

Bringing Out the Downed Pilot, 11 September 1966

by Bob Babcock, recovery mission leader, B/1-22 INF, 4th INF DIV, US Army

MAPS OF CRASH SITE & COMBAT CONTEXT

1. Vietnam in Southeast Asia 2021 Google Map



Bringing Out the Downed Pilot

2. Crash Site Location: 2021 Google Terrain Map

Downing of USAF O1-E Bird Dog 56-0184
 Location: Dong Hoa District, Phu Yen Province, SVN
 Date: 10 September 1966
 Pilot: USAF Capt. Edmund F. Thornell, KIA
<https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/51948/EDMUND-F-THORNELL/>
 Remains recovered: 11 September 1966
 Cause of crash: hostile ground fire, .50-cal AA-HMG

**B/1-22 INF
Base Camp**

**Tuy Hoa
Air Base**

Crash Site Location
 9.6 mi SE of Tuy Hoa Air Base
 3.4 mi NW of Cape Varella (Mui Dien)
 U.S. Army Map (1969) Sheet 6834-1 CQ 300302
 Google Map coordinates shown
 Sources: US Army recovery team, AFHRA

**Cape Varella
(Mui Dien)**

Hoà Tâm
 Đông Hòa District, Phú Yên Provin...
 12.936952, 109.428074

Map data ©2021 United States Terms Privacy Send feedback 2 mi

Bringing Out the Downed Pilot

3. Crash Site Location: 2021 Google Satellite Map



Bringing Out the Downed Pilot

4. Crash Site Location: 1969 U.S. Army Terrain Map

Downing of USAF O1-E Bird Dog 56-0184

Location: Dong Hoa District, Phu Yen Province, SVN

Date: 10 September 1966

Pilot: USAF Capt. Edmund F. Thornell, KIA

<https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/51948/EDMUND-F-THORNELL/>

Remains recovered: 11 September 1966

Cause of crash: hostile ground fire, .50-cal AA-HMG

<http://1-22infantry.org/kia2/thornellpers.htm>



Crash Site Location: September 1966

U.S. Army Map (1969) Sheet *Ban Nham* 6834-1 CQ 300 302

https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/topo/vietnam/ban_nham-6834-1.pdf

Scale 1:50,000, grid square is 1 km = 0.621 mi = 1,094 yds

9.6 mi SE of Tuy Hoa Air Base

3.4 mi NW of Cape Varella (Mũi Dien)

~ 250 yds inland from shoreline

Sources: US Army B/1-22 INF recovery team, AFHRA records

Google Map coordinates corresponding to CQ 300 302:

12.936952, 109.428074

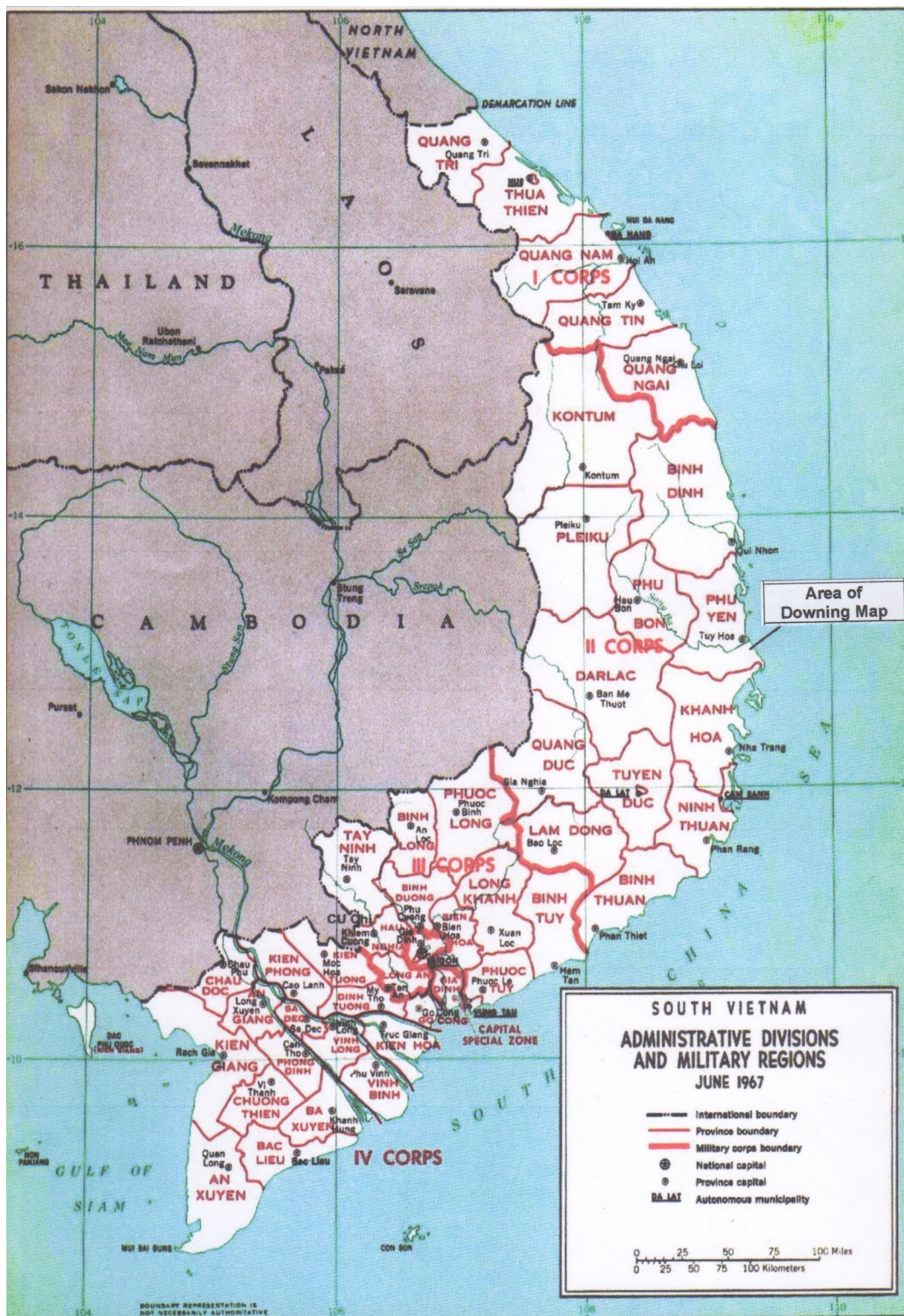
Bringing Out the Downed Pilot

5. Crash Site Location: 1969 U.S. Army Terrain Map

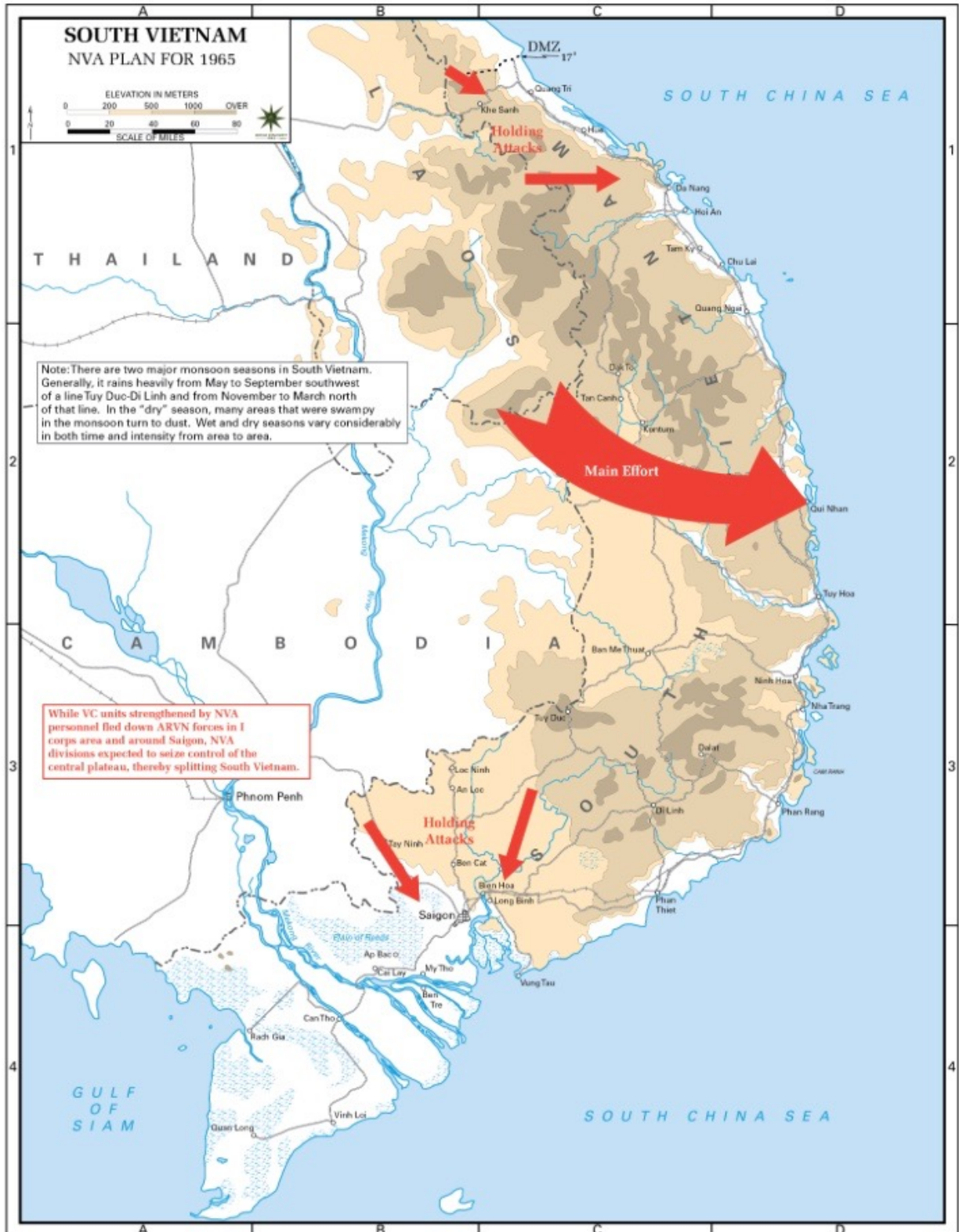


Combat Context

6. South Vietnam in 1966: Administrative Regions



Combat Context
7. The NVA in South Vietnam:
Plan for 1965

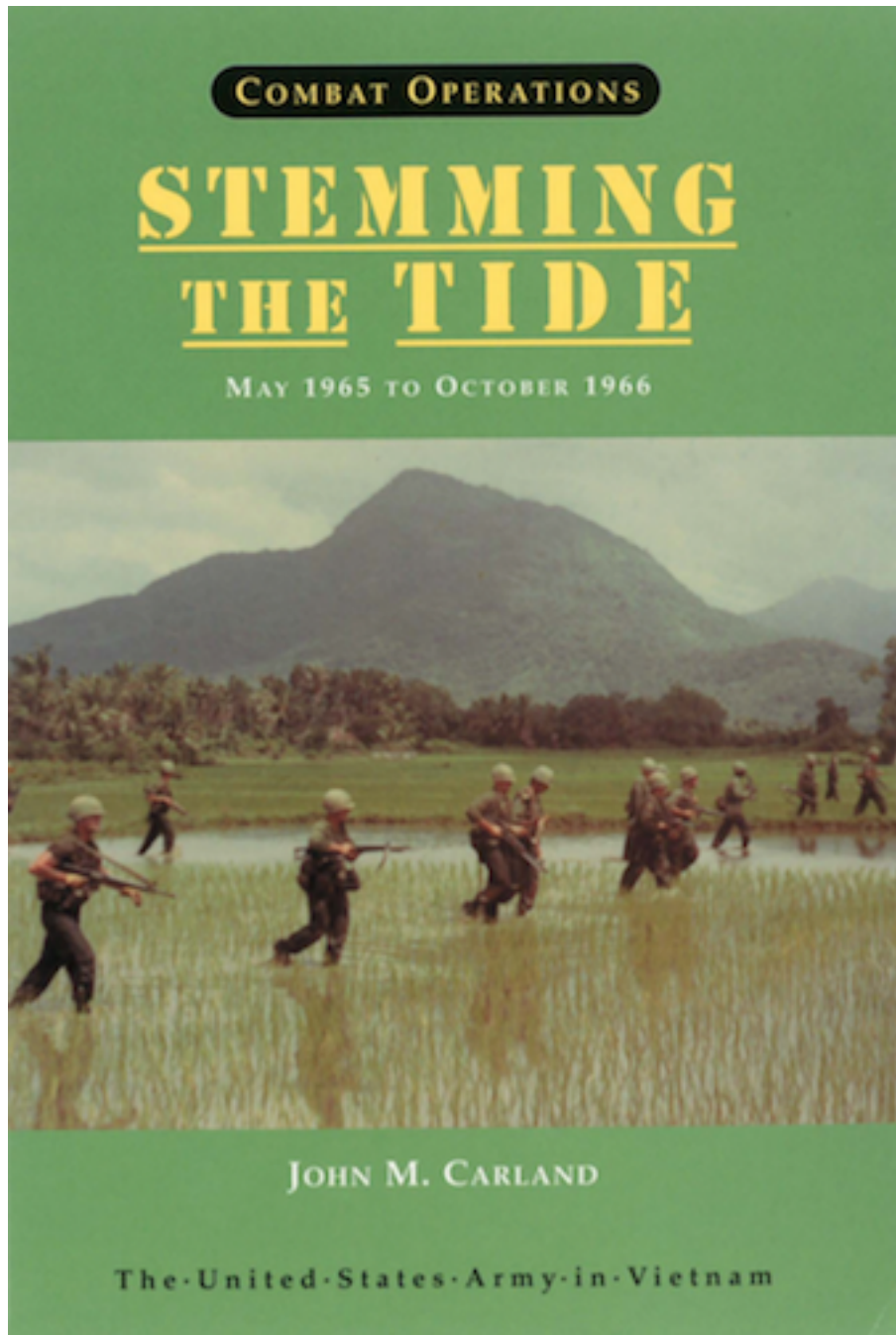


Combat Context

8. The U.S. Army in Vietnam: History of Combat Operations for 1965-1966

https://history.army.mil/html/books/091/91-5/CMH_Pub_91-5-B.pdf

See pp. 185-200 (Phu Yen January-June '66) & pp. 254-256 (*Operation Seward*, September '66)



Combat Context

9. Phu Yen Province, January-July 1966 Extract from *Stemming the Tide*, pp. 185-186

Attrition and Pacification in Phu Yen

After Saigon, General Westmoreland made securing the populated coastal plain of I and II Corps his main objective for early 1966. The rice paddies of Phu Yen Province were particularly important to him. While the Communist main forces in II Corps drew their arms and equipment from the North, they obtained much of their food in Phu Yen's Tuy Hoa Valley. In fact, they had requisitioned so much of the valley's rice harvest in 1965 that the government had to import some six hundred tons of food per month to feed the territory's population. Aware that a rich harvest was once more about to come in, Westmoreland was determined to reverse the situation and deny the enemy sustenance. Colonel Timothy's 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, drew the assignment.¹

On the Coast

The Tuy Hoa Valley spanned twenty-one-hundred square kilometers of a triangular area, with thirty-five kilometers of the South China Sea coastline as its base. The north and south sides of the valley, enclosed by verdant mountains, converged at a point thirty-five kilometers inland. Bisecting the area was the Da Rang River, flowing east to the sea. The most important city in the area was Tuy Hoa, the province capital, which lay at the mouth of the river at the juncture of Highway 1 and Route 7B. Somewhere in the mountains within a twenty-kilometer radius of Tuy Hoa were three battalions of the *95th PAVN Regiment, 5th PAVN Division*.²

Stemming the Tide



The Tuy Hoa Valley

Combat Context
**10. Phu Yen Province Combat Zone
 January-July 1966**



Combat Context
11. Phu Yen Province Combat Zone
July-October 1966

