From 1966 to 1971 the First Australian Task Force was part of the counter-insurgency campaign in South Vietnam. Though considered a small component of the Free World effort in the war, these troops from Australia and New Zealand were in fact the best trained and prepared for counter-insurgency warfare. However, until now, their achievements have been largely overlooked by military historians.

The Search for Tactical Success in Vietnam sheds new light on this campaign by examining the thousands of small-scale battles that the First Australian Task Force was engaged in. The book draws on statistical, spatial and temporal analysis, as well as primary data, to present a unique study of the tactics and achievements of the First Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy province, South Vietnam. Further, original maps throughout the text help to illustrate how the Task Force’s tactics were employed.

Thoroughly researched and engagingly written, The Search for Tactical Success in Vietnam provides a unique insight into counter-insurgency and Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

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THE SEARCH FOR TACTICAL SUCCESS IN VIETNAM

AN ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE COMBAT OPERATIONS

ANDREW ROSS
ROBERT HALL
AMY GRIFFIN
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AUTHORS’ NOTE

Unless otherwise specified, the source of all tables and figures in this book is the IATF Contact Database 1966–1971 and/or the Phuoc Tuy Incident Database (which are the bases of this study).
ABBREVIATIONS

1ATF 1st Australian Task Force
AAORG Australian Army Operational Research Group
AATTV Australian Army Training Team Vietnam
ANPRC Very High Frequency radio set
AO Area of Operations
APC Armoured Personnel Carrier
ARVN Army of the Republic of Vietnam
AWM Australian War Memorial
CAAR Combat After Action Report
CAT Combined Arms Team
CIDG Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CMF Citizen Military Forces
CO Commanding Officer
COMAFV Commander, Australian Force Vietnam
COMUSMACV Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CP Command Post
CRW counter-revolutionary war
CS A form of disabling agent similar to tear gas
DIOCC District Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centre
DMZ Demilitarised Zone
DRV Democratic Republic of Vietnam
FFV Field Force Vietnam
FGA Fighter Ground Attack
FO Forward Observer
FOO Forward Observation Officer
FSB Fire Support Base
FSCC Fire Support Coordination Centre
FWMAF Free World Military Assistance Forces
GPMG General Purpose Machine-gun
GVN Government of Vietnam
H&I Harassing and interdiction
HFT Heavy Fire Team
ICTZ I Corps Tactical Zone
IED Improvised Explosive Device
IIFFV II Field Force Vietnam
IIICTZ III Corps Tactical Zone
INTSUM Intelligence Summary
KIA Killed in Action
LFT Light Fire Team
LMG Light Machine-gun
MATT Mobile Advisory and Training Team
MFC Mortar Fire Controller
MG Machine-gun
NCO Non-Commissioned Officer
NDP Night Defensive Position
NLF National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam
NPFF National Police Field Force
ORBAT Order of Battle
PF Popular Force
POW Prisoner of War
PRU Province Reconnaissance Unit
PSDF Popular Self-Defence Force
RDC Revolutionary Development Cadre
RF Regional Force
RIF Reconnaissance-in-Force
RNZA Royal New Zealand Artillery
ROE Rules of Engagement
RPG Rocket Propelled Grenade
RPM Rounds per Minute
RRF Ready Reaction Force
RVNAF Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SAS Special Air Service
SLR Self-Loading Rifle
SOP Standing Operating Procedure
TAOR Tactical Area of Operational Responsibility
USMACV United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam
VCI Viet Cong Infrastructure
VC/PAVN Viet Cong/People’s Army of Vietnam
WIA Wounded in Action