

ANNEX A

The Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta is the southern portion of South Vietnam, and includes all of the country that is to the southwest of Saigon. It is bordered on the southeast by the South China Sea, on the west by the Gulf of Siam, and on the northwest by Cambodia. The Delta area is approximately 175 miles long on a northeast southwest line and varies in width from 150 miles to 20 miles as it tapers to a point at its southernmost extremity.

The Delta is an almost flat stretch of land having a mean elevation of less than 20 feet. Much of its shore line has a narrow strip of dense foliage and trees extending in places as much as three to four miles inland. Other shore line areas are characterized by swamps and marshes.

Inland, there are large rice fields which cover almost the entire countryside. Numerous canals, streams and rivers mark the countryside and along these streams and rivers are tree lines, small villages and hamlets. There are few roads; however the intricate network of canals and rivers link everything together, and the "sampan" is the primary vehicle for surface transportation outside of the larger cities.

The Mekong Delta is transversed by two major rivers, the Bassac and the Mekong. The Bassac is the more southern of the two and it flows down from Laos through Cambodia and enters Vietnam just north of Chau Doc flowing southeastward, past Long Xuyen, Can Tho and empties into the South China Sea. These are major cities in the Delta, sharing in importance with Sadec, Vinh Long, and My Tho, located on the Mekong River which runs generally parallel and is located to the northeast of the Bassac River. Rach Gia is

located on the West coast. Ca Mau is located toward the southern tip of the country and Soc Trang is located just south of the Bassac River near the Southeastern coast line. Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh, Vi Thanh, Ben Tre, and Co Gong are other important cities. The Mekong River divides into three branches just southeast of Sadec near Vinh Long. Each branch, like the main parts of the two rivers contains numerous small islands.

During the monsoon season, the rivers, streams, canals and the flooded rice paddies give the impression from the air that the country is under water. During the dry season, (which lasts from December through May) the rice paddies and the smaller streams and canals dry up.

The Mekong Delta is a rice growing region which produces over two thirds of the food in the Republic of Vietnam. It contains over half of the country's population. It is an area rich in natural resources and is very important to the Vietnamese people. This was the operating territory of Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion -- "The Winged Warriors"