



EDO Salutes River Patrol Flotilla Five

Operating one of the smallest, least traditional craft in the U.S. Navy, River Patrol Flotilla FIVE is engaging Viet Cong guerrillas on the rivers and canals in South Vietnam. Commissioned on September 1, 1968, following the decommissioning of her predecessor, River Squadron FIVE, the Flotilla is comprised of 250 31-foot fiberglass river patrol boats (PBRs).

River Patrol Flotilla FIVE, a unit of the Pacific Fleet's Amphibious Force, is the major arm of the River Patrol Force (CTF 116) which is also comprised of the UH-1B "Seawolf" helicopter gunships, Navy SEALs, mine-sweeping craft, fixed wing aircraft, riverine craft and LSTs converted for PBR support.

Their mission, called Operation Game Warden, is to deny the enemy the use of the vital water transportation routes in the Mekong Delta, Rung Sat Special Zone and "I" Corps Tactical Zone of South Vietnam.

The boats, built on a pleasure craft hull, are powered by water jets driven by two diesel engines. The water jet principle allows them to operate in less than a foot of water, an often vital factor in some of the shallow

canals where the Viet Cong move men and supplies in small sampans.

Speed and firepower are the main allies of the PBR. Attaining a speed of 25 knots, the boats carry twin .50-caliber machine guns forward, a .50-caliber machine gun aft, an automatic grenade launcher, and an M-60 machine gun besides the crew's individual weapons. Mark I PBRs first arrived in Vietnam in March, 1966, and began operations April 10. Mark II PBRs, a later model, began arriving September 1967.

Operating in pairs, the boats are manned by an all enlisted crew with first or second class petty officers as boat captains. The lead boat carries a commissioned officer or chief petty officer as the patrol officer while the cover boat may carry a Vietnamese national for liaison and interpreting.

To date, over 6,000 awards and decorations have been bestowed on the men of River Patrol Flotilla FIVE and her predecessor, River Squadron FIVE, including two medals of honor, three Navy Crosses, 40 Silver Star medals, and three Legion of Merit awards.



EDO CORPORATION

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