize the Soviet Union would have to consider intervening more actively. Increased Soviet participation was something which the USA did not relish, and this may have been a factor in inducing Israel finally to accept the ceasefire. Much more important, however, was the circumstance that by dusk on 10 June Israel had got what it wanted.

The foregoing description of the 1967 war was taken from the book 'The History of the Middle East Wars' by J. N. Westwood and published in 1984. As of June 10, 1967, the U.S. Army's knowledge of the details of the conflict was limited. As a result of diplomatic arrangements, the United States made arrangements to obtain samples of Soviet Military Equipment that had been captured or destroyed and this was the beginning of the project MEXPO - Middle East Exploitation which for the most part was run by civilians working for the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Ballistic Research Lab. The material did not arrive in the United States until several years later and the results of the analysis was not available until several years after that. In the interim the U.S.

was receiving a trickle of material from Southeast Asia where the Military Advisory Command was beginning to expand its activities.

Writing on April 30, 1985, in response to an editorial, Roger Hilsman, who was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in 1963-1964 stated that...

"History and Hindsight: Lessons From Vietnam", which appeared in the N.Y. Times that day, says that by late 1964 the war in Vietnam was being lost and that a "major reason was the infiltration of South Vietnam by ever-growing numbers of regular North Vietnamese troops." It would be nice to believe that the North Vietnamese were the ones to escalate the war and that the war was being won before they did so. The historical record indicates the opposite.

First, according to official U.S. estimates of the time, the number of people coming over the infiltration routes remained fairly steady, 5,400 to 12,400 a year, from 1961 until after the bombing of North Vietnam in 1965. When all the intelligence was in, in fact, it turned out that fewer infiltrators came over the trails in 1964 than in 1962. Second, there is no evidence of infiltration of significant numbers of individual North Vietnamese, much less of regular troops, before December 1964.

All the evidence available at the time was assembled in the State Department white paper "Aggression From the North: The Record of North Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Vietnam," which was issued in 1965 to support the case for bombing North Vietnam. No captured documents, equipment or matériel were presented that indicated the presence of North Vietnamese in significant numbers. The white paper was able to present case studies on only four captured infiltrators who were ethnic North Vietnamese. Neither was evidence presented of the presence of regular North Vietnamese units except the allegations of two of these and of two other captured Vietcong of southern origin. Later evidence permits two conclusions. First, one battalion of North Vietnamese regulars had entered South Vietnam in December 1964. Second, the United States Government did not know this at the time.

In December 1964 and in January 1965, the first of a new family of Soviet small arms were recovered after clashes with a disciplined and uniformed enemy unit. This aroused suspicion, but it was not until the Highway 19 campaign in February and March of 1965 that there was evidence of the presence of significant numbers of North Vietnamese members of a march unit. Hard evidence then began to accumulate that regular North Vietnamese units had been introduced into South Vietnam. But not until the enemy summer monsoon campaign in the central highlands was it established that the infiltration of North Vietnamese regulars had begun in late 1964 and was substantial.

Thus the war in South Vietnam was being lost before these units arrived, and the U.S. escalated the war before it knew that North Vietnamese regular forces had been introduced.

As it will be pointed out in the next chapter, the lack of an effective intelligence effort in Vietnam was a primary factor in the misinterpretation of events that were taking place in Vietnam, as well as the whole of Southeast Asia. A limited amount of the New Soviet small arms that were being transported into South Vietnam and captured were returned to the United States and promptly turned over to the Foreign Science and Technology Center. The detailed analysis done on these weapons was classified and became a part of a document that was referred to as the FOM-CAT. This was a SECRET document which listed all Foreign Ordnance Material Cataloged by country of origin. Since it included all nations it was classified as NOFORN of NO FOREIGN NATIONAL in addition to SECRET. This in effect denied the South Vietnamese access to the information, and kept most U.S. weapon designers ignorant of foreign developments.

The decision to escalate the conflict with the addition of U.S. combat elements had been made and in May 1965, the 173rd Airborne Brigade was deployed to Vietnam. Landing at Bien Hoa Airfield, near Saigon, the brigade found itself in an area battered frequently by enemy raids and shelling attacks. By night-fall of the first day, the Sky Soldiers had moved into the surrounding jungles, destroying Cong (VC) operations and plans. For a year thereafter, not a single round of enemy fire fell on that airfield while the 173rd was there. The brigade maintained the initiative, keeping the enemy off balance and holding open the door for the influx of arriving Army units. The experience gained in two years of combined exercises with allied forces paid off as a battalion task force from the Royal Australian Regiment and a New Zealand artillery battery joined up with the brigade, remaining until the summer of 1966. Acting as an airfield security force, the Brigade had little need for intelligence that went beyond a short distance from the airfield, but as more and more American units began deploying, the requirements for additional intelligence support became obvious.

As in past conflicts, the intelligence build up was slow to get started, was several years late in arriving and was sent in a piecemeal fashion. By July 1965, U.S. Army intelligence elements in Vietnam included the 704th Intelligence Corps (INTC) Detachment, Detachment 1 of the 500th INTC Group, and 218 intelligence advisors thinly spread among the south Vietnamese corps, divisions, sectors, and special zones. The 704th was a counterintelligence (CI) unit and functioned as a advisory counterpart to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Military Security Service (MSS). Detachment 1 of the 500th INTC Group served as advisory counterpart to the ARVN 924th Support Group, a human intelligence (HUMINT) or area intelligence collection unit. The advisors throughout the ARVN tactical organization functioned as counterparts to Vietnamese intelligence staff officers and sections. Up to this time, before deployment of major U.S. units, intelligence activity was of an advisory nature to the Vietnamese of consisted or specialized unilateral collection means such as airborne

radiodirection finding, photo and visual reconnaissance, and infrared and side-looking airborne radar (SLAR) reconnaissance. Even these capabilities were quite austere and additionally needed MI specialists were not readily available for reasons later pointed out by the U.S. Military Assistance Command (MACV) Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence (J-2), Major General Joseph A. McChristian in his Vietnam Study, the Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967:

History records that in time of war the tendency to the U.S. Government is to provide the man on the battlefield the resources he needs. The record also reveals repeatedly the sad story of too little too late because we were not prepared... History also records that after a war ends resources are greatly reduced, centralized more and more at a higher and then higher levels, and given over to civilians to a greater extent. After the Korean War, Army intelligence resources were reduced drastically. In 1965 the resources we needed were not combat ready. Great efforts were made to provide them as quickly as feasible, but more than two years would be required to receive most of the resources we originally requested."

The Southeast Asia Resolution (Public Law 88-408) was passed by the Congress and approved on August 10, 1964, as was previously mentioned, authorizing the U.S. President "to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom." That authority was used by President Johnson on April 1965, when he decided to commit U.S. combat forces for military action in South Vietnam to include MI elements to support those forces. General McChristian, the MACV J-2, explained the MACV intelligence buildup process as follows:

"For Military Assistance Command we requested a military intelligence group headquarters (a brigade headquarters did not exist) to command a counterintelligence group, an intelligence battalion (air reconnaissance support), and a military intelligence battalion to administer the personnel working in the centers, the advisors, and various support activities."

"I knew it would take a year or more for the Department of the Army to activate, train, and deploy to Vietnam new intelligence battalions and groups. However, our organizations were cellular in concept; one could request various functional teams to be attached to existing units. Such individual teams could be created rapidly and their arrival could be programmed over a period of months. I requested such teams. This course of action saved time and spread out the buildup so that

no one unit or activity had to turn over all its experienced men at one time."

In response to the MACV request for intelligence support units, Fort Bragg was selected as the center for the intelligence buildup in the United States with the Continental Army Command Intelligence Center (CONTIC) serving as coordinator of the buildup and deployment. The 525th MI Group, already in existence at Fort Bragg, was selected to become the overall command element for the MACV intelligence organization. The already existing 1st MI Battalion (ARS) and the 519th MI Battalion (Field Army-FA) were to be the two MACV requested MI battalions. Two new MI groups were to be established for CI and HUMINT collection, the 135th and 149th MI Groups, respectively. Thus the MACV intelligence organization was to materialize over the following year to emerge in Fall 1966 in the form envisioned by MACV. Initial increments of the existing organizations were able to begin deploying soon after receiving alert notifications in Summer 1965. The first packet of the 525th MI Group to deploy to the combat zone, after flying from Fort Bragg, departed Oakland and California aboard the USNS Geiger on 4 November 1965 and debarked at Vung Tau for movement by aircraft to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, near Saigon, on 28 November. The 1st and 519th MI Battalions followed in December 1965.

Planning began at CONTIC for organization and deployment of the two new MI groups and the cellular functional teams which were to provide the MI and CI specialists to flesh out the MACV intelligence organization. This required the official establishment and activation of the numerous other units; the requisitioning from active intelligence units around the world and the U.S. Army Intelligence School of personnel to fill these units; some additional training and preparation for overseas movement of these personnel; the requisitioning and marshalling of equipment, arms, and material to supply these units; and the requesting and scheduling of the transport necessary to move men and equipment from Fort Bragg to the combat zone. Needless to say, problems were numerous and came thick and fast. But as in all previous wars and conflicts, they were settled as appropriately and expeditiously as was possible at the time. The example of the 568th MI Detachment may serve to illustrate.

The 568th MI detachment was established in Spring of 1966 with an authorized strength of 42 officers and 24 enlisted men (EM). all HUMINT/area intelligence specialists. It was to be formed with a deployment readiness date of 3 July for equipment and 18 July for personnel; but by early July, there was as yet no equipment on hand and only about six officers (majors, captains, and one 2d Lieutenant) present for duty. Officers had been ordered to the unit from as far away as Europe and as near as Washington, DC. Their orders had contained the special instructions that movement of their dependents and household goods to the vicinity to Fort Bragg was not authorized unless it was to be their residence for the sponsor's entire Vietnam tour; therefore, these officers were

busy settling their families throughout the United States from New York to California before reporting for duty at Fort Bragg. The deployment readiness date had to be slipped for the first of what was to become numerous times (three times in September alone). By the end of July, most officers and some equipment were present, but no vehicles and no EM. By the end of August, all of the officers and one EM had reported for duty. New equipment had been slowly trickling in so that by mid-September, all vehicles and most of the remaining authorized equipment were available.

During the months of waiting for deployment, personnel of the 568th occupied themselves with weapons firing, immunizations (to include the bubonic plague series), full physical and dental examinations and remedial work, arranging for wills and powers of attorney, dying white underwear and handkerchiefs a dull olive drab, visits to the Vietnamese Village and the gas chamber for training, and regular training in combat intelligence related subjects. Some officers were assigned special duties by CONTIC, such as surveying officers on lost or damaged equipment, preliminary investigation officers, and members of officer boards. One large special project had about eight CI experienced officers of the detachment preparing and presenting an entire course of CI instruction to officers and NCOs of the U.S. Special Forces at the John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare (Airborne). With the exception of two or three supply personnel involved in receiving, controlling, and packing material and equipment, these activities filled only part of the time for most of these men who had come expecting early deployment. This resulted in numerous partial duty days and some "just waiting." It was these periods of inactivity which created some frustration and made the time seem far longer than it really was.

Finally in mid-September 1965, notification was received that the last major predeployment requirement had been solved - the detachment's enlisted strength had been located and was to arrive on or about 1 October. Sure enough, on that date the remaining 23 enlisted men arrived to fill out the organization. They had been assigned straight from basic training and the area intelligence collection course at the intelligence school. All of these soldiers were young privates, and their entire class had been assigned to fill out the 568th MI Detachment. Despite their lack of intelligence experience, many of them would go on to perform outstandingly in their combat tours, and some would even be decorated by the Army for service in Vietnam. After their arrival at Fort Bragg, they were put through a training course and qualified in weapons and as vehicle drivers. They also received, in just a few days, that almost disabling battery of pre-Vietnam deployment immunizations.

For the remainder of October, the pace of deployment activity quickened. Hold baggage was turned in and shipped. Vehicles were driven to Port Charleston, South Carolina, on 4 October. A deep relief was expressed by all when the final deployment date was set

for November since for almost four months many had been separated from their families, and the Vietnam tour had not even begun yet.

On 4 November, the main body (all but four officers of the advanced party) of 568th was flown to California for movement by ship to Vietnam. The advanced party would leave Travis Air Force Base, California, by air on 14 November and still arrive in Vietnam almost a week before the main body. Upon arrival in Vietnam, the personnel of the 568th were absorbed by the 149th MI Group and scattered throughout the country from Quang Tri in the North to Rach Gia in the South. The Detachment's equipment was entirely absorbed and redistributed by the 525th MI Group.

The story of the 568th MID was a pattern repeated over and over, through often to a lesser degree, by the many cellular MI units which filled the 525th MI Group and its major sub-elements in Vietnam. These small cellular units would be trickling into Vietnam periodically over the 1966-67 period.

Upon arrival in Vietnam in November 1965, the 525th, MI Group was assigned to the U.S. Army, Vietnam (USARV), and placed under the operational control of the MACV J2. The group made its initial home in a compound at 121 Chi Lang Street in Saigon. It moved to a more permanent location in March 1966 in a compound in Gia Dinh Province on the Saigon River, northeast of the city of Saigon. This was the compound through which the vast majority of MI specialists assigned to duty in Vietnam over the following two years would in and out-process.

Since many intelligence elements would not be deployed and flushed-out for over a year, some initial reshuffling and reorganization of MACV intelligence was required. After their arrival in Vietnam, the 1st and 519th MI Battalions were assigned to the 525th MI Group on 1 January 1966 by USARV General Order Number One. The 525th would play its intended role of being the top-echelon organizational command element.

It fell initially to the 519th MI Bn (FA) to become the operational "jack-of-all-intelligence-trades." Upon its arrival in Vietnam, the battalion organization included a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Company A (Interrogation), Company B (CI), Company C (Collection), a Technical Intelligence Detachment (Composite), and Signal Detachment. The battalion mission was to provide command and control, administration (less finance and personnel management, which the 525th provided), and limited supply and maintenance support for its assigned multifunctional companies. It immediately began assuming its intended functions of commanding and administering the personnel of the joint intelligence centers, the MI advisors, and the various MI operational support activities. The joint intelligence centers to which the 519th provided intelligence specialists were the Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC), the Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC), the Combined Material Exploitation Center (CMEC),

and the Combined Intelligence Center-Vietnam (CICV). Each of these centers was a joint U.S.-Vietnamese supported and manned activity. The interrogation company was placed under the direct staff supervision of the MACV J2 Intelligence Operations Division (IOD). The signal detachment was placed under the operational control of the 525th MI Group, which became responsible for all communications support to intelligence elements and activities throughout Vietnam.

In that the 135th and 149th MI Groups would not be deployed and fully manned until Fall 1966, the 519th also initially commanded the expanding MACV CI and HUMINT collection activities. In February 1966, the personnel (about 50) and equipment of the 704th INTC Detachment, also then known as the Central Registry Detachment, were transferred to Company B of the 519th, which then assumed the mission of CI support to MACV to include providing CI advisors to the ARVN MSS. At the same time, personnel and equipment of Detachment 1, 500th INTC Group, also known as Special Military Intelligence Assistance Team were transferred to Company C, 519th MI Bn, which then assumed the mission of HUMINT collection in support of MACV to include assuming the advisory role with the ARVN 924th Support Group. During this initial period, from February to June 1966, these CI and HUMINT collection units functioned under the operational control of and reported to the MACV J2 staff. Operational requirements were levied by the MACV J2 staff for these units, which then responded directly back to the J2 staff, bypassing the 519th headquarters. This was done to facilitate a system of rapid intelligence tasking coupled with rapid response. The system was changed in June 1966 when the 525th MI Group (and later the 135th and 149th Groups) assumed operational control of these elements. From that time, the MACV J2 staff levied intelligence requirements on the groups, which refined them and further levied them on appropriate subelements.

Intelligence reporting resulting from these requirements and other collection activity was in nearly all cases passed directly by operational intelligence teams to local U.S. or Allied tactical units who could use the information in combat actions against the enemy, with follow-up reporting to MACV and the 525th.

Since the 1st MI Bn (ARS) had specific-type missions and was made up of trained and qualified imagery interpreters, it was able to establish and maintain general operational procedures from the beginning. The battalion had the mission of providing tactical interpretation and reproduction of imagery resulting from tactical air reconnaissance operational elements operating from the Republic of Vietnam in support of COMUSMACV, MACV subordinate commands, and ARVN tactical forces. It also performed liaison with tactical air reconnaissance elements and delivered imagery and reports to requestor and user agencies. General McChristian explained the battalion's employment as follows:

The concept for the employment of the MIBARS placed the

battalion headquarters at Tan Son Nhut with a detachment in each of the four corps tactical zones and thereby provided a direct support facility that would be familiar with the local situation...By virtue of their personal contact with the reconnaissance wing and their close relationship with ground units, the battalion personnel contributed immeasurably to developing a truly joint effort in photo intelligence. Elements of the battalion and the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing of the Air Force merged in order to provide the greatest capability. The rapport and mutual cooperation that evolved resulted in the 1st Military Intelligence Battalion (Air Reconnaissance Support) being one of the few Army units ever to receive a Presidential Unit Citation through Air Force channels. In addition, its many accomplishments were recognized when the 1st received two Meritorious Unit Citations."

The battalion, although assigned to the 525th, was from its entry into Vietnam, under the staff supervision of the MACV J2 IOD.

The main bodies of the 135th MI Group (CI) and the 149th MI Group (Collection) arrived in Vietnam in early September 1966 aboard the USNS Weigel. The trip had taken from 12 August to 1 September, when the Weigel arrived at Vung Tau. The troops were disembarked and ferried to the beach by U.S. Navy landing craft where they were greeted and welcomed to Vietnam by their respective commanders who had arrived a few days earlier by air with advanced parties of the two groups. All were then flown to Saigon where their respective group headquarters were to be established.

The 135th MI Group moved into the headquarters compound of Company B, 519th MI Battalion at 10 Hoang Hoa Than, Gia Dinh, where it began immediately absorbing completely the personnel and CI support mission of Company B. As previously planned the 135th was placed under the command of the 525th MI Group and then assumed command and control of the existing CI field offices. These were then organized into six regions covering all of South Vietnam. The assumption of the CI mission included the advisory function with the Vietnamese MSS.

The 149th MI Group, upon arrival in Saigon, quickly absorbed the personnel, facilities, equipment and mission of Company C, 519th MI Battalion, to include the advisory function with the ARVN 924th Support Group. The group organized into three battalions, two of which (the Bilateral Battalion and the Unilateral Battalion) were organized into regions which were sub-organized into collection or advisory teams located throughout South Vietnam. The third battalion (Special Operations) was headquartered with all personnel working in or from Saigon.

By December 1966, these two groups completed their functional organization and had received and deployed the majority of their

personnel and equipment. At this time, the 525th had achieved the organization structure desired and programmed by MACV. It would function in this organizational configuration until November 1967, at which time a major reorganization occurred.

Thus it can be seen that in the early but all important phase of the war there was almost no combat intelligence support of the war effort. The major policy decisions on the war had already been made based on the limited intelligence and implementing instructions were issued before a real understanding of the conflict was possible. By the time the intelligence effort became effective in 1968, it was too late, as the American people had begun the process of disengagement having elected Richard Nixon as President on a campaign promise to get the U.S. out of the Vietnam conflict.

Because the conduct of the Vietnam War would have its impact on the U.S. Army for many years to come, it is important that the Vietnam War be examined in some detail, especially the intelligence effort, the technical intelligence effort, and intelligence supplied by the Special Forces/CIA as well as the State Department. The military intelligence effort which began to arrive had to contend with both the conduct of the war as well as the fact that they were new to the conflict as well as being a new branch of the army.

In the United States, the Intelligence Branch had developed an Orientation Course on Intelligence which was presented to officers who had just finished another officer basic course or who had transferred to the branch from other branches. The course lasted six weeks and covered the entire spectrum of intelligence with a heavy orientation on Europe. Technical Intelligence training consisted of a one hour presentation with a display of handbooks that showed various enemy weapons and how to use them. However, no enemy weapons were available despite the close proximity to Aberdeen Proving Ground as well as FSTC. The culmination of the course was a simulated map maneuver where the students formed a Division G2 section and conducted a two day exercise. Each group consisted of about ten students who knew nothing and attempted to function as a division G2 section in Central Europe!

The intelligence branch was developing a sub-course on technical intelligence but it did not become available until August 1967, long after I departed the Intelligence school. This sub-course became the main instrument for training Intelligence personnel for years to come, but it was a course that should have been developed in the late 1950's, not the late 1960's. Unlike the Technical Intelligence course that the Ordnance Corps had conducted during the Korean war, this course lacked any detailed explanation as it was not considered a career field but was simply another subject to for intelligence personnel consider. Copies of this sub-course began to arrive in Vietnam in early 1968.

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On September 1, 1967 I arrived in Vietnam, landing at Bien Hoa Airfield and proceeded to the 22nd Replacement Battalion at Long Binh where I spent a week before being taken to the 525th MI Group Hq. The compound was referred to as the Southeast Asian Research Center. From there I was assigned to the 149th MI Group's unilateral Battalion. After one day I transferred to D Co. of the 519th MI Bn which was the Technical Intelligence operation. I was listed as executive officer of the Medical Intelligence Detachment, but was put in charge of the weapons and munitions section as a temporary replacement for Captain James Leatherwood who was on leave in the United States. There was no formal explanation or briefing on the unit and one had to learn everything the hard way. Within a week, I realized that there were serious problems in the intelligence effort, not the least of which was a conflict between the military's intelligence effort and the Special Forces/CIA/State Department Intelligence effort. In addition to dealing with local problems, the technical intelligence effort had to contend with a worldwide mission and the Washington, DC based intelligence operations.