



INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

COUNTEROFFENSIVE, PHASE III

1 JUNE 1967-29 JANUARY 1968

Our 50-year lookback [January 1967 Timeline Article](#) provided excerpts from the Project CHECO Southeast Asia Report and ARDF support to Operations CEDAR FALLS and JUNCTION CITY. Beginning with his 1967 Operational History Article, [The Year of the Offensive Begins](#), Joe Martin chronicles the war as it evolved and summarizes developing important stages in subsequent articles: [Supporting the Marines](#), [Action in II Corps](#), [III Corps War](#), and [Crossover Points](#).

The US Army Center of Military History [Vietnam Campaign](#) section has this summary statement for 1967:

“As Operation JUNCTION CITY ended, elements of the U.S. 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and the forces of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam swung back toward Saigon to conduct another clearing operation, MANHATTAN. This took place in the Long Nguyen base area just north of the previously cleared "Iron Triangle.”

South Vietnamese Armed Forces became more active and capable under U.S. advisors. During the year the Vietnamese Special Forces assumed responsibility for several Special Forces camps and for the CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies manning them. In each case all of the U.S. advisors withdrew, leaving the Vietnamese in full command.

With an increased delegation of responsibility to them, the South Vietnamese conducted major operations during 1967, and, in spite of VC attempts to avoid battle, achieved a number of contacts.

Despite the success of U.S. and South Vietnamese Army operations, there were indications in the fall of 1967 of another enemy build-up, particularly in areas close to Laos and Cambodia.”

The Leatherneck website [Chronology of Vietnam](#) cites a more detailed 50th Vietnam War Commemoration Timeline for the attack on Con Thien. *“From September 19 to 27, 1967, the North Vietnamese fired more than 3,000 heavy artillery, mortar, and rocket rounds against the Marine battalion at Con Thien. In response, U.S. artillery returned 12,577 rounds, Navy gun ships fired 6,148 rounds, and U.S. fighter/attack aircraft flew 5,200 missions against the enemy firing positions. This would be one of the heaviest North Vietnamese artillery bombardments against American troops during the war and is the first phase of the Communist 1967-1968 Winter Spring Campaign that would culminate in the 1968 Tet offensive.”*



The photograph (above right) used by the Commemoration also appears in a 5th Marine Division.com story authored by Richard K. Kolb titled [“Hill 48: A Battle for Con Thien.”](#)

For another viewpoint, Lance Corporal Geoff Nicely, USMC, provides his personal story in the article: [Counteroffensive Phase III Campaign \(1967-1968\) Siege of Con Thien](#).



Video Screenshot—The Ordeal of Con Thien

On 1 October 1967, CBS TV aired a Special Report with Mike Wallace titled [The Ordeal of Con Thien](#). Besides personal interviews and photos and sounds that vividly portray the dire life and death situation at Con Thien, this 25-minute video opens the discussion about the [rules of engagement](#) that Paul Schmehl claims “... when viewed through the lens of military strategy they border on the insane.” Schmehl also writes, “... The rules of engagement were drawn from three different sources; the President and Secretary of Defense, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commander of the Military Assistance Command and the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command. Except if you were operating in Laos. Then the State Department set the rules.”