

**PHOTOS,**  
*Mid-1966-Mid 1967*

**CAPTAIN HERBERT DE GROFT**  
**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**



**AERIAL OBSERVER**

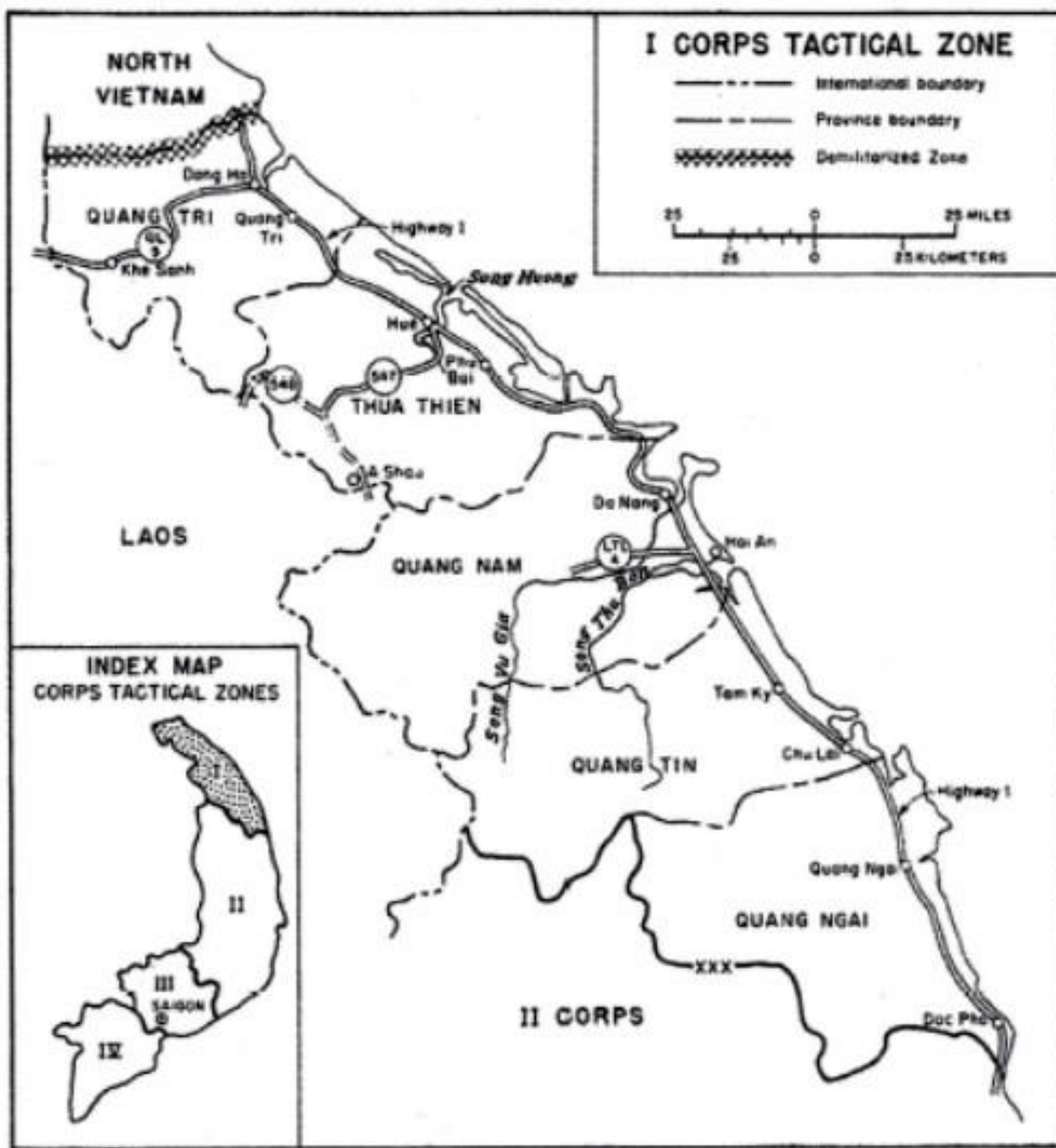


**MACV Advisory Team 2,**  
**Chu Lai/Quang Ngai**

**Edited by Donald M. Ricks,**  
**Webmaster, 220<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company**

**All photos copyright 2019 by**  
**Herbert W. De Groft**









HDeG-001





HDeG-002

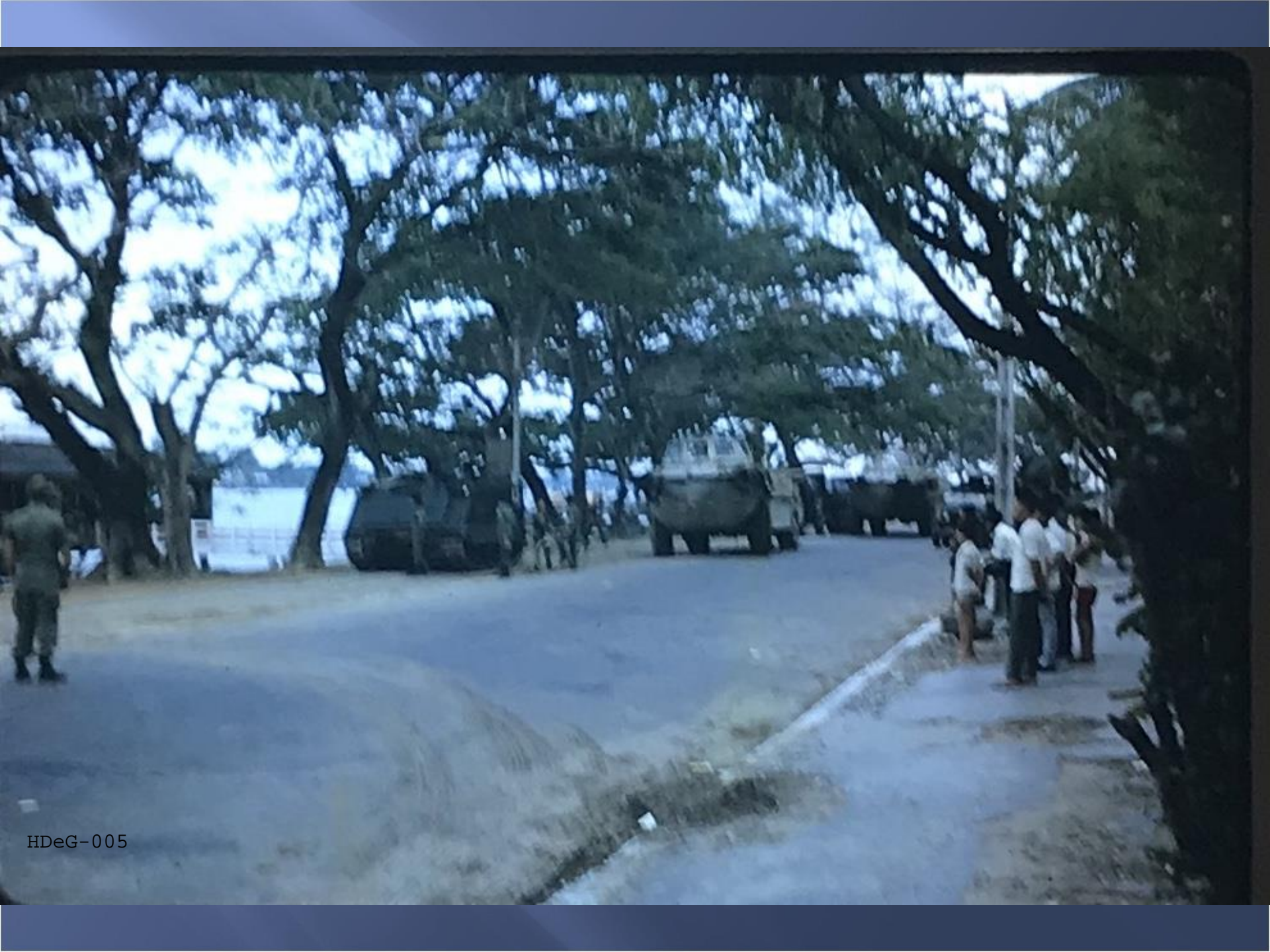


HDeG-003



HDeG-004





HDeG-005





HDeG-006



HDeG-007





HDeG-008



HDeG-009



HDeG-010





HDeG-011



HDeG-012





HDeG-013





HDeG-014



HDeG-015



HDeG-016





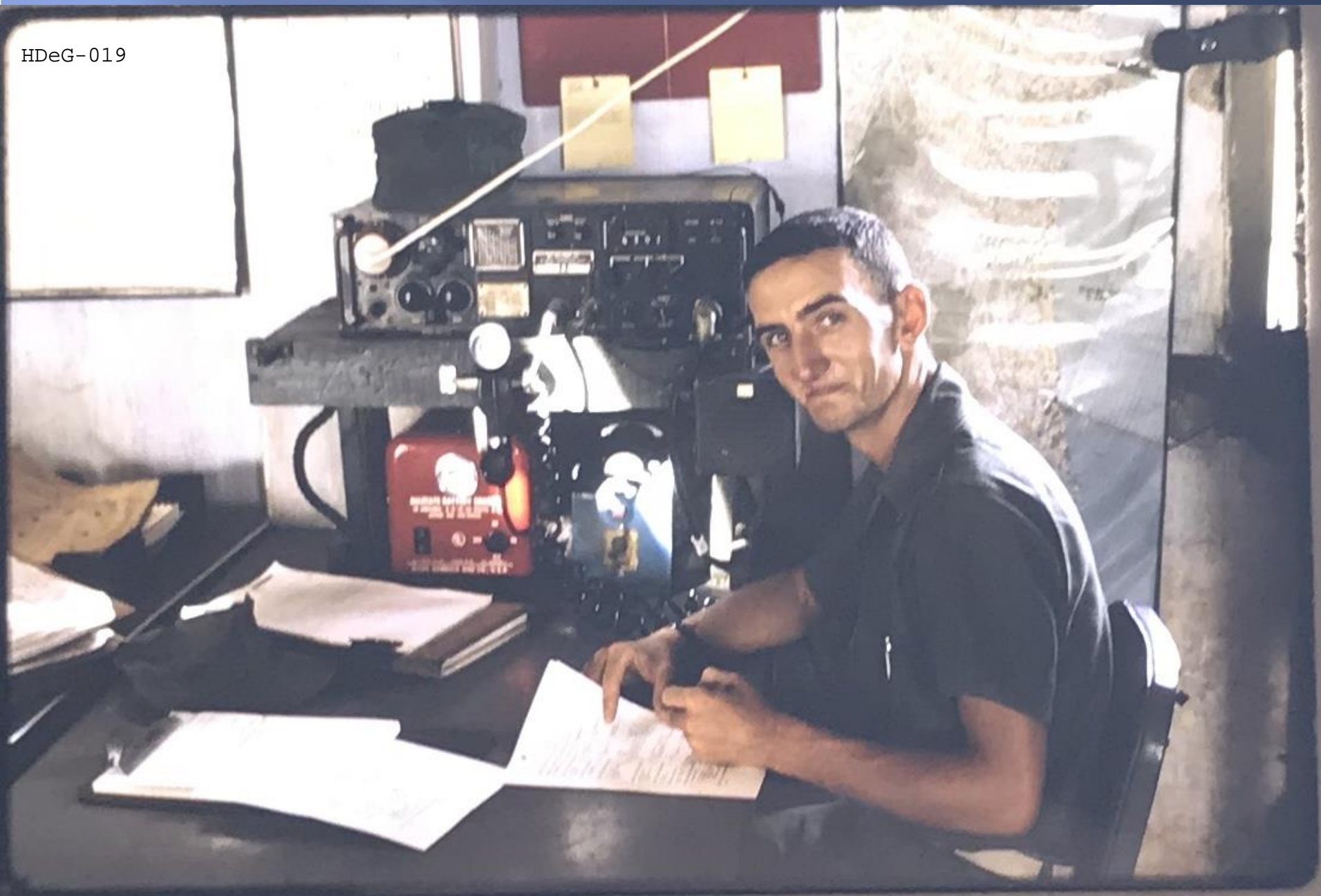
HDeG-017





HDeG-018

HDeG-019









HDeG-021





HDeG-023





HDeG-024



HDeG-025





HDeG-026





HDeG-027



HDeG-028



HDeG-029





HDeG-030



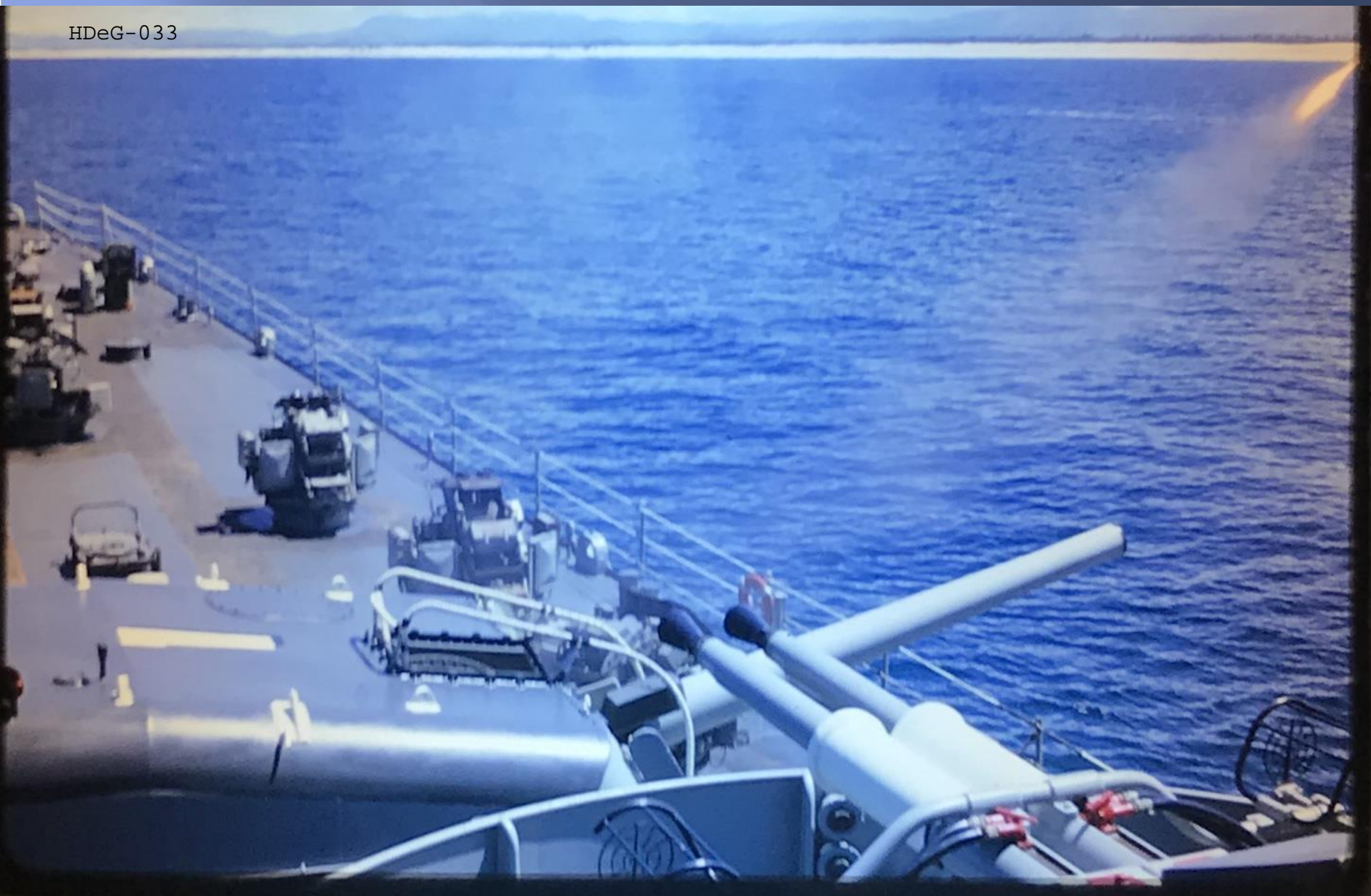




HDeG-32



HDeG-033





HDeG-034



HDeG-035





HDeG-036

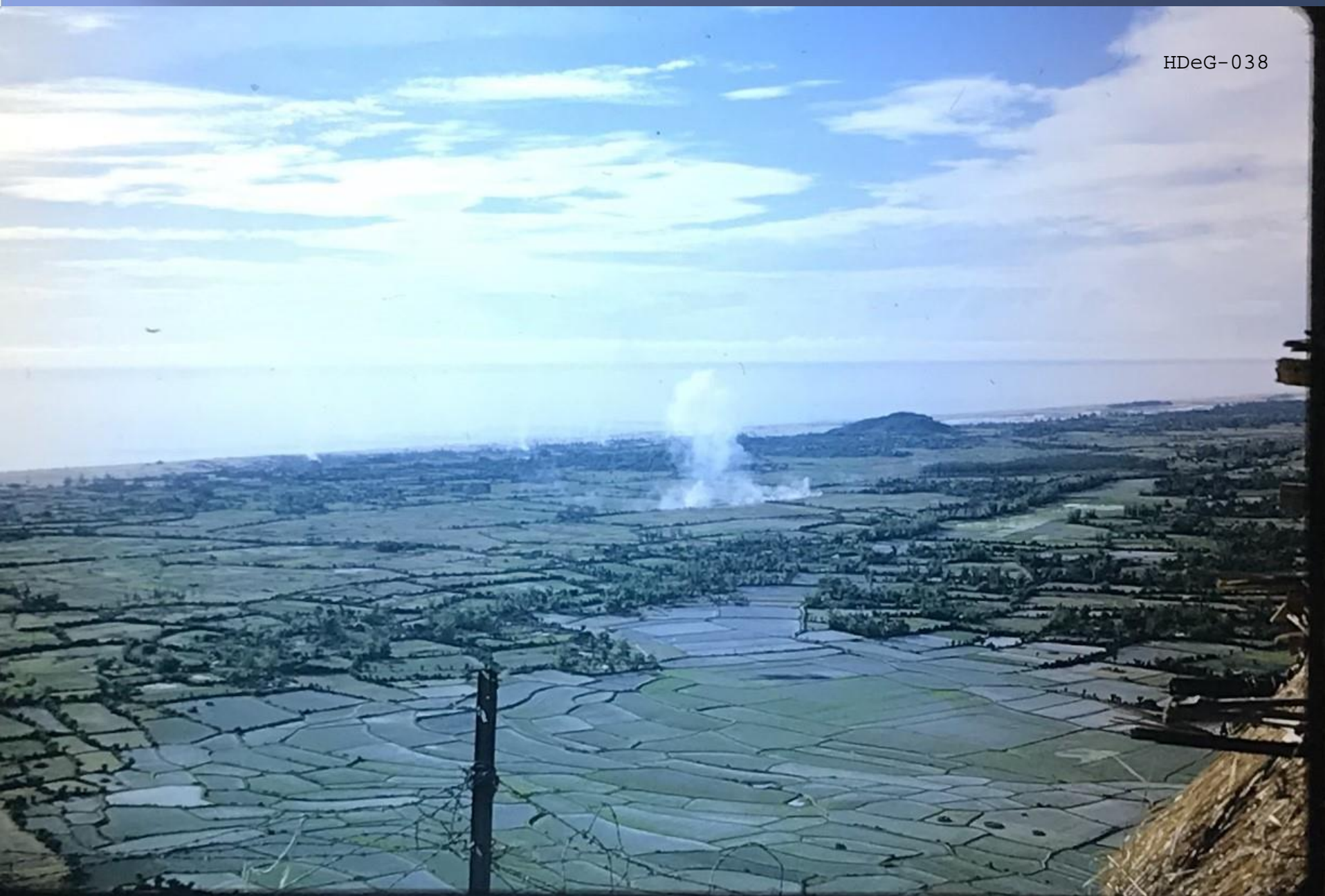


HDeG-037





HDeG-038



HDeG-039





HDeG-040



HDeG-041

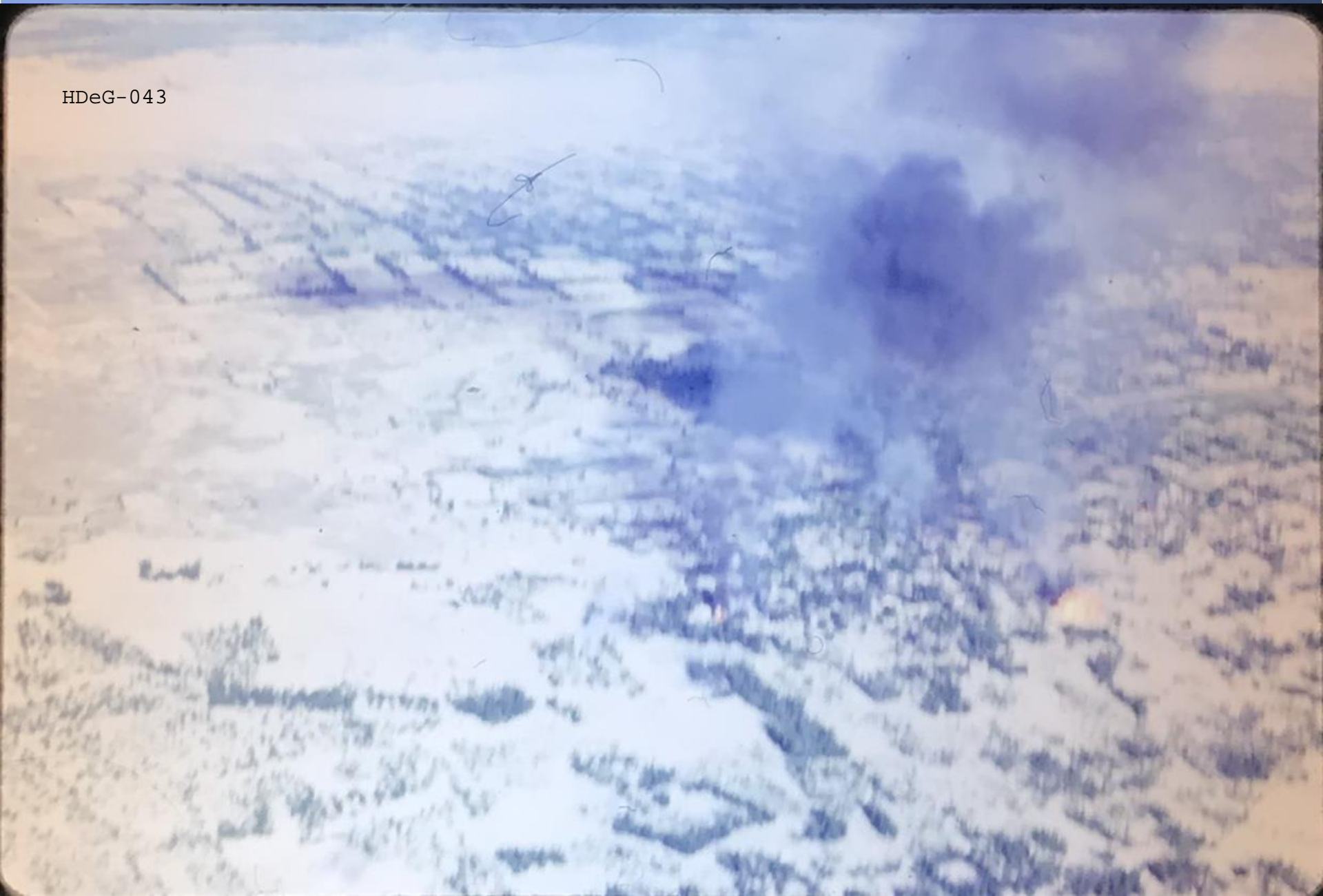






HDeG-042

HDeG-043





HDeG-044



HDeG-045







HDeG-046

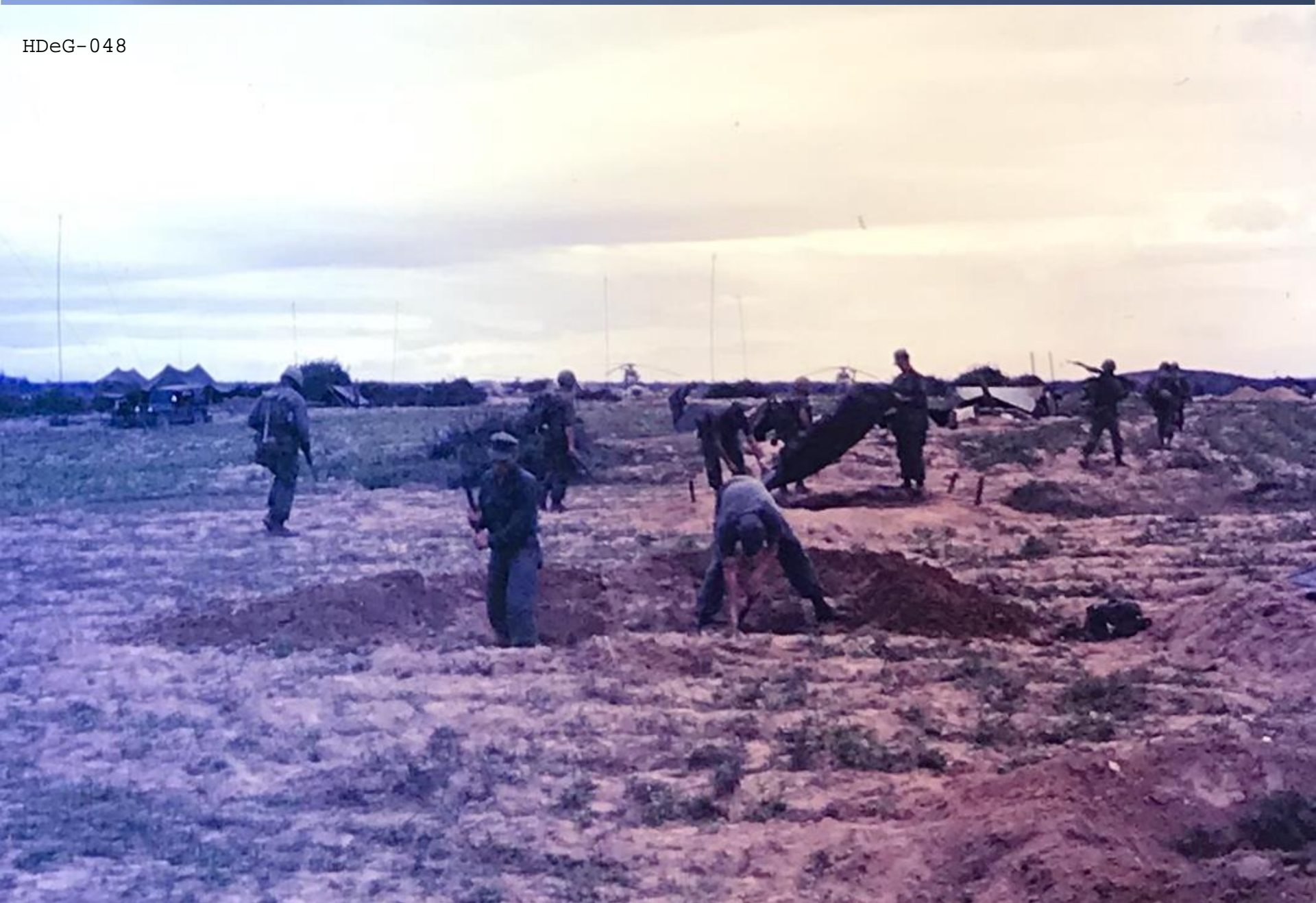


HDeG-047

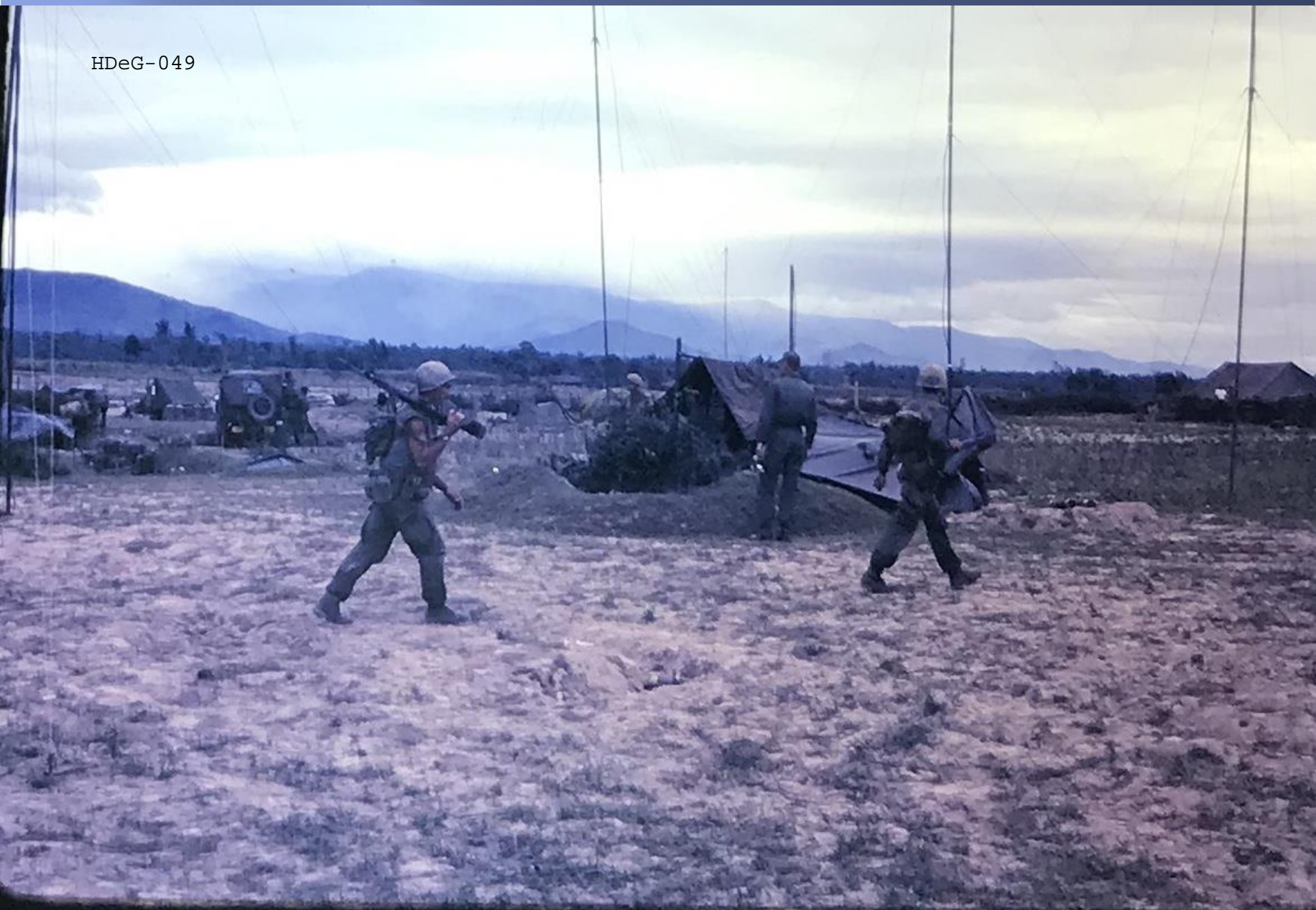




HDeG-048



HDeG-049





HDeG-050









HDeG-052

All photos are taken in last half of 1966 thru early Spring 1967), such as follows below:

Map of Vietnam.  
Map of I Corps area.

**HDeG-001**: Tan Son Hut in Saigon.

**HDeG-002**: Saigon street scene.

**HDeG-003**: Da Nang airfield.

**HDeG-004**: Marble Mountain in distance.

**HDeG-005**: ARVN APC"s and "modern" DUKW by river in Danang.

**HDeG-006**: Danang Airfield from air.

**HDeG-007**: Quang Ngai Airfield w/ 0-1D and taxiing C-123.

**HDeG-008**: 0-1D Army Birdog w/ mechanic and Red Baron's FAC 0-1D at Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-009**: C-123 Provider and Air America (?) DC-3 in background at Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-010**: Army Bearcat in flight near Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-011**: FAC 0-1D being safely returned to base by CH-47 Chinook after running out of fuel and landing on beach SE of Quang Ngai, thanks to St. Francis River being nearby and covering their butts while awaiting "rescue."

**HDeG-012**: Army Warrant Officers of 1st Platoon, 220th Aviation Company, CW2 Bert E. Wiggins and CW2 George Aman, at Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-013**: Army LT Joseph Kurt Lauer (on left), Catkiller 13, and Marine Captain Herbert W. "Herb" De Groft, Afterburner 26 Charlie (Air), upon return from mission, Quang Ngai Province.

**HDeG-014**: Army LT Lloyd T. Rugge (on left) and Marine Captain Herb De Groft upon return from mission in Quang Ngai Province. Lloyd was later in the year KIA after crashing into streambed NW of Duc Pho with Marine Aerial Observer (AO) aboard; they would become separated after crash and taken under fire by VC. The AO evaded and escaped to be later picked up by helicopter. Lloyd's body was recovered as result of actions by a Marine out post west of Duc Pho about two (?) months later. Cause of crash believed to be result of failure to recover from too steep a dive (high speed stall).



**HDeG-015:** Army CW2 George Aman completing logbook after return from mission at Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-016:** Army Captain Darl McAllister (on left) at Quang Ngai; he may have been newly promoted 1st Platoon Leader.

**HDeG-017:** Army CW2 George Aman piloting us on mission.

**HDeG-018:** USAF FAC Major Barney McCann in flight,

**HDeG-019:** My ANGLICO Team Senior NCOIC, SSgt Tomlinson, in Advisory Team #2 Operations Center (Ops Ctr).

**HDeG-020:** VC prisoners being taken in for interrogation at Advisory Team #2 HQs.

**HDeG-021:** Our 0-1D Birdog w/buckled right main landing gear due to 180 degree ground loop when brake on it locked upon landing; the first of two Kurt Lauer and I had over the course of our flying together, and the only 2 the platoon had in 1966 & 67. On the second one, Kurt killed engine just as we were getting to barbed wire fence and only looped the b-wire one revolution of prop.

**HDeG-022:** Results of VC mortar shelling one night in our compound in 2nd ARVN Division HQs area, near my ANGLICO Team's hooch.

**HDeG-023:** USS Phillips', destroyer's motor-whaleboat on way back to ship after CO & Weapons Officer came to Advisory Team #2 Hqs for briefing,

**HDeG-024:** Heavy cruiser St. Paul; had a PC worrywart CO on engaging targets he personally found of questionable description interpretation.

**HDeG-025:** Heavy cruiser, Canberra CAG-2; could thread the eye of a needle at max range on 2nd round adjustment.

**HDeG-026:** USS Carronade IFS-1, only ship of her class ever built and Squadron flagship of Inshore Fire Support Division made up of, USS Clarion River, USS St. Francis River and USS White River, ton for ton, the best NSFS ships in the US Navy, by my experience.

**HDeG-027:** USS Clarion River-LSMR 409, on fire mission just over beach dune line.

**HDeG-028:** USS Forrest Royal, twin mount 5" 38 gun destroyer, 2 guns per mount, entering Da Nang harbor.

**HDeG-029:** HMAS Hobart, mounting two 5" 54 caliber guns, prepared for "fire mission": Australian Navy destroyer.

**HDeG-030**: USS White River-LSMR 536 moving into position to support "requests for fire."

**HDeG-031**: Market Time Swift boat used to patrol coast to interdict small boat infiltration of supplies to local VC.

**HDeF-032** : View forward of main deck USS Carronade showing several of twin 5" rocket launchers.

**HDeG-033**: USS Carronade firing rockets in support of local Vietnamese RF/PF, coordinated by US advisors. In foreground of pic is the single mount 5" 38 gun and twin 40mm gun tub, both just forward of Carronade's superstructure.

**HDeG-034**: Carronade's "rockets away" in response to "call for fire" from airborne spotter,

**HDeG-035**: Results of "fire for effect" by 5" rockets on VC supply area.

**HDeG-036**: Resulting POL fire from gunfire mission on VC supply area.

**HDeG-037**: Multiple fires from several VC targets taken under fire over a period of about 2 hours.

**HDeG-038**: CAS on VC target supporting Marine Ops by Marine attack jets while we reconnoitered west of operation to observe for VC exiting area.

**HDeG-039**: Fire For Effect on suspected VC supply storage area just over beach dune line.

**HDeG-040**: Naval Gunfire mission NE of Tam Ky.

**HDeG-041**: Naval Gunfire mission NE of Tam Ky.

**HDeG-042**: Marine attack bomber rolling in for airstrike on VC assembly area NE of Tam Ky.

**HDeG-043**: Explosions from airstrike NE of Tam Ky.

**HDeG-044**: ARCLIGHT strike by B-52s WSW of Quang Ngai.

**HDeG-045**: ARVN convoy stopped near Binh Son as result of road interdiction by VC w/ "booby-trapped" unexploded US aerial bomb.

**HDeG-046**: RF outpost at Nui Dan.

**HDeG-047**: Thang Binh, a fortified hamlet.



**HDeG-048:** Marines digging protective positions against potential indirect fire danger from VC in Duc Pho area.

**HDeG-049:** Marines returning from foray into VC area W of Duc Pho in operation that resulted in recovery of LT Rugge's remains.

**HDeG-050:** Early morning ground fog prevalent at times when warm ground temp interacted w/ colder atmosphere in high humidity condition.

**HDeG-051:** Heavy ground cover in left of pic w/ defoliated area in bottom right quadrant.

**HDeG-052:** Last mission flown, of 236 during my year, most with the 220th Aviation Company's 1st Platoon out of Quang Ngai base with Captain David J. "Dave" Antonoplos, pilot, 1st Platoon Leader. About 5% were flown with Maj. McCann's USAF FAC detachment in Quang Ngai.

Used by permission:

<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

**220th Aviation Company**



**1965-1971**

<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

## Comments:

25 April 2019:

Please thank Herb and tell him he nailed it. Thank you for your ongoing historical and website work in publishing it.

After all these years and having adjusted naval gunfire, that a Navy boat could hit anything intended is a revelation. Maybe it just took a better AO!

**HDeG-025: Heavy cruiser, Canberra CAG-2; could thread the eye of a needle at max range on 2nd round adjustment.**

T Lee, was this one of yours?



Herb's excellent photos display differences from '66 – '67 to '70 – '71: During the former, some C-123's had yet to acquire aux J-47 jet engines; some Army Bird Dogs still had big, white paint; many Catkillers still wore full-color insignia on fatigues.

Assuming the photo is not Da Nang East Airfield (which I don't think it is), Da Nang AB had yet to construct, or complete, a parallel runway. Bob Glenn, during your time on the beach, was there a little USMC air strip (East) between the ocean and the big, Da Nang airfield to the W?

In the topmost map [**crop of area shown below**] the cartographer switched locations of Con Thien and Gio Linh. What say you, LT Ross Sigmon, who lived at Con Thien for awhile, and LT Dan Bobst, who landed at Gio Linh, I believe, without benefit of a runway?



<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>



Thanks, again.

Chris Monteleon (108thArty)

---

25 April 2019:

I agree with Chris on the change-up in locations. I "landed" at Alpha-2 which I am sure is Gio Linh. I didn't know it had a Vietnam name at the time.

I only got to direct a naval barrage once, and I don't remember the accuracy - just the awe of how far they could shoot.

Dan Bobsyt

---

26 April 2019:

How interesting is this photo...I just today found a site in my junk inbox that sells Navy Patches of most all ships, so I ordered the patches of the 3 ships for whom I adjusted fire: The Light cruisers USS St Paul, the Canberra and the Turner Joy, one of the destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

The Turner Joy steamed in and requested a fire mission so they could rid themselves of ammo. I picked a grid on bank of the Ben Hai that ran from north east to south west, on the gun target line so that any round that went over the target would land on the North Vietnam side of the river.

First round is 1,000 meters into N Vietnam. Yikes. Has to be a dispersion error so I ask for repeat. The next round lands 500 meters short of round 1 and right where I wanted it, into a little area with huts that had to be used as a staging area for the NVA to easily cross across the not so wide river into S Vietnam. It was a very easy crossing point

<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

I then asked to drop 50 and the next round landed 500 meters short of the target and I so I ended the mission.

Douglas was helping me eyeball the staging area and felt we did some damage. We called it our Huntley- Brinkley mission.

That night we get rousted out of the sack as the North Vietnamese filed a complaint at the Paris Peace talks about the violation of the rules of engagement...A nice Major ..the S-3 I believe was the night duty officer and he pulled The fire mission and my grid and adjustments were duly noted and showed I was legit all the way.

So here is the Turner Joy involved in another incident and I got to use the huge range dispersion factor of naval gunfire to my advantage and landed a blow for truth justice and the American way by getting a couple of shots into North Vietnam .

My infiltration theory was proven correct as one of my last missions was on a suspected bunker about 2 clicks into S Vietnam from that staging area. O got a direct hit with the first round. It had never happened before. C battery 8/4 out of Con Tien was the best and that shot blew the lid off the bunker showing NVA troops running from the destroyed portion of the bunker into their now exposed trench and into another underground bunker of some sort. C battery landed a bunch of 8 inch rounds, now with fuse delay....and I was literally frothing at the mouth and screaming like a savage. The perfect mission.

Of course you can see that I never think of any of that shit anymore as I am almost 73, married and even went to church on Easter Sunday.

Peace you animals.  
Lt Beans, actual

Joseph E Brett

---

26 April 2019:

....best my memory could do on airfield pic, [Da Nang Airfield, HDeG-006; I believe this is an early photo of Chu Lai Airfield. Editor] based on where it was in Chron file. I stand to be corrected.

HDeG-010 is an Otter aircraft, per Kurt Lauer.



<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

Herb De Groft

Of all my experiences, a 5" 38 gun destroyer, call sign "Assassin" (likely politically incorrect today) on 1st Fire Mission.....took a bit to find the 1st round's impact. Gave significant adjustment to get to target.....2nd round even harder to find. Advised ship of problem and gave another adjustment.....3rd round's out there somewhere to this day.

Secured Assassin from mission and suggested they find out what their "gunfire control" problem was because it appeared they were utilizing ship's position as from the landward side of the Gun-Target line. Just glad no friendlies were in the area.

Congrats, Joe on bringing an 8" snack to the NVA in the bunker ! I had the 8" gunned heavy cruisers St. Paul and Canberra for several day's missions—very different ships in response to mission response thanks to CO, I think. The fleet flagship, Providence as a 6" light cruiser was a good experience, which made the Flag very happy getting time on the gun-line w/ satisfactory effect of their fires, I believe. The Joy's "no joy" 1000 yard range error had to have been a "poor ship's positioning" problem you'd think. Glad you had a "commonsense" S-3

Ray, I read your book, "*Catkiller 3-2*". Nicely done ! Recommend to all for getting copy and reading. When done consider giving to your local high school JROTC, if there's one in your area.

Best wishes to you all.

Yours,

Herb De Groft

---

**26 April 2019:**

Dear Church-goer,

I've asked before, where do you get that memory. I don't even remember what a range-dispersion is.

Yes, C battery up there was the best. (Old news, that, Lt Sigmon?)

I just measured. The Flag was about 225 meters from the S bank of the Ben Hai. Many (most? all?) of us employed the ole trick of calling in coordinates somewhere on the S

<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

bank. Then, exuberantly mis-claiming first rounds short, then walking them up to the alleged position of the target. Which actually put the rounds onto Uncle Ho's property. So, why did no one ever take out the Flag that way? Or, did some try and miss? Or, did someone hit the damned thing and I just don't know, or remember hearing about it. That would have made peace-table talk.

Beans, I got a dollar says your runners in that trench were hunched over. Note to the savage – from above, human backs make larger targets than human heads.

LT Lee USN recalls seeing a LSMR and being blown away by the number of launchers it carried. From his recollection and from Herb's photos and comments, seems they were used quite a bit. I never adjusted rockets; never even heard of such a thing. (Yeah, I know, there's always that 10%).



Sierra [Chris Monteleon (108thArty)]

---



<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

27 April 2019:

I was just reviewing Herbert De Groft's photos. Noticed in photo HDeG 014 Bird Dog R 72880 in 1966. That plane was a workhorse, as it was in Phu Bai in 1968. I believe Mike Brown was the crew chief and I flew back seat with Captain Herring on a few missions. *My front license plate still keeps the image of R 72880.*

Peter Henderson, AO, 82nd Airborne Div [w/2nd Plat]; AO with the 101st out of Chu Chi October 1968; AO with Air Force 'Gimpy FACs' out of Ton Son Nhut from November 68–May 69



1 May 2019

Lloyd and I were in the same platoon. When he went down near Duc Pho in Quang Ngai Province I flew a radio relay mission to let our Headquarters know what was going on. Later I accompanied his body to the morgue in Saigon for ID. I do not know where the Kontum province stuff started. We did fly recon there. And I heard stories that Lloyd was captured and paraded around the area before he was tortured and executed.

Joseph Kurt Lauer, Catkiller 13, Quang Ngai

---

Concerning Catkiller KIA Lloyd T. Rugge posted information:

April 24, 2019 10:41 PM

To: vvmf <[vvmf@vvmf.org](mailto:vvmf@vvmf.org)>

Subject: Lt. Lloyd T. Rugge; info on The Wall of Faces,  
correction to

VVMF-Wall of Faces Director,

I was a Marine ANGLICO AO serving on Advisory Team #2 in Quang Ngai, Quang Ngai Province, who had the opportunity to fly several missions w/ Lloyd before he lost his life in January 1967, a little NNW of Duc Pho in southern Quang Ngai Province, RVN, a little W of Route #1. A Marine AO from Chu Lai was w/ Lloyd at the time, but after their Bird-dog crashed into a stream bed they became separated from one another. Lloyd was captured by the local VC and later died, being declared KIA. The Marine AO was able to evade and escape until being picked up by a rescue Huey later the same day and returned to Quang Ngai airfield, HQ's of the 1st Plt, 220th Aviation Co.

Captain Dave Antonopolos, 1st Plt Cmdr. and I flew a support mission to the area in response to Lloyd's going down, ready to direct CAS or NGF as needed during recovery operations. Before on-station TAC Air was available we observed a VC machine-gun crew setting up on a knoll NW of Lloyd's crash site to interdict helo rescue efforts. Dave took action to attack the VC machine-gun position w/ our onboard 2.75" Zuni HE rockets, which resulted in the VC hastily abandoning their position on the knoll. Rescue

<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

operations continued unimpeded, getting the Marine AO out but not being able to locate Lloyd. A Marine combat operation in the area several weeks later did recover Lloyd's remains.

Your Wall of Faces page on Lloyd has incorrect information, the "Casualty Province" is Quang Ngai.

Contact me if you have any questions.

Herb De Groft, LtCol , Marine Corps (retd)

---

**Response to above: 30 April 2019**

Herb -

There are thousands of errors in the database. Some of them historical artifacts and others mistakes like this one. When provided written evidence to change it per their policy, they've been open to doing so.

If you can get unit records or flight records that help establish Quang Ngai, I'm sure we can get this changed. The UTM coordinates support it, we just need a DoD document that does as well.

Tim Tetz, Director of Outreach, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF)

---

**To which Herb responded: 30 April 2019**

**Tim,**  
**I was there, eye-witness to crash-site just NNW of Duc Pho, just W off Hwy #1 in Quang Ngai Province on day of. Please ask them to call me. I am a "real" person w/ firsthand knowledge.**

**Promise to "keep my cool".**

**Yours, Herb**

---

**To which Tim responded, same day:**

Herb -

Thank you for your email and voicemail concerning the casualty province of LT Rugge.



<http://www.catkillers.org/Vietnam-Herb-De-Groft-2019.pdf>

I sent your inquiry and statement to the DoD data keepers. While they can see that there is reference to Quang Ngai, the records they have to review don't support anything but Kontum.

They agreed that if we had some sort of military documents that would support the change, they'd review and do their best to have the database reflect those records. However those aren't available to them. If you have unit logs or other information that would help us establish this position, I'm happy to provide them to the appropriate folks.

As a retired LtCol, I'm sure you understand yet remain frustrated as we at these times.

Thanks for your continued support of the Vietnam veterans through your presentations and efforts to memorialize their sacrifices.

-Tim

**Editor: This same situation affects KIA Robert Garth, and that is being brought to the attention of DoD.**