

Saigon – Aerial Views, 1955

[All comments are edited versions of what Mike McNally wrote when he sent them to the Webmaster.]



This is Raymond Cauchetier's Saigon-to-Tan Son Nhut aerial shot taken in 1955. Closest to the camera are downtown landmarks such as City Hall and the Cathedral. To the right is a dark area of trees, the Zoo. Running left from the Zoo is Thong Nhut Boulevard which runs into Cong Ly just in front of the Norodom Palace, which would become the Independence Palace and is now the Reunification Museum.

Knowing where Cong Ly is, follow that road, or its tree line, towards Tan Son Nhut. you will see the road crossing the Cong Ly Bridge and then bearing left. Harder to see is where Cach Mang is crossed by Vo Tanh right at the Caltex Station just outside the Joint General Staff Compound entrance.

If you follow Vo Tanh from JGS toward where the TSN Main Gate would be, you will see a road to the left coming back toward Saigon. I believe this is Truong Minh Ky, which turned into Truong Minh Giang when it got closer to downtown. Further to the left in the large aerial is another road running from downtown towards undeveloped areas. I believe this is Le Van Duyet. Le Van Duyet became Highway One or the Cu Chi Highway at the Bay Hien Crossroads where it was intersected by Vo Tanh, which then became Nguyen Van Thoai, aka Plantation Road, as it headed toward Cholon. I think you can see the rubber trees, which gave Plantation Road its American name, still there in 1955.



I've also enlarged a portion of Cauchetier's photo showing the JGS HQ Building on the right and the Cach Mang/Vo Tanh crossroads on the left.



Here is an aerial shot showing the JGS HQ after MACV Annex has been constructed so you can compare these two areas.

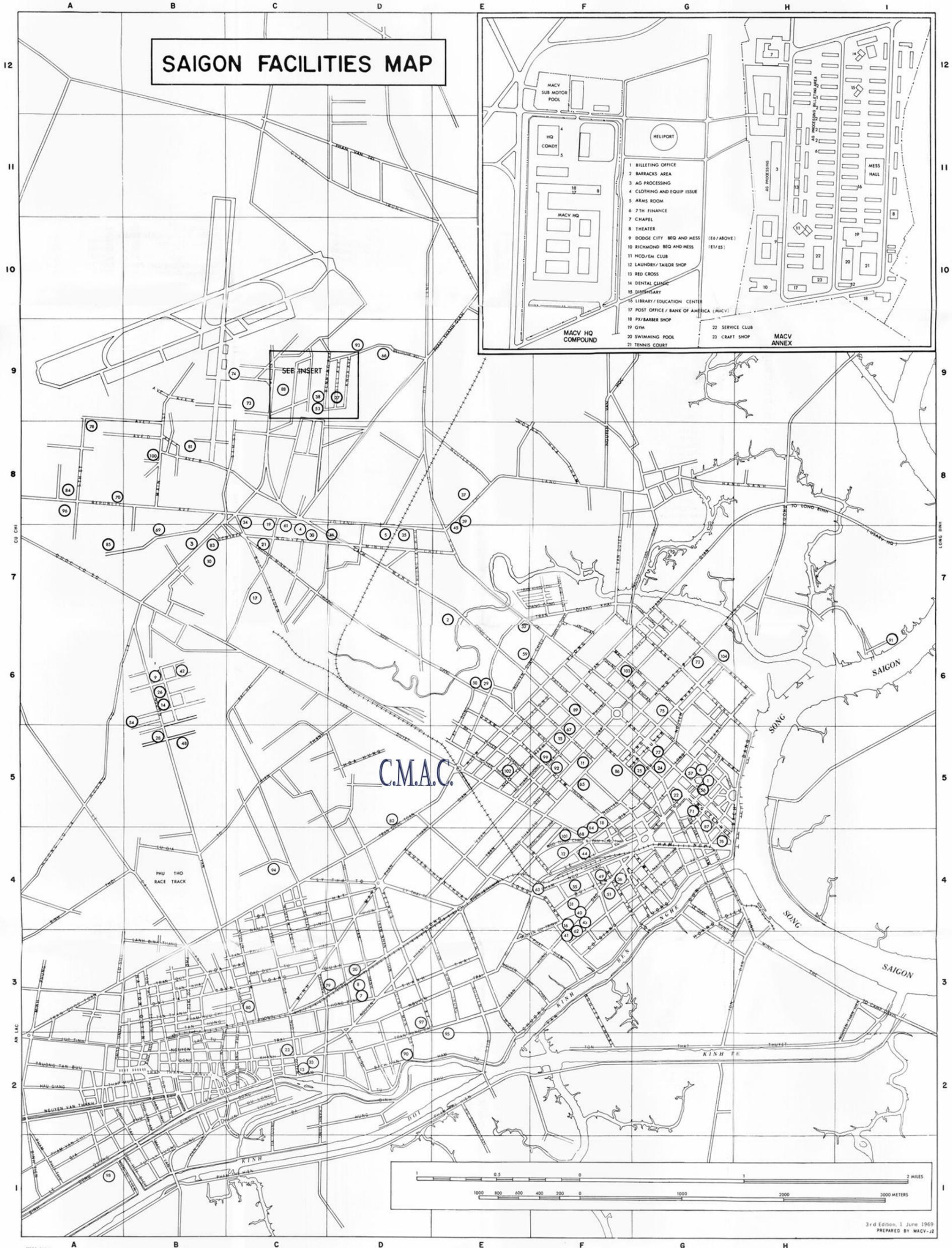
The following two graphics, one a Saigon Facilities Map, and the other a Google screen shot, might help in figuring which roads are which in the 1955 Saigon aerial photo above.

SAIGON FACILITIES MAP

MACV HQ COMPOUND

- 1 BILLETING OFFICE
- 2 BARRACKS AREA
- 3 AG PROCESSING
- 4 CLOTHING AND EQUIP ISSUE
- 5 ARMS ROOM
- 6 7TH FINANCE
- 7 CHAPEL
- 8 THEATER
- 9 DODGE CITY BQ AND MESS (E6/ABOVE)
- 10 RICHMOND BQ AND MESS (E1/E5)
- 11 HCO/EA CLUB
- 12 LAUNDRY/TAILOR SHOP
- 13 RED CROSS
- 14 DENTAL CLINIC
- 15 DISPENSARY
- 16 LIBRARY/EDUCATION CENTER
- 17 POST OFFICE/BANK OF AMERICA (MACV)
- 18 PX/BARBER SHOP
- 19 GYM
- 20 SWIMMING POOL
- 21 TENNIS COURT
- 22 SERVICE CLUB
- 23 CRAFT SHOP

MACV ANNEX



The Saigon Facilities Map is not oriented exactly like the 1955 photo, but it shows all the important roads. You might be able to read the street names as they were in 1969. Save the JPEGs to your computer, open them in Windows Photo Viewer, and zoom in for closer viewing.

One of the prominent streets shown in the 1955 photo is Hai Ba Trung, running from downtown out in the direction of Tan Son Nhut. In the 1955 photo, Hai Ba Trung is partially obscured by some clouds just as it bends right and approaches the Phu Nhuan intersection. The road crossing it at that point is Vo Tanh to the left and Chi Lang to the right.

After Vo Tanh Street passes through the Caltex intersection, it would appear to go straight into TSN. In fact, it bends left and heads for Cholon. At the Bay Hien intersection it crosses Le Van Duyet/Highway One and becomes Nguyen Van Thoai, aka Plantation Road.

As it enters the TSN Main Gate, the road which was Vo Tanh became Republic Avenue during the American era and still has that name, "Cong Hoa" in Vietnamese, today.



Google Earth view of part of Saigon.

Webmaster's note; If all leaves you confused, please don't blame the Webmaster because he is most likely the most confused of all.

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