



Frequent wind

organization and assembly

by BGen Richard E. Carey
and Maj D. A. Quinlan

**A factual beginning to a successful evacuation as seen
through the eyes of the commander and his staff.**

The original plan for the evacuation of South Vietnam, TALON VISE, was renamed FREQUENT WIND to symbolize the many helicopter sorties that would be required to evacuate South Vietnam.

The stage had been set with the evacuation of Phnom Penh. Operation EAGLE PULL had been conducted with relative ease. If we could traverse the long distance from the Gulf of Thailand to Phnom Penh and evacuate without incident, why couldn't we simply enlarge the forces and the scope of the plans to evacuate as many people as would be required from South Vietnam? The success of EAGLE PULL had in fact created a mood which without vigilance could have led to disaster. We could not allow complacency to infiltrate our planning or our execution. From the outset the name of the game was plan, plan, and replan. Examining every possible option from the standpoint of the worst possible case.

The purpose of this and subsequent articles is to provide a factual account, in broad context, of the operation as seen through the eyes of the commander and the staff of the Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade.

Your interpretation of actions is your own, but . . . what evolves is a narrative of a successful operation. Why this operation succeeded as it did is testimony to Marine ingenuity and initiative. The lesson reconfirmed: an integrated Marine team that meticulously plans and vigorously executes those plans is an irresistible force that can meet the challenge—any challenge!

This first article will describe the situation in South Vietnam prior to the execution of the operation; and the organization and assembly of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade. In subsequent articles the specifics of the planning for and the execution of FREQUENT WIND, and the evacuation operations which followed in its aftermath will be described.

Following the withdrawal of United States combat forces from South Vietnam, contingency planners on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) and throughout the various Pacific commands carefully prepared voluminous plans for the evacuation of the American presence in Cambodia and South Vietnam. The importance of these latter plans was evident when the North Vietnamese boldly moved on the South commencing with the 1974–1975 Dry Season Offensive. The plan for the evacuation of Military Region I (MR-1), Operation FORTRESS JOURNEY, was put into effect by late March 1975. FREQUENT WIND which provided for the evacuation of the Saigon area followed by one month.

In light of the importance of one of the most unprecedented combat operations, the extraction by helicopter of nearly 7,000 persons from the clutches of the enemy; followed by one of the most extensive humanitarian evacuations in history, it is important that the stage be set properly so that the very reason for the execution of FREQUENT WIND is not lost in the aftermath of its success. Forgetting for a minute the bloody epilogue to the fall of the Lon Nol government, the defeat of the Khmer Republic was a gradual almost forgotten thing—like a tire slowly losing air, it collapsed. By comparison, the fall of South Vietnam can be likened metaphorically to a violent blowout. The enemy situation leading up to the evacuation chronicles clearly the

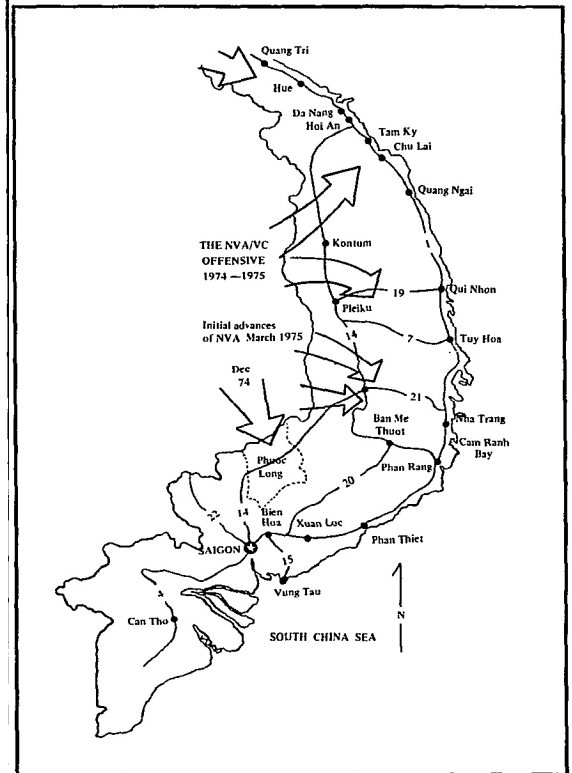
North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) maneuvers.

NVA/VC 1974-1975 offensive

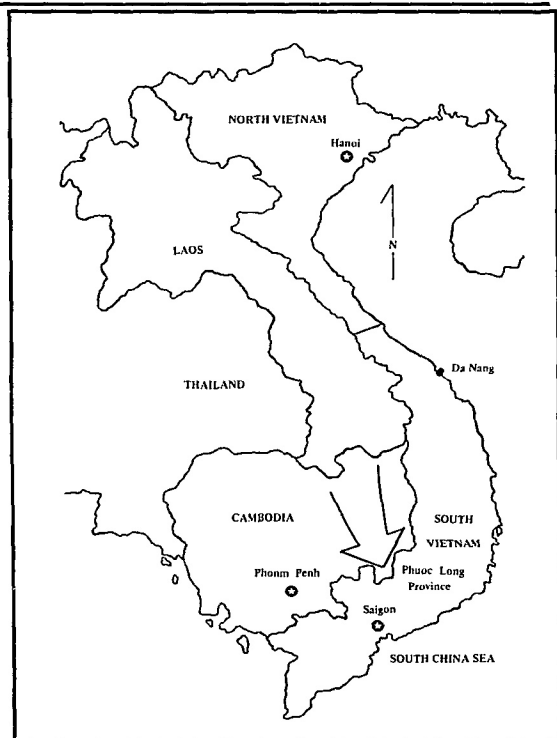
In the absence of the all important U.S. sanctions following the cease fire and subsequent withdrawal of U.S. air support to the South Vietnamese in 1973, the NVA worked in earnest to mass its greatest military strength in the South. Cessation of American bombing had allowed the NVA to develop good lines of communication (LOCs) throughout the Indochinese Peninsula and especially in South Vietnam, and to create a sophisticated logistical apparatus to support their aggression.

The final sequence of events which led to the fall of the Republic of South Vietnam and the American withdrawal started in December 1974 in Phuoc Long Province along the Cambodian border north of Saigon. The NVA launched an attack in Phuoc Long about New Year's Day 1975. They encountered little resistance. The thrust into Phuoc Long in MR-3 was as much as anything a test of American reaction to a major offensive. Finding the temperature of the water to their liking, the NVA prepared to plunge in with more forces.

There was a lull of sorts following the cap-



A tactical error lost Ban Me Thout.



Testing the U.S. reaction at Phuoc Long.

ture of Phuoc Long Province. The NVA were content with a *status quo* while making final preparations for larger scale assaults. The South Vietnamese began to prepare defensive plans in earnest, especially in MR-1 where the heaviest attacks were expected. In MR-2 attacks were anticipated around the vital civilian and military complexes at Kontum and Pleiku.

When large scale combat did again erupt on 4 March 1975, it was along the major LOCs (Routes 19 and 21) to the central highlands. The roads were swiftly interdicted and on 10 March, Ban Me Thout was attacked suddenly by two NVA divisions. The major roads into the area being closed, the South Vietnamese forces (ARVN) began the piecemeal commitment of reinforcements. This tactical error resulted in the loss of Ban Me Thout and the defeat in detail and eventual destruction of one ARVN division.

Retreat from the highlands

On 16 March, after deciding on their indefensibility, President Thieu ordered a withdrawal from the highlands to what he considered to be more defensible terrain. A lack of

detailed prior planning and organization turned the subsequent withdrawal into a rout. What followed was a repetition in historical precedent of the retreats during the Napoleonic Wars and in France in 1940. Within two hours, the road south (Route 7) was clogged with South Vietnamese military and civilians in vehicles and on foot. The NVA pursued the retreating, slowly-moving columns. Hampered by the restrictive terrain and masses of humanity, the ARVN units became completely disorganized and incapable of defending the retreating column. The NVA pursued to the coast, capturing tens of thousands of South Vietnamese and tons of abandoned equipment along the way. Inadequately prepared and improperly and incompletely executed, the withdrawal touched off a series of chain reactions which led to the general collapse in the northern and central regions. The NVA moved quickly to capitalize on this situation. A few ARVN units resisted the aggressors, but otherwise the Communist drive to the coast met little resistance. South Vietnam had been successfully cut in two.

The remainder of the month of March reads as a chronological litany of defeat:

- 18 March—An Loc, north of Saigon, fell.
- 19 March—Quang Tri City and Province were abandoned as the general retreat from MR-1 commenced.
- 24 March—Quang Ngai and Tam Ky fell.
- 26 March—Hue and Hoi An fell.
- 27 March—Chu Lai fell.
- 29 March—Da Nang fell.

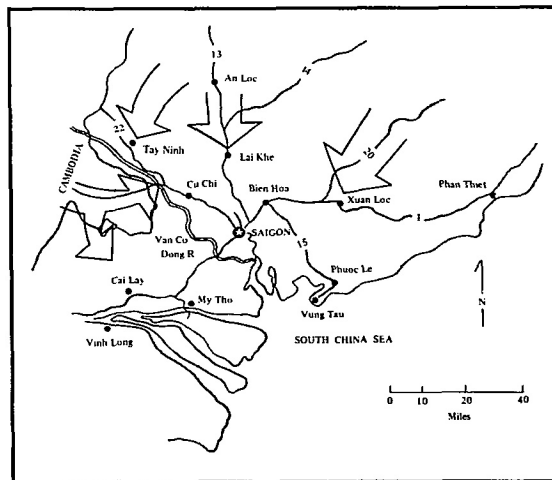
Da Nang fell without a struggle. The northern aggressors walked into the city to find planes, tanks, guns, and equipment in serviceable condition left abandoned.

Thousands of the civilians and ARVN, uprooted in the path of the onrushing North Vietnamese forces, fled to the coast seeking refuge. Many thousands of these refugees were evacuated aboard U.S. Navy and Military Sealift Command (MSC) ships from the northern port cities of South Vietnam to havens farther south. (The exploits of Marines and corpsmen placed on board these ships who provided a stabilizing influence, quelled near riots, and assisted the refugees, will be described in a subsequent article.)

Closing In

By 3 April the NVA held most of MR-2. The major cities of Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, and Dalat had been abandoned.

Combat was light for the next few days as the NVA prepared deliberately for attacks in MR-3. The degree of success of the North Vietnamese offensive which brought about the rapidly deteriorating situation throughout South Vietnam during March was apparently almost as totally unexpected by the North Vietnamese as it was by the rest of the world. The NVA apparently needed a few days to consolidate its gains and formulate new plans. It was however evident that command and control problems which had plagued the NVA in the past, for the most part, had been solved. Their ability to capitalize so swiftly on the ARVN withdrawal is testimony to the improvements. Divisions from North Vietnam, MR-1, and MR-2 were moved south, while simultaneously divisions in MR-4 were moved north and east to MR-3. Newly captured equipment and an improved road network aided this movement, which was accompanied by forward deployment of anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air missile (SAM) cover, particularly the portable SA-7, GRAIL. These latter weapons significantly inhibited the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese Air Force.



NVA advances first week in April 1975.

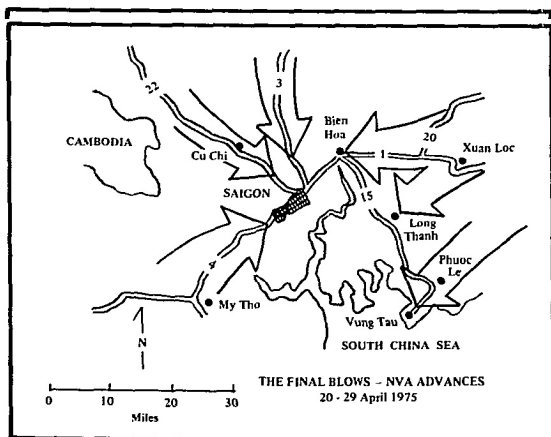
Morale suffering badly now, the ARVN nevertheless made efforts to regroup and organize its defense. Some units were formed from the soldiers evacuated from MR-1 and MR-2, but they proved to be only marginally effective when later committed to combat. Having once been routed, it was unlikely that they would perform well when remnants were reconstituted. Forty per cent of the ARVN ground combat power had been rendered inef-

fective during the fighting and routs in MR-1 and MR-2.

The final blow

Major combat activity in MR-3 began in Tay Ninh Province. A massive combined arms attack there eliminated all ARVN presence west of the Van Co Dong River. This action was followed quickly by launching heavy attacks in the eastern portion of the region against the ARVN positions along Route 1 and Route 20. Heavy fighting subsequently shifted to Xuan Loc, the capital of Long Khanh Province. Here, four NVA divisions commenced attacks on 9 April in order to defeat the ARVN defending there and to gain control of the main highway (Route 1) approach through Xuan Loc into the Bien Hoa/Saigon area. The South Vietnamese swiftly reinforced Xuan Loc. It appeared that they would make one final effort to throw back the northern invader. And fight they did, valiantly and professionally, but they were badly outnumbered. Despite stubborn resistance, as well as taking heavy casualties, on 20 April the NVA was able to take Xuan Loc maintaining its momentum and moving on west toward Bien Hoa. The badly battered ARVN forces withdrew to take up the defense of Bien Hoa. While some of the NVA forces moved westward toward Bien Hoa, others moved to the south from Xuan Loc to interdict effectively the main Bien Hoa-Vung Tau highway (Route 15) north of Long Thanh. The loss of Xuan Loc and the effective interdiction of Route 1 and Route 15 signalled the end of major organized ARVN resistance in eastern MR-3 and opened the way for attacks against Bien Hoa and Saigon.

On 21 April, President Thieu finally bowed



Attacks against Saigon marked end of war.

to increasing pressure and resigned. He was succeeded by Vice President Tran Van Huong, who initially assumed a militant policy of continued resistance. However, only seven days after he had assumed office Huong turned over the presidency to former General Duong Van "Big" Minh, who immediately began implementing plans for negotiations with the North Vietnamese. The Communists added a new prerequisite for negotiations by demanding the eliminations of the South Vietnamese machinery of war in addition to the previous demands for the expulsion of "all U.S. agents and of the Thieu clique" by 26 April 1975.

True to its word, when their demands went unanswered, the NVA launched the final assault on 26 April. Strikes were made against ARVN elements in the Long Thanh and Long Binh areas. Phouc Le, near Vung Tau, came under simultaneous attack and was quickly taken, thereby isolating the Vung Tau Peninsula. The Bear Cat Armor School and Long Thanh District were overrun sealing off the escape route from Saigon to the sea over Route 15. Route 15 was the key to massive evacuation to the Vung Tau Peninsula. The South Vietnamese had planned, as a last effort, to conduct an overland evacuation from Saigon by way of Route 15 to Vung Tau. There the evacuees would be loaded onto South Vietnamese and friendly vessels for transport to safe havens. As Route 15 fell, so went the option to execute this plan.

On 28 April, direct attacks on Long Binh began. Poorly defended by a polyglot of units decimated by casualties and suffering from continuous defeats which generated increased fear and panic, the defenses around Bien Hoa broke down. The South Vietnamese Air Force units which had operated out of Bien Hoa for most of the war were now forced to fly to Can Tho. Also on the 28th, Saigon and the vital Tan Son Nhut Air Base came under heavy rocket and artillery attacks for the first time since the Tet Offensive of 1968. Additionally, turncoat South Vietnamese pilots began bombing and strafing the airfield. The North Vietnamese AAA and SAM envelope closed more tightly around Saigon. Simultaneously, ground attacks were launched against the ARVN in Cu Chi, Lai Khe, and virtually all ARVN positions around the city of Saigon. The NVA strategy apparently was to destroy the remaining ARVN units outside the city and avoid a prolonged fight in Saigon itself. On 29 April, Bien Hoa and Vung Tau fell. Sai-

gon was defenseless.

Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade

As the situation in South Vietnam continued to deteriorate the Marine forces who would eventually become involved in one of the most extensive humanitarian evacuations in history began to assemble off the coast of South Vietnam. The 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB) would ultimately be comprised of over 6,000 Marines and Navy corpsmen, 80 plus helicopters of various types, and the other vehicles, supplies, and equipments normally associated with an embarked Marine air-ground task force prepared to conduct amphibious operations. Together with their partners of long standing, the amphibious forces of the Navy, the Marines of the 9th MAB were prepared to support airlift, sealift, or helicopter evacuation operations.

In order to avoid any possible confusion it should be pointed out that the 9th MAB is not maintained in a fully structured status. A staff nucleus is maintained continuously and normally collocated with the Commander of Task Force 76, (CTF-76), the commander of the amphibious forces in the Seventh Fleet. The staff nucleus is headed by the Chief of Staff, 9th MAB and consists of representatives in each staff functional area. For contingencies and exercises the full brigade staff is activated by drawing designated personnel from the staffs of III MAF (at the time commanded by MajGen Carl W. Hoffman), 3rdMarDiv (at the time commanded by MajGen K. J. Houghton) and 1stMAW (commanded by MajGen N.W. Gourley). The nucleus is absorbed into the full staff. Ground combat, aviation combat, and service forces are then attached to the brigade as the mission or operational requirements dictate.

On 26 March 1975, the 9th MAB was activated by III MAF ostensibly to participate in a scheduled brigade level landing exercise. By fortunate coincidence a major combined landing exercise had been scheduled months in advance. (Subsequent events would reveal how fortunate was this coincidence.) Most importantly, an amphibious squadron overlap had been planned for this exercise, i.e., during the scheduled exercise period (April-May 1975) there would be twice as many amphibious ships as are normally located in the Western Pacific. The activation order, reflecting however, the events ongoing in Southeast Asia, stipulated a dual purpose for the activation: ". . . activated for MABLEX and such con-

tingencies as may be directed." At the time of the activation, there was little doubt in anyone's mind as to the primacy of purpose.

The Assistant Wing Commander, 1st MAW, was named as the Commanding General, 9th MAB. He proceeded from Wing Headquarters at Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni, Japan to III MAF Headquarters at Camp Courtney, Okinawa on 3 April. There he would assemble part of the staff which, in conjunction with the 9th MAB staff nucleus already deployed, would comprise the brigade headquarters. Assembly of the full brigade staff would not take place until the 11th of April.

It would be well at this point to reflect on the rapidly changing situation which brought about the circuitous route by which the brigade headquarters and the forces assigned to the bridge assembled.

On the date of activation of the 9th MAB the principal forces which would eventually be assigned were disposed as follows:


- On station in the Gulf of Thailand, was the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (31st MAU), consisting of Battalion Landing Team 2/4 (BLT 2/4), Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 (HMH-462), and Logistic Support Unit 2/4 (LSU 2/4), embarked in Amphibious Ready Group Alfa (ARG "A") shipping. This force was in an increased readiness posture for possible execution of the Phnom Penh evacuation and had been on station in the Gulf since February.

- Ashore for normal training at Camp Fuji, Japan were BLT 3/9 and LSU 3/9, the landing forces regularly assigned to ARG "B" shipping.

- On Okinawa were BLT's 1/9 and 1/4, the



Marines rush to board CH-53 on USS Okinawa.



USS Okinawa is flanked by ships of task force.

primary and back-up air contingency BLTs on alert for possible deployment to Southeast Asia by fixed wing aircraft, but continuing to conduct normal training; and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (HMM-165) and Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 367 (HML-367), likewise conducting normal training.

► At Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, HMH-463, the heavy helicopter squadron of the First Marine Brigade, was embarking aboard *USS Hancock*, an attack carrier now configured for helicopter operations.

The Navy forces which became involved in the operation were situated as follows:

- ARG "A", consisting of the amphibious assault ship *USS Okinawa* (LPH-3), the amphibious transport dock *USS Vancouver* (LPD-2), the dock landing ship *USS Thomaston* (LSD-28), and the tank landing ship *USS Peoria* (LST-1183), on station in the Gulf of Thailand.
- ARG "B", consisting of *USS Dubuque* (LPD-8), the amphibious cargo ship *USS Durham* (LKA-114), and the *USS Frederick* (LST-1184), in port for upkeep at Yokosuka (*Dubuque*) and Subic Bay (*Durham* and *Frederick*).
- The amphibious command ship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC-19) in port at Okinawa.
- Amphibious Squadron Five, consisting of *USS Denver* (LPD-9), *USS Duluth* (LPD-6), *USS Anchorage* (LSD-36), *USS Mount Vernon* (LSD-39), *USS Mobile* (LKA-115), *USS Barbour County* (LST-1195), and *USS Tuscaloosa* (LST-1187), was getting underway from San Diego for its normal rotational tour in WestPac.
- *USS Hancock* in Pearl Harbor loading HMH-463.
- Other units either in port or conducting routine operations.

The Seventh Air Force, in Thailand, was in an increased state of readiness for possible commitment to Southeast Asia contingencies.

Within 48 hours of the activation of 9th MAB, the situation in South Vietnam had deteriorated so badly, particularly in MR-1 and

MR-2, that immediate modifications to freshly issued plans and orders had to be made. The northern Provinces of South Vietnam were to be evacuated. The populace and troops were to be transported to safe havens in the southern provinces. Navy ships with Marines embarked for internal security purposes were ordered to close the coast of South Vietnam at the earliest possible time. III MAF was maintaining a capability to meet multiple contingencies. While repositioning forces to meet new contingencies, there was no decrease in readiness to respond to existing contingencies.

The MAB staff nucleus was dispatched with CTF-76 on 30 March to act as a control headquarters for Marine security platoons destined for employment aboard Navy and MSC ships involved in the evacuation from MR-1 and MR-2. The 1st Battalion 4th Marines, less most of its Headquarters and Service Company and reinforced by military police, counter-intelligence, and interrogator/translator personnel; and HMM-165 (-) were embarked aboard *Blue Ridge* and *Dubuque* as elements of the unit which was entitled the Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group. The Marines were commanded by Col D.C. Alexander, who concurrently retained his position as chief of staff, 9th MAB.

On 4 April, the Commanding General, 9th MAB, moved to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. He took with him not only the assembled staff augmentation personnel, but Col A.M. Gray, the commanding officer of the 4th Marines, as his deputy commander. Col Gray was assigned concurrently as the commanding officer (designate) of the 33rd MAU. Much was accomplished at Subic Bay in preparation for sailing to join up with CTF 76, RAdm Donald B. Whitmire, off the coast of South Vietnam.

On 7 April, the 33rd MAU was activated with BLT 1/9 and LSU 1/9 as its attached elements. By this time BLT 1/9 and LSU 1/9 were ensconced in the MAU Camps at Subic Bay. These units had been alerted on 5 April and, including their organic amphibian tractor platoon, had been flown in a round the clock shuttle by Military Airlift Command (MAC) aircraft to the Naval Air Station at Cubi Point, adjacent to the Naval Base at Subic Bay. The tailing elements of the BLT closed on Subic just 27 hours after the initial alert.

Simultaneous with the movement of 1/9 to Subic, BLT 3/9 was alerted for air movement from Camp Fuji, by way of NAS Atsugi, to

Okinawa. There BLT 3/9 would join up with PHIBRON 5 shipping coming hard westward across the Pacific. With the shipping to which he was normally assigned off the coast of South Vietnam, the BLT commander was experiencing a marooned feeling. These orders did much to assuage his land-locked pangs. The movement was accomplished in its entirety by utilizing the aircraft from Marine Aerial Refueling Transport Squadron 152 (VMGR-152). Flying round-the-clock while maintaining a low profile, this movement was accomplished in 72 hours. Every day during this dynamic period, the KC-130's of *Ichi Go Ni* would prove their worth.

It is difficult in a narrative of this type to recapture the turbulence and dynamism of the period, with units out-chopping and in-chopping on a daily basis. Admittedly, the greater portion of this and subsequent articles will describe the activities of the higher visibility, forward afloat units. This was however, in the classic sense, an all hands evolution, the flight crews and ground crews of VMGR-152; the drivers and mechanics in the 3rd and 9th Motor Transport Battalions; the personnel of 3rd Shore Party Battalion, 3rd Force Service Regiment; the list goes on; . . . suffice to say, every Marine and sailor in WesPac had shares in the enterprise—some greater and very few lesser.

Navy units were also on the move during this period. *Durham* and *Frederick* which had been participating in the evacuation operations from MR-1 and MR-2 were ordered to return to Subic, where together with *Hancock*, they would embark the 33rd MAU. The attack carrier *USS Midway* in the meantime had stopped at Okinawa, during its transit from Yokosuka, to bring a deck load of 1st MAW CH 46's, UH 1E's, and AH 1J's to Subic Bay. These aircraft were then spread loaded aboard the amphibious ships and *Hancock*.

On 9 April, the MAB staff and the 33rd MAU aboard *Hancock*, *Durham*, and *Frederick*, sailed for the waters off Vung Tau. Also on this date, HMH 463 and HMM 165 (-) were placed under the operational control of 33rd MAU. On 10 April HMH 463, aboard *Hancock*, was chopped to the 31st MAU, off the coast of Cambodia preparing to execute the EAGLE PULL evacuation of Phnom Penh.

Meanwhile back to Okinawa, the 35th MAU, commanded by Col H.G. Edebohls, was in the process of forming around a nucleus of the 9th Marines headquarters. This MAU was to be comprised of BLT 3/9, HML



Aboard USS Hancock prior to evacuation.

367 (-), and LSU 3/9. It was scheduled to load aboard PHIBRON 5 shipping which had been designated as ARG "C." Following the load, the 35th MAU would close the coast of South Vietnam and join the brigade.

The three MAU's were formed in response to the two separate and simultaneous contingencies on opposite sides of the Indochinese Peninsula. While each was of apparently short duration, they were both still of uncertain duration. Therefore, in order to ensure the more flexible posture of being able to meet both contingencies simultaneously, and at the same time providing for a rotational capability, the three MAU's were formed to utilize the three ARG's.

On 11 April, the commanding general rendezvoused with CTF 76, aboard the latter's flagship, *Blue Ridge*. Now joined with the 9th MAB staff nucleus, the 9th MAB headquarters was manned for planning and operations, and reported the same day to CTF 76 for planning in connection with Noncombatant Emergency Evacuation Operations (NEMVAC) in South Vietnam.

On the 12th of April, the event which would most significantly affect the brigade's organization occurred. Operation EAGLE PULL was executed. The Marines from 31st MAU, and the Marine Command Group flown in to the embassy nine days before, carried out a model NEMVAC operation. Now, there was only one contingency.

The following day, the 31st MAU reported to the brigade for planning.

For all practical purposes the MAB was formed for planning and, with the exception of the 35th MAU which was to arrive within a few days, was ready for operations. The MAB was organized as follows:

9th Marine Amphibious,	
Brigade	BGen R.E. Carey
31st Marine Amphibious	
Unit	Col J.F. Roche
BLT 2/4	LtCol G.P. Slade

LSU 2/4	Maj J.A. Gallagher
HMH-462	LtCol J.L. Bolton
33rd Marine Amphibious Unit	Col A.M. Gray
BLT 1/9	LtCol R.L. Bond
LSU 1/9	Maj D.O. Coughlin
HMM-165 (-)	LtCol J.P. Kizer
HMH-463	LtCol H.M. Fix
35th Marine Amphibious Unit	Col H.G. Edebohls
BLT 3/9	LtCol R.E. Loehe
LSU 3/9	Maj F.W. Jones
HML-367 (-)	LtCol J.R. Gentry
Amphibious Evacuation RVN Support Group (1/4)	LtCol C.E. Hester

Return to Subic

On 15 April, Task Force 76 was ordered to return to Subic Bay for badly needed upkeep. Evacuation of refugees on Navy vessels had been terminated and activity had lulled on MSC shipping. Moving away from the coast at this time was a calculated, but necessary, risk. Accordingly, the return to Subic was completed by midday on 17 April. This was to be a very short-lived upkeep period. Overnight, the tensions in South Vietnam had heightened and the task force was directed to sail that very afternoon (18 April) back to the contiguous waters of the Republic of South Vietnam off the Vung Tau Peninsula. The 1st Battalion, 4th Marines which had performed so well in the MR-1 and MR-2 evacuations debarked at Subic and remained at the MAU Camps for reconstitution as a BLT, in anticipation of relieving BLT 2/4 as the Marine landing force embarked in ARG "A" shipping.

The return to Subic Bay had been a frustrating one for the 9th MAB to say the least. Planning had been initiated, as had liaison ashore. The principal areas of concentration had been Vung Tau, the Newport Pier (on the Saigon River, at the eastern extremity of the City of Saigon), and the Defense Attache Office (DAO)/Air America complex (adjacent to Tan Son Nhut Air Base). The plans essentially were ready to be promulgated when the three MAU's were ordered to be deactivated.

The Doctrinal MAB

While the MAB was en route back to the waters off Vung Tau a planned reconfiguration of the brigade was directed with simultaneous activation of the 9th MAB for operations. The existing MAB/MAU organization

was replaced by a doctrinal brigade organization. This reorganization was effected on 19 April. The three MAU's were deactivated and simultaneously Regimental Landing Team 4 (RLT 4), Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 (PROVMAG 39), and a Brigade Logistic Support Group (BLSG) were activated. In addition, a unique organization, the Amphibious Evacuation Security Force (AESF) was included in the newly reorganized brigade. The AESF replaced the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines as the force designated to provide security detachments aboard Navy and MSC ships. Initially, the AESF was comprised of a Control Group drawn from Headquarters, 9th Marines and ten 72-man detachments task organized from various 3d MARDIV organizations.

The reconfigured MAB was organized as follows:

9th Marine Amphibious Brigade	BGen R.E. Carey
Comm Co (-) (Rein)	Maj R.L. Turley
Regimental Landing Team 4	Col A.M. Gray
BLT 1/9	LtCol R.L. Bond
BLT 2/4	LtCol G.P. Slade
BLT 3/9	LtCol R.E. Loehe
Provisional Marine Air Group 39	Col F.G. McLenon
HMH-462	LtCol J.L. Bolton
HMH-463	LtCol H.M. Fix
HMM-165	LtCol J.P. Kizer
*HML-367	LtCol J.R. Gentry
Brigade Logistic Support Group	Col H.G. Edebohls
LSU 1/9	Maj D.O. Coughlin
LSU 2/4	Maj J.A. Gallagher
LSU 3/9	Maj F.W. Jones
Amphibious Evacuation Security Force	Maj D.A. Quinlan

*Command remained at Subic. Aircraft were attached to other squadrons in PROVMAG 39. (As were the "Cobras" of HMA-369.)

On 20 April the reconfigured MAB arrived back at Vung Tau and reported to CTF-76 for operations. Planning had been moving at a rapid rate through all of the manipulations leading up to the MAB's return to the Evacuation Objective Area (EOA). The next ten days were to be even more hectic as the North Vietnamese and the VC concentrated their efforts on Saigon and the surrounding vicinity. **(Part II in this series will appear next month.)**

USMC