

THE U.S. NAVY



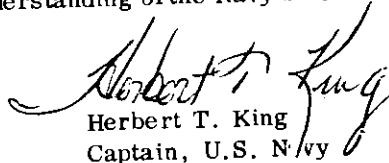
IN VIETNAM

The United States Navy, along with other U.S. and Free World Forces, is deeply involved in the war in Vietnam. Most widely known are the actions and accomplishments of U.S. Seventh Fleet units flying air strikes against targets in North Vietnam, and firing gun support missions up and down the coastline.

But the Navy has also committed a force of some 20,000 men in the country whose roles include operating smallboats on counter-infiltration missions, construction, supply, support, and serving as advisors to the Vietnamese Navy.

This booklet has been published to provide a briefly written and photographically illustrated record of achievements by those Naval forces in Vietnam under the operational control of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.

It is by no means a comprehensive history, but rather is intended as a tribute to those officers and men who are writing the chapter of Navy history in this wartorn nation. It is hoped that the booklet will serve to increase awareness by those Navymen of the magnitude of their contributions, and will provide others with an insight and understanding of the Navy's role in the fighting within the Republic.



Herbert T. King

Captain, U.S. Navy

Commander Naval Support Activity, Saigon

FRONT COVER - Young Vietnamese watch as a U.S. Navy River Patrol Boat passes on one of the rivers of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam

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Rear Admiral Norvell G. Ward, USN, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, and Chief Naval Advisory Group



COMMAND

The Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV), is the Navy's senior officer in Vietnam and has responsibility for controlling and coordinating virtually all the Navy's efforts in country.

From his headquarters in Saigon, he directs Navy activities running the scale from one-man advisor units and four-men patrol boats to multi-thousand man construction and logistic support commands.

To help him carry out his responsibilities, COMNAVFORV has a staff of several hundred officers and men who are specialists in fields ranging from logistics to intelligence.

Commanders of the various Navy elements in Vietnam report operationally to COMNAVFORV though administratively they remain under their own type commanders.

Major forces under COMNAVFORV include:

- the Coastal Surveillance Force (Task Force 115);
- the River Patrol Force (Task Force 116);

- the Naval Advisory Group, which is charged with advising the Vietnamese Navy on all phases of its operations;
- the Seabees of the 3rd Naval Construction Brigade;
- the Military Sea Transportation Office, Saigon;
- the Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, which provides logistic support for all U. S. Forces in the I Corps area;
- the Naval Support Activity, Saigon, which provides logistic support for Navy operations in the II, III, and IV Corps areas.

The newest major U. S. Pacific Fleet command, COMNAVFORV was established April 1, 1966, as a result of the expanding Navy commitment throughout the embattled Republic of Vietnam.

COMNAVFORV also serves as Naval Component Commander for General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

Rear Admiral Ward inspects Vietnamese Navy honor guard



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One thousand miles of rugged coastline is a tempting invitation to the Viet Cong to smuggle men and equipment into South Vietnam by sea.

The U. S. Navy and Coast Guard have joined with the Republic of Vietnam Navy to make any acceptance of that invitation by the communists as expensive as possible.

Operation Market Time is the code name given to the U. S. Navy's effort aimed at blocking enemy attempts at taking advantage of sea routes to carry on their subversive war against the beleaguered Vietnamese.

Formally designated the Coastal Surveillance Force (Task Force 115), Market Time includes Navy SWIFT boats, Coast Guard Cutters, radar picket escort ships, SP2H "Neptune" aircraft, Harbor Defense units, and strategically located Coastal Surveillance Centers which coordinate overall efforts in their sectors.

Together they are proving a formidable foe for the Viet Cong and an effective barrier from the 17th parallel in the South China Sea clear around to the Cambodian border in the Gulf of Thailand.

Navy SWIFT boats (PCF for Patrol Craft, Fast) and Coast Guard Cutters (WPBs) operate in much the same fashion, patrolling waters along the shoreline, boarding and searching literally thousands of junks daily.

Their job is to sort contraband from cargo which may include anything from chairs, rubber tires and salt to nuoc mam, a distinctly aromatic Vietnamese sauce made of fermented fish.

During routine searches, identification cards of individuals and cargo manifests are checked. They are looked over by a Vietnamese carried as liaison man and interpreter.

If any papers or identification are out of order the boat or person is taken into custody and turned over to Vietnamese authorities.

The boats operate from bases established along the coastline. There are 26 WPBs and over 80 SWIFTS in country. The SWIFTS are part of the Pacific Amphibious Force.

The larger Coast Guard Cutters, 82 feet long, can patrol up to five days at a time with their 11-man crews alternating watches. Carrying only six men, the 50-foot SWIFTS stay at sea between 24 and 36 hours at a stretch.

The Navy craft have speeds up to 25 knots while the more heavily armed Cutters can do 18 knots.

Coastguardsmen have twice tangled with large, steel-hulled enemy trawlers trying to slip war goods into country. Results: one captured and one destroyed, though both times enemy land forces tried to intervene.

In addition to board and search operations, the patrol craft regularly provide supporting gunfire for land-based troop operations.

Such action has included assistance to the Marine Corps in reconnaissance operations and amphibious assaults; mortar and .50 caliber machine gun support for Special Forces raids; beating back Viet Cong trying to overrun Vietnamese Army outposts; strikes against VC positions and evacuation of wounded from combat areas.

When the 1st Cavalry Division had the VC in a three-sided trap recently, SWIFT boats closed the fourth side and netted over 300 VC suspects trying to escape by sea.

Another task the small craft have accomplished is the rescue of Vietnamese fleeing the Viet Cong in overcrowded boats, and fishermen who have capsized in heavy seas.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Point Hudson



Radar picket escort ships (DERs), assigned to Market Time on a rotating basis by Cruiser-Destroyer Force, Pacific, provide an outer screen force to prevent any end runs by the communists.

Long range, Saigon-based Neptune aircraft add an umbrella to Market Time's search efforts.

The Naval Air, Pacific, Neptunes make it almost impossible for the VC to slip any vessels through the patrolling surface craft. The airmen call in patrol boats to check suspicious junks out.

Also part of Market Time are units of the Harbor Defense Force.

Merchant ships are protected against sabotage by Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance (MIUWS) teams from the

Navy's Mine Force. They keep a running tab on all ships present, and assign anchorages as each ship arrives.

Using small landing craft, MIUWS teams patrol the inner harbors, checking all junks passing through.

Tying all phases of Market Time Operations into a coordinated network are strategically located Coastal Surveillance Centers (CSCs).

From these sites, small staffs of both U. S. and Vietnamese Navy men keep track of all actions, ordering movements as needed.

They effectively serve as the eyes and ears for the Task Force Commander and Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, who are responsible for the overall effort.

Blasting away at suspected Viet Cong hideout





U.S. Navy SWIFT boat

SWIFT boat sailors stay alert during inspection of junk





SWIFT crews fire mortar rounds in support of ground forces

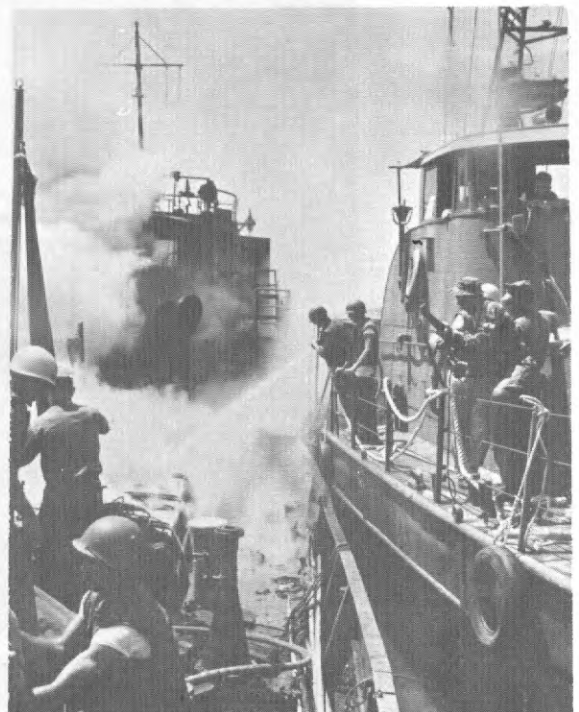
U.S. Army troops are pulled aboard a SWIFT prior to a small amphibious assault (lower left). At right, checking papers on Market Time patrol.





Coast Guard Cutter stands by as enemy trawler burns

Salvage and fire fighting on board captured trawler

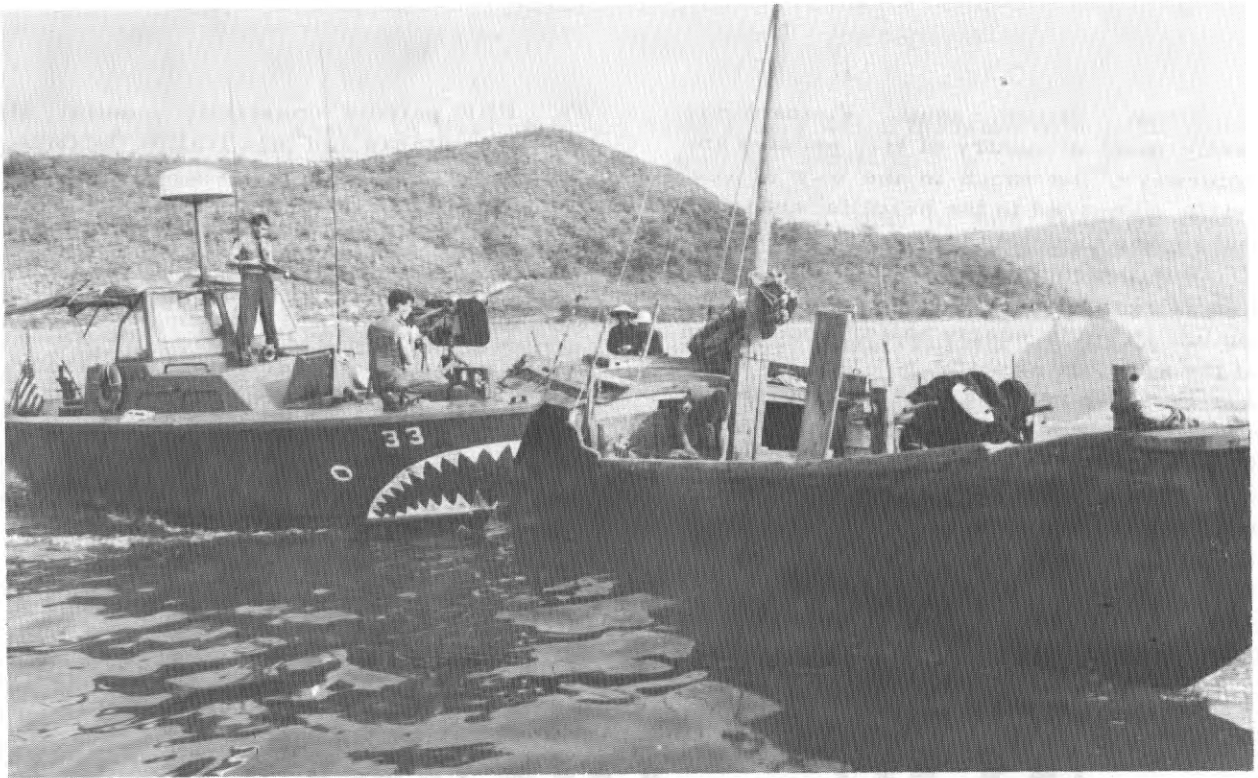




SP2H "Neptune" swoops low over junks during surveillance patrol

USS Lowe (DER 325) on Market Time patrol





Harbor Defense Landing Craft Personnel, Large (LCPL) inspects
junks transitting cargo shipping anchorage



From Saigon, south Vietnam is pretty much a country of rice paddies and waterways. Not much in the way of real estate compared to the beautiful coastline and rugged mountain interior to the North.

But the southern one-third of the nation is not only the rice-bowl of the Republic, it holds nearly half the population of the war-torn country.

For both reasons it is a prime target area for communist forces waging a relentless war of terrorism to get and keep control of the people and rice crops.

PBR patrols constantly monitor all civilian sampan and junk traffic, boarding and searching when necessary to hunt for Viet Cong supplies and personnel.

The crews live with the constant threat of attacks by Viet Cong hidden in the dense jungle along the riverbanks.

The four-man PBR is a fiberglass boat, redesigned from a civilian pleasure craft for Game Warden, capable of 25 knots top speed and extremely maneuverable. The boat is powered on a principle similar to that of a jet aircraft, using

OPERATION GAME WARDEN

The U. S. Navy is waging a battle to control the waterways of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone, which is the swamp area around the ship channel to Saigon.

The world's most powerful navy is fighting a war using small boats, small arms and automatic weapons as its "big guns."

The Navy's Operation is code named Game Warden. Its official title is River Patrol Force (Task Force 116) whose command is headquartered at Can Tho in the Delta.

Mainstay of Game Warden are the River Patrol Boats (PBRs) which conduct day and night patrols along the three major Delta rivers.

Their mission is to prevent enemy use of these main regional highways to transport men and supplies. They also block enemy movement across the rivers from one area to another.

twin water jets to propel and maneuver.

Three .50 caliber machine guns and individual small arms give the PBR withering fire power.

There are now eight PBR bases in Vietnam, with more than 90 boats manned and supported by nearly 700 men. PBRs are part of the Pacific Amphibious Force.

Although the rivers are well patrolled during daylight hours, nightfall brings more patrol craft out prowling.

A curfew makes any traffic at night suspect. Anyone apprehended for improper identification or cargo manifest is turned over to Vietnamese authorities for further investigation.

Boat operations are backed up by UH-1B "Huey" armed helicopters, bristling with machine guns and air-to-surface rockets.

Nicknamed "Seawolfs," the Navy airmen operate from scattered sites in the Delta region, providing fire support and reconnaissance for PBRs.

The helicopters assist in firefights with enemy sampans and junks, or against VC ambushes.

They also provide support for other friendly ground or waterborne units, carrying out rocket and strafing strikes, rescue downed pilots or others in distress and cover for medical evacuations. The 'coptors belong to the Commander, Naval Air, Pacific.

Operation Game Warden also includes Minesweeping Boats (MSBs) from the Mine Force, Pacific. These 57-foot, wooden-hulled craft sweep the Long Tau River channel which winds 45 miles through the Rung Sat Special Zone to the port of Saigon. Their job is to find and destroy ene-

my mines which threaten both civilian and military shipping.

A ship sunk in this vital waterway could choke Saigon's civilian economy as well as cut an important Free World Forces supply route.

The boats, working in pairs, sweep with equipment designed to cut the detonator wire of remotely-detonated mines which are planted in the river channel. They also sweep for moored mines which may be anchored to the river bottom.

Like the PBR sailors, the Minemen have to be alert against harassment from shore. They operate in an area heavily infested by Viet Cong.

U.S. Navy River Patrol Boat (PBR)

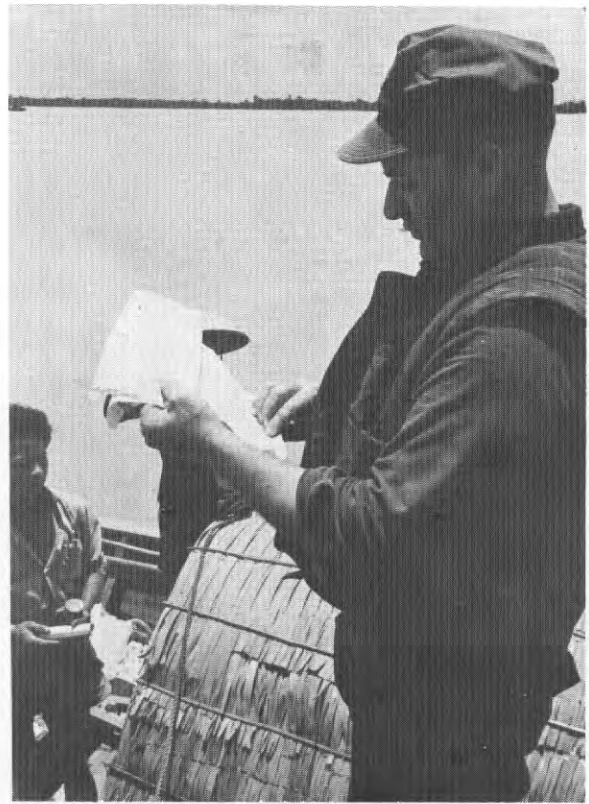


PBR probes for Viet Cong in the underbrush





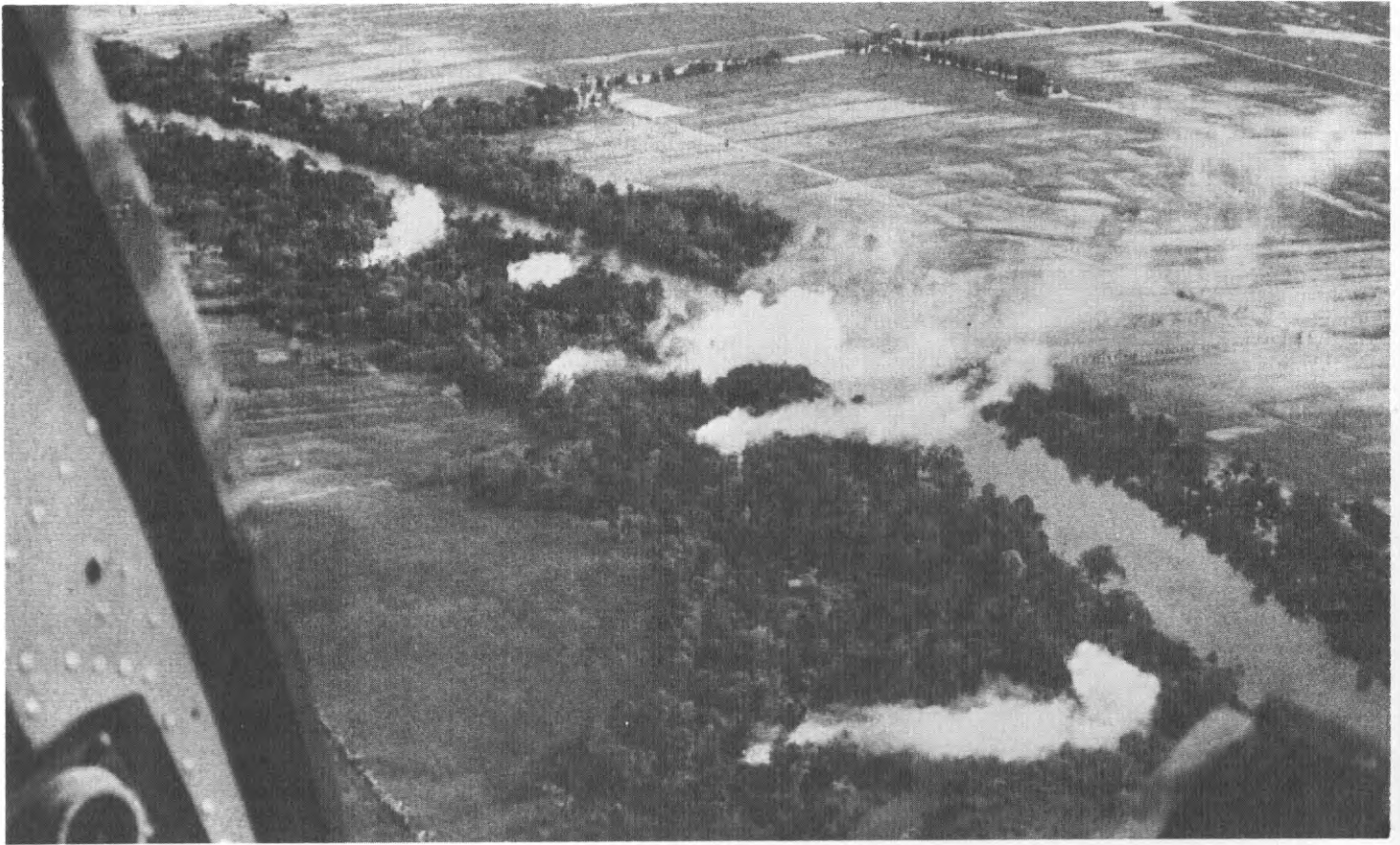
Sampan approach for inspection



Checking papers

Extended operations in flooded Delta called for airdropped fuel





TOP - Helo rocket strikes



LEFT - M-60 machine guns at work

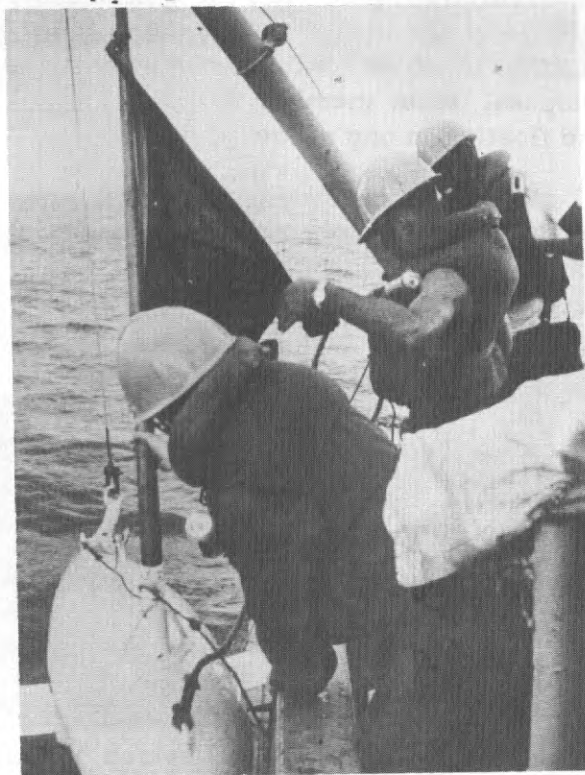
BOTTOM - UH-1B "Huey" Helicopter





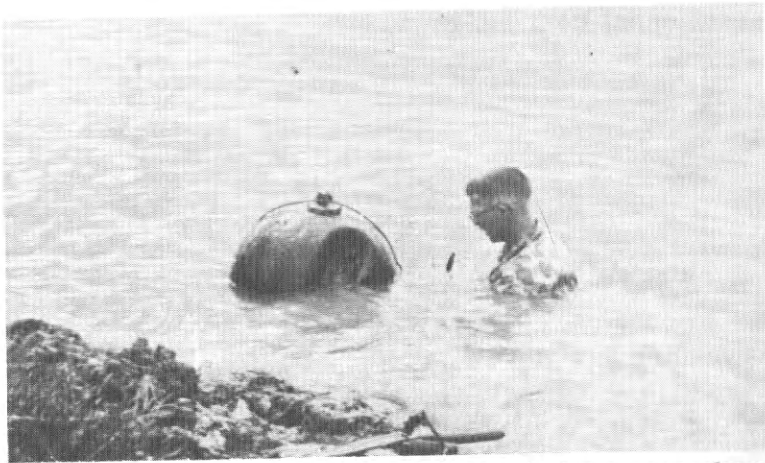
U.S. Navy Minesweeping Boat (MSB)

Preparing minesweeping equipment

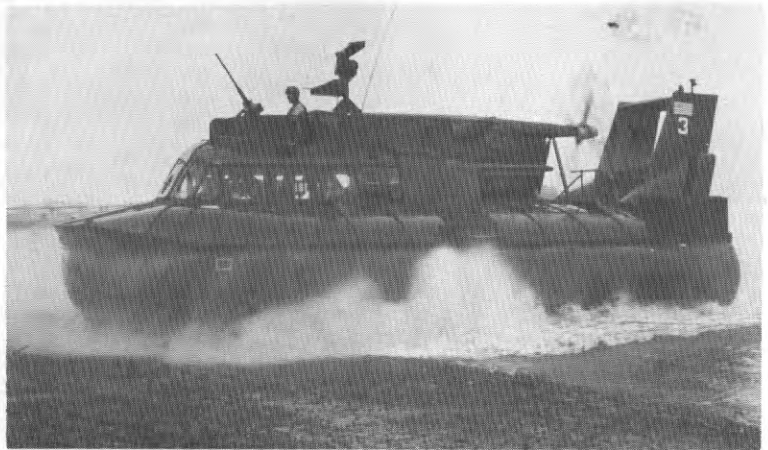




Harbor Clearance Teams of the Service Forces, Pacific, search for obstructions in ports and shipping channels.



Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal team member checks a Viet Cong mine found floating in one of the river.



Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACVs) were tested for use in both Market Time and Game Warden operations. Craft travel over a cushion of air.