

Wiring Vietnam: The Electronic Wall

By Anthony J. Tambini

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During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army deployed electronic sensors along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam in order to detect and track troop and vehicle movements. At approximately 8,100 miles in length, monitoring this sophisticated logistics network_consisting of roads, trails, vehicle parks, petroleum pipelines, and storage areas_was no mean task. Since the work was classified as 'Secret' until only recently, a comprehensive story of the electronic sensors used in Southeast Asia has never been completely told. Wiring Vietnam: The Electronic Wall relates the history of the electronic detection system that was deployed during the Vietnam War. Author Anthony Tambini covers everything from the sensors used to detect seismic signals from nearby troop and vehicle movements to audio sensors that were deployed to pick up conversations of troops as well as traffic noise of vehicles to engine ignition detectors. Beginning with the conception, development, and implementation of these sensors, Tambini then relates how, ultimately, the various signals the sensors collected were transmitted to orbiting aircraft that would process and retransmit the signals onward to a base in Thailand. There the data underwent further analysis for possible targets that could be attacked from the air. Anthony Tambini, a member of the 25th Tactical Fighter Squadron based at Ubon, Thailand in the late 1960s, was part of an organization that dropped these sensors. His firsthand perspective, along with rarely seen photographs of the actual sensors used, will provide those interested in the Vietnam War and modern warfare with a clear picture of an undocumented side of history.

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Editorial Review

Review
Beginning in the late 1960s, the US military began a program called Igloo White, deploying a network of sensors, orbiting aircraft, monitoring devices, technicians, and computing equipment designed to detect and track enemy movements in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Thoroughly approving of this electronic wall both in concept and in practice, Tambini (a retired aerospace technical and logistics field representative) details its underlying technologies and describes how they were deployed and utilized in theater. He argues that the system was a significant success in disrupting the logistics of the North Vietnamese and their allies, even if it was a success within the midst of a failed war. (*Reference and Research Book News, August 2007*)

About the Author
Anthony J. Tambini is a retired aerospace technical and logistics field representative. He spent 40 years in the aerospace industry and he is a former USAF flight engineer.

Users Review

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Margaret Velasquez:

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