

## ***Change of Command***

There was more a fuss over my next assignment in other people's minds than in mine.

I did not know that 3 star General Palmer, for whom I worked in the Pentagon and was on Westmoreland's MACV staff nominated me to be the G-3 of the Americal Division. That irritated 3 star General Weyand, who was the II Field Force Commander (the Corps around Saigon that controlled the 1st Division, the 25th Division, the 9th division in the Delta, and the 101st Airborne Division ) who, on Colonel Fuller's recommendation wanted me at Field Force Headquarters. And Ambassador Komer wanted me for a Province Advisor - where the real war was taking place. Even John Vann, who was reputed to be the most savvy counterinsurgent expert, got in the act. General Weyand went to the MACV Chief of Staff, declared I was an 'indispensible' battalion-commander-experienced and he desperately needed me.

Nobody bothered to ask me what job I wanted.

I was not particularly interested in going to the Americal Division in any capacity. It already had a questionable professional reputation. It was the same outfit that the My Lai massacre came out of.

Col Fuller, G-3 who had commanded the 2d Brigade of the 25th Division before I got there, and gave me good advice before I took over my battalion, had obviously been following my combat record on the ground while I commanded it. He really wanted a combat tested battalion commander. He fought for me.

Fuller through Weyand won. I was assigned to II Field Force Headquarters just north of Saigon, on something called "The Plantation" at Bien Hoa, under Colonel Fuller the G-3. I was made 'Chief of Plans, G-3, assigned 3 lieutenant colonels, 3 majors including one Australian. My job would be to make war plans for American and allied forces in the southern half of Vietnam. (I Field Force would plan for the northern half.)

## Vietnam War (10)

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The change of command of the 1/27 from me to the incoming commander was on the 6th of December. I left for my new job immediately. Patsy was, in her letters, greatly relieved. For I didn't have to wear a helmet, or carry a gun. I was that remote from likely VC attack. I ate in the officer's mess, had a cubicle BOQ, a maid, and electric lights. Most of the boys in the headquarters, sunbathed over lunch hour.

And for the first time I listened to some music.

Christmas gifts and cards came to me there from home. The US might not know how to win the war in Vietnam, but it sure knew how to deliver soldier's mail.

### ***New Duties***

As in most every 'S-3 or G-3' unit office in the Army, I had first to read the current war plans, attend every evening's briefing for Lt General Weyand, the Commander of all forces in southern Vietnam, listen to his 'guidance' on what the effort of US forces should be over the next six months, then go back and draft the implementation plan for units to obey in order to carry out the missions assigned. And coordinate the plan with both the threat analysis by the G-2, intelligence chief, and the capabilities and limits of the G-4 - who was the logistics chief.

Having spent a year going through the Command and General Staff school at Fort Leavenworth, I had a good handle on how such war plans should be made.

And by attending the briefings, where much of the 'immediate' news of the results of NVA or Viet Cong attacks throughout II Field Force's area of operations came from, and reports about progress in operations undertaken by subordinate units were described (most by Col Fuller who had to monitor all operations) I learned how the war was progressing.

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Of course all the briefings were classified Secret, and some were even more Secret, especially about operations directly against Viet Cong organizations.