

## ABANDONED ARMS PILED AROUND HUE

**\$100-Million in Equipment  
Left Along Estuary by  
Defeated Soldiers**

By DANIEL DE LUCE  
The Associated Press

HUE, South Vietnam, May 5 — American military equipment estimated to be worth \$100-million is strewn like a gigantic junkpile along the Hue estuary where Saigon's defeated armored and infantry forces tried to escape by sea in late March.

A spokesman for the new Revolutionary Government said earlier in Da Nang that 103,000 of the enlisted men and non-commissioned officers of the former South Vietnamese Army who had been taken prisoner had already been released to return to their homes.

Some former war prisoners were seen in the areas around Hue working in rice fields.

From the watchtower of the former army base here, one can see about 600 burned-out vehicles in one group of abandoned equipment. Other equipment is scattered for miles along the highway connecting Hue with Tan My harbor, leading to the South China Sea.

### Vehicles Made to Run

Former drivers and mechanics of the defeated army's armored regiments are now working under the supervision of army officers of the Revolutionary Government in making tanks, armored cars, trucks and other vehicles run again.

Three mechanics from the old army who were putting a group of diesel forklift trucks in operational order were permitted a pause from work to answer visitors' translated questions.

All said that they were working for the victorious revolutionary army by day and were going home to their families in the neighborhood at night. When Saigon's forces collapsed at Hue, they had not tried to retreat further but reported to the authorities as soon as possible.

Some captured M-48 tanks still have "United States Army" painted in white on them. On the dirt shoulders of the highway are belts of .50-caliber machine-gun ammunition, hand grenades, artillery shells still in the original packing and many other items.

### Equipment Almost New

Revolutionary Government forces are salvaging steel pontoons and steel bridging along the estuary. The equipment seems almost new.

A revolutionary army officer at a captured supply base said that of some 3,000 military vehicles left along the estuary, more than 200 had been sunk, most of them self-propelled guns and armored cars. He added that 60 of the M-48 tanks that fell into his army's hands had been cleaned up and sent south with the Communist forces.

He said that six self-propelled 175-mm. long-range artillery pieces were recovered here and that four were now in combat condition and were with the revolutionary forces in the south.

Driving to Hue over Hai Van Pass from Da Nang, this correspondent saw heavy south-bound military traffic for most of the 60 miles on Route 1. Along with Soviet-made armor were some tanks from the Saigon army's American supplies.

### An Unusual Mixture

In the military truck convoys there was a mixture of Soviet, Chinese and American vehicles.

Along the route thousands of acres of rice were being harvested. Teams of seven or eight young men were cutting rice stalks and tying them in sheaves. The young men were dressed in green military tunics and shorts.

Through an interpreter, the leader of one of these teams said that he and his men had come from a nearby village and that all had served at one time in Saigon's army. Some had served until very recently, he added.

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**A North Vietnamese soldier approaches armored vehicles abandoned by the South Vietnamese on a beach in Qui Nhon. Some were driven into the sea.**

*Photoreporters*