

VC Field Front and its three battered and torn regiments finally withdrew in defeat, leaving thousands of dead at Pleim, in the Chu Pong mountains and in the Ia Drang valley (Chart I). Of the three, the 3rd regiment was the most ill-fated (Chart II) and suffered the bitterest failure: its infiltration from North Viet Nam (departure between 27 and 29 July 67) had just been completed by 2 October. The 6th regiment got itself bloodied on 2 November in an ambush while it had been in country only two days ago. The 3rd regiment with nine months of combat in the Highlands to its credit was also unable to avoid deadly blows despite its elusiveness throughout the immediate, prolonged and relentless pursuit by the 27 Air Cavalry in the second phase.

#### CHAPTER VII

### THE VIỆT-CỘNG FRUSTRATION

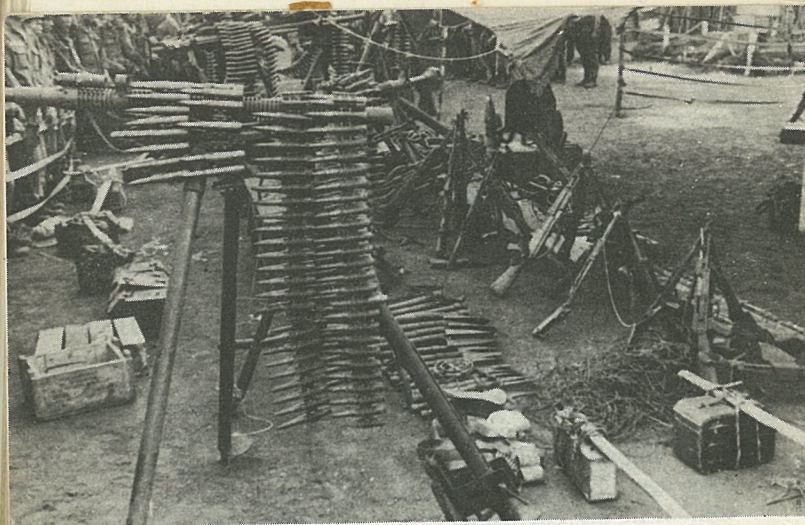
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...and sustained a decisive defeat on the ground. For the first time the fanaticism of their troops was broken by a general deterioration of morale. One captive from the 8th battalion, 66th regiment (the last to infiltrate) reported after the engagement with the 27 Air Cavalry battalion (17 November) that his unit sustained 30 KIA, 50 WIA and most importantly, 50 deserters. Other captives from the 3rd regiment in late November confessed that they believed their war was lost. The 33rd regiment's cadres, upset by the precision of friendly airstrikes held a conference in an attempt to discover what was allowing such repeated and accurate airstrikes to take place: it was concluded that only spies within the ranks



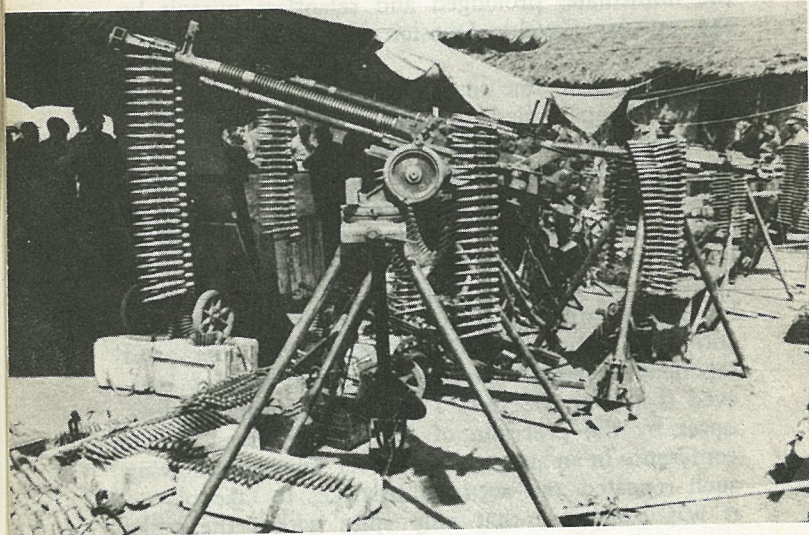
VC Field Front and its three battered and torn regiments finally withdrew in defeat, leaving thousands of dead at Pleime, in the Chu Pong mountains and and in the Ia Drang valley (Chart I). Of the three, the 33rd regiment was the most ill-fated (Chart II) and suffered the bitterest failure: its infiltration from North Viet Nam (departure between 22 and 25 July 65) had just been completed by 2 October! The 66th regiment got itself bloodied on 3 November in an ambush while it had been in country only two days ago. The 32nd regiment with nine months of combat in the Highlands to its credit was also unable to avoid deadly blows despite its elusiveness throughout the immediate, prolonged and relentless pursuit by the 1st Air Cavalry Division in the second phase.

For the first time since Dien Bien Phu, the Communist troops failed to boast their « invincibility » and sustained a decisive defeat on the ground. For the first time the fanaticism of their troops was broken by a general deterioration of morale. One captive from the 8th battalion, 66th regiment (the last to infiltrate) reported after the engagement with the 2/7 Air Cavalry battalion (17 November) that his unit sustained 30 KIA, 50 WIA and most importantly, 50 deserters. Other captives from the 32nd regiment in late November confessed that they believed their war was lost. The 33rd regiment's cadres, upset by the precision of friendly airstrikes held a conference in an attempt to discover what was allowing such repeated and accurate airstrikes to take place: it was concluded that only spies within the ranks

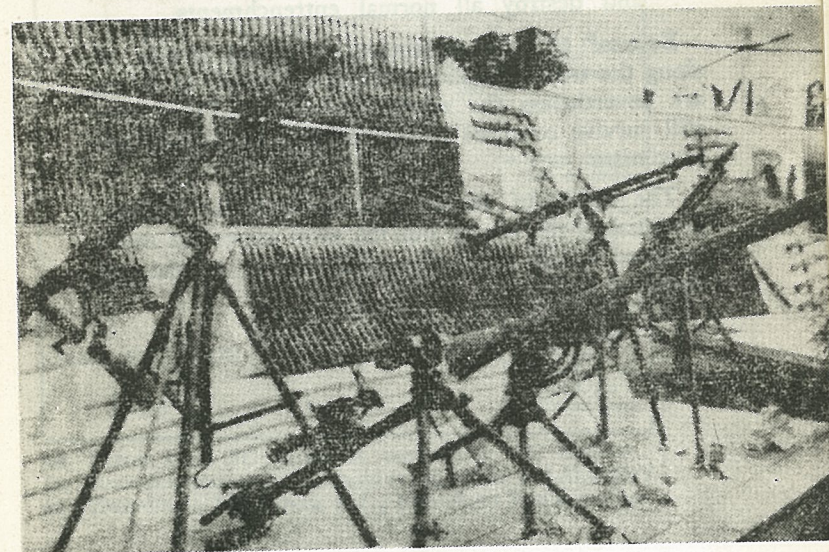
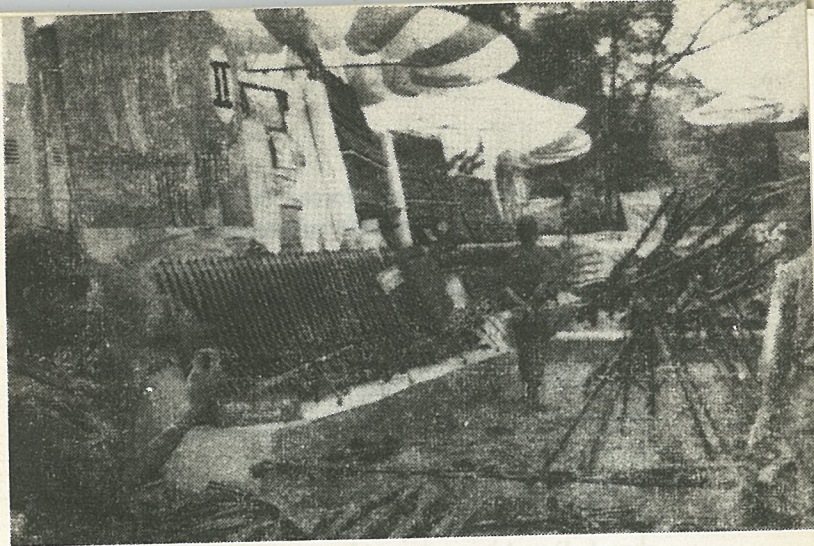




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the important campaign and the



101  
V.C. Weapons Captured  
in the Battle of Pleime



011  
VC Weapons Captured  
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could be furnishing friendly forces the location and movements of the regiment's elements.

Of the VC who surrendered or were captured as the operations progressed the major causes of disenchantment appeared to be :

- Disillusionment with the empty promises and bleak future of the VC cause.
- Lack of medicine and medical care
- Continued sickness
- Lack of food, especially of rice and salt.
- Struck with terror by 52's bombers raids which are believed to cover each 20 square kilometers and destroy all normal entrenchments.

Because of that nightmare, the dead strewn all along the trails and streams from Pleime to Ia Drang are nevertheless the most « fortunate ». Those who still survive continue to be obsessed by despair and pessimism.

The battle of Pleime has crushed the material potential of the enemy but the most important result gathered is the destruction of their hope to win and their will to fight.

CHART I

**RECAPITULATION OF VIET CONG LOSSES**

from 18 Oct. to 26 Nov. 65

at PLEIME, CHU PONG, IA DRANG

PHASES	KIA (BC)	KIA (EST)	WIA	CIA	WEAPONS		MISCEL- LANEOUS
					Crew served	Indiv- idual	
I	220	228 (a)	115	6	24	81	+ 40000 US\$ of surgical equipment and supplies.
II	1519	2042	1178	163	126	897 (b)	+ 200 kg of enemy documents.
III	265			10	19 (c)	49	+ Large quanti- ties of ammo, grenades and individ- ual field equipment.
Total	4254 2004	2270 4274	1293	179	169	1027	+ 2700 refugees from VC dominated villages resettled at Thanh An District town.

- (a) Figure from VC document captured at VC hospital  
 (b) Excluding 400 others destroyed at LZ XRAY and ALBANY  
 (c) Excluding 2 MG barrels and 2 base-plates 82mm mortars.



CHART II

**LOSSES OF THE 33RD VIET CONG REGIMENT**  
as of 11 November 1965

Source: Rollier, First Lieutenant BUI VAN CUONG  
Political officer Signal Co/33rd RGT

UNIT	Approximate Initial Strength	Percentage of casualties	REMARKS
1st Battalion	500 men	33% KIA	- Cumulative major weapons losses: 13 AA guns 11 Mortars 3 Recoilless Rifles
2nd -	500 -	50% -	
3rd -	500 -	33% -	
Mortar Co	120 -	50% -	- Cadre casualties: 2 Bn Cdrs 1 Bn Chief of Staff 4 Co Cdrs 4 Co Political officers 1 Surgeon
Anti-Aircraft Co	150 -	60% -	
Signal Co	120 -	4 men KIA- 16 men CIA	
Transportation Co	150 -	50% KIA	
Medical Co	40 -	80% KIA and CIA	
Engineer Co	60 -	15 men KIA and CIA	
Reconnaissance Co	50 -	9 men KIA	
TOTAL . .	2200 -	40%	