

0. IA DRANG OVERVIEW - Story Preface

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**9. IA DRANG OVERVIEW**

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Immediately after the 1st Cavalry arrived at [An Khe](#), the North Vietnamese Army (also called [PAVN](#)) prepared for battle. General Hoang Phuong describes what they did initially:

*In September of 1965, when you landed at An Khe, our commanders in the Central Highlands studied how to cope. We foresaw that the coming battle would be very fierce.*

*First, we evacuated the population and prepared training camps. We improved our positions, dug shelters, and prepared caches of food and underground hospitals. We knew that sooner or later you would attack our zones, and we tried to prepare positions that would neutralize you. We knew that it would not be enough just to make propaganda saying that we were winning.*

*We had to study how to fight the Americans. (We Were Soldiers Once...and Young, page 50.)*

By October, the PAVN were ready to begin the first of a 5-phase attack against the South. Although the battles at Landing Zone X-Ray ("LZ X-Ray") and Landing Zone Albany ("LZ Albany") are the most famous, they were the last two of the Ia Drang battles. General Phuong describes the beginning of the assault on the [Plei Me](#) (scroll down 60% and look just above "South Vietnam" on the linked map) Special Forces [Camp](#):

*On October nineteenth we started our attack on Plei Me at 11:50 P.M. We attacked from three directions. This was the 33rd Regiment. They had rehearsed the attack.*

*When we encircled Plei Me the ARVN sent one regiment as a relief force. On October twenty-third, at one P.M., the first reinforcements reached our ambush position. Our 320th Regiment had set up the ambush. The battle took place along four kilometers of Provincial Route 5. The enemy made many air strikes, bombing our positions fiercely.*

*The fighting continued until October twenty-fifth. We destroyed the first group of Saigon forces, but other ARVN occupied the high ground and kept fighting. We could not destroy the entire relief column. There were too many of them who survived. (We Were Soldiers, page 50.)*

How did the PAVN fare after this attack? Phuong continues:

*Our 320th Regiment suffered heavy losses to air strikes and at five P.M. October twenty-fifth we ordered the withdrawal of our troops from the battle area, including the forces surrounding Plei Me. They were ordered to withdraw rapidly and be prepared to fight against Americans. That was the end of Phase 1 of the campaign. (We Were Soldiers, page 50.)*

It was far from the end of North Vietnam's Ia Drang casualties. The killing would get much worse for both sides.

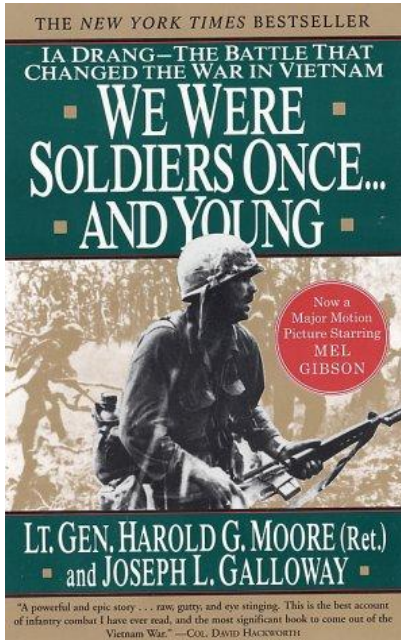
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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/IA-DRANG-OVERVIEW-We-Were-Soldiers>

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## Media Stream



### We Were Soldiers - Online Reading

Book cover, online courtesy Amazon.com

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### Map Depicting Plei Me - Vietnam War

Image online, courtesy the [Liberty References](#) website.

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### Special Forces Camp at Plei Me

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