

US History The Vietnam War

Learning Target:

I can define and identify the Vietnam War as a war of attrition and relate that to one of the first battles, The Ia Drang Valley.

6. The Battle of the Ia Drang Valley

The Battle of the Ia Drang Valley illustrates how both sides, the United States and the North Vietnamese, believed that a war of attrition would lead to success in Vietnam.

Location of the Ia Drang Valley –

- Located in the central highlands of Vietnam
- Known place of NVA activity

Strategy –

- Helicopters would chopper in soldiers from bases a safe distance away
- They would use numerous landing zones with names like X-Ray and Albany
- Commanded by Lt. Col. Moore

The First Battle (November 14 – 16, 1965) –

- Moore's men were dropped off at Landing Zone X-Ray
- To their surprise X-Ray was near the headquarters of three NVA regiments
- US soldiers were outnumbered 10 – 1

Air Support –

- Air support was the only thing to save the Americans
- Choppers brought in fresh supplies and troops and took out wounded
- Jets used napalm to push back the NVA troops and neutralize their numbers advantage

Casualties –

- United States – 79 dead and 121 wounded
- NVA – 10 times the US amounts

The Second Battle (November 17 & 18, 1965) –

- A second battalion was sent in to replace Moore's men
- Mission was to march from Landing Zone X-Ray to LZ Albany
- On the way they were ambushed by NVA troops
- Once again US air support saves them

Casualties –

- US – 155 dead and 124 wounded
- NVA – 10 times again

Conclusions from the Ia Drang Valley –

- General Westmoreland declared victory for the US in Ia Drang
- Became convinced that attrition would win the war in Vietnam due the alarming casualties suffered by the enemy
- NVA became convinced of the same thing