

# THE NAVY IN VIETNAM



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More than 135,000 Navymen and Marines in and off Vietnam are engaged in military operations ranging from the flying of sophisticated supersonic aircraft to sailing—and searching—wooden-hulled junks, their design as ancient as Asia itself.

The color photographic exhibit, "The Navy in Vietnam . . . from Jets . . . to Junks" shows a portion of the Navy's varied and complex mission in Southeast Asia.

A Navy Nuclear Powered Carrier Task Force operating off Vietnam is featured in the 128 photographs that compose the exhibit. The ships, aircraft and men in this Task Force are conducting the most intensive combat air operations in Naval history. Many carrier pilots have flown more than 200 combat missions in this war, twice as many as most pilots flew in World War II.

Navy-Marine Corps amphibious assaults from the sea, by helicopter and landing craft, are shown, along with combined United States and South Vietnamese counter-insurgency operations which prevent men and materials from reaching "Charlie" (the Viet Cong), by sea.

Navy logistics and construction efforts are here, too. But photographs cannot measure the supply route to Vietnam, the longest of any war, or reveal the complexities of directing a vast billion-dollar military-civilian construction program in the middle of a war.

The photographs here, which were taken by a special team of Navy photojournalists and selected by Captain Edward Steichen, USNR-R, show what some of the men of the United States Navy and Marine Corps are doing to help the people of South Vietnam fight their battle for survival, rebuild their country and prepare for the day when peace comes to their nation.

■ The powerful Nuclear Powered Carrier Task Force operating off Vietnam fulfills an indispensable role in this war. The huge carriers move rapidly across the sea, providing bases from which Navy planes fly close air support for our troops, strike at supply lines in North Vietnam, fly reconnaissance missions and save downed pilots during air-sea rescue missions.

Of the five carriers operating off Vietnam, three are always on station, flying thousands of missions during intensive, round-the-clock operations. The 5,000 men aboard each carrier work 16 to 18 hours a day during months of fast, furious and continuous operations in the war zone.

Work never stops on a carrier. Planes are armed, pilots briefed, planes launched and recovered and supplies are constantly being taken on from replenishment ships. In this war the carriers stay on station longer and launch more missions in a shorter time than ever before in the history of the Navy.





■ Navy-Marine amphibious assaults from the sea have been conducted all along the coast of South Vietnam, landing Marines by boat and helicopter from the northernmost part of the country south to the hot, swampy delta flatland. Some of the assaults have involved landing Marines who establish bases for continuous operations while other landings have been search and destroy operations designed to surprise the elusive Viet Cong.



■ Navy counter-insurgency operations along the coast of South Vietnam and on the thousands of miles of rivers and canals inland, impair the movement of Viet Cong men and supplies. Over 15,000 U. S. Navy men, working with South Vietnamese forces, conduct this major operation with ships, small craft and both land and sea based patrol aircraft. Thousands of sailing junks are stopped and searched each month, looking for infiltrators from North Vietnam.



■ Navy shore bombardment and gun fire support has proven as essential in Vietnam as it was during World War II or Korea. Navy Cruisers, Destroyers and smaller ships sail close along the shore of South Vietnam, firing more than 30,000 shells and rockets each month with computer controlled accuracy at Viet Cong targets. These ships clear dense jungle areas before waves of boats and helicopters land Marines during amphibious assaults. Also, as the ships sail along the coast they can quickly respond to calls from allied troops, providing gunfire support where it is needed against enemy forces. Navy and Marine spotters working with ground units ashore or in small aircraft overhead direct the fire against discovered Viet Cong emplacements. Once on target, the automated guns of the ships lay down a barrage with deadly accuracy. The guns of Naval ships have also been fired to stop boats attempting to infiltrate supplies to the Viet Cong and to save downed American pilots from being captured by the enemy.



■ Underway replenishment of Navy ships at sea is a daily occurrence off Vietnam. The amount of beans, bullets and black oil needed to keep 60,000 men working, approximately 50 combatant ships operating and 500 aircraft flying is considerable. Ships still must be carefully maneuvered side by side to deliver fuel and other supplies from supply ship to combatant, but the rate of transfer of hard goods from ship to ship has tripled, thanks to the addition of the helicopter.



■ The Navy directed Military Sea Transportation Service is engaged in a massive sealift operation carrying men and supplies to Vietnam. Over ninety-eight percent of all supplies going to Vietnam are carried by ships over the longest supply route of any war in history. At first, cargo from most ships had to be slowly unloaded onto lighters, until deep water piers were towed to Vietnam from the U.S. and primitive harbors were made into efficient ports.

■ Navy Medical men are performing near-miracles in Vietnam. Marines and Navymen receive medical attention superior to that available in any previous war. Navy Hospital Corpsmen accompany Marines on patrols to provide immediate assistance. When a man is wounded a helicopter is called and minutes later, he is being treated at a hospital or on a hospital ship off shore, both facilities have expert staffs and modern equipment equal to the best stateside hospitals.



■ Navy Civil Engineers are directing the largest military-civilian construction effort ever attempted; a billion dollar construction program calling for everything from airfields to school houses. It is a mission of virtually building a country in the midst of a war. In addition, over 5,000 Navy Seabees are constructing Navy and Marine Corps bases as well as sending technical assistance teams throughout the country to help the people rebuild their villages.





■ The Navy in Vietnam is not just men fighting enemy forces. It's also Navymen and Marines building homes for orphans and helping the kids. It's Navy Doctors treating civilians and teaching medical students. It's construction men teaching new methods with new tools. It's many things. In whatever way they can, Navymen help the South Vietnamese help themselves towards a better life.