

Portrait Of Urban Combat Tet 1968: A Glimpse into the Brutal Realities of Vietnam War

The Vietnam War is known for its horrific battles and dramatic events, and one of the most intense moments in this conflict was the Tet Offensive of 1968. This military campaign, launched by the North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong, aimed to strike major targets throughout South Vietnam and surprise the American and South Vietnamese troops. One aspect of the Tet Offensive that particularly stands out is the brutal urban combat that took place, leaving lasting scars on both soldiers and civilians alike.

The Tet Offensive began in the early morning of January 30, 1968, during the Vietnamese New Year celebrations – known as Tet. The North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong launched a series of coordinated attacks on cities, towns, and military bases across South Vietnam. The strategic objective was to provoke a popular uprising among the South Vietnamese people, leading to the collapse of the American-backed government. And while the offensive did not achieve its intended goals, it did have a profound impact on the perception of the war and its outcome.

One of the key battlegrounds during the Tet Offensive was the city of Hue, located in central Vietnam. Hue was chosen by the North Vietnamese forces as a major target due to its cultural and political significance, as well as its proximity to the demilitarized zone. The battle for Hue lasted for nearly a month, resulting in heavy casualties and massive destruction.

**Marines in Hue City: A Portrait of Urban Combat
Tet 1968: A Portrait of Urban Combat, Tet 1968**

by Eric Hammel (Kindle Edition)

 Marines in

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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As American and South Vietnamese forces fought to retake the city, they encountered a well-prepared and determined enemy. The North Vietnamese soldiers and the Viet Cong had taken positions inside homes, buildings, and even tunnels, turning the urban environment into a deadly maze. The American and South Vietnamese troops had to navigate through the narrow streets, alleyways, and ruins, facing relentless resistance at every step.

The urban combat in Hue resulted in some of the most intense and brutal fighting of the entire war. The North Vietnamese forces showed incredible resilience and resourcefulness, using a combination of guerrilla tactics and conventional warfare methods. They set up booby traps, snipers, and hidden defensive positions, making it extremely challenging for the American and South Vietnamese troops to advance.


The urban battleground was a chaotic and terrifying scene. Buildings were leveled by artillery and airstrikes, leaving nothing but rubble and debris. Civilians were caught in the crossfire, struggling to survive amid the chaos and destruction. The injuries and deaths of innocent people added a tragic dimension to the already grim reality of war.

Despite the overwhelming challenges, the American and South Vietnamese troops eventually managed to regain control of Hue. However, the cost of this victory was heavy. The battle took a toll on both sides, resulting in thousands of casualties. The psychological impact on the soldiers who fought in the urban combat of Hue and other areas during the Tet Offensive cannot be underestimated. The horrors they witnessed and the hardships they endured left lasting scars, often unhealed even after their return home.

The significance of the Tet Offensive and its urban combat cannot be overstated. It marked a turning point in the perception of the Vietnam War, as it shattered the belief that the American forces were winning and that victory was in sight. The offensive exposed the vulnerability and limitations of the American military, causing shockwaves across the United States. Public opinion began to turn against the war, leading to increased anti-war sentiment and calls for a withdrawal.

The Vietnam War was a complex and multifaceted conflict, and the Tet Offensive with its urban combat offered a glimpse into the brutal realities faced by the soldiers on the ground. It showcased the determination and resilience of the North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong, who fought fiercely against overwhelming odds. It also revealed the devastating consequences of war on civilians, who often found themselves trapped in the crossfire.

The portrait of urban combat during the Tet Offensive of 1968 serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by both soldiers and civilians during the Vietnam War. It highlights the need to understand the true nature of conflicts and the effects they have on individuals and societies. As we reflect on this period of history, it is important to remember the lessons learned and strive for a peaceful future.

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As Vietnam's former imperial capital, Hue occupied a special place in the hearts of the Vietnamese people. Over decades of conflict, it had been spared the terrible effects of war. But that all changed on January 31, 1968, the eve of Tet—the lunar new year, Vietnam's most important national holiday Tet had previously been marked by a mutual ceasefire, but this time the celebrations and hopes for a happy new year were shattered. All of South Vietnam erupted in a cataclysm of violence as the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong launched a massive military and political offensive. The American embassy in Saigon came under siege and Vietnam's ancient capital city was captured nearly in its entirety.

The only forces immediately available to counterattack into Hue were two Marine infantry companies based ten miles south of the city. For the next four weeks, as the world looked on, fewer than two thousand U.S. Marines fought street by street and building by building, with virtually no air support, to retake the symbols of Hue's political and cultural importance. It was savage work. Ground gained was often measured in yards, with every alley, street corner, window, and garden adding to the butcher's bill. In the end, the Marines retook the city, but scores of

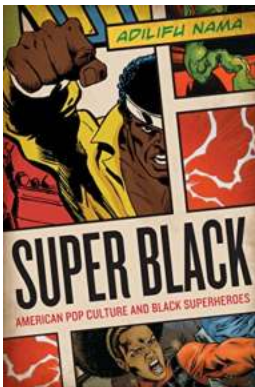
Americans and thousands of Vietnamese civilians died there. This pictorial is a testament to their will and their sacrifice.

The Vietnam War is often pictured as a jungle conflict, punctuated by American troops fighting in rural hut-filled villages. But in the 1968 Tet Offensive, the war spilled out of the jungle into the streets of Hue City. The battle for Hue became one of the most important of the war, a month of grueling house-to-house fighting through buildings and around civilians. *Marines In Hue City* documents the intense urban combat in Hue with many never-before-published photographs, including more than one hundred in full color.



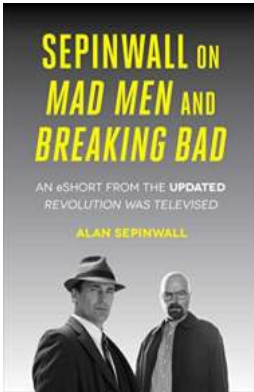
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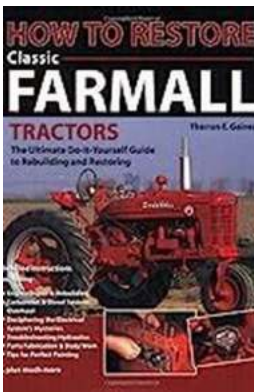
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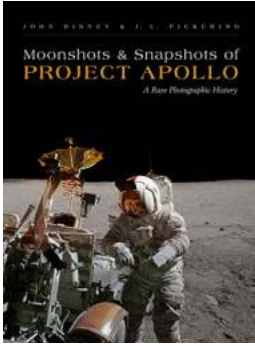
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