



# **The Approaching Storm: Conflict in Asia, 1945-1965 (The U.S. Navy and the Vietnam War)**

*Department of the Navy, Edward J. Marolda*

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When the U.S. Seventh Fleet embarked the last of 50,000 Vietnamese evacuees, got underway from Vietnam's southern coast, and set a course for the Philippines on the evening of 2 May 1975, it marked the end of America's longest war. For more than 25 years, the United States and its allies had fought to preserve the independence of free governments in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, but that effort had failed. Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian Communist movements and military forces now held sway over the entire Indochinese peninsula. The struggle for Southeast Asia, however, was only one episode in the even longer Cold War that began in 1946 and ended with the collapse of global communism in the late 1980s. The 58,000 Americans who sacrificed their lives in Vietnam marched in the same proud ranks as the tens of thousands of their compatriots who fought and died to achieve ultimate victory in the Cold War. The U.S. Navy was in the forefront of the fight. More than 2.6 million Sailors and Marines served in the combat theater at one time or another. It is the objective of this series, *The U.S. Navy and the Vietnam War*, to honor the faithful service to their country of those men and women who, in John Paul Jones' immortal words, went "in harm's way" to fight for freedom. Between 2008 and 2015, the 50th anniversary of the onset of major combat operations in 1965, the Naval History and Heritage Command and the Naval Historical Foundation will collaborate in publishing well-illustrated, engagingly written, and authoritative booklets that detail the Navy's major involvement in the conflict. We have enlisted to the cause distinguished authors and charged them with producing interpretative essays based on research in primary sources and the best secondary works. First in the series, *The Approaching Storm* covers the global, regional, and ideological stimulants of the conflict, setting the stage for subsequent booklets on the fight for the rivers and canals of Vietnam, naval special warfare, the POW experience, the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign, Navy medicine at war, coastal operations, the Linebacker bombing campaign, Navy leaders, naval advisors and the Vietnam Navy, sealift and naval logistics, Seabees and construction, naval intelligence, and the seaborne evacuations from Indochina. It is important for this and future generations of Americans to understand that in the war for Southeast Asia our Sailors fought with skill, courage, and perseverance in often trying circumstances. They were sorely tested but never failed to do their duty. This illustrated book describes the U.S. response to Communist movements in Asia after World War II and the U.S. Navy's role in the region as it evolved from an essentially advisory one to actual combat after the Tonkin Gulf attack off North Vietnam in August 1964. *Approaching Storm* inaugurates the Naval History & Heritage Commands series *The U.S. Navy in the Vietnam War*.

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