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Semper Fi-Vietnam: From Da Nang to the DMZ : Marine Corps Campaigns, 1965-1975

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of overly optimistic official statements about the course of the war, soon led the news media, especially the Saigon-based correspondents, to question all government pronouncements.

One often overlooked factor that had a profound impact on the media-military relationship was the perceived "politicization" of the Commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), General William C. Westmoreland. Hammond carefully explains how Westmoreland, who was initially respected by the media, came to be viewed as a spokesman for the administration and a tool of the president, ruining his credibility in the eyes of the war correspondents. This had a profound effect on the reporting of the event that changed the course of American policy in Vietnam—the 1968 Tet offensive.

Today's military professional can see throughout this text the birth of our modern public affairs doctrine. The stipulated policy during the course of the war, "maximum candor and disclosure consistent with the requirements of security," closely mirrors our current joint public affairs doctrine of "maximum disclosure with minimum delay." The MACV public affairs practitioner dealt with a complicated list of problems: media ground rules, accreditation, press pools, security violations, international media representatives, embedded media, violations of the law of war, and off-the-record comments. Unfortunately, many of these problems resurfaced during the Gulf War and will likely appear again during our next conflict.

This book is a must read for any military officer or member of the national security community responsible for developing plans or strategies that may have an impact on public opinion. This text readily demonstrates the critical need for well developed information strategies. Censoring of the media in this age of instant communications is highly unlikely, so public affairs considerations must enter early in the deliberate planning cycle.

The student of military history, as well as the casual reader, will find this innovative view of the Vietnam War very interesting. President Nixon once stated, "Our worst enemy seems to be the press." In truth, the situation was much more complicated, and this book does a good job explaining the actual root issues.

SCOTT STEARNS
Captain, U.S. Army

Murphy, Edward F. *Semper Fi—Vietnam: From Da Nang to the DMZ: Marine Corps Campaigns, 1965–1975.* Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1997. 356pp. $24.95

Consisting primarily of densely packed battle narratives reaching down to platoon level and even to the exploits of heroic individuals, Edward Murphy's one-volume history of the U.S. Marines in the Vietnam War illustrates vividly what a difficult war it was—especially for the Marines. During the early years in particular, as Murphy portrays them, it was a particularly dreary experience. Forced by Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) commander General William C. Westmoreland

into search-and-destroy operations for which they were ill attuned, the Marines experienced long periods of frustrating inability to find the enemy or bring him to battle, periods punctuated by sudden crises in which pinned-down units took heavy casualties.

The Marines' long ordeal at Khe Sanh is also attributed to Westmoreland's insistence that Khe Sanh be occupied, overriding Lieutenant General Lewis Walt's objection that it had no military value. Murphy describes case after case of search-and-destroy operations experiencing significant problems, but he concludes that they were a success after all, on the basis of comparative casualties.

It was in fact only in terms of Westmoreland's body-count measure of merit that the typical exchange could be counted a success—and the Marines *knew* it. From General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., the Commandant, and Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, commanding Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, on down, they understood that the real war was in the villages. Murphy states that the Marines became so frustrated that at one point the 9th Marines launched Operation KINGS, which they "reported to MACV as a search and destroy mission" even though it "was actually designed to be a long-term occupation of the area."

Not until General Creighton Abrams succeeded to the top command in Vietnam was the Marines' preferred approach—emphasizing pacification—reinforced from the top. Surprisingly, however, Murphy characterizes pacification as "a tough, unappreciated, unrewarding, and deadly task." The degree to which it succeeded, though, is underscored by his observation that in the final week before withdrawing from Vietnam, the last operational Marine infantry battalion conducted over a hundred small-unit patrols yet "experienced no enemy contact, encountered no booby traps, and took no casualties."

While almost uniformly admiring of Marine accomplishments, Murphy misses no opportunity to criticize the South Vietnamese. They are by turns "much vaunted," "skittish," "detached observers," and "lackluster." The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong are, by contrast, typically described in such admiring terms as "crafty," "slippery," and "well disciplined and determined."

This book is notable for what it omits as well as what it includes. Despite a multitude of tactical detail, there are no maps, save one outline sketch of the five northern provinces of South Vietnam. Such matters as troop morale and discipline receive virtually no mention. The emphasis of the later years on pacification and neutralization of the enemy infrastructure is also overlooked.

A far more disturbing omission is the lack of any notes or citations of any kind. Even when rendering direct quotations, Murphy does not provide sources. Yet there is no indication that he has interviewed the people quoted or that he has conducted any research in relevant archives. The reader is forced to surmise that Murphy appropriated to his own use the work of other scholars without acknowledging the fact or providing citations that would enable readers to verify the accuracy and context of the quoted

material. Even the photographs are printed without credit lines.

There is a bibliography, a very skimpy one listing fewer than three dozen titles, and these almost entirely volumes from the Boston Publishing Company's *Vietnam Experience* series and the official Marine Corps history of the Vietnam War (but not the very important volume covering 1968). Presumably these two series are the sources for the large number of unattributed quotations. Nevertheless, the publisher (specifically, this book's editor) ought to have required the author to comply with one of the most basic obligations of scholarship: acknowledgment of one's reliance on the achievement of others.

Those major shortcomings detract greatly from the usefulness of the work. What does come through, however, is the valor of individuals and small units in what Murphy concludes was for the Marine Corps "the most difficult mission in its history."

LEWIS SORLEY
author of *Thunderbolt*

Friends and Volunteers of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum. *Flying Stations: A Story of Australian Naval Aviation*. New York: Allen and Unwin, 1998. 289pp. $A45

This book is a celebration of fifty years of Australian naval aviation. It accomplishes this celebration in two ways: first, it allows several of the participants of that history to tell their stories, humorous and sad. Second, and more important to the foreign or serious naval affairs reader, it tells the trials and tribulations of interservice rivalry, politics of economy, strategic choices, and attempts to stake out a specific naval aviation role.

The first chapters deal with the years when naval aviation in Australia simply meant aviators assigned to shipboard flying (the scout/spotter plane role) or flying in support of naval operations (antisubmarine warfare in and around a land operation). Concurrent with the place of Australians in these operations are the stories of the development of naval aviation in the British navy and the U.S. Navy. The role of the Aussie aviator was within the framework of the Royal Navy, but that was to change with the Second World War.

By the 1950s, Australia was no longer a simple pastoral nation within the Commonwealth. The Aussies looked about and saw their place—naval aviation had a role to play in protecting Australia, as well as in keeping problems from its shoreline. After all, several Japanese attacks on parts of Australia had exposed its vulnerability. So began the real story of Australian naval aviation.

The problems were monumental. Like the big-bomber people of the fledgling U.S. Air Force, so too the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) challenged the need for maritime aviation. It controlled several of the pilot training bases. Many aviators, deck handlers, etc., were borrowed from the Royal Navy. The RAAF was a difficult partner in defense. Because the Australian population grew from five million in 1945 to fifteen million today, social service demands on tax dollars generally meant that defense budgets were slim, making demands on tax dollars even greater. Also, lacking a major