

The military tactics  
used by both the usa  
and viet cong forces  
in vietnam in the ...



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When America went to Vietnam many people thought that it would be an easy victory for America, they were fighting a poor country and it would seem that compared to Vietnam America was a " Superpower". The two sides were bound to use different tactics; the American's were going into unknown terrain, whereas the Vietcong knew the terrain, so really they would have the advantage on America. America had a technological advantage over the Vietcong, but they had a geological advantage- over America, as they knew the terrain.

In the early stages of the war the Vietcong were using guerrilla warfare against Diem, this meant that a few members of the Vietcong who were dressed as civilians would usually ambush a target most of the time at night, they would kill the target or targets and then mix into the crowd.

" The Strategic Hamlets Policy" was a complete failure as they tried to separate the Vietcong from the civilians and put them into fortified areas where they would be protected from the Vietcong, this failed because the Vietcong would be mixed into the villages so when they were separating they would just be moving the Vietcong.

On the 13th of February 1965 Johnson ordered the start of " Operation Rolling Thunder" basically this meant that the Americans would drop a very large amount of bombs on the North of Vietnam, they thought if they bombed the north they wouldn't be able to help the Vietcong in the south they also hoped that the north would surrender or negotiate peace talks with America-. Before " Operation Rolling Thunder" it looked like the Americans were failing in Vietnam.

After all the bombing America decided that the airbases needed protection so the American soldiers were told to protect the land around the bases. The General in charge of America's soldiers was General Westmoreland; he became annoyed with this policy as he thought that the soldiers should go into the jungle to fight.

Westmoreland strategy was for the soldiers to go out into the jungle and to search for Vietnamese forces and destroy them. Westmoreland was convinced that this would work, he thought as America were better equipped than the Vietcong it would work, this sounded good but very often the enemy couldn't- be found. When the soldiers couldn't find the Vietcong they would be very frightened and frustrated, so they settled on searching for villages and then destroy them, most of the time the villages would be full of innocent people. The troops nicknamed these attacks " Zippo Raids" as they would burn down the village. This made the Americans unpopular to the Vietnamese people.

The Viet Cong learnt how to fight against the search and destroy missions; the Vietcong would stay close to the Americans and only fight occasionally, this way they would avoid fighting large battles- by staying close it made it hard for the Americans to use aeroplanes or artillery shells against them.

To try to make it easier for the Americans to find the Vietcong they used defoliants, which are chemicals, which destroy trees, crops and farmland. This did not work, it destroyed the Vietnamese peasants crops, which made the Americans more unpopular.

As the Americans were dropping so many bombs the Vietcong built many hundreds of miles of tunnels underground, the Americans were scared to go down the tunnels, so a special type of soldier "The Volunteer Soldiers" would go down them.

The Americans developed new bombs, the Cluster and Napalm. The Cluster bomb- was aimed to kill as many Vietcong members as possible; if someone were injured by a cluster bomb they would need a lot of care. When napalm was dropped it would explode and shower the surrounding victims in burning petroleum jelly, napalm stuck to the skin and burned at over 800C it caused terrible deaths and injuries. The Vietcong worked out how to stop the burning, by simply jumping into water, so the Americans added phosphorus; which burns underwater.

The Vietcong launched the "Tet Offensive" the Americans in the south were taken by surprise because for the first- time in the war the battle had come to the city. The Vietcong had changed their tactics completely. The war became a stalemate. The Vietcong lost thousands of men but the Americans became convinced they couldn't win the war after the suicide raid on a American.

The "Tet Offensive" was the last tactic used by the Vietcong. The war was to drag on, many more people were killed, and the war caused many arguments in America.

You could say that the Vietcong had the best tactics but they were fighting in known terrain whereas the Americans didn't know what to expect. It was

hard for America to fight this war as their soldiers were only in the country  
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fighting for one year at a time, the guerrilla tactics used by the Vietcong were to blame for 51% of the soldiers lost in Vietnam. The Vietcong knew that the Americans had more technology so their tactics were clever, using the guerrilla tactic they never had to fight large battles. When the " Tet Offensive" was going on America were fighting strongly and in some ways better than the Vietcong. Taking into consideration of the terrain and their opponents I think that the Vietcong had better tactics to deal with the circumstances.