

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE (RSSZ): FACT SHEET

Vietnam's Rung Sat Special Zone consists of 406 square miles of dense mangrove swamp, interspersed with heavy nipa palm. The northern border is only 15 miles southeast of Saigon. The swamp stretches from Nha Be in the north to the South China Sea. Countless rivers, streams and canals crisscross the area and are major lines of communication and transportation.

From this area the Viet Cong frequently launch mining or heavy weapons attacks against shipping and naval craft on the Long Tau River, main shipping channel from the South China Sea to Saigon. This vital river flows through the heart of the Rung Sat and a prime objective of VC units in the area is to block or close the vital channel, preventing the flow of supplies to Saigon.

POPULATION:

The civilian population of Rung Sat is about 18,000 with approximately 1,200 refugees. They are located entirely within the villages and hamlets.

MILITARY:

The Vietnamese Navy Commander of the RSSZ has operational control of all Republic of Vietnam military forces operating within the Zone. The Rung Sat is the only land area under the operational control of the Vietnamese Navy.

The Vietnamese Navy (VNN) maintains two River Assault Groups plus patrol units. The Vietnamese minesweeping effort is composed of six Motor Launch Mine Sweeps (MLMS) which patrol daily.

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U. S. Navy (Game Warden) units operating in the Rung Sat are: Minesweeping Boats (MSB's), River Patrol Boats (RPB's) and a "Seawolf" light helicopter fireteam, all based at Nha Be.

HISTORY:

The Rung Sat is historically known as a topographically perfect area for guerrilla type operations. Prior to 1960, the area was completely ruled by a well-organized group of pirates and assassins who gave the name "Forest of Assassins" to the area. General (at the time colonel) Minh was assigned by President Diem to clean them out. After several years of fighting, two districts were finally established in 1960, coming under the jurisdiction of Bien Hoa Province.