

# Technological deficits in the vietnam war assignment

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America lost the war because the weapons provided to the grunts and tunnel rats, although slightly different for each specialization, were unsuitable for the given environmental conditions, and for combating the guerilla tactics the Viet Congo employed. The weapons the grunts and tunnel rats possessed were too loud to engage in guerilla warfare. A single shot from an M-16 rifle was loud enough to alert any NIL or Viet Congo forces of the approaching American soldiers.

Though the Nell rats (American soldiers assigned the task of killing tunnel-using Viet Congo) did not carry the exact same supplies as the rest of the infantry, their gear lacked critical differences from regular gear, and therefore impeded their performance in tunnels. The pack frames and any other unnecessary weight that the soldiers carried (such as nearly 30 pound M-ass's or 20 pounds of ammunition) had to be taken off prior to entering Viet Congo tunnels, consequently slowing the troops and giving the Viet Congo more opportunities to attack.

Moreover, the standard issue M-16 rifle deafened soldiers for a few seconds due to its high muzzle flash and loud noise. To combat this problem, American soldiers would scavenge for quieter and lighter revolvers or pistols that would make less noise in the tunnels, however, this detracted from their attention and alertness to the already silent Viet Congo, again, leaving them more susceptible to ambush and attack. Another flaw America had was that the grunts, the infantry (foot) soldiers, were not trained or supplied with the knowledge/materials to combat guerilla warfare.

This kind of warfare utilized traps that would not necessarily kill, but disable and infect soldiers with diseases, resulting in more than 75,000 veterans becoming physically disabled. Traps could range from simple traps such as the Punjabi trap (spiked wheels that when stepped on, dismember the leg) to hidden explosives. The soldiers who received only basic training were utterly ill equipped for this type of warfare; none of their supplies, including weapons, had the capability to locate said traps, leaving every deployed soldier vulnerable with the weight of 90 pounds of grenade launchers, machine guns, and rifles, and odds and ends.

While the Americans had major power arms at their disposal, such as the B-52 - a plane with a one-ton capacity for bombs, and advanced weaponry relative to the Viet Cong, these capabilities were moot in terms of inflicting damage on the Viet Cong. Due to the Viet Cong's underground tunnels and their anti-aircraft system, the heavy bombing of the North became a major drawback for the U.S. A study from the state department found that the bombing of the North Vietnam had no significant effect. The VC forced 90,000 civilians to dig a 30,000-mile long underground tunnel to use as a means to keep transport flowing.

As a result, the agricultural economy of Vietnam was unaffected by the heavy bombing of the US. Furthermore, the bombing campaign was widely inaccurate; it was later found that 80% of all casualties were civilians. Aerial warfare not only failed to adequately harm the North, it inversely rebounded onto the U.S. in the form of casualties and costs. From the heavy bombing, the North Vietnamese subsequently developed extremely effective anti-

aircraft systems, which destroyed a quarter of U. S. Gunship. The U. S. Lost around 900 aircraft and the lives of over 800 pilots by the end of 1972 as a result.

By the end of the war, the U. S. Lost 3, 689 fixed-wing aircraft plus 4, 857 helicopters valued over at \$1 0 billion, effectively damaging the U. S. Economy and morale as well as bolstering the confidence of the Viet Congo. The antiquated, but substantial reliance on airport and major artillery had little effect on the outcome of individual battles. As the North Vietnamese used guerilla tactics to slowly drain and pick off soldiers, using large scale attacks to bomb specific areas did little damage to an enemy who was not only dispersed over large areas, but also used intricate tunneling systems for over and transport.

Whilst the use of Hue's and napalm bombs may have been effective on a defined battlefield, they proved to be useless in the jungle. Designed to fly at lower altitudes, loud, and identifiable, Hue's became easy targets for the North Vietnamese. The helicopters successfully transported materials and injured soldiers; however, they did little to fend off the communists who instead used them against the U. S. As a means of locating grunts and misdirecting the attacks. The war was ultimately lost due to the old military tactics employed by the LLC. S. S they determined that gains in territory would define a win, they supplied their troops with unsuitably heavy munitions and gear, and relied too heavily on aerial attacks. The heavy artillery provided would normally be used to puncture the enemy's front lines and push them back, gaining territory to win battles. However, in this war,

the number of kills determined the outcome of these battles; territory had little relevance where no front lines existed. The lack of adaptability of tactics resulted in the provision of heavy munitions and supplies weighing down the oldie's and slowing their obvious movement through the jungle.