Introduction

The Archives Branch supports the professional military education requirements of Marine Corps residential and distance learning programs. They are the chief repository for reporting units as well as for personal papers of current and veteran Marines. The Archives is open without appointment to both military and civilian patrons, and a professional archivist is always available for assistance. Patrons may bring laptops, digital cameras, and personal scanners for use in the reading room.

Contacting the Archives Branch

Physical address: 2044 Broadway Street, Quantico, VA 22134
Phone: (703) 784-4685
Email: mcu_archives@usmcu.edu
Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Administrative Information

Restrictions: Collections are open to all researchers

Preferred citation: Researchers wishing to cite these collections should include the following information:

[Name of Collection], [Folder heading], [Collection Number], Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Historical Note

During the early morning of 31 January 1968, a division-sized force of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong soldiers launched a coordinated attack on Hue City. Their targets were the Tay Loc airfield and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam compound in the New City on the south side of the river. The first move by the North Vietnamese Army came from the 6th Regiment. They attacked the western bank of the Citadel on the northern side of the city. In a simultaneous attacked, the NVA 4th Regiment attacked the Military Assistance Command Vietnam headquarters in the southern part of the city.

At the Western Gate of the Citadel, a North Vietnamese team was able to kill the guards and open the gate. Upon this event, the gates were opened and members of the 800th and 802nd Battalions were able to enter the city and move north. While the 800th fought for the airfield, the 802nd Battalion struck the 1st Division headquarters at Mang Ca. At 0800, North Vietnamese troops raised the Viet Cong banner over the Citadel flag tower.

While the North Vietnamese had struck Hue, the Marines were facing rocket and mortar fire at the Phu Bai airstrip. At the Truoi River Bridge, a North Vietnamese company attacked the South Vietnamese security detachment and the nearby Combined Action
Platoon. While this fighting continued, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (1/1) began to move into Hue City.

As the Marines approached the southern suburbs of the city, they began to come under increased sniper fire. In one village, the troops dismounted and cleared the houses on either side of the main street before proceeding. The Marine convoy stopped several times to eliminate resistance in heavy house-to-house and street fighting before proceeding again.

By that evening, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines had established defensive positions near the MACV compound and a helicopter landing zone in southern Hue.

The next morning at 0700, the Marines launched an assault, but did not progress further than one block before they were attacked and decided to retreat. Later on in the day, helicopters from HMM-165 began bringing in reinforcements.

In southern Hue, on 2 February, the Marines made some minor headway and brought in further reinforcements. The 1st Battalion reached the Hue University campus. Two Ontos were able to enter the city, but were attacked by enemy snipers. The Marines participated in intense street fighting for the next 3 weeks, retaking the city one block at a time. Finally, the Citadel and the Imperial Palace were the last sites to be retaken. On 29 February 1968, the Imperial Palace was secured and the NVA flag was removed. A few days later, the NVA withdrew completely from the city.

The Communist forces suffered heavy losses in the battle, losing 5,133 men at Hue; and about 3,000 more were estimated to be killed outside of the city. Eighty percent of the city was destroyed by American firepower. The American forces suffered 216 killed and 1,584 wounded.

Scope and Content

The Archives Branch holds approximately 15 collections related to the Marine Corps and Hue. This index highlights some of those collections, focusing on those that have notably unique content, are large in volume, or are frequently requested by Archives Branch patrons.

Included in this compilation are collections that contain official Marine Corps reference records; personal papers collections; photographs; maps; and oral histories.

This index does not cover every collection in the Branch’s holdings related to Hue. It highlights select collections from which researchers may start to explore the materials that the Archives has available on the subject.

Reference Collections

Title Vietnam War Collection, 1954 - 1975
Box 24: Tet Offensive, 1968. Included is one letter written by Ray Smith, Commanding Officer of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (1/1) to Gordon Batcheller former Commanding Officer describing the fighting in Hue that took place after Batcheller was wounded. The letter gives statistics on the strength of the Company, details of Marines wounded and killed, and daily reports of resistance encountered. Also included is the 1st Marine Division Commanders After Action Report, Tet Offensive, 29 January - 14 February 1968; The Viet Cong Tet Offensive published by the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces; a paper written by Major George Ronald Christmas on his experiences in Hue City; and a transcript of an interview conducted with Christmas. Note: a finding aid is available for this collection.

**Personal Papers Collections**

**Title** Chuck Gilbert and Ned Clark Memoir  
**Record** COLL/4860  
**Home** A/29/B/5/1

Memoir titled *The Road to the Graveyard: A Bloody Footnote to the Battle for Hue.* Gilbert and Clark were members of 1st Battalion, 11th Marines (1/11) and the memoir gives a day to day account from January - February 1968. It details combat operations of the unit, and the circumstances surrounding those Marines killed and wounded. The memoir also includes copies of photographs and maps.

**Title** Foster C. LaHue Letter  
**Record** COLL/1887  
**Home** A/11/D/4/2

Letter and reports sent to the Editor, Los Angeles Times from Brigadier General Foster LaHue in response to an article written by William Tuohy related to the battle in Hue. The letter attempts to correct inaccuracies of the article and gives statistics on unit strengths, casualties, and Vietnamese/American relations. Foster LaHue served as the Task Force X-Ray commander.

**Title** W. Roger Lansbury Diary  
**Record** COLL/2182  
**Home** A/11/L/7/5

A published copy of *Notes Between Two Worlds: The Diary of Roger Lansbury 2nd Battalion, Fifth Marines.* This diary was kept by Lansbury while in Vietnam, April 1967 to February 1968. He was a Corpsman assigned to Company E, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines (3/5). Lansbury’s entries describe the fighting going on around Hue while he was trying to get into the city to help treat the wounded. In February, he was able to enter the city and describes his experiences there.
Major General Robertson served as Commanding General, 1st Marine Division from June 1967 - June 1968. This collection consists of a set of 4 photograph albums: one covering General Robertson's tour as commanding general of III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) from 1970 - 1971; a Vietnamese album with scenes that include President Thieu, Lieutenant General Lam (ARVN), General Robert Cushman, General Anderson and General Robertson; a 1964 album of the 4th MEB Grass Roots 64 counterinsurgency / counter-guerrilla exercise at Camp Pickett, Virginia; and an album presented to Colonel Robertson of President Syngman Rhee's visit to the United States in 1955. Also, included are the Commanding General's Debriefing Book, 1st Marine Division, III MAF from June 1968; map overlays; and a large collection of photographs, including views of the destruction at Hue. The collection of 29 4 in. x 5 in. black and white photographs depict the aftermath of the battle for Hue City, including destroyed buildings and the collapsed Long Am Bridge. 14 5 in. x 8 in. black and white photographs depict combat operations within Hue City during the battle. 15 5 in. x 8 in. black and white photographs depict various operations, including Operation Boon, Operation Shelby, Operation Essex, and Operation Allen Brook.

This collection contains a variety of materials related to US Navy activities in Phu Bai and Hue City in Vietnam between 1968 and 1969. Included in the collection is a US Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Deployment Completion Report for December 1968 - July 1969; photocopies from a Deployment Completion Report for August 1967 - April 1968, in which bridges demolished by enemy activity are highlighted; portions of the minutes of an undated conference group report regarding the selection of Amphibious Task Force Objectives for CTF 136; a photocopy of a cover letter (dated 6 September 1968) accompanying the completed Deployment Completion Report for 1967 - 1968; a photocopy of a letter of appreciation to the Commanding Officer of US Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 121 from General Creighton W. Abrams; 3 color 5 in. x 7 in. photographs of Thua Thien Province Capital, the Phu Van Lau Flag Tower, and a shrine on Dien Tho Palace within the Purple City, Hue City, January 1969; one black and white map, 8.5 in. x 11 in., of Hue-Phu Bai-Phu Loc, Thua Thien Province, circa 1969; one black and white map of I Corps Tactical Zone, circa 1967-1968; one black and white map, 19.5 in. x 24 in., of Hue, Thua Thien Province, circa January 1969; a photocopy of an alphabetical list of street names in Hue, circa 1965; a photocopy of a tourist informational brochure for Hue published by the Vietnam National Tourist Office.

Also included, and of particular interest, are three sets of map overlays for Amphibious Planning Exercises, circa 1969. The overlays are labeled Appendix 1, 3, and 7 of Annex.
C (Strength, Composition, and Disposition of North Vietnamese Force) of an unidentified report; the reference map for the overlays 1 and 3 is Army Map Service Series 1301, sheets NE-48, NF-48; the reference map for overlay 7 is Army Map Service Series L7014, sheets 6146-1 through 6146-4.

Title Charles Meadows Collection
Record COLL/5379
Home A/29/F/4/2

This collection is comprised of sixteen (16) maps of Vietnam and Hue City, including city maps, pictomaps, and Army Map Service maps. Of particular interest is the operations map used by Captain Charles Meadows, the commanding officer of Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) during the battle of Hue City.

Included are Army Map Service maps, series L7014 sheets 6228-1, 6228-2, 6328-3, and 6328-4; Pictomap series L7014, sheets 6228-2 S and 6541-4 N; Joint Operations Graphic (Ground) series 1501, edition 2, sheets NC 48-11 and NC 48-7; Joint Operations Graphic (Ground) series 1501, edition 3, sheet NC 48-7; map titled "Vietnam and Neighboring Countries in 1968"; map of Cambodia (1:1,740,000); map of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos (National Geographic, 1965); a reproduction of a photograph of a Shell gas station in Hue City, 2009; a souvenir map taken from the Shell station during the battle of Hue in 1966, including a reproduction; a photocopy of the Citadel and surroundings, bearing annotations indicating landmarks; and a tourist map of Hue, circa 2009.

Photograph Collections

Title Michael T. Lambert Photographs
Record COLL/695
Home A/11/L/5/4

Two black and white photographs of Marines from 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines in Hue. The first is of a Marine firing a grenade launcher from a window in Hue University. The second is of Marines fighting in the streets of Hue. Lambert gives a written statement about the circumstances of both photographs.

Title Jonathan Abel Photographs
Record COLL/3611
Home A/12/C/2/4

Thirty-seven black and white photographs of members of III Marine Amphibious Force fighting in the streets of Hue. Included with the combat photographs are images of the Citadel; the Army of the Republic of Vietnam flag raised over the city; helicopters bringing in replacements; Marines evacuating civilians; and aerial views of the city. Note: a finding aid is available for this collection.

Title Richard W. Carter Photograph
One color photograph of Carter at the evacuation point near Hue University on 13 February 1968. The Citadel and Perfume River can be seen in the background of the photograph.

Maps

Title Joint Operations Graphic (Ground): Hue, Vietnam; Laos
Record NY-MAP/2152


Title Hue Map
Record NY-MAP/6195

Black and white topographical map of Hue and surrounding area. Printed by 569th Engineer Company, reference number E-48-132.