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REPORT ON THE POLICE

OF VIET NAM

December 1, 1955

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Vietnam Advisory Group**

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REPORT ON THE POLICE  
OF VIET NAM

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December 1, 1955

# VIET NAM POLICE REPORT

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## SUMMARY

1. The police in Viet Nam must face, in addition to usual police problems, a basic security problem in rural areas as well as in Saigon-Cholon although to a more limited extent. This problem is of primary importance and results from the continued activity of Viet Minh agents and rebellious Sect banditry. Though the national army is active in establishing security, the police must also bear a large share of the burden.

2. The police forces of Viet Nam include five organizations in various stages of development and activity--the Civil Guard, Municipal Police, Security Police (Sureté), Gendarmerie, and the rural cooperative guards and village militia. Of these five, the Civil Guard, Municipal Police and Sureté have the most general police powers, are the most numerous at present, and carry the major burdens of policing the country.

3. The Civil Guard totals over 44,000 men distributed throughout the country. While it does have general police powers, its function for the present is para-military in nature and most of its men are committed to patrol activities, guarding bridges, manning military-type guardposts along main routes of communication, and in other ways backing up the military in more pacified zones. Although the future of the Civil Guard as a civilian police force seems rather hazy at present, plans of the Government call for it to become the general mobile, rural police force when times become more "normal". It is not well equipped, is considered undermanned by provincial authorities, and needs additional training.

4. Municipal police forces operate in all of the cities of Vietnam, but the one given special attention in this report is the police force of the Saigon-Cholon prefectorate, which is by far the largest and most important in the

country. Saigon-Cholon police total over 5000 men with general police power within the city. They face serious problems as a result of the rapid growth of the city, the inadequate condition of their equipment, and their lagging training system. Organizationally, they operate out of a commissariat station and a series of posts within each of the seven arrondissements (districts) of the city. Director Tu is responsible to the Prefect, chief administrator of Saigon-Cholon, and General Le, Director of Police in the Ministry of Interior.

5. Security Police have general police powers but specialize in political investigations and reporting. The "Sureté" is the principal police group concerned with subversive activity. Sureté agents operate in plain clothes throughout the country and total under 3000 in all. When combined with other communal police (small city police) operating throughout the country and under the same organization of "police and security" for the individual provinces, they total somewhat under 6,000. They lack specialist training and specialist equipment which is necessary in the type of investigations pursued by an organization such as this. Organizationally, they are responsible to the Chief of Province for administrative matters and to General Le, within the Ministry of Interior, for police matters.

6. The Gendarmerie consists of 753 well trained police officers assigned to the Ministry of Defense. They work in close cooperation with Military Police and serve as a sort of liaison between civil and military police. They are distributed throughout the country and are mainly concerned with traffic accident reporting and investigations concerning military personnel.

7. Rural cooperative guards and village militia represent two types of village recruited, local police groups which go by various names throughout the country. While there is considerable variety in the organization and armament of these groups, generally speaking they break down into the cooperative voluntary

guards who are unarmed, unpaid and untrained and serve mainly as night watchmen, and the newly developing rural militia who are paid, partially armed, slightly trained, full time police. In both cases, their main purpose is to guard against Viet Minh infiltration and intimidation within the local village.

## INTRODUCTION

The police situation in Viet Nam is confused and difficult to describe with precision. As might be expected, the years of warfare have left their imprint on police organizations. The brief period of relative calm preceding this report has not been sufficient to even begin to compensate for the years of disorder. Yet, security throughout the country is essential for the various government programs such as the resettling of refugees, the extension of agrarian reform and the improvement of health. In a country at peace, this security is highly dependent on the adequacy of the police organizations.

Police in Viet Nam belong to a variety of organizations, each of which will be considered separately in this report. At least five types of police organizations can be identified--municipal (communal) police, Civil Guard, Gendarmerie, Security Police, and rural organizations of various types. While each of these has a rather specific function that it concentrates on, several are authorized to perform a rather broad police function. Organizationally, three of them, the Civil Guard, Municipal and Security Police, have been until recently under the same leadership within the Ministry of Interior, while the Gendarmerie operates within the Ministry of Defense and the rural police, though usually under the District and Province Chief, may have a variety of relationships. In mid-November, the Civil Guard was transferred to the direct control of the Presidency.

Understanding the structure of the police system in Viet Nam requires some knowledge of the regional and provincial administration which operates throughout the country. There are three regions south of the 17th parallel--the Pays Montagnards Sud (P.M.S.), South and Central Viet Nam. Each of these regions is headed by the Delegation of the government for the region. There is a Delegué in

administrative charge of each region through his leadership of the Delegation. At each of these regional headquarters there are a series of governmental services maintained, including the police and security service. These regional services are responsible to the Delegué for administrative matters but report to their central ministry in Saigon on technical matters.

Each of the regions includes a number of provinces. The P.M.S. has four provinces and the city of Dalat; South Viet Nam has twenty-one and Saigon-Cholon prefectorate; Central Viet Nam has nine plus the city of Tourane. Within each of these provinces there is a province chief, his headquarters staff and bureaux and a series of provincial services corresponding to the regional services for the most part. Police, Security and the Civil Guard are included in these provincial services. As is the case at the regional level, the services are responsible to the Chief of Province for administrative matters and are related to the central ministry through the regional service on technical matters. The remoteness of some of the provinces from Saigon as well as other reasons has caused some province leaders to become relatively strong while others are weak. There is considerable variety in details and in the way the system operates in practice, but the general organizational pattern is essentially as summarized. Only the military and the court system are set up to operate outside of the regional and provincial administrative structure.

Understanding of the police situation in Viet Nam also requires some knowledge of the nature of the security and police problem. In addition to the many crimes and misdemeanors of concern to police in the United States, there is a much greater problem of "security" both in the countryside and to some extent in the city as well. In the rural areas this security threat takes the form of eruptions of open warfare between government forces and armed sects and bandits. Provinces in the extreme

south and west are considered unsafe for travel because of these eruptions and the existence of armed banditry along the highways. Viet Minh subversive activities add greatly to the problem. Provinces in these regions are under military province chiefs instead of the usual civilian leadership and they include BacLieu, Rachgia, Longxuyen, Hatien, Cantho, Sadec and ChauDoc. Military province chiefs still hold appointments in Cholon and GiaDinh because of the recent campaign against Binh Xuyen in these areas close to Saigon. Within Saigon itself frequent nighttime and late afternoon bombings of government buildings were an indication of unsettled times and the nature of the police problem. These bombings which began immediately after the demonstrations and riot of July 20, 1955 did not end until several months ago. Police in Viet Nam face not only the problems of robbery, traffic control, vice, civil disorders and other more or less routine police situations, but the pressing problem of providing physical security. In this operation the army plays a large role but police, too, have had to operate and organize to meet the situation as best they can. For the present, at least, the security problem appears to be the most important single problem facing the country.

As has been indicated three of the police forces have operated until recently under the control of the Minister of Interior. These three, the Civil Guard, Municipal and Security Police, are the most important from the standpoint of overall function, size, equipment and present commitment. Within the Ministry they were under the control of General Le who is Director of Police and Security. The Gendarmerie, under the Ministry of Defense, is a more limited police force. The rural police units are now in the process of being organized in many provinces. Both the form they will eventually assume and their relationship to other police organizations are not clearly understood at present. Though they will be discussed in this report, it is not possible at this time to present much detailed information about them.

Most of the information in this report is based on interviews with police or government officials or on official police records. While the data is the best available at this time, it should be used with caution because of the general unreliability of information in a country going through the war situation and rapid changes that Viet Nam has undergone during the past decade. Where reliability of data is particularly questionable, a note to this effect is made in the report. All tables contain date on which information is supposed to be accurate.

## CHAPTER I

The Civil Guard

## A. FUNCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Civil Guard which was created in April, 1955, has general police responsibilities throughout Viet Nam. In areas where prefectural or municipal police operate, the Civil Guard coordinates its activities with these units. But in all other areas of Viet Nam, the Civil Guard is, for all practical purposes, the only general police agency. The function of the Guard was defined from the outset to include:

1. Protection of public security and the maintenance of order.
2. Enforcement of laws and administrative rules.
3. Assistance in the pacification of portions of the country, by replacing the military in recently occupied zones.
4. Guarding public buildings, convoys, communications, and national monuments, other than those protected by the military.
5. Special guard duty at sea and airports.
6. Responsibilities for public security and safety at time of national disaster, i.e. floods, storms, fires, etc.

At this stage of its operations the Civil Guard is primarily a semi-military organization taking over operations from the military as the situation becomes less tense. It has the power to perform as a general police organization but because of the nature of the police problem in Viet Nam it has had to operate as a semi-military organization devoting most of its attention to the security problem and to highway patrol. The Civil Guard report for the months of September and October, 1955 include accounts of actual engagements fought against

bandits and communists although most activities consisted of patrols, manning of guard posts, and seizure of illegal arms, equipment and materials.

In order to carry out this operation, the Civil Guard, or Garde Civile as it is commonly called, is deployed throughout the three regions of the country. A national headquarters is maintained in Saigon and provincial and regional commands operate out of their respective capital cities.

The Civil Guard is under the direction of Director General Ton That Trach who was nominated for the post by the Minister of the Interior and appointed by President Diem. Until recently, he was responsible to General Nguyen Ngoc Le, Director of Security and Police Services of Vietnam, and through him to the Minister of Interior. Organizational structure of all units of the Garde Civile have been fixed by decree of the Minister of the Interior. On November 19, 1955 President Diem transferred control of the Civil Guard to the Presidency. Whether or not this is an extremely temporary shift is not known at present. Assurances have been given that in the long run the Civil Guard will remain a civilian police unit though in the immediate future there is some room for doubt.

The Garde Civile is an outgrowth of the provincial guard system operating up to this year. These provincial guards or the national guard, as it was called in some parts of the country, were combined into the national Civil Guard in April. While the extent to which central control really operates over the Guard in some provinces is somewhat doubtful given the recentness of the change, the Civil Guard is now conceived of as a civilian police service under the control of Saigon and stationed in the various provinces as other services of the national government are.

**B. ORGANIZATION**

1. Headquarters. In addition to the Director General, the headquarters organization consists of the cabinet of the Director, a Personnel service, Administrative service, Technical Service and Communications section. Two directors, one for civilian affairs and the other for military, are provided for but have not been appointed.

Chief of Cabinet: Lt. Nguyen Trong Dau

Personnel Service Executive Officer: Mr. Nguyen Van Tho

Director of Administrative Service: Mr. Ngo Van Sieng

Director of Technical Services: Captain Tran Thanh Chieu

Communications Section: Lt. Dao Van Khang

Organization of Saigon Headquarters of Civil Guard

Director General

Cabinet

Personnel Service

Administrative Service

Technical Service

Communication Section

- I. Active Personnel
  - Province
  - Regional
- II. Recruiting Office
  - Recruitment
  - Reenlistment
- III. Personnel Administration
  - Transfers
  - Promotions
  - Decorations
  - Penalty
  - Dismissal

- I. Administrative and Financial Office
  - Budget
  - Salary
  - Office Materials
- II. Legislation and Arbitration Office
  - Elaboration of regulations (Statute, Ordinance, Decree)
  - Arbitration ("contentieux") matters

- I. Intelligence Office
  - Collection, investigation, exploration, study of all documents concerning security situation
- II. Military Training Office
  - Military training
  - Military school
  - Charts
- III. Civil Affairs Training Office
  - Administrative and judicial police training
  - Civic Action
  - In-service propaganda
- IV. Equipment Office
  - Plan and supply equipment, weapons, uniforms, mechanical outfits
  - Transportation provision and reparation

- Use of wireless transmitters to communicate with other posts
- Training of radio specialists and operators

Headquarters personnel and equipment is provided for in the organization plan prescribed by the Minister of Interior. The plan has never been fully implemented but it does give some idea of the size and scope of the envisioned headquarters unit. As explained by Civil Guard officials, the personnel provisions are being met but the equipment plan has not been followed.

Planned List of Active Personnel  
and Equipment for General  
Headquarters of the Civil Guard

	<u>Personnel</u>			<u>Vehicles</u>			<u>Weapons</u>				<u>Radios</u>		
	Officers	NCO	Ev.	Pikes and Motorcycles	Light Vehicles	Trucks and Other Heavy Vehicles	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light and Medium Machine Guns	SCR 193	SCR 694	SCR 300
Director General and Cabinet	5	15		4	6		7	3	8	2			
Personnel Service	4	13	3		4		4	6	3	6			
Technical Service	5	45	41	10	4	15	15	17	37	11			
Administrative Service	3	13	2		3		3	7	4	4			
Communication Sec- tion including Escort Service	3	27	48		2	6	8	2	24	31	4	4	6

2. Regional Headquarters. A regional headquarters of the Civil Guard is maintained in each of the three regions of Viet Nam.

<u>Region</u>	<u>HQ Location</u>	<u>Director</u>
South Viet Nam	Saigon, 5, Lucien la Couture	Lt. Col. Tran-Vinh-Dat
Central Viet Nam	Hue, palace	Lt. Col. Le Dinh Hien
P.M.S.	Dalat, Pavilion A, National Administration School	Cao Xuan Thieu

Regional organization corresponds roughly to the central headquarters structure. In addition to the Director, each regional headquarters has a personnel office, a technical office, an administration office, a correspondence office and a communications section.

As is the case in all civilian and police governmental organizations the regional office is responsible for activities throughout the region. In the case of the Civil Guard, the regional director works under the administrative guidance of the specific Regional Delegré who controls all services of the government in his region. The three regional directors are responsible to thier respective Delegré for administrative matters but report to the Director General of the Civil Guard on technical, personnel, and equipment matters.

According to the original plans of the Minister of the Interior a substantial regional organization would be maintained. Though these plans have not been fully implemented, the planned equipment and personnel lists for regional headquarters give a view of its planned size and composition.

Planned List of Active Personnel  
and Equipment for Regional  
Headquarters of the Civil Guard

	Personnel			Vehicles			Weapons			Radios			
	Officers	NCO	EM	Bikes and Motorcycles	Light Vehicles	Trucks and Other Heavy Vehicles	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light and Heavy Machine Guns	SCR 193	SCR 694	SCR 300
Director and Cabinet	3	3	3	2	2		3	5	1				
Personnel Office	1	7	2		1		1	2	2	5			
Technical Office	4	24	13	15	1	2	4	16	18	3			
Administrative Office	1	7	1		1		4	2	3				
Communication Section including Escort Department	2	14	26		2	3	5	13	9	17	2	2	3

3. Provincial organization. Within each province, the Civil Guard command consists of 1 provincial commander, 1 deputy provincial commander, a correspondence office, personnel department, administrative department, technical department and a communications section.

The basic unit for the Civil Guard is the company consisting of one command platoon and four operating platoons. The plan calls for each company to consist

of 158 persons commanded by a captain or a lieutenant. All the companies in a province are commanded by the provincial commander who is responsible to the Province Chief on all non-technical questions. At present, the units within a province fall within the budget of the Province Chief also. This is viewed as a temporary situation and central budgeting is planned after the first year's operation.

Within the provinces the Civil Guard is deployed in guard and patrol posts throughout the province. For example, in Tay Ninh companies are divided into platoons of thirty men each and there are about 20 guard posts throughout the province. Most of these are along transportation routes and at bridges. The number of men at each post will vary from a minimum of about 12 to as many as fifty in some of the key posts in provinces of the insecure South. Civil Guard personnel are rotated within company areas and then whole companies are rotated over a period of a few months. The assignment in the posts is to guard the particular bridge or section of the highway and maintain patrols whenever necessary to secure the area against highway bandits, Viet Minh and rebellious sects.

As prescribed by the Minister of Interior, the provincial command should follow the general lines of the table below. In actual fact up to the present the Civil Guard has not been able to obtain equipment at the prescribed levels and in some provinces personnel assigned to the province command is also below the specified number.

Planned List of Active Personnel  
and Equipment for Provincial  
Command of the Civil Guard

	Personnel			Vehicles				Weapons				Radio		
	Officers	NCO	EM	Bikes and Motorcycles	Light Vehicles	Trucks and Other Heavy Vehicles	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light and Heavy Machine Guns	SCR 193	SCR 694	SCR 300	
Director and Cabinet	2	2	2	1	2		3	1	2					
Personnel Office	1	3	2				1	4						
Technical Department	1	16	12		1	1	11	7	8	3				
Administrative Office	1	3	2				1	3		2				
Escort and Communi- cations	1	11	24			2	3	13	9	13	2	2	3	

The Provincial Command has charge of all Civil Guard companies in the province. This number varies considerably from one province to another depending on the nature of the security situation in the province. Each company ideal consists of 158 men broken down into one command platoon of 30 men and four operating platoons of 32 men each. The general breakdown of organization, equipment and personnel in a Civil Guard Company is described in the table which follows. It should be noted, however, that many variations occur in this breakdown and the proposed equipment has not been obtained as yet.

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Civil Guard Company Planned  
Personnel and Equipment List

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	One Command Platoon	<u>Each Operating Platoon (4 Platoons)</u>			Total (Five Platoons)
		Command Groups	Firing Power Group	Assault Group	
<u>Personnel</u>					
Officers	2	1			6
NCO	9	2	4	3	45
EM	19	2	8	12	107
<u>Weapons</u>					
Pistol	3	1	2		15
Machine Gun	2		2	11	54
Rifle	16		5	2	44
Grenade Launchers			2		8
Mortar (50 mm.)	1				1
Carbine	9	4	3	2	45
Dagger				8	32
<u>Vehicles</u>					
Jeep	1				1
Light Truck	1				1
GMC	1				1
<u>Radio</u>					
SCR 536	2	1			6
SCR 300	2				2
SCR 625				1	4
<u>Light Tools</u> (Shovels, Hoes, Axes, etc.)					
	15	4	12	15	139

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## C. PERSONNEL

The Civil Guard consists of 44,429 officers and men. Most of the personnel come from the former national guard and have military training backgrounds. The breakdown by province and region is given in the following table.

Civil Guard Personnel by Province  
(November 1, 1955)

<u>Province</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>NCO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Gia Dinh	27	271	1,793	2,091
2. Cholon	11	142	1,127	1,280
3. TayNinh	8	74	700	782
4. Thu Dau Mot	21	266	1,335	1,622
5. Bien Hoa	15	130	1,040	1,185
6. Vung Tau	1	10	156	167
7. Ba Ria	6	67	368	441
8. Tan An	14	125	998	1,137
9. My Tho	30	358	2,096	2,484
10. Ben Tre	40	243	1,538	1,821
11. Tra Vinh	41	230	1,082	1,353
12. Go Cong	10	92	736	838
13. Vinh Long	16	150	1,327	1,493
14. Sa Dec	5	77	583	665
15. Chau Doc	8	173	1,124	1,305
16. Long Xuyen	3	71	802	876
17. Soc Trang	34	237	1,883	2,154
18. Can Tho	14	198	1,598	1,810
19. Ha Tien	1	25	282	308
20. Rach Gia	10	97	1,036	1,143
21. Bac Lieu	11	123	1,060	1,194
22. Thi Nghe	4	26	213	243
Headquarters (S.V.N.)	23	64	58	145
Total for South Viet Nam	353	3,249	22,935	26,537

<u>Province</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>NCO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Dalat	9	55	231	295
2. Dong Nat Thong	14	49	313	376
3. Ban Me Thout	6	17	125	148
4. Pleiku	6	23	126	155
5. Kontum	5	29	116	150
Headquarters	10	21	35	66
Total for P.M.S.	50	194	946	1,190
1. Quang-Tri	10	122	570	702
2. Thua Thien	13	170	992	1,175
3. Da Nang	8	72	363	443
4. Quang Nam	16	208	1,212	1,436
5. Quang Ngai	9	64	1,093	1,166
6. Binh Dinh	4	32	478	514
7. Phu Yen	11	124	910	1,045
8. Khanh Hoa	17	108	746	871
9. Ninh Thuan	1	11	434	446
10. Binh Thuan	5	73	765	844
Headquarters	--	---	---	---
Total for Central Viet Nam	95	984	7,563	8,642 (1)

SUMMARY

South Viet Nam 26,573

P. M. S. 1,190

Central Viet Nam 8,642

TOTAL 36,369

Assigned to Central HQ 8,060

TOTAL . . . . . 44,429

(1) The total does not include the effective personnel of the Central H.Q.

The pay scale for the Civil Guard as compared to the National Army is shown on the table which follows.

Pay Scale of Civil Guard  
and National Army  
(November, 1955)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Pay in Piastres</u>		
	<u>Civil Guard</u>	<u>National Army*</u>	
		<u>Beginning Level</u> (single)	<u>Maximum Level</u> (married with 5 children)
Lieutenant-Colonel	9,200.\$	7,031.99\$	13,101.38\$
Major	7,860.\$	5,600.99\$	12,687.38\$
Captain	6,020.\$	4,482.99\$	11,090.38\$
Lieutenant	5,050.\$	3,713.99\$	9,706.38\$
2nd Lieutenant	4,580.\$	2,744.99\$	8,338.38\$
Senior Company Sergeant- Major	3,220.\$	2,013.99\$	7,919.38\$
Company Sergeant-Major	2,900.\$	1,871.99\$	7,585.38\$
Senior Sergeant	2,500.\$	1,589.98\$	7,025.39\$
Sergeant	2,260.\$	1,323.99\$	6,818.38\$
Senior Corporal	2,020.\$	1,448.98\$	6,581.38\$
Corporal	1,430.\$	561.00\$	3,159.38\$
Private 1st Class	1,310.\$	446.99\$	2,841.38\$
Private 2nd Class	1,250.\$	395.99\$	2,763.38\$

\*The pay system in the army is so complex that the maximum figures used here are subject to question. The maximum figure includes various supplements such as family allowances, living allotments, and an increase for each child which the Civil Guard salaries do not include.

The most common complaint heard from Province Chiefs about the Civil Guard is that there are not enough of them. As the national army is withdrawn from a partially pacified area it is up to the Civil Guard to take over and maintain stability and security. This takes a considerable force in some provinces because of the many bridges and posts to be guarded. The Civil Guard force is rarely considered large enough by province officials to do this important job.

Although the central headquarters maintains that the Civil Guard does not get involved in caring for and moving families, this was not found to be the case in the provinces. With some exceptions, the Civil Guard officers and men had their families with them wherever they were assigned and upon inquiry it became clear that the Civil Guard had provided transportation. Of course, this is the tradition in Viet Nam and the Guard is not the exception.

In Central Viet Nam as well as in the South, Civil Guard strength is increased by the inclusion of northern Vietnamese national guardsmen who have come across the parallel. In the Center, they number over 2400 men. The national guard is the former designation of the Civil Guard and these men from the North are assigned to Civil Guard provincial commanders.

#### D. EQUIPMENT

The Civil Guard is not well equipped and a common complaint of provincial commanders is that they do not have enough weapons, mobile equipment or ammunition. As was mentioned in connection with the established organization personnel and equipment lists for headquarters, region, province and company which were discussed above, the equipment portions are far from being met at present.

The following table gives the data on armaments throughout the Civil Guard. It does not give the condition of rifles which are in many cases old and in bad

condition. (According to the estimate of the chief of technical services, 50% are unusable.)

Civil Guard Weapons  
(November 1, 1955)

<u>Region and Province</u>	<u>Pistols</u>	<u>Sub-machine Guns</u>	<u>Rifles</u>	<u>Automatic Rifles</u>	<u>Grenade Launchers</u>
South Viet Nam					
Headquarters	37	74	4,715	91	540
Gia-Dinh	144	516	2,370	33	114
Thi-Nghe	17	60	5	2	
Cholon	19	77	1,314	3	36
Tay-Ninh	19	105	659	18	55
Thu-Dau-Mot	42	591	1,897	70	145
Bien-Hoa	47	464	1,664	50	147
Baria	5	36	368	9	34
Tan-An	15	100	1,007	39	36
My-Tho	24	44	2,416	10	83
Ben-Tre	24	20	1,587	1	215
Tra-Vinh	12	39	613	7	5
Go-Cong	7	41	882	3	
Vinh-Long	27	50	1,128	10	10
Vung-Tau	3	17	185	4	8
Sa-Dec	15	45	545	8	46
Chau-Doc	14	46	1,295	16	220
Long-Xuyen	9	48	505	10	13
Can-Tho	24	54	1,529	16	78
Soc-Trang	15	41	1,587	5	103
Ha-Tien	5	14	179		
Rach-Gia	12	73	1,258	44	121
Bach-Lieu	4	39	744	3	24
<b>Total for South Viet Nam</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>2,594</b>	<b>28,452</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>2,032</b>
Central Vietnam					
Headquarters (C.V.N.)					
Quang-Tri	8	155	415	5	
Thua-Thien		185	584	6	
Da-Nang	5	30	179	2	

<u>Region and Province</u>	<u>Pistols</u>	<u>Sub-machine Guns</u>	<u>Rifles</u>	<u>Automatic Rifles</u>	<u>Grenade Launchers</u>
Quang-Nam	7	450	562	42	
Quang-Ngai	3	110	354	6	
Binh-Dinh	3	15	541	2	
Phu-Yen	40	187	823	24	
Khanh-Hoa	66	354	992	41	
Ninh-Thuan		45	277	8	
Binh-Thuan	<u>15</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>1,018</u>	<u>8</u>	
Sub-Total for C.V.N.	147	1,641	5,745	144	
Northern Guards					
Quang-Tri (Quang-Yen)	3	77	450	15	
Quang-Tri (Haiphong)		135	636	7	
Quang-Nam (Kien-An)	18	87	468	20	
Binh-Dinh (Hai-An)	<u>8</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>792</u>	<u>24</u>	
Total for C.V.N.	176	2,007	8,121	210	
P.M.S.					
Headquarters					
Dalat	10	44	39	10	
Dong-Nai-Thuoc	5	25	60	8	
Ban-Me-Thuot	6	26	60	8	
Pleiku	6	25	50	8	
Kontum	<u>6</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>8</u>	
Total for P.M.S.	34	145	329	42	
General Headquarters					
Battalion I	24	77	494	30	
Battalion II	24	73	490	30	
Battalion III	75	230	495	40	
Battalion IV	75	230	485	40	
National Command	<u>5</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>9</u>	
Total HQ (Saigon)	207	693	2,093	149	
SUMMARY					
South Vietnam	540	2,594	28,432	455	2,032
Central Vietnam	176	2,007	8,121	210	
P.M.S.	34	143	329	42	
General Headquarters	<u>207</u>	<u>693</u>	<u>2,093</u>	<u>149</u>	
TOTAL	957	5,442	38,985	856	2,032

The weapons have been derived from three main sources: 1) Old weapons brought in from old national and provincial guard units; 2) Weapons donated by the French; 3) Weapons on loan from the Vietnamese army.

The Civil Guard has very few trucks or vehicles of any sort. In those areas where water transportation is the main or only means of travel, they are equally short of boats. Many of the vehicles used by Civil Guard are borrowed from the national army. The following table presents data as of mid-1955. The situation has not improved materially since then.

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Civil Guard Vehicle Inventory  
and Requirements  
(July, 1955)

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<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Number Needed*</u>	<u>Now Existing</u>
Bicycles	86	0
Motorcycles	14	1
Light cars	6	1
Jeeps	402	10
Light trucks	348	10
G.M.C.	317	11
Ambulances	<u>35</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	1,208	34

\*Needs are estimated by the Civil Headquarters on the basis of a 45,000 man Civil Guard.

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As for uniforms, about 12,000 men have army uniforms. The rest of the men are partially uniformed. At present new uniforms are on order and the Civil Guard should receive shipment in about two months. In some provinces at present, province chiefs have supplied some uniforms to the Civil Guard.

## E. TRAINING

An army training base, Quantrung, has been providing training to Civil Guard personnel during the past six weeks. The course consists of four weeks of paramilitary training followed by two weeks of police instruction arranged by the MSU police team. Five hundred civil guards are started in the course each week and a total of 3000, therefore, are in some stage of training at any one time. While this is considered a temporary emergency situation, and the training leaves something to be desired from the standpoint of a civilian rural police force, the training is being sought by almost every province commander for groups of his own men. Up until the beginning of this operation at Quantrung, the Civil Guard had poor training facilities and individual provincial commanders were responsible for most of the training that did exist. Also in operation at Quantrung is a leadership course which 300 Guard Civil officers are attending.

Other training opportunities are being developed through the National Police Academy and contacts in the Philippines. Officers of the Civil Guard were among the two groups of trainees graduated from the special course put on by the Philippine Constabulary School.

The background of most of the Civil Guard personnel would indicate that most of them have had some military training. Many, however, are illiterate and the level of training has certainly not been high on the average throughout the Guard.



Central Headquarters  
Building, Civil Guard  
Saigon



Central headquarters  
showing congested office  
space.

**Civil Guard**

**Civil Guard man on  
guard duty**



**Technical Services  
Building, Civil Guard**



## CHAPTER 2

Prefectoral Police of Saigon-Cholon

## A. FUNCTION AND BACKGROUND

The prefectoral police of Saigon-Cholon have general police powers within the prefecture. Specifically, they are given the responsibility to

1. guarantee the security of the public.
2. maintain law and order as designated by the government and the prefect.
3. guard the public buildings, bridges, and system of communications.
4. exercise powers as police related to the courts as part of the national police and security system.

These responsibilities are specified in the decree of March 26, 1955 signed by President Ngo Dinh Diem. This same decree goes on to limit the activity of the prefectoral police to the limits of the prefecture except where ordered by appropriate authority to go beyond them.

Put in other language, the municipal police have the general responsibilities and power to enforce law and maintain order throughout Saigon-Cholon. They conduct criminal investigations, direct traffic, patrol the streets, operate against vice, maintain the city jails, and in numerous other ways perform a general police function.

In order to understand the problems faced in organizing and perfecting the municipal police force in Saigon-Cholon, a brief resume of events of the recent years is necessary. The recent history of the force can be broken down into three basic periods: 1) Before 1945; 2) 1945-1950); 3) 1950-present.

1945. Up to 1945 the municipal police were completely under the control of the French. French officers were in charge of key positions down to the chief of post level. Vietnamese served on the force but were not in positions of

responsibility. From 1942 to 1945, the Japanese were present but not until April of 1945 did they actually step into police positions and take over from the French. Then for a six month period active French leadership gave way to direct Japanese control with Vietnamese elevated to positions of little importance and closely checked by Japanese.

1945-1950. The Viet Minh took over the police when the Japanese withdrew. When the British and then the French came in and negotiations failed, the police records were burned by Viet Minh and they as well as a major portion of the city population left the city. As the French retook the rural areas, the population returned and the police were again under French control with some Vietnamese elevated to administrative posts but without real responsibility or control.

1950. Nguyen Tan Cuong, a Vietnamese with French citizenship, was named Director of Police in 1950. In his office was a French advisor who controlled policy. The present director, Mr. Tran Van Tu, was assistant to the Director and involved in administrative matters to a large extent. Director Cuong was considered a political figure and appointee and not really a controlling element on the police force. Gradually Vietnamese were selected and appointed Commissioners in charge of the various arrondissement stations. The French advisor stayed in office until 1953. In March, 1953, Director Tu was placed in full charge. But the police force was to undergo another phase when in May, 1954, Bao Dai "sold" control of the police in Saigon-Cholon to the Binh Xuyen sect. They controlled by naming one of their members the superior to Director Tu. During this period regular payments from gambling house profit and opium smuggling were reputed to go to Bao Dai from the Binh Xuyen. Since the "Battle of Saigon" of this year the police have been under legitimate control and within the folds of the prefectoral administration

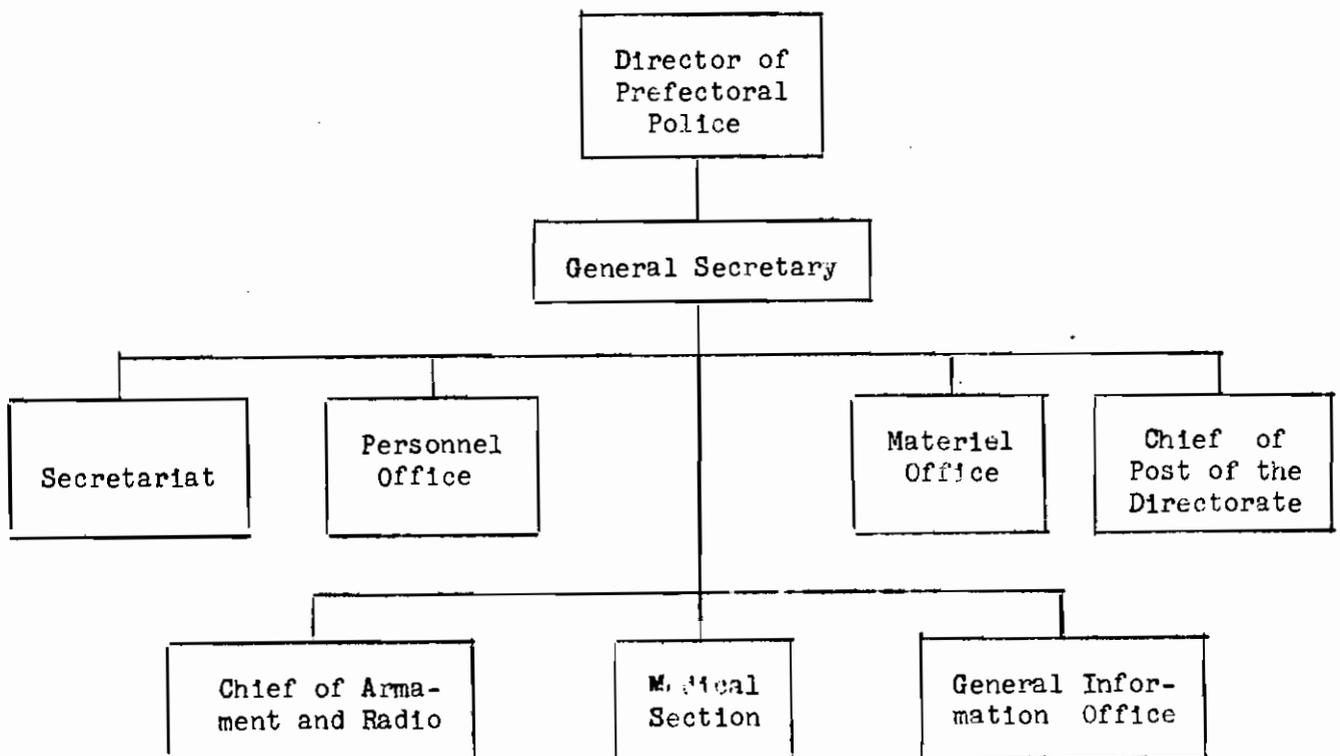
During this period of approximately 15 years, the city of Saigon-Cholon has grown from 300,000 to 2,000,000 in population and its traffic, crime and security

problems have multiplied proportionately. The traffic situation is a particularly obvious problem with more than 60,000 vehicles, 200,000 bicycles, trucks, and jeeps swelling the 260 kilometers of city streets. Other problems due to the increased population and the conditions of warfare are equally difficult to handle. It is against this background that the city police operate.

#### B. ORGANIZATION

The municipal police are organized under a Director of Prefectoral Police into a headquarters unit, seven commissariats (precincts) corresponding to the arrondissements or boroughs of the city, and three special units concerned with morals, vice and traffic control. The following chart shows the organization of the central headquarters.

Saigon-Cholon Prefectoral Police  
Headquarters Organization



The function and responsibilities established for each of these offices is as follows:

1) The Director of Prefectoral Police. Director of Prefectoral Police is in full charge of all personnel and activities within the force. He is responsible to the Prefect of Saigon-Cholon on administrative matters, but on technical matters he reports to General Le through the office of the Chief of Police and Security Services for South Viet Nam.

2) The General Secretary. The General Secretary serves as an assistant to the Director. He cannot assume the full powers of the Director though he may temporarily substitute for him on minor decisions during his absence. In theory, he is a channel through which other offices are supposed to report to the Director. In practice, Director Tu is in direct contact with all affairs within his department and headquarters and has shown considerable hesitance to delegate responsibility.

3) Secretariat. The Secretariat is organized into five sections as follows: administrative and military affairs; political, economic and judicial affairs; records bureau; mail bureau; typing section. The Chief of the Secretariat is in charge of checking and distributing mail, writing the monthly and daily reports, looking after various licensing operations.

4) Personnel. The chief of personnel has responsibility for administration of police personnel, organizing examinations, preparing documents for recruitment, transfers, promotions, dismissals, pay increases, etc.

5) Materiel Bureau. The chief of the materiel bureau is responsible for rolling stock, motor fuel, office equipment, equipment of personnel, housing, and food for prisoners detailed in precinct stations.

6) Chief of Post of Directorate. Chief of Post has responsibility for the use of rolling stock, permanent service, first aid police, and the intervention squad.

7) Armament and Radio. The chief of armament and radio has responsibility for the acquisition, distribution, cleaning, and repairing of firearms. He is in charge of the ammunition supply. He is in charge of all matters concerning radio acquisition, repair and use.

8) Medical Cabinet. Headed by a doctor, this office is concerned with the health of police officers and their families. He is in charge of vaccinations against smallpox and cholera. His responsibilities extend throughout the prefecture to all police personnel.

9) General Information Bureau. The chief of this bureau is in charge of political affairs and propaganda.

The seven commissariats are organized along similar lines. Each is headed by a Commissioner of Police who is responsible to the Director. A Commissioner is appointed by the Delegee for South Viet Nam upon recommendation of the Prefect (administrative mayor) of Saigon-Cholon. He is aided by one or several assistants who look after administrative and judicial affairs in the area served by the commissariat. A chief of post is in charge of the police patrols and active force. A Chief of research in each commissariat is in charge of investigations of a criminal as well as political nature.

Within each commissariat there are several subposts or stations out of which the patrol groups operate. These are distributed throughout the city and are usually rather small, badly kept buildings. Each has a chief of post and is the base of operations for the platoon assigned to patrolling streets or guard duty in the area. The chief of the subpost is responsible to the Chief of Post at the Commissariat station.

The three special units have responsibilities as their names suggest. The unit in charge of public traffic, "le Commissariat de la Voie Publique", has responsibility for all matters concerning traffic. Other police officers do not have

authority to direct traffic even in temporary emergency situations, although they may take certain measures while staying out of the street. Only the traffic police can take full authority for directing and regulating traffic. The traffic unit also collects fines. The Morals squad, "Service de Moeurs", is concerned with prostitution, vice, and movie censorship. The third unit, "la Brigade des Jeux", is organized to handle gambling and rackets.

### C. PERSONNEL

Saigon-Cholon is a city of 2,000,000 population covering an area of more than 5000 hectares. The population has grown rapidly during the post war years for various reasons but largely because of the insecurity existing in rural areas and the displacements of war. In 1945 the police totaled 1200 officers; now there are over 5000 in the city police. In spite of this growth the ratio of one policeman for 4000 population is still low. Distribution of police is as follows:

Saigon-Cholon Police Strength  
by Arrondissement (October 25, 1955)

<u>Arrondissement</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Commissioner</u>	<u>Number of Officers</u>
1	Q. le-Myre-de-Villers	Vo-Van-Phi	584
2	73 Borette St.	Tran-Van-Sat	586
3	3 place Maréchal-Joffre	Nguyen-Thanh-Que	810
4	359 Bd. Dong-Khanh	Trinh-Van-Ca	689
5	Binh-Dong	Vinh-May	293
6	14 Fonck St.	Do-Cong-Khanh	352
7	167 Tho-Ky St.	Hang-Van-Thai	414
Special Police*		Leguerre Jean	551
Central HQ	268 Bd. Gallieni	Tran-Van-Tu (Director)	739
		TOTAL	5018

\*Special police include traffic (370), reserve force (128) and office staff for these two (53). Most of them are stationed at the Gallieni HQ in Cholon.

There are three categories of police ranks in the prefectural police. Only 1613 of the total police force falls within these three categories. The remainder are special administrative personnel, people on a contract or day-to-day basis and special borrowed guards working for the city police but not considered a part of the regular force. This breakdown can be seen on the following table.

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Saigon-Cholon Police Strength  
by Rank and Classification

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<u>Category, Rank, Classification</u>	<u>Number</u>
Category A	
General Inspector	3
Commissioners	11
Category B	
Clerks	17
Urban Inspectors	146
Category C	
Assistant Urban Inspectors	1332
Somen Searchers	<u>104</u>
SUB TOTAL	1613
Administrative Services	
Administrative Secretary	20
Typist	16
Physical Culture Trainers	9
French employees	57
Vietnamese day-to-day officers	2170
Auxiliary Guards (mostly Cambodians)	580
Northern police officers	430
Industrial guards	<u>58</u>
SUB TOTAL	<u>3340</u>
TOTAL*	4953

\*This total is slightly lower than the total in the previous table because the figures are not kept as current as in the previous case. They are accurate as of about September 1, 1955.

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A word of explanation of the various ranks and classes in the above table is needed. The Inspector General or Controller General rank is held by only three persons in the Saigon-Cholon area, one being Mr. Tran Van Tu, Director of the prefecture police. The other two are Mr. Ton Ngoc Trac, Chief of Cabinet in General Le's office, and Mr. Tran Ba Thanh, Director of Police and Security for South Viet Nam. The eleven commissioners of police include five who head up arrondissement commissariats and the head of the vice squad, the General Secretary, the head of the traffic section and others in high administrative posts. The clerks are persons in high administrative posts who may, if they prove capable, move into the commissioner rank. An Inspector can be a Chief of Post at an arrondissement station, deputy Chief of Post, chief of a substation or, generally speaking, he can hold any leading active position. The assistant inspector can be a patrolman or hold positions of greater responsibility up to Deputy Chief of Post. The women searchers are the only women employed by the police and they are used exclusively for searching women.

The French members of the Saigon-Cholon police force include one commissioner who is in charge of traffic, 35 persons on a contract basis and 21 temporary, day-to-day agents. According to Director Tu, the French will be completely replaced by Vietnamese when contracts terminate, presumably in April, 1956.

The 2170 day-to-day employees are patrolmen who are not on a permanent basis in the force, do not have rank, and could be dismissed very easily. On the other hand they make up a large share of the effective personnel and play a large role in the every day work of the force. The auxiliary guards consist mostly of Cambodians born in Vietnam. They are assigned as guards on buildings and they may be put in the rank of assistant inspectors. The northern police officers are on a temporary basis. They are Vietnamese from the North who are used on guard duty in the city at present.

The 58 private guards are special industrial guards who are paid by private persons and firms but who are under the supervision of the municipal police.

According to the Director of Personnel for the prefectural police, they are planning to add about 2000 more police officers in the near future. All of the new people would be recruited from former army personnel. The usual means of recruitment is through posters, advertising and publicity of various sorts. Though such measures used to be necessary there is now a surplus of applicants because of the large number of men with army experience. Three standards are followed in hiring:

- 1) Police recruits must have at least an elementary education which includes knowing how to read and write. In actual fact, though a large share of present personnel are literate, many in the temporary ranks and in the irregular classifications are illiterate.

- 2) Physical requirements include a health examination plus minimum height (1 meter, 45 centimeters) and chest (80 centimeters) measurements.

- 3) Ex-soldiers are given a priority in hiring.

#### D. EQUIPMENT

Very little of the equipment now being used by the municipal police was purchased for its use. Most of it was received as surplus or materiel other security forces could no longer use. Much of it is old and obsolete; very little new or modern technical equipment exists in the force. The following table presents the motor vehicle situation.

Saigon-Cholon Prefectoral  
Police Motor Vehicles  
(November, 1955)

	Central HQ	Commissariats							Totals
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Light Passenger Car (Citroen, Renault)	3								3
Jeep (Willys)	11	1			1		1		14
Land-Rover	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
Trucks (Dodge, Chevrolet)	4								4
Command Car (Dodge)	1								1
Light truck (Renault)	6	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	18
Motorcycle (Harley)	18								18
Side-Car (Harley)	4	1	1		1		1	1	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79</b>

As for the condition of these vehicles, the three light passenger cars are in good condition and ten of the motorcycles are new. Most of the land rovers are in good condition with the exception of two which are constantly in need of repairs. The rest of the equipment is in fair to poor condition. The trucks and the command car have been in operation since 1945. The side car is a 1948 model which can no longer be repaired because of missing parts. The light trucks and most of the jeeps are about five years old and have seen constant service. When

asked to supply a list of needs in June of this year, Director Tu listed vehicles totaling more than three times the present number. Jeeps with radios are in greatest need.

One of the equipment problems is finding trained men who can use and properly maintain modern equipment. The communications situation is an illustration. The man in charge of communications at the central headquarters building is also in charge of ammunition and firearms. He has no technical background and does not even know the frequency of operation of the transmitting equipment. Most of the present equipment is old and poorly installed which is one reason communication is so poor between the various units of the prefectural police.

Police communications consist of a main switchboard at headquarters in Cholon which is connected to a small switchboard at each of the commissariats. The central switchboard has extensions to Director Tu's office and to several of his assistants. There are two lines to the telephone company switchboard for outside service. The fire department is also connected to this board. At each Commissariat the switchboards are connected to the main posts. Some of the smaller posts have no communications with the commissariat station except that furnished personally by members of the posts on bicycle. The bicycle is furnished by the officer.

The headquarters has a 250 watt transmitter operating on 2400 KC which is used to contact the various commissariat headquarters which have transmitters operating on the same frequency. A temporary installation of 12 sets on loan to the police from USIS operates on the 40 megacycle band. These sets were brought in to bridge the gap until more permanent installations can be developed. A complete survey of police communications is needed and a new system should be developed along with a training program for maintenance and operating personnel.

The firearms situation is shown on the following table. Many of the rifles appear to be in poor condition and the ammunition supply, included in the table, is very low.

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Firearms and Ammunition  
Supply, Saigon-Cholon  
Prefectoral Police  
(November, 1955)

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<u>Weapons</u>	<u>Present Number</u>
Medium Machine Guns (F.M.)	38
Light Machine Guns	524
Rifles (Mousquetons)	1,699
Pistols	2,115
Revolvers	92
Signal Pistol	1
<u>Cartridges and Grenades</u>	
8m/m cartridges for rifles	91,423
6.5m/m cartridges for rifles	5,524
7.92m/m cartridges for rifles	28,028
303. cartridges for rifle and medium machine guns	18,915
24 x 29 cartridges for medium machine guns	25,371
7.62m/m cartridges for rifles	19,838
8m/m cartridges for revolvers	1,192
9m/m long cartridges for light machine guns	27,554
7.65m/m long cartridges for pistols and for light machine guns	39,412
9m/m short cartridges for pistols	28,311
7.65m/m short cartridges for pistols	25,420
6m/m (Bosquettes)	8,388
7.35m/m cartridges for pistols	748
O.F. grenades	246
F.I. grenades	438
Tear-gas grenades (O.F.B.)	225
British model grenades	39
V.B. grenades	30
U.S.A. tear-gas grenades	18
FUM. smoke grenades	74
Signal rockets	20

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## E. TRAINING

Training of new recruits to the municipal police force is minimal. During the "Battle of Saigon" of April, 1944, the training school operating on a limited basis next to the Central Headquarters station in Cholon was destroyed. The fighting centered in the area surrounding the headquarters and much of that part of the city was burned or destroyed by gunfire.

At present all of the regular personnel must be literate though this is not the case for irregulars and temporary borrowed guards. Recruits are sent out with more experienced officers during their first days on the force. After this type of supervision they are on their own. The Director has required an extra hour or two service of each patrol group when they come off of duty in the morning and during this time they are given some drill and minor training. Other than this, there is no organized training system in present operation.

The National Policy Academy which opened recently with the assistance of Michigan State University police specialists is an attempt to partially fill this training need. The school consists of 120 trainees from the various provincial communal police, the Sureté and the Saigon-Cholon police who comprise the bulk of students. The curriculum includes physical training, judo, military training, criminal identification, traffic, public relations, penal law, first aid and general administration. The Academy is operating in temporary quarters consisting of several long sheds converted to classrooms, several large open sheds for drill and rainy day activities and a small drill field and parade ground. It is expected to increase enrollment and move to more adequate quarters during the next year. The municipal police have supplied some of the instructors for the school. Administration and control is maintained within the Ministry of Interior.

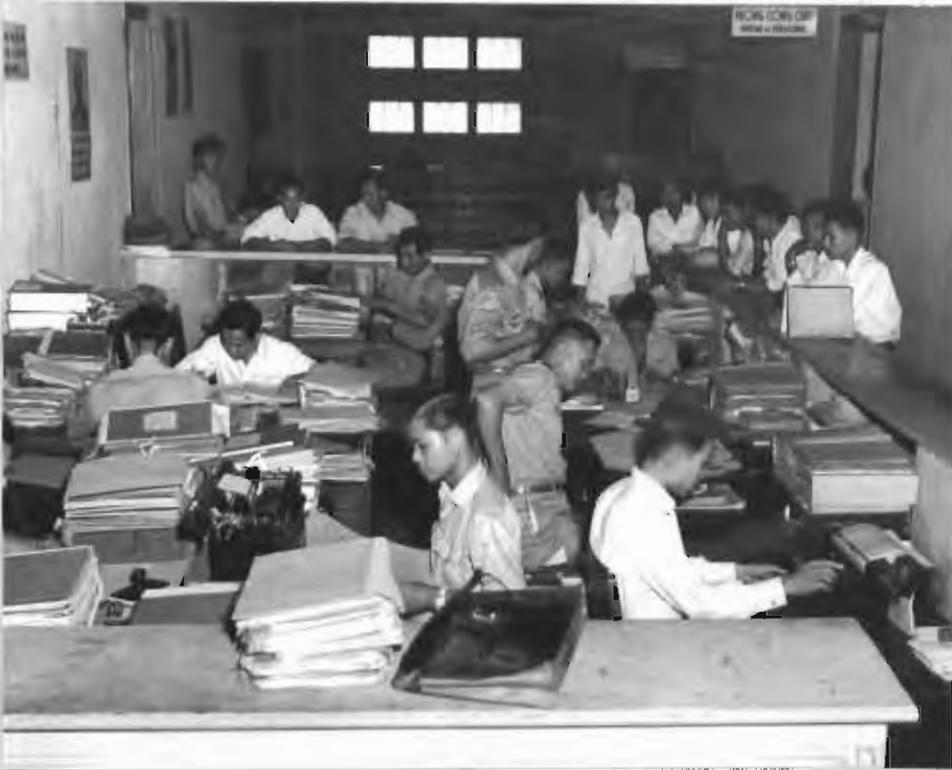


Central Head-  
quarters Cholon



2nd Commissariat  
station, Saigon

Two scenes inside  
Prefectoral Police Headquarters



Upstairs, Crowded  
office area in  
hallway



Downstairs Main  
Waiting Area



Saigon-Cholon  
Police officers.



Record filing system  
in office of Saigon-  
Cholon police station



2nd Commissariat  
Saigon-Cholon  
Police Confiscated  
items behind counter  
add to the congestion



Police post  
Saigon-Cholon  
police

## Traffic: Saigon-Cholon

Many types of vehicles are part of the flow of traffic on Saigon streets including cyclopousses, cyclocarts, bicycles, motor-pousses, motor bikes, cars, buses, trucks, pony and ox carts

