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# The Role of the Rear Area in Wartime: A Case Study of Vinh Linh (Quang Tri, Vietnam) from 1965 to 1975

Nguyen Chi Hieu

*Ph.D. student, Faculty of History, University of Education,  
Hue University, Vietnam.*

*Email: [nguyenchihieuqt282@gmail.com](mailto:nguyenchihieuqt282@gmail.com)*

## **Abstract**

### **Keywords:**

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*The role of the rear in warfare, particularly in the context of Vietnam's 30-year resistance against the French and the Americans from 1945 to 1975, cannot be overstated. The rear area, which encompasses a vast range of activities, proved to be crucial in determining the success or failure of the conflict. During this period, the Vinh Linh Rear in Quang Tri, Vietnam, from 1965 to 1975, emerged as a paradigmatic example of how the rear operations could significantly impact the outcome of the war. It demonstrated remarkable achievements in various domains such as construction, economic development, culture, and societal organization. Moreover, Vinh Linh's rear area effectively deployed the people's war strategy, successfully resisting attacks from the air force, navy, and U.S. spy and commando operations. This not only ensured the safety of the populace but also provided support to the southern battlefield, particularly the Tri Thien theater. The Vinh Linh rear area's ability to combine economic development with military defense, social cohesion, and cultural resilience illustrates the multifaceted nature of rear operations in a protracted conflict. Its successes serve as a testament to the importance of comprehensive rear support in achieving strategic objectives in warfare. The article utilizes statistical research methods, along with incorporating several other methodologies such as classification method, retrospective method, periodic method, structural-systematic method, and comparative method. Delving deeply and comprehensively into the rear area, particularly Vinh Linh's rear area, during the resistance against the United States, is a significant and essential subject matter. Therefore, in the forthcoming period, it is imperative to have numerous research projects focusing on this content to extract valuable lessons and experiences in the endeavor to construct and safeguard the nation in the current context.*

## **Introduction**

Discussing the role of the rear entails addressing a vast area of work, of utmost significance, which decisively influences the outcome of the conflict. For Vietnam, during the 30-year resistance against both French colonialism and American intervention (1945 – 1975), the rear echelon assumed a crucial role, bearing decisive factors in the course of the war. The establishment of a robust rear area facilitates the resolution of manpower issues, provision of logistical support, and sustenance of morale for the armed forces. Simultaneously, it promotes production to meet the needs of the civilian population, ensuring the steadfast maintenance and continuous enhancement of economic and defense capabilities. The strength of the rear echelon lies in its comprehensive integration of various elements such as political, military, economic, cultural, and social factors, closely interrelated and forming a unified entity.

For Vinh Linh, following the defeat at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, the French government was compelled to sign the Geneva Accords to cease hostilities and restore peace in Indochina. According to the provisions of the Accords, Vietnam was temporarily divided into two regions, with the 17th parallel (along the Ben Hai River in Quang Tri province) serving as the temporary military demarcation line for the assembly of armed forces from both sides: the People's Army of Vietnam in the North and the French Union forces in the South.

Executing pre-conceived plans, the United States sought to fill the void left by the French, establishing a pro-American government and military in Saigon to perpetuate the long-term division of Vietnam. This move aimed to transform South Vietnam into a new type of colony and a military base to counter the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and thwart the national liberation movements in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese people continued their arduous struggle to liberate the South and reunify the country for over 20 years, from July 1954 to April 1975. Given its strategic position, Vinh Linh became a pivotal political and military focal point at the forefront of the demarcation line. It represented the northern socialist society, showcasing the superiority of its regime over the capitalist regime in the South and serving as the rear area for the Southern battlefield, particularly in Quang Tri Province. It served as the supply base for troops and ammunition from the North to the large frontline in the South. Vinh Linh was where the main units were stationed before crossing the river to fight in the South and returned for reinforcement, rest, training, and preparation for new battles.

The purpose of studying the rear area of Vinh Linh is to affirm its strategic role and position in the anti-American struggle, the liberation of the South, and the reunification of the nation. Through this article, we aim to elucidate the cooperative relationships between main military forces, local military units, and guerrilla forces, as well as the integration of various military branches and local allies. This exploration will shed light on how Vinh Linh maintained its defensive posture and people's war stance, drawing lessons and experiences in building defense zones and establishing a comprehensive national defense system aligned with the people's war strategy in modern contexts.

The significance of this research is twofold. Scientifically, it contributes to enriching the understanding of Vietnamese military tactics, the mobilization of forces, and resources in the face of intense warfare conditions. It clarifies Vinh Linh's dual role as both a rear support base for the Southern revolution and a frontline position for the Northern socialist forces.

Practically, this thesis supplements the historical documentation of the nationwide anti-American resistance, particularly in Vinh Linh. It provides valuable insights for political and military leaders to formulate policies and strategies that accurately serve the nation-building and defense efforts of today.

In summary, this study serves both academic and practical purposes, enriching military knowledge while offering practical guidance for contemporary national defense and development endeavors.

## **Literature Review**

Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001, *Complete Party Documents*, Volume 16 (1955), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. The work reflects the leadership activities of the Vietnam Labor Party in 1955.

Ho Xa Town Party Executive Committee, 2005, *History of Ho Xa Town Party Committee and People, 1955 - 2005*, Quang Tri Department of Culture and Information. The project reflects the leadership process of the Party Executive Committee of Ho Xa town, Vinh Linh district in the years 1955 - 2005. The project reflects the process of building an economically rich and culturally beautiful Ho Xa town, strong in security and defense, became the face of the socialist North, the bridgehead of the border line.

History Research Committee Party and Binh Tri Thien Culture and Information Office, 1977, *Uncle Ho with Binh Tri Thien*, Thuan Hoa Publisher, Hue, p.278. The work is a collection of articles about the feelings, care and direction of President Ho Chi Minh towards the officials and people of the three provinces of Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue during the years of peace as well as the years of peace. Resistance against America, unification of the country. Especially the attention and direction of President Ho Chi Minh towards Vinh Linh - the land at the beginning of the boundary line in the first years of the North and South implementing the Geneva Agreement.

Standing Committee of Vinh Linh District Party Committee, 1994, *History of the Party Committee and People of Vinh Linh, 1930 - 1975*, Department of Culture and Information of Quang Tri ([Standing Committee of Vinh Linh District Party, 1994](#)). The work highlighted the results achieved during the leadership of the Vinh Linh Party Committee from 1930 - 1975. In it, it emphasized: "Over the past 60 years, generations of party members, officials and people of Vinh Linh have continued to step firmly on the path of fighting for the independence and freedom of the nation. In particular, from 1954 - 1975, the Committee Party and people of Vinh Linh received the task before the nation's history: To be the outpost of the socialist North, the direct rear of the South, of Tri - Thien".

Standing Committee Party of the Military Command of Quang Tri province, 2011, *Proceedings of the scientific conference "Vinh Linh tunnel village system - A symbol of the Vietnamese people's war "*. The yearbook is a collection of articles clarifying and affirming valuable values and experiences in the military arts of the Vietnamese people's war, especially on how to prevent and deal directly with weapons. modern, keeping absolute secrets, preserving forces, food, and weapons for the army and people of the Vinh Linh area to fight and win the destructive wars of the US army. At the same time, clarifying the synergistic relationship between the military zone, province, district, commune and other localities, creating conditions for Vinh Linh to maintain a defensive posture and people's hearts, drawing many lessons. valuable experience in building and protecting the homeland and Fatherland of socialist Vietnam. The project affirms: "Vinh Linh tunnel village has become a unique creative symbol of the Vietnamese people's war, demonstrating the strength and will of the righteous resistance war for independence and freedom of the Vietnamese people".

Standing Committee Party of the Military Command of Quang Tri province, 2012, *Heroes of the People's Armed Forces of Quang Tri province*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. The project gathers the achievements of localities, units and individuals of Quang Tri province who were awarded the title of Hero of the People's Armed Forces by the State in the two resistance wars against the French and the Americans and in building and defending the Fatherland during the two wars. new period. The project highlighted the achievements of Vinh Linh's army and people in construction, fighting to protect the rear and providing support for the southern battlefield.

*Complete works of Ho Chi Minh, 2011, volume 15, 1966-1969*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. The booklet includes speeches, articles, press interviews, and many telegrams and letters from President Ho Chi Minh to officials, local people, politicians, and international friends, expressing his views. President Ho Chi Minh's diverse views, feelings and activities from January 1, 1966 to September 2, 1969. President Ho Chi Minh praised the compatriots and soldiers of Vinh Linh for upholding the spirit of patriotism and the spirit of determination to fight and win. Although the United States bombed and bombarded the area in a destructive manner, Vinh Linh fought heroically and won a glorious victory. The compatriots and soldiers were united, courageous, cunning, proactive, well prepared, fought continuously, and won a decisive victory. Vinh Linh also achieved many successes in production, transportation, people's air defense and protection of order and security.

Nguyen Chi Hieu, *The leadership of the Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee for the task of supporting and supplying Con Co island in the years 1964 - 1968*, Science Magazine of Hue University of Education, No. 1 (65) 2023. The article clearly stated the important military strategic position of Con Co island, which is the forward guard post of the Socialist North. Con Co Island is located nearly 30 km from the mainland, in the Vinh Linh area. From the island, using observation means can detect all movements on the mainland, and can see the positions of the US and Vietnam. Republics in Con Tien, Doc Mieu, Cua Viet port, can detect American ships from afar. Therefore, when the US launched a war of air and naval sabotage against the North, Vinh Linh - Con Co became a target of destructive destruction. Since 1964, the US began to attack to destroy Con Co Island with increasing bombardment intensity, the lives and fighting of officers and soldiers on the island encountered countless difficulties, hardships, and sacrifices. Faced with the island's survival risk, the Regional Party Committee held many meetings, issued nearly 30 directives, resolutions, plans and hundreds of important phone calls for the army and people of Vinh Linh to open the "bloody road". "Supply and provide guns, ammunition, medicine, food, food... to the island. The correct and timely leadership of the Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee is a prerequisite and a decisive factor in the victory of officers and soldiers on Con Co island.

Associate Professor, Dr. Hoang Chi Hieu, 2022, *The high-tech war at MacNamara Electronic Fence (1966-1972)*, Ho Chi Minh City General

Publisher ([Hoang Chi Hieu, 2022](#)). The book clarifies the birth of the McNamara Electronic Fence on the Vietnam battlefield, essentially a form of high-tech warfare deployed on a large scale for the first time in the world; structure and operating mechanism of containment barriers; The struggle against high-tech warfare directly involves the participation of forces on the Northern Quang Tri battlefield and Truong Son road to defeat all plots to prevent reinforcements from the North, which directly involves Vinh Linh's rear for the southern revolution and moved towards removing the fence. Thereby, it proves that Vietnam's bravery and intelligence, once properly promoted, will be able to win against any power, even if it is many times superior.

In addition, there are historical works on the Party organizations and the people of the communes and towns within Vinh Linh district that have outlined the process of formation and development of these party organizations. They also detail the leadership and guidance provided by the local Party committees to cadres, soldiers, and civilians in the areas of combat, homeland construction, and defense, as well as during the nation-building period. Therefore, there have been numerous historical works, scientific research topics, and articles studying the rear area of Vinh Linh in the resistance against the United States. However, these works and topics have mainly just begun to investigate and summarize each aspect of the various wartime activities or the history of conducting people's war against the multifaceted destructive war of the United States in the region. To date, from a general historical perspective, particularly in military history, there hasn't been any in-depth research that systematically and comprehensively explores the process of organizing and implementing the tasks of building, defending, and enhancing the rear area's role in the Vinh Linh district during the resistance against the United States. This lack of comprehensive research fails to fully capture the characteristics, roles, successes, and lessons learned, hindering their application in current nation-building and defense efforts. Therefore, there is a need for more extensive and systematic research to address this gap and provide valuable insights for contemporary national development and defense strategies.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Building Vinh Linh into a symbol of the socialist regime in the North (1954 - 1964)**

Clearly define the position, role, and importance of the rear of Vinh Linh to the southern revolution. From being a district of Quang Tri province, after being liberated, Vinh Linh was upgraded to an administrative unit equivalent to the level conscious. On May 28, 1955, the Party Central Committee Secretariat issued Resolution No. 16-NQ/TW on "*establishing a new Vinh Linh Area Party Committee on the same level as a province and the Party Committee must be directly under the direction of the Central Committee*" ([Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001](#)). Next, on June 16, 1955, the Prime Minister issued Decree No. 551-TTg to organize Vinh Linh into an administrative unit directly under the Central Government. The Decree

clearly stated: *"Vinh Linh area belongs to Quang Binh province." Tri, from now on, is organized into a separate administrative unit, equivalent to a province (Article 1). Temporarily place Vinh Linh Area under the direct direction of the Central Government (Prime Minister, 1955). As early as the end of 1955, the 4th Inter-Regional Party Committee determined that "Vinh Linh has a special importance for us as well as for the enemy. It is a place of fierce struggle between the two regimes in all aspects of politics, culture, society, economics, etc. For us, it is a typical place for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a place that serves as a springboard to promote our regime's strong influence in the South, develop North-South relations and fight against all evil plots. espionage and sabotage activities, countering all enemy influence. As for the enemy, in order to temporarily close the military line in peace, destroy the cause of unification of our country and prepare for war, they actively consolidate the South and rely on the Southern demilitarized zone as a springboard to attack. spies colluded with counter-revolutionaries to disrupt and provoke us in the northern part of the border; In case the war returns, Vinh Linh will also be a way to attack the enemy in the North (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001).* The Party Central Committee has set out specific immediate tasks for Vinh Linh: Strive to consolidate and build Vinh Linh in politics, economics, military, social culture, mainly the people's living standards, highlights the superiority of the socialist regime in the North over the South.

On June 16, 1957, during his visit to Quang Binh and Vinh Linh, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: *"Quang Binh and Vinh Linh are on the front line in the North, adjacent to the South, whether everything is good or bad." of the aunts and uncles here all had a certain influence on the Southern revolution, and were all meaningful to the protection of the North. If the enemy takes any action, Quang Binh and Vinh Linh must confront them first and must defeat them first (History Research Committee Party and Binh Tri Thien Culture and Information Department, 1977).* "The admonitions of President Ho Chi Minh and the tasks of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labor Party have affirmed the strategic position and responsibility of Vinh Linh's rear for the national revolution in the resistance war against America and to save the country.

From 1955-1964, Vinh Linh received national attention and was built into a symbol of the socialist North. Many offices, businesses, state and collectives were massively built, becoming the pride not only of the people of Vinh Linh but also of the entire North at that time. With dozens of industrial and handicraft enterprises such as electrical enterprises; mechanical factory; cassava starch processing factory, fragrant tea processing factory, rice milling factory, tractor station, wood factory. The commercial network develops widely. In the center of Ho Xa Town, there is a two-story commercial store, a hotel, a park, an exhibition hall, and a high school; museum, library, bookstore "Unification"; Radio stations, printing houses, outdoor theaters, etc. create a complex of towns and population centers with many houses, large streets, and bustling markets (Ho Xa Town Party Executive Committee, 2006, p. 42). To encourage and inspect the work of building a new regime, at the end of 1963,

Prime Minister Pham Van Dong visited Vinh Linh. At a talk with officials and people of Vinh Linh in Ho Xa town, the Prime Minister praised and acknowledged the initial efforts of the people of the town and the entire Vinh Linh for being united, courageous and courageous in fight, defeat the poor and backward, strive to build Vinh Linh strong and beautiful, worthy of the regime's front line position, contributing to being a reliable support for our compatriots on the other side of the southern bank to fight confronting America and the government of the Republic of Vietnam, completing the people's national democratic revolution throughout the country ([Ho Xa town Executive Committee Party, 2005](#)).

Ten years of peace (1954 - 1964), with the help of the Party, the Government, the people of the country and with all intelligence, creativity, diligence, and suffering, with his hard work, Vinh Linh quickly changed his skin and flesh. From a poor countryside, it has become a "diamond at the frontier" as writer Nguyen Tuan praised. The early orientation of building Vinh Linh into an outpost in the Socialist North, the right policy, is the basis for build Vinh Linh into a solid area in all aspects of politics, economics, society, defense and security. From that correct perception, the Party Central Committee and the Government have proposed policies and measures. Appropriate leadership and direction to build and strengthen the rear of Vinh Linh is both a front-line task for the Southern revolution and associated with all activities of the large northern rear.

Before February 1965, Vinh Linh always had a superior advantage over the new American colonial regime on the other side of the line, most notably the activities of "flag fighting", "speaker fighting"<sup>1</sup>, and other activities. Cultural and artistic activities create a special attraction and encourage the people of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) on the south bank to firmly believe in the Party's leadership and the inevitable victory of the revolution to liberate the South. That advantage is further affirmed when the front line of the Socialist North is always safely protected from the permanent "Northern advance" plot of the US and the government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

**Vinh Linh is on the front line to prevent and destroy the "Northern advance" plot and the "War of sabotage" strategy of the US and the Saigon government, contributing to protecting North Vietnam (1965-1975)**

After the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the United States launched a campaign of aerial and naval warfare throughout North Vietnam. In this conflict, Vinh Linh became a particular target for U.S. attacks, being identified as a critical strategic location on the northern border. By targeting Vinh Linh, the U.S. aimed to eradicate all life in this relatively small area of less than 820 square kilometers, with a length of only 17 kilometers and a width of 62 kilometers, and a population of just over 40,000 people. This relentless assault sought to transform Vinh Linh into a desolate wasteland, effectively severing all support from the North to the revolutionary forces in the South.

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<sup>1</sup> The race features large-sized flags, high flagpoles, and high-volume loudspeakers to overwhelm the opponents on both sides of the Hien Luong River.

As America's war of sabotage becomes more and more fierce in Vinh Linh area, the issue of prevention to "*To exist or not to exist*" is decisive in order to successfully carry out all tasks, first of all is to preserve the lives of the people and the armed forces to fight and defeat the invading enemy. Therefore, the Party Committee of Vinh Linh area pays special attention and does well in prevention work. To stay in the area, protect the safety of forces participating in combat, serve combat, produce, protect the people, perform direct rear missions of the Northern Quang Tri battlefield and provide supplies, Providing support and fighting to protect Con Co Island, the Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee has focused on leading and implementing the construction of a system of "prevention and fighting back" works, implementing the movement: "*Militarization of the entire population, fortification of the entire area*" with the slogan: "*Houses cover the sun and dew, cellars cover bones and flesh*" ([Standing Committee Party of the Military Command of Quang Tri province, 2011](#)). Almost all Vinh Linh's human activities have been moved underground. A continuous system of "A-shaped tunnels", shacks, single sections of trenches..., gradually developing into continuous fortifications and communication trenches connecting villages and communes, from forest to sea, was formed in a short time, demonstrating the determination to fight and defeat the invading American imperialists.

Along with the increase in the intensity of American raids, all combat activities, combat service and daily life of the people cannot survive on a ground dense with bombs and bullets. The Party Committee and government of Vinh Linh decided to move all activities underground with a continuous system of "*tunnel villages*" throughout the area. The army and people of Vinh Linh have turned the hills and red basalt lands into "tunnel villages".

From 1965 to 1968, the entire Vinh Linh area dug 91,840 tunnels, 2,098 km of trenches, organized a civil defense system with thousands of rescue and ambulance teams and mobilized all forces. and the ability of sectors and localities to synchronously implement solutions: evacuation, dispersion, camouflage, cover, observation, alarm... so we have reduced losses and casualties, consolidated and improved high people's spirit ([Standing Committee Party of the Military Command of Quang Tri province, 2011](#)). Just like Cu Chi<sup>2</sup> or many other localities, the entire area of Vinh Linh is a fortification battlefield with a system of tunnels, trenches, and tunnels of all kinds . What makes the basic difference is that from the tunnel system, Vinh Linh has developed into a "tunnel village" system. If in Cu Chi and many other localities, a tunnel system is built in villages, hamlets, hamlets... forming fighting villages, "steel fortresses" right in the area. American troops and the Republic of Vietnam occupied it , forming a "bunker in the village" ; Vinh Linh also built the tunnels into a "village in a tunnel". It is the "tunnel village" system that has

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<sup>2</sup> Cu Chi Tunnels is an underground defense system in Cu Chi district , 70 km northwest of Saigon City (now Ho Chi Minh City). This system was dug by the Viet Minh resistance army and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam during the period Viet Nam's war. The tunnel system includes an infirmary, many rooms, kitchens, storage rooms, offices, and an underground tunnel system, about 250 km long.

helped the army and people of Vinh Linh firmly hold on, not only ensuring regular combat activities and effective combat service; but also maintain increased production, cultural and educational activities... ensuring the material and spiritual life of the forces in the area when Vinh Linh's land has become a "white area" before the devastation. fierceness of American bombs .

In 1967, the intensity of American bombardment increased, so even though some tunnels were dug over 15 meters deep, they were still destroyed by American bombs, killing hundreds of people, including many children and students. Particularly, the tunnels of Tan Ly village, Vinh Quang commune were destroyed by American bombs, killing 62 people. The painful loss happened every day and every hour. Facing the fierceness of the war, the Party Central Committee thought of reducing population density in the war zone. The forces that stay behind to produce and fight are adults, young, and healthy, while children, students, the elderly, weak, and physically exhausted must have plans to move to the Northern provinces, to safe places. prevent a prolonged war. Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee proposed to the Central Committee and received Central approval for Vinh Linh and the southern districts of Quang Binh province to implement Plan K8 and Plan K10<sup>3</sup>. This is a plan stemming from one of the major and extremely correct decisions of the Party Central Committee's Politburo to move a force of youth behind the line of fire to protect and nurture the red seeds of the Party. revolution for the post-war period, while creating favorable conditions for young, healthy forces to stay and fight against the Americans. After the K8 plan was completed, Vinh Linh Party Committee advocated reviewing the force and continuing to evacuate 22,137 old people, children and young people in Vinh Linh area Thach Ha, Can Loc districts (Ha Tinh province) and Tan Ky district (Nghe An province).

Plans K8 and K10 are considered a unique evacuation in the history of the homeland and the country. It is a strategic policy of the Party and has great significance, making an important contribution to the victory of the resistance. fight against America , save the country. After implementing prevention plans and evacuating people to the northern provinces, the army and people of Vinh Linh focused their efforts on the resistance war against the US and supporting the southern revolution. The Party Committee and government of Vinh Linh Special Zone have flexibly applied the People's War posture, perfecting methods to attack American aircraft and warships. The militia and self-defense forces and local soldiers of Vinh Linh stuck to the area, fought on the spot, widely and coordinated soldiers with the main army stationed in the area to build a concentrated battle. The People's Armed Forces in Vinh Linh has developed to include three types of troops equipped with many types of weapons from conventional to modern, so when the war started, they applied both combat methods at the same time, combining them. closely

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<sup>3</sup> Plan K8 is a plan to evacuate 30,000 young people from 7 to 15 years old to live and study in the provinces of Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Ha Nam, and Thanh Hoa. Plan K10 is an evacuation plan 22,137 old people, children and young people in Vinh Linh area Thach Ha, Can Loc districts (Ha Tinh province) and Tan Ky district (Nghe An province).

together and promote the effect of attrition and destruction of the enemy, creating glorious victories in the heroic journey of history. The People's War's air defense system formed a widespread ground-to-air posture to attack the US, especially in important areas, causing many losses to the US Air Force. Vinh Linh soldiers and people shot down 293 aircraft of all types, including 7 B52 aircraft, sunk and burned 69 warships, including the 100,000-ton battleship New Jersey ([Standing Committee Party of the Military Command of Quang Tri province, 2012](#)). The most typical fight against sabotage by the US air force in Linh is the battle on November 11, 1966, shooting down 6 US planes, capturing American pilots, becoming "the darkest day of the war". US Air Force. On November 15, 1966, President Ho Chi Minh sent a letter praising the army and people of Vinh Linh for winning a great victory: "...That was a glorious victory of a locality in one day. ...The localities should try their best to compete and win big like Vinh Linh" ([Ho Chi Minh, 2011](#)). On September 17, 1967, Vinh Linh was the first locality to shoot down a US B52 strategic aircraft on the Vietnamese battlefield with SAM-2 anti-aircraft missiles provided by the Soviet Union. This is a very important victory, relieving concerns about the possibility of shooting down B52s when attacking the North, opening the possibility of defeating the US Air Force's B52 super flying fortress. Thanks to the experiences, situations, and plans to attack B52 aircraft in Vinh Linh, missile units in the North have been learned, so the strategic raid by B.52 aircraft in the North was completely defeated. Hanoi, Hai Phong, and Thai Nguyen forced the US to sit at the negotiating table to sign the Paris Agreement to restore peace in Vietnam <sup>4</sup>.

### **Vinh Linh supplied supplies to Con Co island (Quang Tri, Vietnam) and performed a direct rearguard role in the southern battlefield**

#### *Returning Supplies to Con Co Island*

Island has a very important military strategic position, standing at the southern gate of the Gulf of Tonkin, is the forward guard post of the North, and the guard post of the "Ho Chi Minh Trail on the Sea" to protect ships, boats of the Northern rear area transporting people and weapons to the Southern battlefield. This is a confrontation point between the forces of the South and the North both on sea and air routes. Con Co Island became the target of destruction by the US Air Force and Navy. Warships, cruisers, destroyers, commando ships, amphibious ships... cut across, split along the sea surface, surrounded on all four sides... using all means to block all reinforcements and supplies from the mainland to the island. Facing the risk of the island's survival, the V Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee held a meeting to set out the determination to protect Con Co with the slogans:

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<sup>4</sup> From the night of December 18 to December 30, 1972, for 12 days and nights, the US used 729 B.52 aircraft and 1,900 attack aircraft to focus on attacking Hanoi, Hai Phong, and Thai Nguyen, dropping a mass of bombs. The amounts of bombs had the destructive power of five atomic bombs the US dropped on Japan in August 1945. The army and people of the North were resilient and cunning, completely defeating the strategic raid by US B.52 aircraft. 81 modern aircraft, including 34 B.52 aircraft and 5 F.111 aircraft were shot down; 43 pilots were captured alive.

" All for the beloved Con Co ", " The mainland still exists, Con Co still exists". The Regional Party Committee has held many meetings, issued nearly 30 directives, resolutions, plans and hundreds of important phone calls for the army and people of Vinh Linh to open a "bloody road" to supply guns and ammunition, medicine, food, food... for the island (Nguyen Chi Hieu, 2023). Accordingly, the cooperatives urgently reviewed the boats, repaired the damage, selected people with good health and were familiar with the canals to form a supply boat team. There were young women who had just turned 16 years old and had never gone to sea before volunteering to join the boat team. There were old men in their 60s and 70s who also drew their blood and wrote applications to go to supply Con Co with the youth.

From 1964 to 1975, tens of thousands of tons of goods, necessities, weapons, including 85 mm artillery, 14.5 mm anti-aircraft guns, and supplies were transported to the island, many wounded soldiers and martyrs from the island were transported to the island. Move to the mainland by simple wooden boats with rowing hands. Officers and soldiers of Company 22 and people of 4 coastal communes of Vinh Linh during the process of supplying and supporting Con Co island had hundreds of times to face and fight directly with American warships, nearly 200 people died. bravely sacrificed his life, 202 others were injured or missing, 86 people were arrested or imprisoned. Opening a bloody sea route to aid Con Co island in the conditions of both being fiercely attacked and surrounded and blockaded was a miracle of the Vietnamese people's art of war. This is the art of promoting the power of the masses, using primitiveness to overcome modernity. Without the experience of looking at the sky and clouds to know the waters of the old fishermen who have spent their lives at sea, without the burning determination of the suicide soldiers, there would not be a Con Co towering like an "invulnerable battleship", standing tall in the face of storms and bombs from the US military. The road across the sea to provide support to Con Co island during the resistance war against the US by the army and people of Vinh Linh made an important contribution to the glorious and resounding victories of the officers and soldiers on the island. Thanks to the supply and support of weapons, food, and medicine on the mainland, the soldiers of Con Co island fought 841 large and small battles, shot down 48 planes, set fire to, and sank 17 warships of all types. With achievements in fighting the Americans well and defending the island tenaciously, Con Co was honored to be the first unit in the entire socialist North to be honored twice as Hero by the National Assembly and the Government.

*As Reinforcements, Coordinate with The Southern Battlefield to Fight*

During the resistance war against the US, the Party Committee, People and Vinh Linh armed forces made efforts to overcome many great challenges, supporting the front lines with all their abilities. Under the direct direction of the Central Committee, Vinh Linh Party Committee advocates bringing experienced political and military officials to the South, along with the base on the southern bank of Ben Hai River to consolidate and build. movements, organize political struggles, and armed struggles to suit each

revolutionary stage. On the other hand, help Quang Tri province organize the transfer of a number of key officers in Gio Linh and Cam Lo districts to Vinh Linh rear base for training, study, and further training in all aspects, and later return to become core leaders. direct, direct.

Faced with the increasing demand for resistance service, in addition to the force of cadres, party members, military and militia, the Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee also established a "*fire line militia*" force<sup>5</sup> to serve the Southern battlefield. This force mainly serves the commune level, with a few serving the district level such as Vinh Linh, Gio Linh, Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, with the following tasks: transporting weapons and food to serve combat troops, and carrying stretchers. Wounded, burying martyrs and caring for wounded and sick soldiers, digging trenches, leveling bomb craters, building houses, camps, warehouses, building roads, purchasing and protecting food, transporting officials... As the fighting in the Northern Quang Tri battlefield became more fierce, the work of bringing in supplies and ammunition from outside and transporting the wounded and dead inside became more and more urgent. With the spirit of "For our biological South, for our beloved Quang Tri", after the Quang Tri "Post Transport" Department was established (December 1964) with the code name "*Lam Son Station*", Vinh Linh Regional Party Committee mobilized 50 Young party members and elite union members in the following sectors: post office, transportation and from communes, organized into shock teams to strengthen Quang Tri (*managed by the Department of Posts and Communications*). The main task of the team is to transport, pick up, and lead officers and soldiers from the South to the North, transporting food, weapons, and goods to the battlefield. From the end of 1965, the entire Vinh Linh area established a regiment, and each commune and town established a transport platoon, ready to serve the front line. Accordingly, the entire region organized tens of thousands of people to transport food and weapons for combat and transport wounded to the Southern battlefield, mainly the Tri - Thien battlefield<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Called "*Fire Line Militia*" or also known as "*Grassroots Youth Volunteers*" to distinguish it from the youth volunteer force concentrated in the south of Quang Tri province (Gio Linh, Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, Trieu Phong, Hai Lang) managed by the Quang Tri Provincial Party Committee, in Vinh Linh managed by Vinh Linh Special Zone. The fire line militia force is a force of young people residing in villages and communes. This army does not have a certain number of troops. Due to the requirements of the battlefield, sometimes it is only necessary to mobilize the militia and youth of a few communes and cooperatives. But sometimes many communes, enterprises and agencies are mobilized. Service time depends on mission requirements and each revolutionary period.

<sup>6</sup> From 1967 to 1973, in the 3 points crossing the Hien Luong River, at ferry station B - Tung Luat alone, there were more than 78,000 ferry trips back and forth, transporting over 1.5 million soldiers, nearly 400,000 civilians, and nearly 20,000 newly liberated Quang Tri compatriots evacuated to Vinh Linh according to plan K.15 in 1972 and tens of thousands of tons of food and weapons. On peak days, wharf B made 145 trips, transporting more than 1,000 people and tons of weapons to the South bank. In addition, at this wharf, 315 shipments of goods from Nghe Tinh were forwarded to support the Quang Tri battlefield. Most of the main units from the North participating in the battle on

Along with organizing on-site combat, Vinh Linh sent his forces to the South to fight directly. Vinh Linh Military Command selected Battalion 47 of Regiment 270 as the unit assigned to operate continuously on the Gio Linh - Cam Lo, Trieu Phong - Hai Lang fronts during the period 1965 - 1972.<sup>7</sup> Overcoming hardships and sacrifices, officers and soldiers of the Battalion, together with the militia and guerrillas of Vinh Linh, implemented the operating method *"Eating rice from the North, fighting the enemy from the South"*, crossing the Ben Hai River, coordinating With superior forces and on-the-spot forces, they organized attacks against the US army and the Saigon army. Vinh Linh's support forces have cooperated closely with on-site forces and main forces in major military campaigns, working with local soldiers and people to defend land, win over people, fight enemy counterattacks, and defend the army. stabilize and expand mastery and liberate the homeland. Fighting side by side with local army forces, dozens of companies, firepower squads, and infantry of Vinh Linh militia and guerrillas continuously rotated into the front to fight directly.

From 1973 - 1975, based on the requirements and tasks assigned by the Central Committee, Vinh Linh promoted the preparation of support forces for the battlefield to win complete victory. Localities and units in the region enthusiastically organize for young people to register for military service. The People's Public Security force reinforced many officers and soldiers for the South, especially the Tri - Thien Hue battlefield. In 1975, together with localities in the region, the army and people of Vinh Linh completed and excellently completed the task of ensuring transportation of goods and replenishing troops for the battlefields, especially the battlefields of the region. Male. The army and people in the rear of Vinh Linh coordinated with the army and people of the South bank to fight 312 battles, eliminating from combat 26,737 American soldiers and the Saigon army, destroying many important war vehicles; Transported hundreds of thousands of tons of food and weapons, dozens of trips to the island and safely to the South shore.

## Conclusion

The rear area is a decisive factor in the success or failure of war, a matter governed by certain laws. In the case of Vinh Linh (Quang Tri, Vietnam)

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the Quang Tri battlefield went back and forth to this wharf, such as the 308th, 320th, 324th Divisions, 126th Naval Brigade... Not to mention, the Regiment. 270 along with thousands of military from communes in the Eastern Vinh Linh region participated in coordinated combat with the main units and the people of the liberated region of Quang Tri. In 1968, a series of battles against US transport ships on the Cua Viet River paralyzed the US transport route supporting the Khe Sanh base. During the strategic offensive in 1972, in addition to transporting people and weapons, Wharf B also played the role of attracting enemy firepower so that tanks could safely cross Wharf A into the battlefield and then participate in the defense. kept Cua Viet port against the plot to recapture the US and the Saigon government in early 1973. (*According to Hoang Chi Hieu, "Tung Luat B Ferry", Military History Magazine, No. 9-2010*).

<sup>7</sup> The predecessor of Battalion 47 was Le Hong Phong Company, established in December 1947. During the resistance war against the French colonialists, Le Hong Phong Company fought tenaciously with the people and soldiers of Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue provinces. Courageous and accomplished many outstanding achievements.

from 1965 to 1975, the research article has contributed to elucidating the strategies and determination of the Party at various levels, particularly the Vinh Linh District Party Committee, in establishing Vinh Linh as a stronghold for North Vietnam's socialist cause. Additionally, it sheds light on the characteristics, roles, and achievements in organizing the construction of the Vinh Linh rear area for the national liberation of Vietnam from the aggression of the United States.

After the resounding victory of the 9-year struggle against French colonialism, Vinh Linh's natural conditions, and political and military significance, led it to become a strategically vital defensive area for Military Region 4. Building and defending the rear area of Vinh Linh became an objective necessity. Therefore, the Party, military, and people of Vinh Linh promptly recognized their strategic importance as both the rear and frontline, directly contacting both the socialist North and the U.S.-backed Saigon regime.

Based on a firm grasp of the Party's people's war viewpoint and revolutionary standpoint as the people's cause, with a resolute determination to fight and win, the Party committees and authorities at all levels in Vinh Linh encouraged the entire army and population to maximize the role of the frontline rear area, contributing to defeating the ruthless destructive war waged by the United States in the region. This effort ensured smooth transportation and mobilization of material and spiritual resources for the resistance struggle, providing strong support for the Southern battlefield, particularly in the Tri-Thien region.

Studying the role of the rear area during wartime, especially in the case of Vinh Linh (Quang Tri, Vietnam) from 1965 to 1975, along with numerous historical works, summaries, scientific topics, and research articles on the resistance rear area, the large socialist northern rear area, and Vinh Linh's rear area in the anti-American resistance, has contributed to a systematic, comprehensive understanding of the organization and implementation of tasks in building, defending, and enhancing the role of the rear area in a specific and unique location like Vinh Linh during the anti-American resistance. From this, clearer insights into the characteristics, roles, and successes can be gleaned, along with valuable lessons to be applied in the current nation-building and defense efforts.

Given its strategic position as a crucial and potential-rich region of Military Region 4, throughout history, all invading enemies have sought to divide and conquer this strategic area. In both the anti-French and anti-American resistance wars, Military Region 4 experienced temporary occupation and liberated zones. With the implementation of the Geneva Accords, Vietnam was temporarily divided into two regions with different political systems: the North following socialism supported by the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries, while the South followed capitalism supported by the United States and its allies. The Ben Hai River, located on the 17th parallel in Vinh Linh District, Quang Tri Province, became the temporary military demarcation line, causing Vinh Linh to endure more than 20 years of national division. Vinh Linh served as the forefront and rear support base for the socialist North and the direct rear area for the Southern battlefield.

In the current nation-building and defense efforts, amidst the complex and unpredictable global and regional situations, the requirements for building and defending the nation, constructing a strong revolutionary armed force, are becoming increasingly demanding. Therefore, continuing in-depth and comprehensive research on the rear area in general and Vinh Linh's rear area in particular in the anti-American resistance is crucial to extract valuable experiences and contribute to the continued development and prosperity of Vinh Linh homeland.

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