THE VIETNAM WAR
ALPHABET SOUP

• ARVN: (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) These were the regular army troops of South Vietnam. They were recruited and or drafted into the army and trained by the South Vietnamese government (and US Advisory personnel). Their equipment was similar to the US Army’s.
• COSVN: (Central Office of South Vietnam) The command center for Viet Cong/NVA military operation located near the Cambodian border in S. Vietnam. Subsequently moved into Cambodia (c. 1969-70).
• PAVN: (People’s Army of Vietnam) The North Vietnamese regular army troops (see: NVA)
• NVA: (North Vietnamese Army) (see PAVN)
• SF: (Special Forces) Highly trained US Army personnel, guerrilla warfare, counter insurgency specialists (Green Berets).
• MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam) refers to the United States military in Vietnam, specifically the advisory personnel and the overall leadership of US ground forces in Vietnam.
• VC: (Viet Cong, Victor Charlie, Mr. Charles, Charlie) The abbreviation for local and main force communist (southern) Vietnamese soldiers.
• RF/PF: (Rural Force/Popular Force) These were part-time soldiers, recruited locally, minimally trained and generally poorly equipped local villagers who were used to provide security for hamlets and rural villages. Cynically called Ruff Puffs.
• CIDG: (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) They were troops trained and employed by the US Special Forces and used in combat missions against the VC/NVA. Normally they operated in areas located near their families. They were primarily composed of Montagnards, Cambodians (Khmer Krom) and Vietnamese.
• DMZ: (Demilitarized Zone) The area adjacent to the 17th parallel that was supposed to be free of military personnel and equipment. Set up by the Geneva Peace Conference in 1954.
• NLF: (The National Liberation Front) This was the political organization of the Viet Cong. Their job was to recruit and propagandize the South Vietnamese population to support the communist insurgency in the South, made up mostly of South Vietnamese.
• AK-47: The basic rifle used by the VC/PAVN soldiers
• HUEY: The most widely used mode of transport. A helicopter (seated six to 10 troops and had two door mounted machine guns) that came to symbolize the war in Vietnam.
• M-16: (Also referred to as the AR 15) Manufactured by Colt firearms, this was the most widely used weapon (rifle) by US and ARVN soldiers in the Vietnam War.
• RPG: (rocket propelled grenade launcher) A bazooka-like weapon used by the VC/NVA.
• PLF: (Popular Liberation Front) The political organization arm of the Viet Cong.
• FSB: (Fire Support Base) Camp or base area set up by American and ARVN units that contained artillery and temporary housing (bunkers) from which patrols, search-and-destroy missions could be run out of while being protected by the artillery.
• TET: The most important Vietnamese/Chinese holiday celebrating the lunar new year. Usually happens late January or early February.
• MR 1, 2, 3, etc: (Military region 1, 2, etc.) The designation given by the VC/NVA leadership that corresponded to areas of Vietnam from North to South (S. Vietnam). The US used the term I Corps, II Corps, etc. to do basically the same thing. (See insert map on p. 101 Moss)
• War Zone “C”/War Zone “D”: Areas north and northwest of Saigon considered strategically important to both the VC/NVA and US due to its proximity to Saigon and the Cambodian border.