



# Steel and Blood: South Vietnamese Armor and the War for Southeast Asia

*Col. Ha Mai Viet ARVN*

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When South Vietnam was abandoned by its American allies and consequently defeated by the North Vietnamese in 1975, all its military records were lost to the enemy. This has led to a paucity of factually based analyses of the war by South Vietnamese authors. In a project lasting some ten years, and financed by his own hard-earned resources, Colonel Viet has researched, documented, and analyzed the Vietnam War from the perspective of South Vietnamese armor forces, elements in which he himself played an important role as leader, teacher, and innovator. His travels to interview hundreds of people with first-hand knowledge of these matters took him back and forth across the United States (and to Canada, France and Australia) and enabled him to piece together the story as recalled by virtually every senior South Vietnamese who was involved, along with many of lesser rank but important experience, and many Americans as well. The result is a unique and invaluable work, one recounting from the early days of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam its organization and development, its combat operations, and its interaction with American advisors and then later with deployed American units. Viet tells this story as an historian would, not glossing over the shortcomings and failures of his fellow Vietnamese soldiers (or of the Americans), but also providing definitive accounts of their successes, their innovations, their courage and determination, and the hardships experienced and survived in the course of a long, difficult, and ultimately unsuccessful struggle. In Colonel Viet's words: "In order to give the truth back to history, we did not hide anything, whether it be victory or defeat." Finally, in a very touching portion of the work, Colonel Viet memorializes his fallen comrades of the armored force and commemorates the service of all the American advisors to the armored force he was able to identify.

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