

The military tactics
used by both the usa
and the vietcong
forces in vietnam in
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There were many different tactics used by the two forces during the Vietnam War. These tactics had an influence over the opposition's use and choice of tactics. One of the most commonly used tactics was by the Vietcong this was guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla Warfare is a tactic where one fighting side uses their geography of their land without using heavy weaponry (tanks, planes etc.

). In Vietnam, the Vietcong used the jungles, swamps and mountains to set traps which included punji traps, tripwires and covered holes with poisoned spikes underneath. These poisoned spikes were sometimes contaminated to ensure the troop injured would have their injury badly infected. They also ambushed the American soldiers by hiding in the trees and bushes and shooting them. The Vietcong used sniper fire and 'bouncing betties', which are operated by a weight sensitive switch.

These exploded at waist height and blew off the testicles of the leading soldier. This was horrible for the US soldiers as they didn't want to lead the expedition teams as these mines or pits could kill them. This lowered the morale of the soldiers as they were constantly on alert and had to see the friend and fellow colleagues die in horrible ways. The Vietcong used simple mines, made from the thousands of tonnes of explosive left by the American bombs and tin cans. They were all operated by a trip wire or a weight sensitive switch.

Other weapons include small arms, like AK 47s. One problem for the Americans was that the Vietcong looked like the innocent Vietnamese and so the soldiers didn't know who was who. This was another tactic used by the

Vietcong. Both sides used another tactic closely related to this during the war. This was ' hearts and minds'. The Vietcong and the USA sent their troops into nearby villages and ' won over' the villagers.

The Vietcong used the villagers as their own and they became part of the Vietcong. The Vietcong used the villages as hideouts to ambush the US as they entered the village. The US used a different tactic to this. They both burnt the village down and moved the villagers to another village or they built walls and turrets round the village to stop the Vietcong entering the village. This was known as the infiltration through strategic hamlets. This didn't work for the Americans because the Vietcong were either inside the walls or could easily get in.

The Vietcong also used tunnels to hide and shoot the American soldiers. These tunnels were used as training facilities, logistics centres and headquarters. The tunnels stemmed from the ideas used by the Chinese guerrillas before them. They used tunnels because hiding the bases that they had was hard to hide as the American spotter planes were flying all around the country.

There were few spotter planes flew around that area but it was extremely difficult nearer the cities. Their only option was to build a series of underground tunnels. These tunnels were treated as fighting bases, not ' mere shelters'. An example of these tunnels is in an area known Cu Chi. There was over 200 miles of tunnels.

Underneath the ground, there was a conference room and a training area.

There were plenty of hidden doors of entry and exit and plenty of dead ends.
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There were kitchens and storerooms and sleeping chambers. There was even an arms factory and aid centres. When tunnels were abandoned, they were often booby trapped so they would explode if discovered. These tunnels helped the Vietcong as they could attack the Americans quickly without them knowing where the shooting came from.

This lowered the morale of the US soldiers, which was a major factor in the defeat for America. The main tactic used by the Vietcong was the use of the 'Ho Chi Minh trail'. Supplies and ammunition were sent from communist countries like China. America frequently bombed the route which was so busy it was sometimes like 'Long Island during rush hour. This trail helped North Vietnam give the Vietcong an endless supply of guns and ammunition.

America frequently bombed the trail but the supplies still arrived in Vietnam. This was a significant lifeline for the North, as they probably would have lost the war without it. The USA used many different tactics to the Vietcong. The main one and best tactic was the different types of bombing. The main type of bombing was napalm.

The US air force played a huge role in the war. The napalm was designed to create a wall of fire in the jungle to kill or trap the Vietcong. The napalm was the most frequently used bomb as it was the most effective. Other normal bombs were used but the napalm was the best tactical one by far. The bombs were dropped by the B-52 bombers from a distance.

These bombings were very accurate but there was a major default in it. The pilots in the bombers were almost 2 miles up in the air and they could not see their own men and sometimes dropped the bombs on their own men.

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The Americans also used helicopters, which were a major benefit to the US army. These helicopters did not need a landing zone and can drop off soldiers in thirty seconds and they could pick up casualties quickly and easily. The helicopters were very effective for their size and range. They proved invaluable for the US army.

One tactic used by the USA most frequently was the 'search and destroy' missions. These missions were designed to stem the flow of Vietnamese civilians being turned into Vietcong allies. The US did this by searching for villages in and around a known Vietcong area. They then destroy the village and move the locals to a safer place. The US did this in stages. First they decided where they were heading in the dense jungle.

They then prepare a landing zone by dropping heavy bombs. This had a major problem, as the Vietcong would scatter. The helicopters would then drop off the infantry in eights. The whole unit contained twenty to fifty men. The infantry would then destroy the village.

'Hearts and minds' was another tactic used to some success. The US attempted to do good deeds for the Vietnamese to win them over. These good deeds included sending in doctors for the ill, food for the hungry and teachers for the children. The only problem with this was the Americans could have helped a Vietcong village. 'Agent orange' was yet another tactic used by the US air force. Planes flew over the dense jungle and dropped fierce chemicals onto the trees.

The chemicals stripped the trees bare and burnt them almost immediately.

This defoliated the jungle and made it easier for the pilots to spot the
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Vietcong and for the troops to see where they were going and where they were. One of the main operations used by USA was the ' Tet Offensive'. This was a massive attack launched by the US against the Vietcong.

More bombs were dropped by the US in this attack than any in World War Two. This shows the magnitude of the attack by the US. After this attack, the Vietcong showed real signs of defeat and America were on the upper hand but they didn't use their advantage to good affect. Both sides used many tactics but the Vietcong proved the most effective. Guerrilla warfare played a big part in the Vietnam War. One of the main advantages was the geography of the land and the inexperience of the US troops that were later drafted into the war.

The Vietcong's ' hit and run' style of combat was used to great success. This style lowered the US troops morale as they were constantly on alert and had to frequently watch their friends being killed. The Vietcong used America's devices and explosives to use against the US, this is very ironic and a major embarrassment for the US. The trip wires were hidden well and very effective. The wires were used to set off mines, operate a hidden hole in the floor and shoot arrows from the trees.

This made life horrible for the troops and played a part in USA's defeat in the war.