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Jeremy s Wilbanks,

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Professor Emeritus. CDC is what it is. All

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why does the 1968 Tet offensive matter?

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The 1968 Tet Offensive matters? Because it really changed the nature of the war for U.S. forces. It marked a change from trying to win the war, to ultimately trying to withdraw from the war, disengage. It resulted in President Johnson leaving office after he decided not to run. It resulted in the election of Richard Nixon, and then it began the policy of Vietnamization and the long withdrawal, which took until 1973.

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how does way play into into 1968,

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way was probably in the top three targets if you include on as the target for the Tet offensive even though it started on 21 January sometime before the first writ large way was the third largest city. And in the country it was the social, intellectual, historical, religious center of Vietnam.

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It had been the site of a number of of uprisings by the Buddhist first in 63 and then and again in 66. It was a city that sat astride Highway one, which was the main supply route from Quang Tre in the north all the way to Saigon. It was revered by both sides.

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Fabulous. You sound great, sir. How did having an appeal off the pilaf?

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Yeah. Mekong take away?

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Well, essentially there were 14 battalions involved. Ten battalions took the city they took the actually way is two cities and one north of the Perfume River is a citadel, which was built in the early 1800s. Interestingly enough, with the help of the French and the modern city south of the perfume, which included the province headquarters, the university, the hospital, the cathedral and other government buildings.

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So the idea was to take both sides of the same time. So essentially the regiment took the south, the regiment took the North. Meanwhile, four battalions sealed the city, all from outside in the areas to the northwest, east and south.

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That dust and that expression. What did the communists intend to accomplish? Our way.

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No way was a major target, a major objective.

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We can talk a bit about their intelligence, which plays into this, but they thought that there would be a popular uprising and they intended to take the city and hold it as long as they could and then hold off any any reinforcements. And ultimately they would provide the seat of a provisional government in the north.

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Could we do that again, sir?

00:03:19:22 - 00:03:39:02

Use the word they. Yes, which is great for answer the question. But when we cut him out, I'm not sure who we're talking about. Okay, I'll say if you can ask the question again, who put the communist in at the beginning and then using the word, okay, how did Patton and pull off take away

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the communists intended to take the city, but basically the two sides of the city, there were two city, two parts of the city, the modern part in the south of the Perfume River and the old citadel that dated back to 1800 north of the river.

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And one regiment was to take the north side of the river, one regiment to take the south side of the river. And then for other battalions, Communist battalions would secure the approaches from the four cardinal directions, basically sealing the city of

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10,000 people. He added, The government was correct. Yes. Thank you, sir. And what made way different than other battles?

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Well, at this point in the war way was a bit different from some of the other objectives in the Tet Offensive, because there had not been much fighting inside the city. As I said earlier, it had was revered by both sides. The only troops that were there was the first Armored Division headquarters on the north side of the river and about a hundred man advisory team that advised the first Armored Division that was located in the modern part of the city south of the river.

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Other than that, there were no troops inside the city itself when the battle started.

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Fabulous. And can you speak about the intel sharing, please, within Mac, the

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well, intelligence sharing within Mac V, It was a very complex organization because each major formation division feel forced had its own intelligence apparatus. Additionally, there was the NSA, the CIA, the CIA, and the ideally that all of that intelligence was shared, but it was not always done in the ideal.

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There was a lot of problems with stovepiping. There was a lot of competition between the various intelligence organizations, and that sort of mitigated against a good effort at fuzing all the available intel into a usable picture about what the intent of the enemy was going to be.

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Have we changed how we how we handle that? I mean, was there any result from this that has influenced maybe current doctrine or anything?

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Sorry, that's off script. But no, you know, by and large, the problem there was there were too many there. There was nobody that was the Road Guard that was gathering all this stuff together. There were all kinds of intel indicators that there was going to be an attack, but nobody was putting it all together. And then there was and we can talk when we get into the intel, if you like, the idea that the enemy was going to launch a major new offensive just flew in the face of logic.

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That logic as defined by Mac, the it is confirmation bias at its best or worst, depending on how you look at it. We had decided that they were on the ropes. So any reports that said they weren't on the ropes were just discounted as so much wishful thinking on the part of the Communist

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fabulous. Did Mac V and Arvind Scheer Intel

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Mac being Ervin ideally shared intel, but that was problematic at times.

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The Arvin were not always trusted by the Americans. Consequently, you would see during an operation operations would not be revealed until the last minute, and at the same time intelligence would be shared, not always shared at the same time.

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Fabulous. How would you characterize American and urban intel

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and intelligence in Vietnam? There was a lot of intelligence, and in some ways that was a problem.

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We were very much dependent on on technical intelligence as opposed to HUMINT. And therefore, you see a lot of emphasis on the NSA, which was conducting radio signals, intelligence. You had, as I mentioned earlier, a number of different organizations that were involved, not only the military side, but also the CIA and the DEA, the Arvin had their own intelligence apparatus and one of the problems was there was no no fusion, no mechanism for fuzing this all together and gathering all these disparate intel reports into something that could be used by the commander at the Mac, the level or the South Vietnamese joint general staff level

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or how would you characterize Arvin in 1968

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or even

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was and remained a mixed bag? Some units were very good. For instance, the first Arvin Division, who fights in way is very good. The airborne are very good, the Marines are very good across the length and breadth of the rest of the force. It was uneven at best. And as always, it came down to the commanders and the senior and junior officers and senior NCOs were those weren't good.

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The units weren't very good. A lot of American soldiers disparaged South Vietnamese fighting capability. But as a former advisor, I would tell you that that is not always the case. It was certainly a case in some units, but in other units it was not.

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How would you characterize the American and South Vietnamese response to the start of the battle

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on the South Vietnamese side?

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General Nego Quang Trung, the division commander of the first Armored Division, thought that something was afoot. And so what happens in Tet is most of the South Vietnamese soldiers go on leave. They return to their homes. It's a it's the biggest holiday of the year. The idea is you go back to your your home village and you you celebrate with your family, your extended family.

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So a large part of his division was on leave. However, he felt that something was going to happen. So he put his headquarters inside the Manka camp compound, which was inside the Citadel, had them go on to alert and alerted his units outside the city that they should be prepared to move, set a couple of his companies like the Black Panthers, the intelligence company, the reconnaissance company, out to see what they could see and see what was going on.

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So he had a feel that there was something coming. He was, in fact, the night of Tet, he stayed in his is command post. He did not go home. He lived outside the world. As far as the Americans, the senior headquarters involved in Hawaii was Task Force X ray, which was a brigade plus size headquarters or element from the the Marine division headed by Brigadier General Frosty Lee, who in essentially the Marines, all of the Americans had really no idea what was going on inside away once the attack started.

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And essentially that that the communists had seized the city before anybody really knew what was happening there. So only Hugh sends one company up the road to relieve the advisors in the modern part of the city and assist with the first Armored Division. CP On the north side. And they immediately went into a buzzsaw because there are ten battalions in Hawaii at the time, and that does not bode well for one infantry rifle company, Marine rifle company.

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This continued for a couple of days as other units were fed in. There really wasn't a good picture of what was going on inside. We and then it became pretty apparent that it was going to take a number of battalions to root out the communist troops from both the modern city and the Citadel.

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You're doing amazing, amazing. Can you explain the coordination between the Americans and the South Vietnamese,

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the coordination between the Americans and the South Vietnamese with regard to retaking away?

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The initial agreement was that the first Armored Division, the Arvin, would would clear the citadel north of the river. The Marines would clear the modern city south of the river. And that is essentially what happened. The focus of the two forces for the first week. And on ten February, General Trong, somewhat a mash oddly called Three Mouth and said basically, I need help.

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And the problem for the South Vietnamese is on the north side. They're fighting in a fortress, inside a fortress, trying to eject the North Vietnamese who are dug in, have heavy weapons and are ready to fight. And the Aavin do not have heavy enough weapons to fight them. They do not have One of those six is they do not have on toast.

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They do not have in 48 tanks. And consequently they're going to have a very difficult time pushing the North Vietnamese out on their own.

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So this is an ad on a question. Could you could you tell us for somebody who doesn't know about the Citadel, what that terrain is like?

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It is a Volvo, Bon esque fortress built in the early 1800s with the help of the French, it has 40 foot thick walls.

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It has. I might be wrong by a factor, one or two nine gates. And inside the Citadel itself is a smaller citadel that's essentially the former Forbidden City. It's where the thrones of the emperors were. So you have basically a fortress inside a fortress. And each of it all has to be clear. It's it's surrounded by a moat.

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It looks like a fortress, a European fortress, which is what it is.

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I think I heard you say 40 foot thick walls. Yeah, 40 feet thick or tall? Thick. Basically. There were two walls filled with earth between them. Holy. Yeah. All right, well, then the only other thing was, is can you started again? Just what the Citadel was built in and by the French, because you said it was built.

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And so when I cut this out, we're going to we've seen those and set it out. So if you could just do the first sentence again. The Citadel was built in the year

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The Citadel was built in the early 1800s with the help of the French. It was the seat of government for the emperors. It consisted of essentially a fortress within a fortress, the outer fortress, which was basically abutted by the Perfume River, an inner fortress, which was which had also a moat.

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It was consisted of 40 foot thick walls. And I believe it's nine towers with these massive gates to get in and out. It was a defenders. It was an attacker's nightmare. And the defenders dream of a perfect, great initiative that makes you say, I appreciate that here, too. Please. Can you tell us about Arvin General Trinh Van Quan I don't know where you got that name is another right name?

00:15:55:00 - 00:16:13:21

No, that's the North Vietnamese guy's name. Okay, So I don't know. Okay. So we'll just throw that trunk. General Truong is the division commander of the first Armored Division. That's probably who you mean. Could you tell us about that? yeah. Arvin Okay. And a go. Kwang trunk. Could you leave with that? Yeah. The. The first Armored Division commander was in a go Kwang trunk.

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He was very well respected within the Aavin and was well thought of by the Americans who had worked with him. He was one of the senior aavin leaders who had gotten their job because of his abilities and his leadership and not because of his political connections. He led from the front. He was well thought of by his troops.

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The first Arvind Division was arguably the best division in the aavin, and interestingly enough, he will lead the counterattack in 1972 to retake Kwang Tree, which fell through during the 72 Easter offensive.

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That is perfect. What role did Aavin play at way?

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Well, essentially the aavin in the beginning were responsible for clearing the citadel. The headquarters was in the main car compound, which was inside the Citadel, actually on one edge.

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There was an airfield there inside. They were to clear that while the Marines cleared the modern part of the city south of the river, initially they moved out to clear to the west and to the southwest and immediately ran into large problems with the North Vietnamese who were dug in because primarily the South Vietnamese did not have a lot of heavy weapons.

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They were attacking with machine guns. They did not have one of those six millimeter across rifles or tanks or on toast or any of those other things that the Marines put to good use south of the river.

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Fabulous. And how would you characterize Arvin during the battle?

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Urban performance during the battle was quite good, depending on which unit you were talking about.

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For instance, the Black Panthers, the the Hawk Ball, which was the reconnaissance company, they were very impressive and they impressed the Marines and their advisors. The problem, I think, for the South Vietnamese were that they did not have enough heavy weapons that were needed to basically eject the North Vietnamese on their own. Consequently, they will not be well thought of by the Marines.

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For instance. But I think the South Vietnamese acquitted themselves reasonably, reasonably well, given the limitations they were dealing with inside the The Citadel

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for me. Thank you. What role did the U.S. Army play at way?

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The U.S. Army played a role in essentially the first Cav, moved a brigade to down toward way and another brigade minus from 101st it was attached was sent to Phu by to secure food by base while the Marines were sent to Kuwait.

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So the Army is going to be number one, trying to block reinforcements coming in from the north in the west northwest, primarily. And they will be involved in some heavy fighting west of way as they fight their way toward the citadel.

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And then the follow up is what role did the US Marine Corps play at way?

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The Marines, as I stated earlier, were responsible for.

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They were sent up the road from Phu Binh essentially to relieve the advisors in the Mac, the compound south of the river. The first company it was sent was unable to break through a second company was sent ultimately to battalions will be sent enabled back north and in west abreast clearing basically parallel moving west along the river to clear the government offices the way university, the cathedral and all of those buildings are in the modern part of the city.

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And then on the 10th of February, General Trong will ask for assistance and one five Marines will be sent to the to the Citadel to clear the southern part of the Citadel.

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Fantastic. Why was way significant to the Americans, South Vietnamese and communists?

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Well, I think why was significant to the Americans? Because why It was significant to the Vietnamese.

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It was the third largest city in Vietnam, South Vietnam. It was the cultural, religious, you know, really psychological center of Vietnam. It had been the the seat of the of the emperor emperors. And in fact, the emperors were built outside or buried outside the city, along the river. From a logistical standpoint, it was astride the main line of communication from Quang Tre running south.

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The main line of communication and military region. One those five provinces, five northernmost provinces in South Vietnam.

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Fantastic. How have historians framed the battle way?

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I think the importance of the battle of way is that it is it becomes the symbol of the Tet Offensive. Some of the other reporting that goes on is all of it basically the offensive that began actually on 30 January, because part of the force launched the attack early, was up and down the length and breadth of Vietnam.

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But the fight for way was localized and there was media there. In fact, Walter Cronkite was there. And he is watching this battle in this battle is ugly. It is fighting in cities. It is block by block, house by house, door by door, window by window. And it is brutal. And the news coverage of the brutality of this fight inside way convinces a lot of Americans their perception is that this is a disaster for U.S. forces.

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And I think that goes a long way to feeding the perception that this was a great defeat for U.S. forces when in fact, the Tet Offensive was a great defeat at a tactical and operational level of the communist forces. They lost some 50 to 60000 of their best troops during this fight. And and but what many Americans saw for virtually three weeks was this fight in Hawaii on the 530 news every night.

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And so the fact that McCarthy will ultimately say we we won this engagement is we turned the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong back sort of flies in the face of the images that Americans are seeing in the media. That's not to say that the media caused any of this, is it basically speaks to the nature of the medium that if you're seeing these pictures, you you draw your own perceptions.

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And if you're watching the fight in way, it just looks like a brutal, brutal war that's going to go on forever with no end in sight. And that's essentially what Walter Cronkite says on 21 February when he goes on TV and he doesn't say we lost. He said that basically we gave it our best effort and we should negotiate to negotiate our way out of this conflict.

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So I know he's crushing your heart. Crushing. We may be maybe Rob is not going to use this in the in the front. But could you just for any case, he needs this. Could you just tell us in a very basic what is the Tet Offensive for somebody who has no idea?

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The Tet Offensive was launched in in January 1968 by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

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And the idea was this would and this goes back into the basically military theory for the communists in the north, a general uprising, general offensive. And the idea was there would be a general offensive by some 80,000 troops and then the people in the countryside in the cities would rise up in the south and join the Communists to overthrow the yoke of the oppressors.

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Without that basically supposition that this general uprising is going to happen, this offensive is not very smart, because if you look at the combat ratios, they're going to launch an attack with 80,000 troops. We have half a million troops there. And the South Vietnamese have something less than a million, depending on how you count them. So the combat ratios are not in your favor.

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So we talk about an American intelligence failure. There's also an intelligence failure on the part of Hanoi because they believe that there is going to be an uprising, because without that uprising, this is so a suicide mission. And in many cases it is. And there are those in the South, particularly those who've been fighting for a number of years, who are saying to the people in Hanoi, they're sending up the chain, this is not a good idea.

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We're not strong enough to take these guys on. And they're told basically that that is subjective thinking and to get on board, the people will join us and we will we will overthrow the South Vietnamese government. And calls to the cost of the war to rise to a level that the United States cannot sustain. It.

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So that's the intro right there that I mean, what are the key lessons from the Battle of way?

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There are many lessons at various levels. I think the first at the operational strategic level is the need not to be surprised. And I think this this speaks a lot to how you understand or how you perceive the intent of the enemy. Once you convince yourself that you are doing well based upon your measure of effectiveness and in this case its body count.

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So if you look what happened back in the the last six or seven months of 67, you have some major battles that to contend the Hill fight that case on this just before the real battle case on in 68 song by locked in in each of those engagements those engagements were a bit different because the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong stayed and fought.

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They did not break and they did not disengage after the initial fight. These were some really brutal, brutal battles in in those battles. For instance, a de facto I think 11, if you remember right, 1100 North Vietnamese were killed in that battle. So by Mack V's measure of effectiveness, when you add all of these battles together and you look at the body count, we're doing quite well.

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But there are people in the CIA who say the other side is getting ready to launch a major offensive. And Mack, they basically says, with some exceptions, some individuals, in fact, the that's impossible. They cannot do that after losing it. Doctorow in Song Bay in Kantian and Caisson Hill fights and further south so all of these reports we're getting of preparations for a major offensive are just so much propaganda to convince the other side by their leaders to keep fighting.

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There is some idea on the part of Westmoreland and his staff that there is something coming in 68, some sort of a fancy. So on 21 January, when the North Vietnamese send a basically 20,000 troops against caisson that draws the attention of Mac V, as well as Johnson in the White House, because Caisson looks a lot like Denbigh and Fu, in which the French were defeated in 54.

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It's an outpost out against the Laotian border by itself at the end of the long line of communication. And this draws the focus. So if you make the if you believe that some kind of offensive is coming on 21 January, you decide that offensive is going to focus on caisson. Meanwhile, some 60000 to 80000 other troops are maneuvering on these other targets, like we like the name, like Saigon, like in the Mekong Delta.

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Tend to. So even after the main attack is launched on 30 and 31 January, there is still an idea. And Mac V among some people there, that the main attack is still a case on until it becomes apparently, I mean ultimately clear that the offensive is from north to south. And as one general that long been said, the situation lit up like a pinball machine

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is like being in class again back in the day.

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What should current soldiers take away from the battle away?

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Well, I think one of the things that the that one of the most interesting things that happens in way that modern soldiers could take away from is when the Marines are sent into way to clear first the southern part of the city, the modern city, and then into the Citadel.

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The Marines had been fighting an eye corps out against the ocean border and along Highway nine, away from population centers. They had not fought in a city since the Korean War. And so they are thrown into the city and told clean them out. That's that's essentially what the brigade commander told them to do, clean those guys out, end of mission.

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And so that begins a period of discovery, learning where they've got to figure out how to do this. So they find out that if you go down the street, you get shot. So they start using 106 is to blow holes in the wall and go through the side walls to clear. They learned that the best way to clear our house is from the bottom down.

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So you drop mortars on the top floor, causing the defenders to move down to the ground floor where you can then take them out. And all of this is done on the fly while in contact. So the adaptability and flexibility of the Marines is remarkable. So I think being able to do that is one of the lessons that has to be taken away from the battle at way.

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I think the other one we we needed to talk about that we've already alluded to is the need to have some sort of fusion cell who can take all the disparate pieces of of intel and put them together and give a decent picture to the commander and the other operators as to what the enemy intends to do and what he is capable of doing and how you can countering,

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sir, I think you said bottom down from the buildings.

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Do we mean to top down? I'm sorry. Okay. So could we maybe talk about just just just that little piece? Yes. That's the whole thing. Just that piece. Just that piece of the Marines learning that dropping mortars on clearing from top down is easier Just just that little bit.

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The Marines learn some techniques and they learn trial by doing one of the things they learn is that the best way to clear a multi-story building is to drop mortars on it and then clip force the troops down from the top to the bottom and then clear from there.

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The other thing that they do is they understand that one way to get across a road is to fire one of those six down the road. And and they do a lot of these things that they're doing on the fly, basically working it out as a necessity in order to dig the north Vietnamese and the Vietcong out of their defensive positions.

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Thank you, sir. So this is just this was really what we're going through. All right. Now, I just have one to answer to, which is, where were you during battle? Okay, I was in college. Okay. Okay. You're in college? Yeah. I didn't arrive in Vietnam till 1971. Okay. How many tours in one? One. Do you know? And you were an advisor during that period?

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I was in the Easter offensive in 72. Okay, got it. How does that, sir?

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Battle of Way? What's something about the battle way that we have not talked about here today that is interesting that we should know.

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Think about that a bit.

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I think we've talked about everything that that's probably most important. I think that we alluded to is the importance of images and perceptions ultimately to the Marines. The Army and the South Vietnamese are able to basically clean out the communists from way, but it is not pretty. It is brutal, it is bloody.

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Some of the Marines that are killed in the fight or replacement and nobody even knows who they are. They've just arrived at the unit and thrown into the fight. So those are the kinds of images that are presented back at home in the United States and the nature of the medium, near real time TV allows people to draw their own conclusions.

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Unless there is someone providing context

00:35:00:15 - 00:35:12:10

for it. And so we are we're going to switch topics. We're almost on. my God. What? That's that's a motion, detective. I move. That's why that is. I've had a long time this whole week.

00:35:12:10 - 00:35:23:13

Well, I think these are very important products. We have the generation of our soldiers, sailors, Marines are visually oriented.

00:35:23:15 - 00:35:46:04

They understand what they see. So if you can tell them what happens at D-Day, for instance, or you can tell them what happens at way, or you can show them what happened at D-Day or what. And I think once they have seen it for themselves, they're able to really, really in their own minds what was the real meaning and what should they take away from it?

00:35:46:06 - 00:36:13:02

I saw the D-Day film. I thought it was grimly well done. And it goes way past, you know, the guys landing on the beach because there was a lot of stuff that happened before guys landed on the beach, not to take anything away from them, of course, because that, as shown in Saving Private Ryan, was unbelievable. The valor that was demonstrated by everybody who landed on that beach.

00:36:13:04 - 00:36:27:18

But there was a lot of moving parts, got those troops to those beaches. And I think that film was particularly good in showing what led up to that. And for that, that's the primary worth of that. That particular film. Sir,

00:36:27:18 - 00:36:36:00

if you don't mind, would you oppose us using that as like a promotional bid just by itself? I don't know who would be interested in what my opinion is, but you're.

00:36:36:00 - 00:37:03:18

Well, you're welcome to it, sir. And and most likely it'll be social media posts and Facebook posts and stuff like that. However, sir, we have been tasked by making an air frame commercial, so all my dreams have now come true. That's making a what? An offense. Our Armed Forces network are familiar. yeah. Yeah. So please, please, please is totally fine.

00:37:03:20 - 00:37:12:23

You say, No, I'm not interested in that. Would we be able to use a quote from you on it and think, I don't care? Okay. Yeah. Because my my problem

00:37:12:23 - 00:37:47:18

and the execution. Well, I think these films are very valuable for just about anybody who watches them, but certainly for our troops. I think that particularly when you're covering something like D-Day and I keep coming back to that, this film showed all of the parts that went into getting those troops to those beaches that caused basically began the beginning of the end for the Third Reich, at least from from our part of that.

00:37:47:20 - 00:38:00:02

And I think the videos are extremely good in showing all of the things that go into into particular operation, not just the battle at the front.

00:38:00:02 - 00:38:15:18

okay. Listen. Yeah, I. I'll be interested to see how you do this, because I think it's a very unique find. Interestingly enough, in 72, I end up in a in a town is surrounded by three.

00:38:16:18 - 00:38:43:19

North Vietnamese divisions. we're not clearing anybody out. We're basically just they're sucking down artillery and putting in airstrikes and holding on for dear life. But, there's something to that is a total totally different fight than tromp through the bushes in the Mekong Delta or even what the Marines had done in that high ground that basically parallel to the DMZ.

00:38:43:21 - 00:39:08:06

And I think I think the operation demonstrated and how flexible the Marines were, you know, and a lot of it came down to their leadership. there were several ultimate four star generals that were company commanders in that fight. it was just a it was an interesting fight.

00:39:08:06 - 00:39:10:13

So I have one more question now since we get going.

00:39:10:14 - 00:39:22:04

So we're here with the security force assistance that we're working on this week as a former advisor. What what are the characteristics of like, what makes a good advisor?

00:39:22:04 - 00:39:36:11

Well, I think the primary thing about being an advisor, it's all about influence. And the only way you influence your counterpart is one technical skill. You know, do you know your business?

00:39:36:13 - 00:40:08:14

And too, can you be trusted? and the other thing is, at the end of the day, you must always remember it is their army, not yours. it's a it's a very difficult task. it's not for everyone. it's particularly difficult for, for instance, in Vietnam, I was a captain. I'd been in the Army for three years.

00:40:08:16 - 00:40:34:04

I was advising a Vietnamese major battalion commander, had been fighting most of his adult life. There wasn't much I could tell him about fighting, but I did have a radio and I could put in an airstrike. Call us artillery and dust offs, and I could be there when they needed me. And that may very well have been the most important role that I had, was to be there.

00:40:34:06 - 00:40:53:12

For instance, when we were surrounded. And and look, they knew as long as myself and the other handful of advisors who were there with their counterparts, as long as we were there, they knew the Americans were not abandoning them. And that that may have been the primary role that we filled.

00:40:53:12 - 00:41:05:06

What so so the fact, of course, is now a command rights were like, what do you think the future of American advising should look like?

00:41:05:08 - 00:41:07:06

What do you

00:41:07:06 - 00:41:40:12

I don't know the answer to that because I've been out of contact with what even what this unit looks like. I know at one time there was some who advocated a full time advisory corps, but this is an army that that is made up of generalist, not specialist. And so I think the one of the problem that mitigates against the effectiveness sometime is the supposition that anybody can be an advisor, because I don't think that's true.

00:41:40:14 - 00:42:18:16

As I said, it all comes down to influence, and that's sometimes difficult to do. as to decide, apropos of nothing, the advisors became in 19 end of 1972, when it became clear the US was leaving, was very uncomfortable for the advisors because our counterparts knew we were leaving. I never experienced any of it, but I've had friends who were advisors, one in the Airborne, which was among the best troops, that his counterpart stopped talking to him because why should I talk to you?

00:42:18:16 - 00:42:27:07

You're leaving? So there are things outside the unit that also can impact on your ability to influence.

00:42:27:07 - 00:42:44:15

I have a question on that, sir. So we've been telling you a lot of soldiers that they're training for or they've been deployed, and it seems like the areas are not current conflicts. And, you know, any time, of course, war could break out anyway.

00:42:44:15 - 00:43:18:17

Not that you were advisory role dipped into a war that was already going on and you were only three years in. And you mentioned advising somebody who has years of experience. From my perspective, not knowing anything about this family and all that stuff, it seems like it's quite an honor to represent American and our armed forces for these former partner countries.

00:43:18:18 - 00:43:33:03

Was that the feeling for you, sir? Three years into the army already You're in here and it's in. It's in. It's in a war. Not like it's peacetime training. So how does that feeling of that responsibility?

00:43:33:03 - 00:43:44:07

I don't want to sound too hokey, but that may have been the best year I spent in the Army because I was.

00:43:44:12 - 00:44:15:17

I was doing something. We were. We were fighting for our lives. and there was a feeling of mission accomplishment when the city held after three months of pounding by thousands and thousands of artillery shells and repeated human wave attacks. I don't know if that answers your question, and I think that's cool because we have some young officers in here and, you know, they they, I believe, understand what they're about to get into.

00:44:15:19 - 00:44:37:14

So you live and then to have you say that is the best year or the most meaningful or, you know, the city held down. That's that's what they're doing. That's what they're trained to do. You've done so I appreciate that very much. It was a long time ago. I, I can respect that, sir, but I don't want to take anything away from that.

00:44:37:14 - 00:44:55:10

That's amazing. Powerful stuff. All right. So we have run up, almost got almost gunmen killed a couple of times. But. Well, sir, we appreciate you very much. I enjoyed it. I hope it was useful to.