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Andrew Ross , Robert Hall , Amy Griffin  
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THE SEARCH FOR TACTICAL SUCCESS  
IN VIETNAM  
AN ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE  
COMBAT OPERATIONS

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.

**Andrew Ross** is a Visiting Fellow at the University of New South Wales, Canberra, and a former Operations Research Analyst at Central Studies Establishment, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Australian Department of Defence.

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## AUTHORS' NOTE

*Unless otherwise specified, the source of all tables and figures in this book is the 1ATF 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



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## ABBREVIATIONS xvii

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