

OPERATION GAME WARDEN

Over half the Vietnamese civilian population lives south of Saigon in the Mekong Delta - a flatland of pronounced rice paddies divided by miles of twisting canals and waterways. Being the "Rice Bowl of the World", and producing fully one-half of the country's food, one can reason why communist aggressors have made this area their prime objective.

Defeating this highly determined and elusive enemy requires unrelenting pressure on as many fronts as possible. Considering the population density, these are extraordinary demands, and they are reflected in the mission of the U.S. Navy's Operation GAME WARDEN.

In Operation GAME WARDEN, Navy river patrol boats (PBRs) are used to fight Vietnam's riverine war. The PBR is particularly suited to her many functions. Small, fast and well equipped, she can overtake evading sampans and escape frequent enemy ambushes. Twin water jets steer and propel the craft at speeds in excess of 25 knots. At this speed her draft is only nine inches. A crew of four, usually captained by a Petty Officer First Class, man the boat's twin .50-caliber machine guns forward, the single after .50-caliber machine gun, an M-60 machine gun, grenade launchers, and various small arms. Patrolling in pairs, the patrol has a Chief Petty Officer or Commissioned Officer as Patrol Officer.

There are now 13 River Patrol Force bases in Vietnam strategically situated at the following places: Binh Thuy, Nha Be, Sa Dec, Can Viet, My Tho, Mobile Bases I and II, YREMS 16, 18 and 20, and three LSTs. Advanced staging sites are located at: Ben Lac, Tam An, Rach Gia, Tra Cu, Tuyen Khon, Kinh Quan II, Tien Binh, Co Dan Ha, and Moc Hoa. There are 250 boats operated and supported by approximately 1630 PBR sailors. River patrol boats are

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part of the Pacific Amphibious Force.

Operation GAME WARDEN was established on March 21, 1966. Commander River Patrol Force, Captain A. W. PRICE, Jr. of Coronado, Calif., directs the Operation from his headquarters at Binh Thuy, near the IV Corps Tactical Zone Army Headquarters in Can Tho, RVN. He controls day and night patrols covering all the major water arteries of the Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone, a strategic mangrove marshland surrounding the main shipping lane to Saigon, the Long Tau River.

The river and canals of the delta are the primary means of travel in the Delta and the primary mission of the River Patrol Force is to prevent enemy use of these vital waterways for troop movements and resupply. Nighttime curfews have been established and daytime traffic is constantly stopped and searched.

Improperly manifested cargo and civilians without proper identification are thoroughly investigated. Vietnamese National Maritime Policemen ride many patrols to aid their American counterparts in investigating sampans. On many occasions the policeman are replaced by Armed Propaganda Teams (APT's). These teams consist of Chieu Hoi (Ex-Viet Cong) ralliers who volunteered to help fight the communists. GAME WARDEN conducts an active psychological operations program to encourage Viet Cong to rally to the Government of South Vietnam.

GAME WARDEN units fulfill varying support roles in riverine warfare on countless fronts. Vietnamese Regional and Popular Force

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outposts along the rivers continually call for PBR assistance when attacked by the Viet Cong. Vietnamese Army regulars use the patrols as blocking forces for their ground sweeps.

Daily contact with Vietnamese on the river has presented unique opportunities for civic action and psychological warfare. Medical Civic Action Projects (MEDCAPS), a joint effort in which whole villages are selected for medical assistance by a doctor and his team, are regularly conducted.

These projects are paying off! To many Vietnamese, the PBR is a welcome friend on the river. This favorable climate is exploited whenever possible to win an increasing number of Hoi Chan ralliers and discredit the Viet Cong propaganda.

River patrol boat operations are supported by UH-1B "Huey" helicopters, heavily armed with M-60 machine guns and air-to-surface rockets. The lead helicopter carries an extra .50 caliber machine gun.

Nicknamed "Seawolves", the Navy aviators operate from seven scattered bases in the delta, providing fire support and reconnaissance. They assist in fire fights against enemy sampans and Viet Cong ambushes.

Seawolves also provide support for other friendly ground and waterborne units, carrying out rocket and strafing strikes, rescuing downed pilots or others in distress, and covering for medical evacuations of wounded personnel.

There are 245 officers and men serving on these Navy helicopters throughout Vietnam. The helicopters are on interservice loan from the U.S. Army, and are the oldest helicopters in-service in Vietnam.

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Operation GAME WARDEN includes two additional units among its assets: SEAL Teams from the Pacific Amphibious Forces and Minesweeping Boats (MSB's) from the Pacific Mine Force.

SEAL Teams operate in small squads, moving well inside uncontested Viet Cong territory. They are highly trained in clandestine anti-guerrilla warfare and strike at selected targets to give the Viet Cong a taste of their own tactics.

Special SEAL support elements with heavily armored equipment insert the squads and provide fire support for rapid recovery at the end of a mission.

The 57-foot, wooden-hulled MSB's (Minesweeping Boats) 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 enemy mines which threaten both civilian and military shipping. A ship sunk by a Viet Cong mine could choke this channel and seriously injure Saigon's civilian economy and an important Free World supply route as well.

There are 180 officers and men serving aboard MSB's in Nha Be, five miles south of Saigon.

Because of the many facets of this riverine war, no one element of Operation GAME WARDEN outweighs the other. Jointly, the elements can be as canny as the enemy and are constantly aware of the consequences their action may have on the divided loyalties of a war torn people. This is a big job!

(DECEMBER 1963)

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

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1966

March 21

Eleven River Patrol Boats (PBR's) arrived in country for use in Operation GAME WARDEN, based aboard the dock landing ship USS Belle Grove (LSD-2).

April 10

The PBR's began Operation GAME WARDEN patrol on the Long Tau River, the first operational appearance of the newly-introduced craft.

April 29

Harbor Clearance Unit One arrived in country and began operations from Cat Lo near Vung Tau. Team one is the salvage component of Task Force 116.

May 16

Two PBR's operating from the Game Warden base at Can Tho were ambushed by the Viet Cong on the Bassac River 13 miles southwest of Can Tho. This was the first of many fire fights involving PBR's.

August 22

Six PBR's interdicted what appeared to be a major Viet Cong river crossing attempt during the night. Two Viet Cong were confirmed killed and one sampen was captured. The three-hour battle took place on the My Tho River, 45 miles southwest of Saigon. On several occasions the boats came under heavy automatic weapons fire as the Viet Cong tried to drive them away. At one point in the action, artillery was called against a Viet Cong position

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which was subsequently silenced. A U.S. Army helicopter fire team was also called in to suppress enemy fire. The Navy boats suffered light damage. There were no friendly personnel casualties.

September 19

U.S. Navy pilots officially took over operation of the UH-1B "Huey" armed helicopters flying in support of Game Warden. This was the first Navy combat use of this type helicopter.

October 6-18

Eight U.S. Navy River Patrol Boats (PER's) based at Vinh Long and My Tho, conducted a special operation during which they hunted the Viet Cong across the flood-swollen canals and submerged rice paddies of Kien Tuong Province. Units of the operation went into areas few Vietnamese and no U.S. Forces had previously penetrated. More than a ton and one half of Viet Cong rice was captured by the Navymen and was turned over to flood victims. Only light contact with the Viet Cong was reported during the operation. In all, three Viet Cong were killed and two wounded. There were no friendly casualties.

October 31

Forty-three Viet Cong sampans and seven junks were sunk in a running three-hour battle by Navy crews of armed UH-1B "Huey" helicopters and PER's.

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The PBR's sprang a trap on a major Viet Cong troop crossing attempt on the My Tho River in the Mekong Delta, approximately 47 miles southwest of Saigon. In excess of 75 sampans and junks, many carrying green-uniformed enemy troops, were sighted by the PBR crews in one of the largest Operation Game Warden actions of the Vietnamese War. There were no friendly casualties and only light damage was inflicted on the PBR's by intense enemy fire. Two of the seven junks sunk were believed carrying explosives. One junk, when hit by U.S. fire, exploded in a huge secondary explosion. The Viet Cong made repeated attempts to sink these large junks to prevent their capture.

November 11

The first of the specially-configured Game Warden tank landing ships, USS Jennings County (LST-846), arrived at Vung Tau and relieved the dock landing ship (LSD) as support ship for U.S. Navy PBR's.

December 28

Nine Viet Cong were killed and a quantity of enemy material captured in the first major fire fight on the Ham Luong River. The action occurred nine miles down stream from the junction of the Ham

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Luong and Mekong Rivers when the PBR's from My Tho interdicted an enemy river crossing attempt.

1967

January 9

The 2,300-ton dredge Jamaica Bay was mined by the Viet Cong at Dong Tam in the Mekong Delta. The dredge was sunk by at least two large, controlled mines placed on either side of the hull. Twenty Americans and five Vietnamese were on board the civilian-owned dredge at the time of the mining. Salvage operations were begun immediately by Harbor Clearance Unit One (HCU-1).

January 15

PBR's based at My Tho engaged at least three main force companies of a Viet Cong battalion in the narrow Nam Thon channel north of Ngu Hiep Island. The boats came under heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire from both banks of the river and took small arms fire from two sampans. Artillery, helicopter and fixed-wing air strikes hit the enemy positions. The PBR's killed nine Viet Cong and wounded three. Nine sampans were sunk, 17 structures were destroyed and 11 others damaged. One PBR boat captain was killed. Three other PBR crewmen were wounded.

January 20

Game Warden units teamed with U.S. Army forces, Vietnamese Regional Forces and River Assault Group (RAGs) in a rapid reaction operation on a Viet Cong supply depot west of the Rung Sat Special Zone. Four Viet Cong were killed and at least 40 others were observed to fall under the heavy fire. One river patrol craft (ATC) (acting as minesweeper) was hit by a 57mm recoilless rifle round. Two U.S. Navy personnel were wounded in the action. Ten cases of TNT were destroyed and 9,000 pounds of rice, 40 pounds of documents, uniforms, a large quantity of cloth, and miscellaneous material were captured. Thirty suspects were detained.

May 25

Two U.S. Navy PBIs suffered heavy casualties in a battle with enemy troops armed with automatic weapons and recoilless rifles. The action took place on the Han Luong River 60 miles south of Saigon. The attack began with a recoilless rifle round landing on the lead boat in the midst of the crew, killing three. Another crewman was killed while readying his weapon to return fire. The only surviving crewmen took

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the helm, using the engines for control, and steered the boat clear of the enemy fire. Killed aboard the second PBR was the National Policeman who was assigned to the mission as liaison officer. Though all the second boat's crew were wounded, they emptied all of their machine gun ammunition and grenades into the enemy positions while moving out of the attack zone. Fighter bombers and helicopter gunships were called in to strike the enemy positions. Three structures were destroyed and six damaged by the aircraft.

June 10

The Rung Sat Special Zone Vietnamese Commandos were formed. Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Samuel M. Garland of Alexandria, Va. was the first advisor to this elite group.

June 17

U.S. Navy armed helicopters stopped an attempt by an estimated 200 Viet Cong to overrun an outpost 90 miles southwest of Saigon near the mouth of the Bassac River. Under intense fire from the helos, the enemy broke off the attack. There were no friendly casualties.

July 8

A U.S. Navy River Patrol Boat and a Navy Seawolf armed helicopter teamed up with junks of Vietnamese

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Navy Coastal Group 35 to support a company of Vietnamese Army soldiers as they killed 27 enemy and captured a number of weapons in the Vinh Binh Sector. One U.S. Navy PBR sailor was killed when the Vietnamese junks and the PBR's were taken under heavy enemy fire.

August 3

The U.S. Navy Base at Nha Be came under heavy enemy mortar, rocket and recoilless rifle attack at midnight. Twenty-four U.S. personnel were wounded, none seriously. PBR and Minesweeping Boat crews got their craft underway and away from the barrage in only a few minutes. The exploding rounds damaged waterfront buildings and the PBR pier.

August 5

The Naval Base at Nha Be came under attack for the second time in three days. The brief enemy recoilless rifle ~~rounds~~ attack resulted in no personnel casualties, and only minor material damage. The base was hit with 75mm recoilless rifle rounds. U.S. Navy armed Seawolf helicopters, joined by Army aircraft countered the attack with rocket and machine gun fire. Enemy casualties unknown.

September 29

Two U.S. Navy men were killed and four others wounded when their two-boat Game Warden patrol came

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under heavy enemy automatic weapons and rocket attack in a canal off the Mekong River 49 miles southwest of Saigon. Entering the canal, the PBR's were hit by sniper fire. A Navy Seawolf helicopter scrambled to the area to escort the boats out of the canal, but before the lead boat could get clear, it was hit by an enemy B-40 rocket. The explosion killed the coxswain and forward gunner, blew the remaining crew overboard and set the boat ablaze. The other boat picked up the injured and a Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group unit salvaged the weapons from the beached and burning PBR.

September 30

For the first time, American forces struck at the birthplace of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) as the U.S. Mobile Riverine Force continued Operation Coronado V. Landing craft and gunboats of the Navy's River Assault Flotilla One moved two battalions of infantry troops from the Army's 2nd Brigade, 9th Division to an area 50 miles southwest of Saigon near An Dinh Village in Kien Hoa Province.

November 1

U.S. Navymen begin U.S. Naval Oceanographic Survey of Long Tau River with scientists and engineers of

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the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office. Historically, this operation may be the most hazardous oceanographic survey.

November 21

Navy recognizes LCDR Donald D. Sheppard of Coronado, Calif., Commander of River Division 51 at Binh Thuy for his innovation of "The Flaming Arrow" on board river patrol boats as an effective weapon against the Viet Cong and his fortifications.

November 23

President Johnson presented five Navymen with medals at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN, during his short stop-over. Captain Paul N. Gray (CTF 116), LTJG Samuel Miess (RIVSEC 512), and EN3 Michael Meeks (RIVSEC 511) received Silver Stars.

1968

January 13

First New Mark II river patrol boats (PBR's) received at Saigon.

JAN 31-MAR 12

During Tet Offensive, River Patrol Boats (PBR's) patrolled the Hu'ong (Perfume) River near Hue, the old capitol of Vietnam. River Section 521 escorted supply ships and free world ships to combat areas on the Perfume River.

February 28

USS Jennings County (LST-846), Tank Landing Ship,

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became the first LST to record 2,000 consecutive accident free helicopter landings in the history of the Navy. USS Jennings County is a support craft in Operation Game Warden.

June 10, 68

A turning point in the Vietnam war was reached when the Vietnamese Navy assumed exclusive responsibility for clearing command-detonated mines from the strategic Long Tau River shipping channel to Saigon.

July 29 68

U.S. Navy river patrol boats (PBR's) of Operation Game Warden began patrolling the upper Mekong and Bassac Rivers, near the Cambodian Border. The PBR's were stationed on Mobile Base II, YREM-16.

August 12

For the first time in Game Warden's short history a river patrol boat was rebuilt after being assessed at eighty percent destroyed. On this date, PBR 130 was launched for the second time by Naval Support Activity Detachment Binh Thuy. The boat was destroyed in a recoilless rifle attack on a River Section 511 patrol at Chau Doc.

September 30 68

Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumalt, Jr. assumed command of the 38,000 U.S. Navy and Coast Guard personnel serving in the Republic of Vietnam. VAdm Zumwalt

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relieved Rear Admiral Kenneth L. Veth as Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.

October 7

Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius presented the Presidential Unit Citation to the men of the River Patrol Force who operated in contiguous waters from May 1966 to June 1967, in ceremonies at Binh Thuy.

October 15

YR-24, a floating workshop, was transferred to the Vietnamese Navy in ceremonies at the Vietnamese Navy headquarters in Saigon. VAdm Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. Commander Naval Forces Vietnam presented the boat to the Vietnamese. This was the first transfer of U.S. Navy assets to the Vietnamese Navy.

November 1

At least 20 American and Vietnamese Navymen were killed ~~early this morning~~ when two explosions ripped separate holes in the side of the Mobile Riverine Force support ship USS Westchester County (LST-1167). Nineteen U.S. Navymen and three U.S. Army soldiers also were wounded by the blast. The incident was caused by VC mining.

November 3 68

The U.S. Navy announced Operation Sea Lords, a new offensive effort designed to interdict enemy

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infiltration deep in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta. This operation brought all three major operating forces of the Navy in Vietnam together, to patrol seldom touched areas south and southwest of Saigon. Mobile Riverine Force CTF117, River Patrol Force CTF116, and Swifts CTF115 all are participating in Operation Sea Lords.

December 6 68

Operation "Giant Slingshot" began. More than forty U.S. Navy patrol boats (PBR's and ASPB's) moved into the "Y"-shaped complex of narrow rivers within 15 miles of Saigon. Centered on the Van Co Dong and Van Co Tay Rivers, which wind westward from south of Saigon around the "Parrot's Beak" section of the Cambodian Border, the operation was designed to interdict enemy movement of personnel and logistics into South Vietnam. Minesweepers (MSM's) of the Navy's Game Warden River Patrol Force and elements of the River Assault Flotilla (CTF 117) also participated in Operation "Giant Slingshot".

December 12

An additional two River Divisions were added to the original three participating in "Giant Slingshot". In addition, USS Harnett County (LST-821) was relocated to participate.

BUNKER - BUNKER BRIEF

SALUTATION (IF MR. PICKERING ACCOMPANIES, HE VISITED GAME WARDEN AND WAS BRIEFED ON 9 JUL)

A SHORT PRESENTATION OF OPERATION GAME WARDEN, THE U.S. NAVYS PARTICIPATION IN THE RIVER PATROL FORCE/TF 116.

-MISSION-

THE FOUR BASIC MISSIONS OF THE RIVER PATROL FORCE AS TASKED BY OUR OPERATIONAL COMMANDER - CNFV ARE:

1. CONDUCT RIVER PATROL, VISIT AND SEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE TO ENFORCE CURFEWS AND PREVENT ENEMY MOVEMENT, RESUPPLY AND INFILTRATION ALONG THE DELTA ESTUARY COAST AND ALONG WATERWAYS OF THE DELTA.
2. CONDUCT MINE COUNTERMEASURES IN THE RSSZ AND DELTA WATERWAYS.
3. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO CTF 117 (MRF) WITHIN THE CAPABILITIES OF OUR ASSIGNED FORCES.
4. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SENIOR ADVISOR IV CORPS.

RECENTLY RIVER PATROL FORCE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED 2 ADDITIONAL TASKS:

5. SUPPORT TO CG CMAC IN DEFENSE OF CMD.
6. ESTABLISHMENT OF ROUND-THE-CLOCK BARRIER PATROLS ON THE UPPER MEKONG AND BASSAC RIVERS TO PREVENT FURTHER INADVERTANT CROSSINGS OF THE CAMBODIAN BORDER BY ALLIED CRAFT ~~MAKING NAVIGATIONAL ERRORS.~~

-ASSETS- (5 DIFFERENT TYPES)

THE RIVER PATROL FORCE PRESENTLY HAS 200 PBRs, 22 (UH-1B) HELOs, 4 LST, 7 MINESWEEPERS AND 6 SEAL PLATOONS ASSIGNED. THESE ASSETS ARE POSITIONED FROM I CORPS WHERE WE MAINTAIN 20 PBRs, TO THE RUNG SAT WHERE WE HAVE 50 PBRs, THE MINE-SWEEPERS, A HELO FIRE TEAM AND A SEAL PLATOON AND A BIT CLOSER IN THE DELTA, 130 PBRs, 6 HELO FIRE TEAMS AND 5 SEAL PLATOONS. GAME WARDEN SHORE BASES EXIST IN THE DELTA AT MY THO, VINH LONG, SA DEC, AND THE FORCE HEADQUARTERS AT BINH THUY. ~~THERE~~ *we* ~~IS AN LST~~ WITH 10 PBRs AND A HELO FIRE TEAM CONTINUALLY LOCATED ON THE HAM LUONG, CO CHIEN AND BASSAC RIVERS. THERE IS ALSO AN AFLOAT BASE AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE

have 3 LST

1968
MY THO AND HAM LUONG RIVERS. IN JULY, WE REESTABLISHED, A PERMANENT PRESENCE IN WHAT WE CALL THE UPPER DELTA. A UNIQUE MOBILE BASE WAS ANCHORED OFF CAMP THUONG THOI NEAR TAN CHAU. ITS A COMPLETE SELF CONTAINED BASE AND THE SECOND ONE OF ITS KIND TO BE USED BY THE NAVY. MB I WAS STATIONED IN THE I CORPS AREA IN THE PERFUME RIVER AT TAN MY IN JAN⁶⁸ OF THIS YEAR. THESE BASES CONSIST OF 6 SECTIONS:

1. OFFICES, ARMORY, OFFICERS AND CPO BERTHING, COMM CENTER & SICK BAY.
2. GALLY & TRANSIT QUARTERS - HELO PLATFORM
3. ENLISTED BERTHING - HELO PLATFORM
4. MAINTENANCE SECTION FOR THE PBR

ALL UNITS ARE AIR CONDITIONED. IN ADDITION TWO SMALLER SECTION CALLED AMMI-PONTOONS SERVE AS FLOATER PIERS WITH ONE FILLED WITH FRESH WATER/DIESEL FUEL AND THE OTHER JP-5 FUEL FOR HELOS. THIS BASE IS EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT 10 PBRs, A LHFT AND A SEAL PLATOON. WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF NEARLY 200, THIS REPRESENTS THE LARGEST U.S. BASE IN THE BORDER AREA OF IV CORPS.

AS PROGRAM V ASSETS ARE DELIVERED, ADDITIONAL AFLOAT BASES AND PBRs WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE VICINITY OF LONG XUYEN WITH 10 PBR IN SEPT AND CAO LANH IN JAN 69 WITH 20 ADDITIONAL PBRs. THE RIVER PATROL FORCE IN 1966/67 HAD UNITS IN THE LONG XUYEN/TAN CHAU AREA HOWEVER IN JULY OF LAST YEAR THESE UNITS WERE RELOCATED TO THE LOWER BASSAC AS A RESULT OF INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THAT AREA AND A CORRESPONDING DECREASE IN THE UPPER DELTA. FROM JULY THROUGH DECEMBER 1967, SMALL PATROL UNITS 4 OR 5 PBRs WOULD CONDUCT RANDOM PATROLS IN THE UPPER DELTA. THESE PATROLS WOULD OCCUR EVERY 2 TO 4 WEEKS AND WOULD LAST ABOUT 5 DAYS ^{not} SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE UNTIL PROGRAM V DELIVERIES PERMITTED PERMANENTLY BASED RESOURCES IN THIS AREA.

AFTER REVIEWING INTELLIGENCE ON INFILTRATION ACTIVITIES DURING THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS CEASE FIRES LAST YEAR, CTF 116 POSITIONED TWO PATROL UNITS COMPOSED OF 9 PBRs AND A SEAL PLATOON IN THE UPPER DELTA AT THUONG THOI AND CHAU DOC TO DETECT AND INTERDICT INFILTRATION DURING THE TET CEASE FIRE. THE EVENTS OF THAT

PERIOD ARE WELL KNOWN. BETWEEN TET AND THE END OF JULY WE CONTINUED OUR PERIODIC PATROLS IN THIS AREA AND BY COINCIDENCE WERE AGAIN IN CHAU DOC OF THE 5TH OF MAY. ALTHOUGH THE RIVER PATROL FORCE IS A U.S. COMMAND, IT WORKS CLOSELY WITH MANY VIETNAMESE MILITARY AND CIVIL AGENCIES, AND AGENCIES OF THE U.S. MISSION AND FWMAF, INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY ARE CUSTOMS SERVICE, NATIONAL POLICE, MARITIME POLICE, REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT CADRE, CORDS, AND OF COURSE THE MILITARY SIDE OF THE HOUSE, PRIMARILY RF ~~AND~~ PF AND PRUs.

ONE POINT THAT WE FEEL IS SIGNIFICANT IN OPERATION GAME WARDEN AND THAT IS OUR CONTRIBUTION TO PSYOPS. WE ARE PROUD THAT OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THIS AREA AND THE EFFORTS EXPENDED GREATLY EXCEEDS THE NECESSARY COMBAT FUNCTIONS WE PERFORM. WE ARE IN AN IDEAL POSITION TO CONDUCT PSYOPS AND CIVIC ACTIONS AS WE ARE IN DAILY CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC - LAST YEAR ¹⁹⁶⁷ OUR PATROLS ENCOUNTERED ALMOST 3 MILLION PEOPLE ON THE RIVERS AND WATERWAYS. AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY WE ATTEMPT TO ASSIST BRIDGEING THE GAP BETWEEN OUR CULTURE - WHETHER BY A SMILE AND A KIND WORD OR BY BRINGING IN A VN MEDCAP TEAM. PBRs CONDUCT AN AVERAGE OF 100 MEDEVACS EACH MONTH, AND IN FOUR INSTANCES DURING THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE COME IN A CLOSE SECOND, IN RACES WITH THE STORK.

ONE INDICATOR OF AT LEAST PARTIAL SUCCESS IS THE INCREASING NUMBER OF CHIEU HOIS RALLYING TO THE GOVERNMENT VIA PBRs - 10 IN AUGUST. ⁶⁸

IN ITS DAILY OPERATIONS, THE RIVER PATROL FORCE PERFORMS BASIC AND ESSENTIAL ACTS OF POPULATION AND RESOURCES CONTROL. IN SO FAR AS IS PRACTICAL, WE ATTEMPT TO HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE OF A VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY ACCOMPANY EACH PATROL, AND PERFERABLY A NATIONAL MARITIME POLICEMAN. THIS HELPS US BRIDGE THE LANGUAGE BARRIER AND SERVES AS A BASIS OF INTERPRETATION OF VIETNAMESE LAW WHEN QUESTIONABLE CASES ARISES CONCERNING PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION, BOAT REGISTRATION, CARGO MANIFESTING AND CONTRABAND IDENTIFICATION. ^{In conclusion} ~~IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE~~ THAT THE NATIONAL POLICE IN KIEN PHONG AND CHAU DOC PROVINCES HAVE BEEN AMONG THE MOST COMPETENT RELIABLE AND AGGRESSIVE POLICE WE HAVE OPERATED WITH.

CONFIDENTIAL

MY PURPOSE TODAY IS TO ACQUAINT YOU WITH OPERATION GAME WARDEN. GAME WARDEN WAS ORIGINATED IN APRIL 1966.

OUR MAIN AREA OF OPERATIONS IS THE MEKONG DELTA. AS THE RICHEST PART OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE HOME OF OVER 40% OF THE POPULATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, ITS CONTROL IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM. THE DELTA IS ONE GIANT RICE PADDY, CUT BY TWO MAJOR RIVERS, THE MEKONG AND THE BASSAC. IT IS CRISS-CROSSED BY LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF MILES OF CANALS AND OTHER WATERWAYS. THE WET SEASON TURNS THE AREA VIRTUALLY INTO A LAKE. ALL OF THIS MAKES THE LAND TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULT AND SO THE WATERWAYS PROVIDE THE MAIN TRANSPORTATION LINES. WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE 30 TO 40 THOUSAND JUNKS AND SAMPANS OPERATING IN THE DELTA. WE KNOW THAT THE VIET CONG ARE USING THE RIVERS, AS A NECESSITY, FOR INFILTRATION, RESUPPLY AND COMBAT REINFORCEMENT. THE RIVER PATROL FORCE, IN COORDINATION WITH VIETNAMESE PROGRAMS, HELPS DENY THE MAJOR RIVERS OF THE DELTA TO THE VIET CONG. THIS ACTION ISOLATES LARGE LAND AREAS IN THE DELTA AND FACILITATES THE PACIFICATION OF THESE AREAS BY VIETNAMESE GROUND FORCES.

IN ADDITION TO ESTABLISHING CONTROL OF THE MAJOR DELTA RIVERS, TASK FORCE 116 HELPED ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE RIVER APPROACHES TO SAIGON IN THE RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE. PACIFICATION OF THIS ZONE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VIETNAMESE NAVY AND THE RIVER PATROL FORCE ASSISTS IN THIS MISSION BY AUGMENTING THEIR PATROL CAPABILITY OF THESE RIVERS.

ADDITIONALLY, THE RIVER PATROL FORCE ASSISTS THE VIETNAMESE NAVY'S MINESWEEPING TASKS ON THE LONG TAU RIVER APPROACHES TO THE PORT OF SAIGON.

THE MISSION OF THE RIVER PATROL FORCE IS - "ENFORCE CURFEWS AND PREVENT VIET CONG INFILTRATION, MOVEMENT, AND RE-SUPPLY ALONG THE DELTA ESTUARY COAST, ACROSS THE MAJOR RIVERS OF THE MEKONG DELTA AND THE RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE BY THE CONDUCT OF RIVER PATROLS, VISIT AND SEARCH OF RIVER AND DELTA ESTUARY TRAFFIC, AND INSHORE SURVEILLANCE.

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CONFIDENTIAL

CONDUCT MINE COUNTERMEASURES OPERATIONS IN THE RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE AND, AS DIRECTED, IN THE MEKONG DELTA RIVERS, WITH FORCES ASSIGNED, PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SA, IV CORPS".

THE PBR IS OUR PRIMARY PATROL UNIT.

WITH THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT SOUNDPROOFED, UNDERWATER EXHAUSTS AND WATER-JET PROPULSION, THE PBR IS EXTREMELY QUIET. COUPLED WITH A LOW SILHOUETTE THE BOAT IS ALMOST UNDETECTABLE TO THE NAKED EYE DURING NIGHT OPERATIONS. THE ENEMY KNOWS SOMETHING IS ON THE RIVER BUT IS UNABLE TO PINPOINT ITS EXACT LOCATION.

DISPOSITION OF THE RIVER PATROL FORCE IS AS FOLLOWS: (YOU MAY FOLLOW MY POINTER ON A CHART OF SOUTH VIETNAM FOR REFERENCE OF LOCALITY.)

1. THE RIVER PATROL FORCE WITH HEADQUARTERS AT BINH THUY ENCOMPASSES THE MEKONG DELTA AND RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE AREAS AND CONSISTS OF:

30 PBR - BINH THUY
1 LHFT
20 PBR - YRBM-18

10 PBR - SA DEC

10 PBR - VINH LONG
1 LHFT

20 PBR - MY THO
1 LHFT

10 PBR - ON LST IN RIVER NEAR MY THO
1 LHFT

10 PBR - ON LST IN CO CHIEN RIVER
1 LHFT

10 PBR - ON LST IN BASSAC RIVER
1 LHFT

50 PBR - NHA BE
1 LHFT
6 MSB

ADDITIONALLY, 20 PBRs ARE AT CUA VIET AND TAN MY IN I CTZ

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THE LSTS PROVIDE A COMPACT, SELF-SUSTAINING AND HIGHLY MOBILE OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE BASE FOR THE EMBARKED PBRs AND LHFT. ADDITIONALLY THE 6 40MM CANNON IN EACH LST PROVIDES A MOST USEFUL NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT FIRE BASE FOR H & I FIRES AND TO SUPPORT GROUND OPERATIONS. A FOURTH LST IS ASSIGNED FOR ROTATION PURPOSES.

TWO SEAL TEAM DETACHMENTS ARE ASSIGNED TO CTF 116 FOR COVERT INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND ARMED RECONNAISSANCE AND OTHER UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE OPERATIONS IN THE RSSZ AND THE DELTA.

THE RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF CONTINUED ACTIVITY BY THE VIET CONG. THAT THE VIET CONG HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO CARRY OUT THEIR LONG STANDING THREAT TO CLOSE THE LONG TAU RIVER APPROACH TO SAIGON IS EVIDENCED BY THE MANY INCIDENTS OF SNIPER FIRE, DIRECT FIRE, AND MININGS. THESE HAVE ALL OCCURRED ALONG THE BANKS OF THE LONG TAU.

THE MAIN SHIPPING CHANNEL OF THE LONG TAU IS SWEPT AT LEAST EIGHT TIMES EACH DAY COMMENCING PRIOR TO THE FIRST TRANSIT BY COMMERCIAL SHIPPING, AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE DAY. CHAIN DRAG OPERATIONS COUNTERING COMMAND DETONATE MINES IS NOW CONDUCTED BY THE VNN WITH USN ADVISORS. OPERATIONS TO COUNTER CONTACT AND INFLUENCE MINES IS CONDUCTED BY MINEDIV 112, A GAME WARDEN UNIT. THIS MINESWEEPING EFFORT IS ADEQUATE TO COUNTER THE PRESENT VIET CONG MINE THREAT AND TO DETECT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ENEMY TACTICS. VISUAL SURVEILLANCE OF THE RIVER IS CONDUCTED BY SURFACE AND AIR PATROLS TO DETER RE-MINING ATTEMPTS BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE SWEEPS.

WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT THE VIET CONG IS UNABLE TO MINE THE RIVER AS LONG AS HE HAS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND CAN MAINTAIN OPERATING BASES IN THE LAND AREAS AND ALONG THE STREAMS, CANALS AND MINOR RIVERS OF THE RUNG SAT. AT THE REQUEST OF COMMANDER U. S. NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM, OPERATIONS "JACKSTAY", "LEXINGTON", "BATON ROUGE" AND "BREMERTON" HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN REACTION TO VIET CONG USE OF THE RSSZ. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT SINCE APRIL 1966 THE LONG TAU HAS ONLY BEEN CLOSED ONCE - AND THEN FOR A PERIOD OF ONLY TWO HOURS.

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MORE IMPORTANT, THOUGH, IS THE FACT THAT THROUGHOUT THE GAME WARDEN TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, THE RIVER POPULATION CAN NOW PROCEED TO MARKETS RELATIVELY FREE FROM VIET CONG TAX INTERFERENCE AND THE RIVERS NO LONGER PROVIDE AN OPEN HIGHWAY FOR VIET CONG SUPPLY MOVEMENTS. PBR'S PRESENTLY CONDUCT OVER 100 MEDEVAC MISSIONS PER MONTH FOR RIVER COMMUNITIES, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY; HAVE AIDED NUMEROUS PF OUTPOSTS UNDER ATTACK BY THE VIET CONG.

THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS THAT GAME WARDEN OPERATIONS HAVE INSPIRED VNN RIVER ASSUALT GROUPS AND POLICE UNITS TO INCREASE THEIR OWN COUNTERINSURGENCY POPULATION AND RESOURCES CONTROL EFFORTS, THE FEELING BEING THAT, "IF THE AMERICAN PBR CAN DO IT, WE CAN TOO." LIAISON WITH RIVER OUTPOSTS HAS ALSO HAD THE BENEFICIAL SIDE EFFECT OF GIVING THESE REMOTE STATIONS A GREATER FEELING OF PARTICIPATING IN THE OVERALL WAR EFFORT.

THE INCREASED EFFORTS OF THE VIET CONG TO HARASS OR DESTROY OUR PATROLS AND MINESWEEPERS LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE VIET CONG REALIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR OPERATIONS AND THEY ARE REACTING THERETO. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS COMING IN INDICATE A STEPPED-UP PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO BUILD FEAR OF THE PBR'S BY TELLING PEOPLE THAT THE U. S. SAILORS —

EXPERIENCE TO DATE INDICATES, HOWEVER, THAT A HIGHER DENSITY OF PATROLS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL. THEREFORE, COMMANDER U. S. NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM HAS ESTABLISHED A FORCE REQUIREMENT OF A TOTAL OF 250 PBR'S TO AUGMENT PATROLS IN THE RUNG SAT, IN I CTZ, AND ALONG THE UPPER BASSAC AND MEKONG.

THE PBR IS A NEW WEAPONS SYSTEM: GAME WARDEN IS A NEW CONCEPT OF OPERATION: OUR SUPPORT BASES ARE NOT YET FULLY IMPLEMENTED. YET, LOGISTICALLY GAME WARDEN HAS BEEN WELL SUPPORTED. MATERIALLY, WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN UNABLE TO MEET OUR COMBAT REQUIREMENTS. THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS, MOSTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE NEWNESS OF THE PROGRAM AND THE WEAPONS SYSTEM AND THE INABILITY TO FORESEE EVERY REQUIREMENT FOR PARTS AND MAINTENANCE SUPPORT. THESE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN MET, HOWEVER, AND THEREFORE NO REDUCTION IN COMBAT READINESS HAS BEEN EVIDENCED.

THIS COMPLETES MY DISCUSSION, SIR. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?