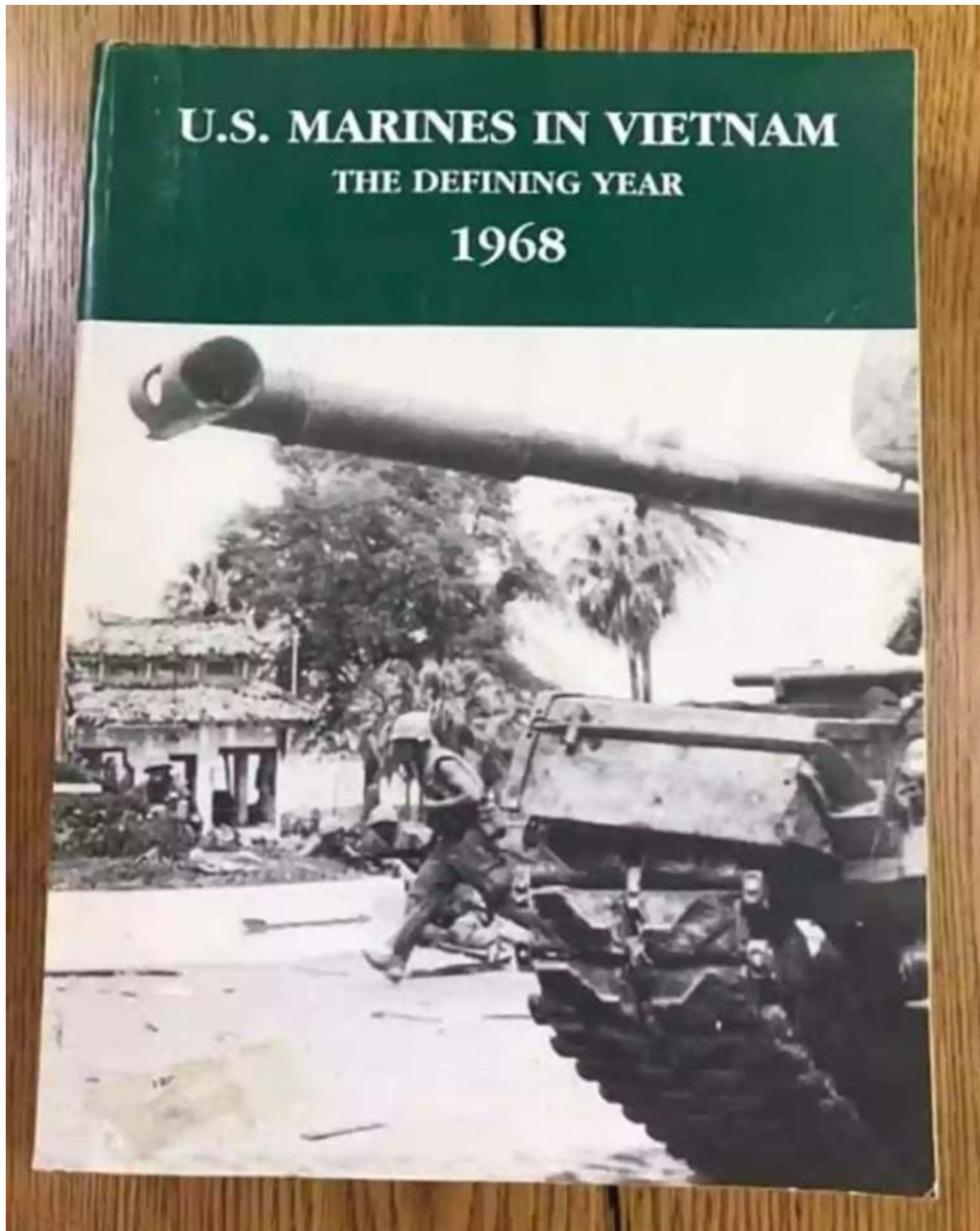


Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year 1968

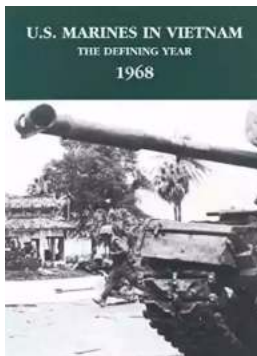


The Vietnam War was a defining period in American history, and 1968 stands out as a particularly significant year. During this tumultuous time, the Marines played a crucial role in the conflict, facing intense combat and experiencing both victories and losses. In this article, we will delve into the events of this defining year,

exploring the challenges faced by the Marines in Vietnam and their lasting impact on the war.

The Context: Vietnam in 1968

1968 was a critical point in the Vietnam War. The conflict had been raging for several years, and the American public had become increasingly divided over its involvement. Anti-war protests were gaining momentum, fueling the growing discontent among citizens. Against this backdrop, the Marines found themselves thrust into the midst of a highly complex and volatile theater of combat.



U.S. Marines In Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968

by William E. Oliver (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 102316 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 2084 pages



The year began with the Battle of Khe Sanh, a protracted and costly engagement between the Marines and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). Lasting for 77 days, this battle was one of the longest and bloodiest in the history of the Vietnam War. While the Marines ultimately held off the NVA, the toll in lives and resources was significant, leaving an indelible mark on the Marines' psyche.

Tet Offensive: A Pivotal Moment

The Tet Offensive, launched by the NVA and Viet Cong in late January, marked a turning point in the war. The coordinated attacks caught the Americans off guard and led to intense fighting across South Vietnam. The Marines found themselves engaged in numerous battles during this period, often fighting in urban areas against a determined and resourceful enemy.

The Battle of Huế, which took place during the Tet Offensive, showcased the resilience and bravery of the Marines. Huế, a strategic city in central Vietnam, became a stronghold for the Viet Cong, who employed a guerrilla warfare strategy. The Marines fought street by street, house by house, to recapture the city, facing a fierce and determined enemy. The battle lasted for weeks, resulting in high casualties but ultimately leading to a Marine victory.

The Siege of Khe Sanh: A Test of Endurance

As the Marines battled in urban areas, another monumental event unfolded at Khe Sanh. The NVA had surrounded the Marine base, initiating a siege that lasted for months. This battle tested the Marines' endurance and resolve, as they were constantly bombarded by enemy artillery and isolated from reinforcements. The intense aerial bombardments from the American forces, dubbed Operation Niagara, forced the NVA to eventually lift the siege. Although the Marines successfully defended Khe Sanh, the cost in lives and resources once again took a toll on their morale.

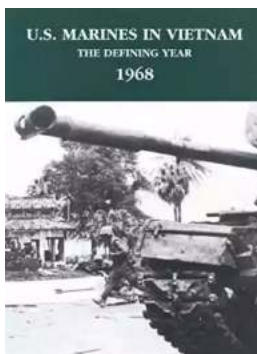
Legacy and Impact

The Marines' experiences during the defining year of 1968 in Vietnam left an indelible mark on both the individual Marines and the nation as a whole. The battles of Khe Sanh, Huế, and countless others tested their courage, resilience, and adaptability. The sacrifices made by the Marines during this year were

enormous, but their bravery in the face of adversity helped solidify their reputation as an elite fighting force.

The events of 1968 also had a significant impact on public opinion back home. The intense fighting, high casualty rates, and graphic media coverage contributed to a growing disillusionment with the war. Anti-war sentiment reached its peak, leading to a shift in public perception and eventually influencing the political landscape.

The year 1968 was a defining period in the Vietnam War, and the Marines played a vital role in shaping its outcome. Their experiences during this tumultuous time in history showcased their bravery, adaptability, and resilience as they faced formidable challenges and confronted a determined enemy. The battles of 1968 in Vietnam left an enduring imprint on the Marines and the nation, forever etching their place in history.



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The year 1968 was the year of the Tet Offensive including Khe Sanh and Hue City. These were momentous events in the course of the war and they occurred in

the first three months of the year. This book, however, documents that 1968 was more than just the Tet Offensive. The bloodiest month of the war for the U.S. forces was not January nor February 1968, but May 1968 when the Communists launched what was called their “Mini-Tet” offensive. This was followed by a second “Mini-Tet” offensive during the late summer which also was repulsed at heavy cost to both sides. By the end of the year, the U.S. forces in South Vietnam’s I Corps, under the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), had regained the offensive. By December, enemy-initiated attacks had fallen to their lowest level in two years. Still, there was no talk of victory. The Communist forces remained a formidable foe and a limit had been drawn on the level of American participation in the war.

Although largely written from the perspective of III MAF and the ground war in I Corps, the volume also treats the activities of Marines with the Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force, activities of Marine advisors to South Vietnamese forces, and other Marine involvement in the war. Separate chapters cover Marine aviation and the single manager controversy, artillery, logistics, manpower, and pacification.—E. H. SIMMONS, Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)



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