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# Red School: Recruit to Guerrilla

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SAIGON.

A defector from one of seven regular Viet Cong battalions now surrounding Saigon said he was told by Communist recruiters "when we win the war you will become master of the country."

The defector, one of some 4,000 trained Red troops on the outskirts of the capital city complex, described his recruitment, training and life with the organized guerrillas to this reporter.

He said the commander and the deputy commander of his unit—the 6th Battalion, operating on the outskirts of Saigon—were native-born South Vietnamese, but had gone to North Viet Nam when the country was divided by the Geneva Convention in 1954.

The political commissar of the unit "is a new man that has just come in from North Viet Nam—and is North Vietnamese by birth," the defector said. He said 90 per cent of the troops in his unit had been recruited from their local villages outside of Saigon—and that recruitment had been accelerated since the February air strikes against North Viet Nam.

## PERSUASION

The defector said the Viet Cong recruiting agents—called propaganda and proselytizing cadres—told him that if he joined "the puppet government forces" he would have to kill his friends and relatives in other villages and that since he had little education "he would have little future with the government and American forces."

"If you join the Viet Cong you don't have to kill innocent people and your future will be very bright," the defector said he was told by the recruiting agents.

The defector said he had received 11 months of training with the Viet Cong before he became a full-time guerrilla. "The first three months we studied in villages around Saigon," he said. "About 80 per cent of the study was

political training—including some cultural training like teaching the illiterate to read. Only 20 per cent of the training dealt with guerrilla warfare, which included how to lay booby traps and spikes and how to shoot pistols and rifles."

He said the trainees were given four months of "district level" training farther from Saigon, where 60 per cent of the instruction dealt with political-cultural subjects, including how to make Viet Cong propaganda and how to become friends with the local

At the district level the

trainees spent about 40 per cent of their instruction time on military training, involving more sophisticated weapons, such as .30-caliber machine guns and automatic rifles. They also were taught how to camouflage themselves.

The trainees were then sent for four more months of "zone-level" instruction, the highest and most sophisticated instruction. About 60 per cent of their time was devoted to military instruction, while only 40 per cent dealt with political subjects.

On the political side, they were taught the policies of the

National Liberation Front for South Viet Nam (the political backbone of the Viet Cong guerrillas—which is dominated and directed by the Communist People's Revolutionary party).

During his military instruction, the defector said that he was taught five main tactics:

❶ How to concentrate human power and fire power to attack fixed positions or moving convoys with high intensity.

❷ How to defend adequately their home bases, plus how to retreat from government attacks.

❸ How to attack armored vehicles, and how to use recoilless rifles, grenades and "elephant traps" to defeat armored convoys.

❹ How to chop up an infantry column or convoy and smash one segment of the selected unit of the column and annihilate it.

❺ How to conduct close hand-to-hand combat, using rifle butts and bayonets.

## CANOPY

The defector said the training was held in the Viet Cong jungle strongholds in Tay Ninh Province bordering Cambodia under three layers of canopy. He said that the training courses started at 5:40 a. m. and lasted until 4 p. m. When the training was finished, the trainees walked through the Viet Cong stronghold of D-Zone, where they received weapons and ammunition, and then they broke up in small units and walked to Binh Chanh district, which lay south of Saigon and Cholon on the outskirts of the city.

During their march to Binh Chanh, the defector said, the unit moved during the day in the thick jungle, but moved at night through areas containing government outposts.

"Every time we stopped, we had to dig foxholes," he said. "Most of these stops were made two to three kilometers from villages. Even if we were near our home village, we could not go to see our relatives. We were forbidden even to talk with our wives."