

- **D67 NVA Sapper Battalion.** This unit was employed in laying improvised mines and booby traps mostly along the axis of Route 15 and Fire Trails in the west of Phuoc Tuy Province, and in the Hat Dich.

### LOCAL FORCE

The enemy order of battle was basically the same to that of 1966/67 though the strength of *D445 VC Battalion* had been reduced to 220 in October 1969 and by mid-1970 to under 200. (By 1971 the Battalion had been so decimated that it was disbanded, and its companies allocated to District Units)

Importantly, by 1969 Local Force units had been able to acquire large quantities of M16 Land Mines from the 1ATF Barrier Minefield (see Enemy Weapons)

### ENEMY WEAPONS

Weapons used by the VC in particular, were from a variety of sources including weapons of French, German and Czech origin, some from the First Indo China War; captured weapons of US origin; and weapons, some of which were obsolete, from Soviet and Chinese sources. The following weapons were all used by enemy units in Phuoc Tuy Province and especially by *D445 VC Battalion*.

#### AK 47



The AK-47 was a gas-operated 7.62 × 39mm (short round) assault rifle, first developed in the Soviet Union by Mikhail Kalashnikov, who commenced design work on the weapon in 1945. It was introduced into service in 1947 – hence the “47”. It was the weapon of choice for the NVA and VC and had a rate of fire of 600 RPM on automatic, with an effective range of about 300 metres. One special feature of the AK-47 was its 30-round magazine which has a pronounced curve allowing it to feed ammunition smoothly into the chamber. Its heavy steel construction, combined with “feed-lips” (the surfaces at the top of the magazine which control the angle at which the cartridge enters the chamber), machined from a single steel billet, makes

it highly resistant to damage. In effect, the AK47 was a Sub Machine Gun with inherent inaccuracy compared to a rifle like the SLR or M16. Known universally as a Kalashnikov it has been produced in numbers exceeding all other assault rifles combined and continues to be used on a massive scale throughout the world in 2021.

#### RUSSIAN MOSIN NAGANT M1944 RIFLE



The rifle was a five-shot 7.62 × 54mm, bolt-action, internal magazine-fed, used by the armed forces of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and various other nations. It is one of the most mass-produced military bolt-action rifles in history with over 37 million units having been made since its inception in 1891. The 1944 model had a cruciform bayonet which folded onto the right of the weapon when not in use. It was replaced by the SKS series of weapons.

#### SKS RIFLE (CHINESE TYPE 56)



The SKS was a 7.62mm self-loading rifle with an internal 10 round magazine and a folding bayonet. It had an effective range up to 400 metres and was clip fed, similar to the .303 Lee Enfield rifle used by Australians in both World Wars and Korea. The weapon was originally designed by the Soviet Union but was soon replaced there by the AK-47. China continued to manufacture the weapon as the SKS Type 56 and it remained in service from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s. It was used extensively by the VC.

#### M1 CARBINE



The US World War II and Korean War semi-automatic .30 calibre carbine was used by South Vietnamese ARVN units, especially by Regional Force (District) and Popular Force (village) units. Many were captured by the enemy and used by Local Force units.