

Viet Cong Miscalculate



VOL. 2 No. 9 U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon. March 2, 1968

MRF Is on the Move

Recently, the joint Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force began operating on the Bassac branch of the Mekong River in Vietnam's Mekong Delta for the first time in its one year history this week.

Five Navy ships, two tugs and an armada of 81 river assault craft completed a 111-mile transit from the Dong Tam Army base near My Tho to Can Tho on February 14. The MRF moved up the Mekong River, crossed over the Vam Nao and moved down the Bassac to reach its destination.

Embarked in the Navy ships of River Assault Flotilla One were infantrymen from the Army's 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division who will be conducting reconnaissance in force and search and destroy operations in the area.

Previous to its move to Can Tho, the MRF had never been further west on the Mekong than Sadec. And the furthest it had moved south was to Ben Tre during a two-day operation in that area on January 25-26.

The MRF moves into the

Can Tho area after a highly successful series of operations in the wake of the VC terrorism which swept across the country after the Tet truce offensive.

During the two weeks since the wave of stepped-up attacks began on January 30, the MRF has reported more than 350 VC killed in action and 12 others taken prisoner. Friendly casualties during the same period were 15 killed in action and 207 wounded.

The MRF gave another demonstration of its mobility during the two week period, moving its base three times between Vinh Long and Dong Tam and operating in seven different areas. The Navy river assault craft and Army infantrymen played a major role in reestablishing allied control over the besieged cities of Vinh Long and My Tho.

JUSPAO — The Viet Cong launched their biggest offensive of the war in South Vietnam during the first week of the 1968 lunar new year. Militarily, the offensive failed; the communists were repulsed and suffered heavy losses they could ill afford. Politically, the offensive was defeated; the people firmly rejected the enemy's call for a general uprising, and the government of the Republic of Vietnam stood firm. Psychologically, the offensive boomeranged; it reinforced urban opposition to communism and brought a greater sense of national purpose to South Vietnamese citizens who bore the burnt of the terror attacks.

Massing in the dark of the moon (traditionally regarded by Vietnamese as a time of lurking dangers) and striking as the thin silver of the new moon first became visible, the communists shattered the holiday truce they themselves had proclaimed. With mortars, rockets, guns and explosives and with guerrillas, terrorists, saboteurs, propagandists, hard-core Viet Cong troops and North Vietnamese Army regulars, 60,000 strong, they attacked 35 major population centers throughout the country. Among objectives hit were Saigon and three other cities, 26 provincial capitals and several other large towns. Fifteen airfields and a number of military positions also were attacked, but the principal targets of the marauders were thickly populated centers.

Civilian casualties were heavy, including men, women and children gathered for family celebrations of Vietnam's most important holiday.

The sneak offensive—planned, according to intelligence sources, as far back as last September—scored a number of initial successes. But the

gains were temporary. Lacking reserve or rescue forces in many sectors and diluting their strength by attacking so many widely scattered targets simultaneously, the Viet Cong saw their units isolated and chopped up one by one. And nowhere did the South Vietnamese public respond to the communists' appeal to rise in support of their campaign. The enemy offensive was checked, and most areas overrun in assaults that started before dawn on Tet were back in government hands before the end of the first week of this Year of the Monkey. By the time the moon was full, the enemy's combatants—50,000 main force and local troops, plus 10,000 guerrillas and cadres—had been cut in half by casualties and the offensive wave had subsided.

But scattered pockets of resistance remained to be brought under control from Hue to the Mekong Delta, and the possibility of a second wave of offensive attacks could not be discounted. Fifty thousand North Vietnamese Army troops massed in or near the Demilitarized Zone at the 17th parallel did not

take part in the Tet terror offensive, and may form the striking force for the next phase of the communist campaign. This next phase may have as its objective the capture of the Republic's northern tier of provinces in I Corps.

The roll of communities that reeled under the lash of war was long, and in them suffering was great: Saigon and its twin city, Cholon; the incorporated cities of Da Nang, Hue and Dalat; the Mekong Delta provincial capitals of Can Tho, My Tho, Chau Phu, Vinh Loi, Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Moc Hoa, Vinh Long and Sadec; the provincial capitals of Bien Hoa, Khiem Cuong, Phu Cuong and Xuan Loc in the III Corps area around Saigon, and the more northern towns of Phan Thiet, Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa, Qui Nhon, Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Hoi An, Quang Tri, Quang Ngai, Tam Ky, Tan Canh, Ninh Hoa and others. Preliminary estimates indicated at least 30,000 structures, mostly homes, were destroyed throughout the country. In the capital district of Saigon-Gia Dinh 9,000 houses were

(Continued on Page 3)

Repose Completes Two Years off Vietnam

With total admissions now nearing 11,000, this floating hospital marked the second anniversary of her arrival off Vietnam on February 16.

Since her recommissioning on October 16, 1965, the U.S. Navy hospital ship Repose has continuously deployed supporting U.S. and Allied forces in Vietnam in the tradition she established during World War II and the Korean conflict.

The Repose has remained in operation along the coast of I Corps tactical zone and commenced operating on a schedule between Chu Lai and Danang in early 1966. By the following November, her area of regular operation had spread to include waters off Dong Ha and Phu Bai in the northernmost sector of South Vietnam.

On July 29, 1967, the hospital ship sailed at top speed to meet the USS Forrestal in the Tonkin Gulf in order to provide on the

scene medical assistance for those burned and injured in the major fire aboard the carrier.

While serving off Vietnam, the "Angel of the Orient," as she was nicknamed in Korea, has recorded over 5,000 accident-free helicopter landings and her doctors have performed almost 4,000 major operations.

On August 19, 1967, the Repose was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for her role in several Marine Corps operations near the DMZ, her outstanding patient care and the record number of accident-free landing on her small flight deck.

Of the 10,300 patients admitted, nearly 7,000 have returned to duty. A record 14,500 servicemen have received "out patient" care.



FLARES—Five flares hang over the Phu Tho race track area of Cholon, headquarters area for the Viet Cong who terrorized the Saigon-Cholon area over Tet. Much of the Saigon area was lighted by flares in an effort to prevent the Viet Cong from moving at night.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by LTJG T.S. Storck)

Editorial**CONTINUE THE UNITY**

The past few weeks Saigon and all of Vietnam has been racked by the increased activities of the Viet Cong. Once again the American servicemen showed the world what real men are made of, for they all stepped forward and did their share.

One particular group really stood out and that was the Military Police. No other group suffered a greater loss percentage-wise than did the MPs. Yet, they continued doing their job with a large number getting only one or two hours sleep a night. When they had every reason to say, "I can't take it anymore, I can't go on any longer," they went on and they took it, patrolling the streets and watching over the military and civilian population, alike.

When everything has settled down again, the curfew is lifted and you are out on the town, take it easy and don't deliberately cause the MPs trouble. There are a large number of rules which seem petty but the MPs didn't make the rules. They are only enforcing them, which is their job. Also, let's try to continue the unity between all the allied forces which the past few weeks have brought about. Remember, we are all working for the same thing—defeat of the Communists and a free world.

Hummel's Vietnam

COME DOWN TO PULL A LITTLE R&R,
HUH, SARGE??

Enemy Blasted

7th FLEET — Gunfire from the destroyer USS Orleck February 13 and 14, killed two enemy soldiers, destroyed five enemy-occupied structures, three bunkers, on sampan and 70 yards of trench line in the Vung Tau area of the Mekong River Delta.

The Orleck was on station in the mouth of the Saigon River, about 30 miles southeast of Saigon, when she was called on to provide gunfire support in the Vung Tau area.

In addition to the two kills reported by the air spotter, there were also two other possible kills. The spotter reported, "Two enemy soldiers ran under a bush. The bush then took a direct hit and after the shell went off, the

bush just wasn't there anymore."

Ensign Malcom Carstens, the ship's ordnance officer said, "The spotters have been outstanding. They are very accurate and make our job that much easier."

The Orleck had been operating in the III Corps area for 10 days. She had fired numerous harassment and interdiction mission during both day and night.

My Mother, What a Cook!

By

CAPT. JJ. Killeen

When you were getting ready to leave Boot Camp did you buy an 8x10 picture of yourself in color for your girl and a passport size picture in black and white for you mother? Did you see your Father only the first night when you asked for the keys to the car and on the morning of the last day when you gave them back?

All your time was spent with a little bundle of fluff called Joanie or Grace or Susan. Mother was the cook and laundress and you loved her for it. She understood.

Give Mother and Dad a break while you are over here. They need reassuring words from you. Stateside TV re-

ports scare the daylights out of them. Keep the cards and letters going their way. Ask them how they are. How is Joe, Aunt Sarah, Granny? There is always some funny thing that happens everyday. Tell them that.

If you go to church tell them. They like to hear it.

If you have to tell them

that a buddy got hit mention the helo evacuation and the good care he got from the medic or doctor. Mom and Pop are on in years. Susie will be with you for the rest of your life.

Mom thinks of you as her boy, she always will. As a man, you should think of her.

Project TARP Begins

General William C. Westmoreland has announced the launching of the Tet Aggression Relief Project (TARP), a voluntary program to assist Vietnamese civilians who fell innocent victim to the brutal VC and North Vietnamese offensive over the Lunar New Year holidays.

The project began February 22 and will be carried out through April 2.

Under TARP guidelines, U.S. personnel working for the Department of Defense in Vietnam—who are in physical contact with victims of the communist-initiated aggression—are encouraged to provide assistance to those in need of it. Voluntary contributions may however, be accepted from other individuals and organizations.

Further TARP guidelines state that the voluntary contributions solicited from U.S. personnel should be made a part of an organization's Civic Action Program. Efforts to provide relief to the Vietnamese people through this project should be coordinated with the Senior Advisor of the province in which the organization is operating.

Did You Know?

NAVAL FACTS — BY HUMMEL

MAJ. John F. Bolt, USMC.....

JULY 11, 1953

KOREAN WAR ACE... BECAME THE FIRST JET ACE IN THE MARINE CORPS HISTORY WHEN HE SHOT DOWN HIS 5TH AND 6TH MIG-15 WHILE LEADING A FOUR PLANE FLIGHT EAST OF SINUIJU...

LT. T.G. ELDYSON

ASCENDED 900 FT. OVER ANNAPOLIS IN 3 MIN. AND 30 SEC.

TOP-1

THE NAVY'S FIRST AUTOGIRO ARRIVES AT ANACOSTIA.....

BURNING THE HORSE

MERCHANT SAILORS CELEBRATING THE COMPLETION OF 5 WEEKS OF A VOYAGE...

The Jackstaff News

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Anthony G. Popowitz, J0SN, Reporter
Staff Photographers: C. Williams, PH1;
Russ Evans, PH2; Forrest C. West, PH3.

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Early Release Program Revised

The early release program for enlisted personnel wishing to enter college has been amended by the Department of Defense to include those seeking two-year associate degrees.

Defense Department officials said this is the only major change to DOD Instruction 1332.15, which has been limited to candidates for a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Instructions on implementation of the change are being written by the individual military departments who administer the program.

Buoy Tender in Vietnam

by
JO2 D.L. Jimenez, USCG

A scene which is common to the harbors and coastline of the United States is being reenacted along the shores of South Vietnam, as U.S. Coast Guard buoy tenders establish and maintain a system of navigational buoys at the entrances to many of this country's coastal seaports.

The most recent of these tenders to bring the long experience and specialized equipment of the Coast Guard in buoy work to Vietnam was the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Basswood (WLB 388).

The cutter, now operating out of Guam, completed her 30-day tour with her busiest day working 10 buoys in the harbor of the central coastal city of Vung Tau. The operation involved bringing the buoys aboard, cleaning and repairing electrical equipment, replacing power packs and replanting the buoys, which ranged in weight from 700 pounds to the lighted five-ton sea aids.

"It's not as easy as it looks," commented one of the cutter's boatswain's mates.

Buoy work at its best is a hazardous occupation especially during the period when the buoy is out of the water, but not yet secured on deck.

At this point a heavy roll of the ship or a sudden pull on the mooring chain due to currents can cause the buoy to swing wildly over the buoy deck. Although the buoys presently used in Vietnam waters are not as large or as heavy as many which the tenders do battle with in other areas, this is still a challenging operation.

"Besides the weather (monsoon season) another dangerous feature of working in these areas of Vietnam is the interference by other vessels travelling in the vicinity," says the commanding officer, Robert O. Slade.

"All through our tour here we were plagued with this problem. It's not that they get in the way on purpose, but I think that this operation is basically new to this area and they just don't know the problems we have to face."

The process of making

Vietnam safer for merchant and military vessels is still not complete. Thus far, the Coast Guard has sent three cutters to Vietnam at intervals of six months for 30-day tours to establish new aids and re-service already established aids dotting the Vietnamese coastline. With some 70 merchant ships arriving monthly and hundreds of military craft plying the coastal waters daily, the aids play an important factor in the upkeep of the war effort.

There are many problems working this far from home without nearby Coast Guard base or buoy depots with their ready supply of buoys, moorings, batteries, flashers and spare parts. However, the Basswood is no stranger to this type of operation, having operated among the far-flung islands of the Pacific for many years.

The Vietnamese Directorate of Navigation has one buoy tender and maintains an aids to navigation system which was adequate for pre-war shipping. However, the rapid development of port facilities and U.S. bases in areas where previously there was little shipping created a requirement which they could not meet by themselves. The U.S. Coast Guard is providing advisory assistance to the Directorate so that South Vietnam will eventually be able to maintain the entire system.

In the meantime, the Basswood and other 180-foot buoy tenders, whose black hulls are familiar in U.S. waters, are becoming an equally familiar sight in Vietnam.

the capital's defense, 7,000 of them South Vietnamese Rangers and other seasoned ARVN troops. By the end of the week only 700 to 1,000 VC remained at large in Saigon and Cholon, half of them organized in a single surviving battalion dug in near a race-track in an outlying section of the city.

In areas they held for any length of time, the communists sent propagandists door to door, urging the people to rise in support of the VC "liberation" campaign, topple their government and install a new coalition government including communist officials. No where did they win spontaneous support for their cause.



By
Charlie Noble

The top of the mornin' and "Erin go bragh" it's almost St. Patrick's day again, the time for the wearing of the green and serving typical Irish fare. By far the most popular item for this occasion is corned beef and cabbage. However, it may be impossible to utilize the traditional, so it'll be my intent to offer a few substitutes.

Remember some issues ago I gave you an Irish stew recipe using lamb; well, I'll repeat that. Use pot roast recipe card J-9 substituting 38 pounds of diced boneless lamb leg roast for the beef. Follow variation No. 2 on the recipe card. Substitute three pounds sliced potatoes in lieu of celery then continue with step three. If the weather is too hot and muggy for stew, sliced chilled canned corned beef to head a cold cut buffet is in keeping with the day.

A liberal, but tasteful, use of green garnish is called for on the mess line; an almost must is a perfection salad utilizing lime jello. For this special occasion, firm the gelatin salad in muffin tins to make individual salads, serve on lettuce leaves with one or two choices of your more popular dressings.

For those of you who are lucky to have the field food service team aboard, ask them for hints as how to make all your meals full of the charm of the "ole blarney".

Rice Wine for Men Only

By
CDR R.L. Mole

Personal Response Officer

The Vietnamese have a number of drinks and, while not encouraging anyone to try them all, it is good to know about them. This knowledge may prevent unpleasant surprises and allow one gracefully to accept or refuse those which are not acceptable by reason of taste or personal conviction.

Rice wine is often served at mealtimes in the home to men, but not to women since the Vietnamese women ordinarily do not drink alcohol. (This does not apply to the hill-tribeswomen during their various religious rituals.) The Vietnamese drink their rice alcohol straight and without chasers. Often such drinks are accompanied by foodstuffs such as fried palm worms, snake or dog meat, peanuts, pork tripe or a bit of acid fruit.

natural teas made of berries, leaves, etc., which may be served either piping hot or cool.

The use of rainwater as a drink seems acceptable to those who drop in for a casual visit on a warm day or a muggy evening. Normally, rainwater is caught from the house roof after a few rains have cleansed away the dirt. The water is stored in earthen containers for use during the dry seasons, and in some areas, numerous large earthenware jars give silent witness to the long dry seasons.

On the hot afternoons found throughout Vietnam, a freshly picked pineapple, either sliced or squeezed for its juice is quite refreshing as are other fruit juices. The coconut provides one of the most common drinks. It seems to be a fairly safe drink since any prior opening of coconut quickly causes spoilage.

Some foreigners have found that the Vietnamese tea brewed in large earthenware vessels over a wood fire is refreshing as well as thirst quenching. There need be no undue concern for side-effects. Perhaps the steaming tea scalds the "germs" as much as it does the mouths of those who drink it.

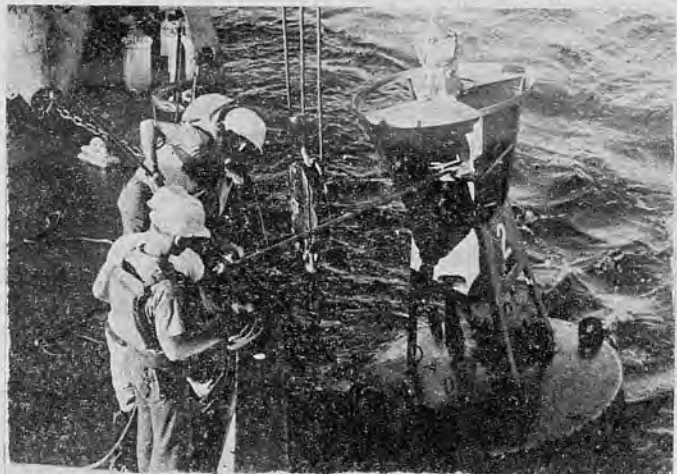
As Vietnamese men grow older they seem to favor a drink of goat's blood mixed with alcohol. Likewise during the so-called "cool months" chrysanthemum flavored alcohol is said to be a favorite drink of aging gentlemen.

Fortunately for some of us, not all Vietnamese drinks are intoxicating. The Vietnamese drink both Chinese tea and green teas as well as many

CRUISE BOOK SALE

The 1966-1967 edition of the Naval Support Activity Cruise Book is now on sale for the reduced price of \$2.00.

All persons interested contact JO-3 William Kobler, NSA Code 03, APO SF 96214. Please enclose an additional 25 cents for postage.



FIVE TON BUOY—Helmeted Coast Guardsmen tug one of the larger buoys on station in Vietnamese waters toward the side of the cutter.

(Official U.S. Coast Guard Photo by JO2 David Jimenez)

Miscalculation

(Continued from Page 1)

razed, including 3,000 in Cholon alone.

Although the main government radio station in Saigon was destroyed by the VC, its Quan Tre transmitter 19 kilometers away was undamaged. A makeshift studio was quickly outfitted and the station remained off the air only a few hours. By both radio and television, Vietnam's leaders addressed the people in the early hours of the VC offensive, calming fears appreciably by replacing rumors with facts. The new refugee problem was tackled with despatch, and facilities were provided to house, feed and clothe those displaced by the

fighting.

Targets in the capital city hit by the VC included the U.S. Embassy's new Chancery compound, the nearby Independence Palace of Vietnam's leaders, the Philippine Embassy residence, U.S. military billets, the Vietnamese naval headquarters and Joint General Staff headquarters, the sprawling Tan Son Nhut airport, the radio station and a number of police stations.

In the battle for Saigon the communists committed 12 to 15 battalions — 4,000 to 4,500 men commanded by a brigadier general. The government and its allies sent more than 11,000 troops to

Mobile Riverine Force Completes First Year

The Mobile Riverine Force (MRF), a unique Army-Navy striking force in the Mekong Delta completed its first year of operations on February 16.

The first riverine warfare unit to be established by the United States since the Civil War, the MRF is a mobile assault force which conducts search and destroy operations on the intricate network of rivers and canals in the Mekong Delta. The fleet of Navy river boats provides close support and fire power while lifting and helping to maintain Army troops in a combat area for 2-3 day search and destroy operations.

Both the troops and the boat crews are based aboard shallow draft Navy support ships especially modified for operation in the Mekong Delta. The smaller river assault craft provide close fire support, block and patrol the waterways in the area immediately prior to the troop landing, during the assault, and throughout the search and destroy operation.

The ground unit of the Riverine Force is the 2nd Brigade of the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division which is commanded by Colonel Bert A. David. Two battalions from this brigade are teamed with the assault boats of the U.S. Navy's Task Force 117 commanded by Captain Robert S. Salzer. All search and destroy operations are determined, planned and executed through close coordination and cooperation between the Army and Navy commanders and their subordinates.

The first staff members of River Assault Flotilla One, the administrative title of Task Force 117, arrived in Vietnam in October 1966. Three months later on January 28, 1967, the 2nd Brigade arrived in country at Vung

Tau, a coastal seaport 35 miles southeast of Saigon.

The Navy's first increment of riverine assault boats were not due to arrive until March, but during the early days of February 1967, the Viet Cong increased the tempo of attacks on U.S. and allied shipping in the Long Tau Channel, the main shipping route between Saigon and the South China Sea. On February 16, a decision was made to press the Mobile Riverine Force into immediate service and destroy operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone and begin clearing approaches to and near the upper Long Tau Channel.

Initial operations proved highly successful. By early April, the task had been completed in the Rung Sat area and it was decided to move the Mobile Riverine Force into other areas of the delta. It first went to Dong Tam in Dinh Tuong Province. Later it moved to such places as Kien Hoa Province, Bien Hoa Province, Long An Province, and Go Cong Province.

By late May all five ships which form the present Mobile Riverine Base had arrived in the delta. These included two self-propelled barracks ships, the USS Benewah (APB 35) and USS Colleton (APB 36); a landing craft repair ship, USS Askari (ARL 30); the barracks ship APL-26; and a logistics support LST assigned on a two month rotational basis by the Commander, Seventh Fleet.

These five ships provide repair and logistics support, including messing, berthing and working spaces for the 1,900 embarked troops of the



RETURN—Army infantrymen return to a Task Force 117 armored troop carrier (ATC) following a search and destroy operation. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by CDR D.K. Dagle)

2nd Brigade and the 1,600 Navy personnel now assigned to Task Force 117. The Benewah also serves as the Mobile Riverine Force flagship. By mid-June 1967, riverboats had joined the force and others would be arriving every few days until the full complement of 100 river assault craft had been reached in early 1968.

By June it was possible to conduct approximately six to eight search and destroy missions per month, each lasting two or three days. On at least eight separate occasions during the year, more than 100 Viet Cong were killed on search and destroy operations, some of which were conducted jointly with South Vietnamese military forces.

Four basic types of assault boats have been designed for MRF operations, each commanded by a senior petty officer.

The primary mission of the armored troop carrier (ATC) is to transport Army soldiers into combat areas. Each ATC is capable of carrying a platoon of 40 fully equipped infantrymen into virtually any canal, river or stream in the delta. Bar-trigger shield and a special hard grade of steel plate protect the ATCs against enemy recoilless rifle and small arms fire. Many of the ATCs have been reconfigured with a helicopter deck to accommodate flight operations for medical evacuations, resupply and personnel transfers.

Protecting the troop laden ATCs are the ironclad monitors, the battleships of the river fleet. The monitors have more fire power than any other boat in the flotilla and are designed to stay on the scene and battle it out with the enemy, once contact is achieved.

Serving as the destroyer minesweeper of the riverine

Navy is the assault support patrol boat (ASPB). These boats provide mine countermeasures for the river assault squadrons, escort the slower ATC convoys during the troop transport phase of assault operations and block and intercept water traffic in the streams near an assault operation and around the Mobile Riverine Base.

A fourth type of craft is the command and communications boat (CCB), a floating command post for the ground force commander and boat group commander. The CCB looks like the Monitor and also can be used to provide fire support.

All of the ships and boats in Task Force 117 are permanently homeported in San Diego and are part of the U.S. Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. While operating in Vietnam, they are under the operational control of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.



BLOCKING—Assault support patrol boats and an armored troop carrier helicopter boat maintain blocking and support positions in the center of the channel as armored troop carriers beach to offload Army infantrymen. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by CDR D.K. Dagle)



FIRING—A Monitor fires 40mm shells into an enemy position during a recent operation in the Mekong Delta. (Official U.S. Navy Photo)

NAVY UNITS SAVE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL

by
JOI E.T. Tompkins

Elements of the U.S. Navy's River Patrol Force were instrumental in saving the capital of Chau Doc Province from destruction during the recent VC lunar new year offensive. They were also instrumental in saving the lives of many civilians, including American and Vietnamese government employees.

The American force was comprised of river patrol boats (PBRs) from River Section 535, a platoon of Seals, and a Naval Support Activity LCM-6 support craft. All units are based at Binh Thuy, on the Bassac River.

The Binh Thuy-based units were the integral units of Operation Bold Dragon, assigned the task of preventing the VC from infiltrating men and supplies into the Republic of Vietnam across the Cambodian border, three miles west of the city of Chau Doc during the scheduled lunar new year truce.

The task unit was commanded by Lieutenant John F. Doyle, officer-in-charge of River Section 535.

Arriving in the city of Chau Doc on January 29th, for a five-day stay, the PBR crews were quartered at Camp Arnn, a U.S. Army Special Forces Camp at the edge of the city.

The following day, the platoon of Seals arrived in Chau Doc with the mission of patrolling normal routes of enemy infiltration. It was this naval unit that made first contact with the VC. At 2 a.m. January 31st, they came upon a reinforcement platoon of VC near the border, covering the crossing of an estimated 200 enemy troops.

Because of the size of the enemy force, Lieutenant Marcinko, Officer-in-Charge of the Seal platoon, ordered his men

to withdraw to the nearest friendly forces which at this time were the PBRs patrolling the Bassac River about two miles away.

At the same time, the city of Chau Doc, with an estimated population of 8,000 people came under a heavy attack by a large concentration of enemy troops, estimated to be about 1,400 men.

As the enemy attack began two PBRs and the LCM were tied up at the piers in Chau Doc, while the other two PBRs were on the Bassac picking up the Seals.

The LCM, with a full crew aboard, got underway in less than five minutes. The two moored PBRs, with only a boat captain and one crewman aboard each boat, also got underway. The other crewmen were at Camp Arnn.

As the LCM and PBRs were making their way out into the main stream of the river, the LCM was hit above the waterline, by a 75mm recoilless rifle round wounding two of its crewmen.

Patrol officer of the PBRs was Quartermaster First Class Arthur Eschman. Chief Gunner's Mate Benny Davidson was in charge of the LCM.

The PBR commanders requested men from the LCM to man the .50-caliber machine guns. Even though Hospital Corpsman Third Class David B. Crockett, Jr. was wounded twice he volunteered to transfer to one of

the PBRs where he manned one of the machine guns.

The PBRs made repeated firing runs on the enemy positions, while resupplying from the LCM support boat but were unable to suppress the enemy's fire. They were successful, however, in keeping much of the enemy's forces tied down until the other PBRs and the Seals arrived about two and a half hours later.

Upon their arrival, and under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire, the PBRs disembarked the Seal platoon into the city. They then made a series of firing runs on the enemy positions while the Seals began the rescue of U.S. citizens who were trapped in the town.

By 8:30 that morning, they had been successful in rescuing ten of the U.S. and six Vietnamese Government civilian employees. One of the U.S. civilians had been wounded.

By prearranged signal, the PBRs came in, picked up those rescued, and evacuated them to the LCM at midstream in the river—500 yards offshore.

The Seals then returned to the main part of the city of Chau Doc, taking one by one and securing key military and civilian installations. One Seal was killed in this action.

At 11:30 that morning, five PBRs from River Section 513 at Sadec, dispatched to assist the operation, arrived on the scene. By this time, the Special Forces Camp Arnn

was under heavy attack from all four sides. Task Unit Commander, LT Doyle, then lined the nine PBRs up and made firing runs on the enemy attacking the camp. During one of the runs, one of the PBRs received a direct hit by a rocket propelled grenade which disabled the craft for the remainder of the action.

At 6:30 that evening, the PBRs picked up the Seals allowing them to resupply and treat their wounded, but at 7:30 the next morning the Seals were again landed at Chau Doc, where they began flushing the VC out of buildings and securing the city's hospital which had become an enemy stronghold. The two Seal corpsmen began treating the wounds of additional Vietnamese military and civilians.

By 8 a.m. the combined forces of Seals and PBRs broke the enemy blockade around the Special Forces camp, permitting the rescue of the PBR sailors who had been trapped there. One PBR beached at Camp Arnn to pick up the crewmen while the other PBR provided cover.

For the remainder of the operation, and until the Navy units were ready to return to their bases at Binh Thuy and Sadec on February 2nd, the Seals kept key installations in the city secure, while the PBRs patrolled and blockaded all water entrances into the city.

In summing up the results of the five-day's operations, U.S. Army Major General G.S. Eckhardt, Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese IV Corps Tactical Zone, sent a message to Navy Captain Paul N. Gray, Commander of the U.S. Navy's River Patrol Force (Task Force 116) which read:

"Since the VC offensive started on January 31st, I have received many reports from the advisors...of the effectiveness of your command in coming to their assistance during these crucial times.

"I know you have suffered some grievous losses, but your men have covered themselves with glory because of their courage and dedication. You have dealt the aggressors a heavy blow which speaks well for the professionalism and capability of your organization."

Navy Pilot Wounded

On the morning of February 1, Ensign Dick Martz, a Navy pilot attached to HAL 3, Det 3 ("Seawolves") at Vinh Long airfield, was asleep in his quarters. He was suddenly awakened by explosions of mortar rounds and recoilless rifle fire which were impacting on the base.

Immediately realizing what was taking place, he grabbed his M-16 automatic rifle, leaped into a passing vehicle, and sped toward the helicopter revetments.

Approaching the runway, he observed an aircraft already in flames, and heard heavy fighting raging at the far end of the runway.

Moving quickly to the Navy "Seawolf" area, and seeing that the UH-1B helicopter gunships were unharmed, he then raced across the runway in the direction of the shooting—about 50 yards. Crouched behind a revetment bunker, he noticed some darkly clad figures coming over some sand

dunes directly behind a parked Army "Birdog" aircraft. Others were milling around the revetments.

ENS. Martz ran around to the other side of another revetment bunker to get into a better position, and immediately found himself face to face with four armed VC. Turning his M-16 rifle onto the enemy, he felled two of them before firing the last round of ammunition from his four ammo clips.

Leaping for cover behind the bunker, he was hit three times by the enemy's automatic weapons—in the left knee, upper left arm, and in the right wrist.

Describing the action in which he was involved, ENS Martz said:

"I remember the Viet Cong shooting at me, and my body seeming to go numb. I remember being lifted into one of our trucks and being medevaced to Dong Tam, for emergency treatment.

"What happened between these times is sort of sketchy and not too clear," he concluded.

ENS Martz was then moved from Dong Tam to the 36th Medical Evacuation Group at Vung Tau 40 miles southeast of Saigon for surgery and ultimate evacuation to Japan.

Friendship Gift



UNITY—To signify the strong alliance and cooperation between the two navies, Captain Burns W. Spore, Commander Naval Support Activity, Saigon, presented three colored photographs of Vietnamese warships and Vietnamese Navy decals to Captain Tyan Van Chon, Chief of Vietnamese Naval Operations. The presentations were made in Captain Chon's office at the Vietnamese Naval Headquarters.
(Official U.S. Navy Photo)



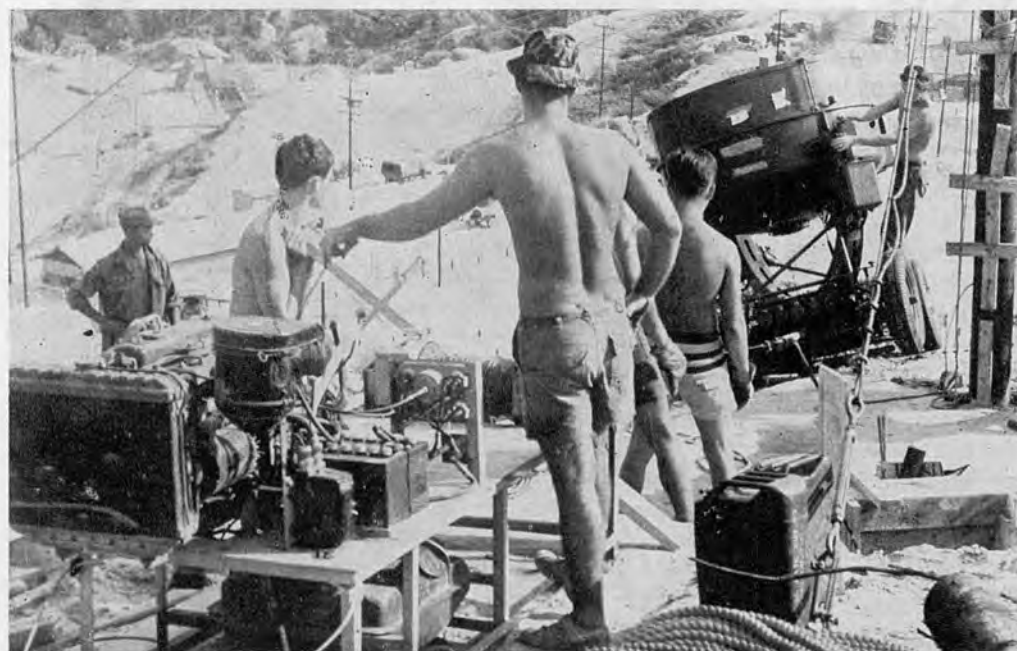
SKIMMER — A U.S. Navy "Boston Whaler" Skimmer speeds across the waters of an inner harbor on Operation "Stable Door".

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO)



ON GUARD — A machine gunner stationed on the perimeter of the Harbor Entrance Command Post (HECP) keeps a lookout for enemy infiltrators and saboteurs of shipping.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN CHARLES BOPP)



BIG LIFT — Equipment and supplies are lifted via "highline" to the Harbor Entrance Command Post at Cam Rahn Bay.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY ET1 L.K. TURNQUIST)

STABLE DOOR LO

To safeguard the ports where many of the men and practice the U.S. Navy has developed well equipped and efficiently operated

Engaged in what is referred to as Operation Stable Door, the Navy's Inshore Undersea Warfare Group-One (IUWG-1), Western Pacific Detachment, has established harbor defense units at major sea-ports of the country.

These Navy harbor defense units are located at Cam Ranh Bay, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, and at Vung Tau in the Cape St. Jacques anchorage, where ships await permission to sail up the Long Tau River to the capital city of Saigon. They are responsible for the protection of Free World shipping at anchor in the four harbors, waiting to be unloaded of their valuable cargos.

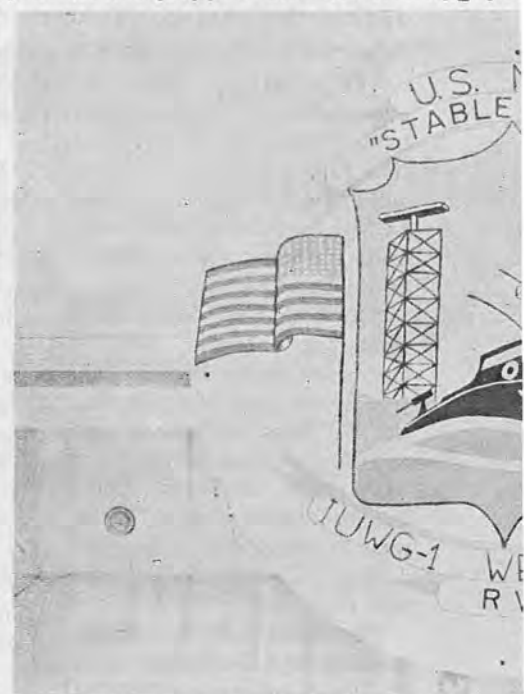
Originally, defense of these harbors rested with the Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance units which are homeported in Long Beach and are part of the Pacific Fleet's Mine Force. The units are designed for short deployments to harbors in hostile areas.

Within the past year and a half, the Western Pacific Detachment units of IUWG-1 have relieved the mobile units, setting up semi-permanent installations in the four harbors. Each of these four units is comprised of a harbor entrance command post, harbor patrol element, and an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team.

In the command posts, which are located atop the highest points overlooking the harbors, a 24-hour vigil is maintained over all movements within their areas. Using radar and visual surveillance, the control post of each unit knows, at any given time, where each and every ship is located within the anchorage area, as well as what other craft are near them.

Contact with the patrolling harbor boats is maintained by the command post with two-way radios and flashing light signals. These command centers have overall control, and direct the harbor defense of each location.

While the command posts are the nerve centers of the IUWG-1 units, the armed harbor patrol boats provide the muscle that safeguards the ships at anchor. It is their job to prevent infiltration of potential saboteurs into the anchorage area. And to do the job they are equipped with 36-foot personnel landing craft (LCPLs), 16-foot



OFFICIAL EMBLEM — This plaque of Inshore Undersea Warfare Group-One (IUWG-1), Western Pacific Detachment, in the Republic of Vietnam, is the "Stable Door" — Harbor Defense in Vietnam.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO)

Boston Whaler skimmers and 45-foot picket boats—each carrying machine guns, grenade launchers and small arms.

The third and completing element of each harbor defense unit is the EOD team. In conjunction with the command post and patrolling craft, the explosive ordnance teams make daily inspections of ship bottoms and anchor chains. Theirs is the job of disarming any explosive devices which the enemy might attach to an anchored ship in an attempt at sabotage.

The biggest menace to shipping at anchor, is the swimmers. Enemy frogmen, carrying mines and other ex-

plosive devices available opportunity or try and destroy ships. Because of the threat of these patrol boats and must exercise caution and duplication of effort to deny success to the enemy. Another hazard at anchor comes from small craft bent on the vital supply lines of the holds of the sampans and junks. They try to sneak in other agents in for the purpose of whatever destruction they have at the warehouses—ships be unloaded.

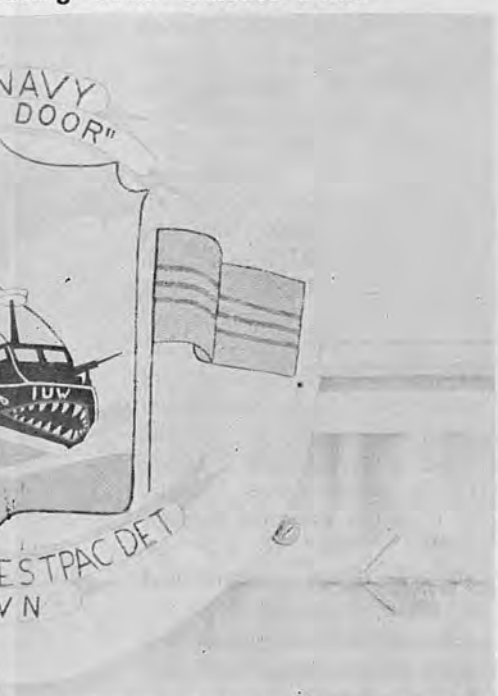


CALLING IN — A sampan moves alongside a U.S. Navy boat of Operation Stable Door to be inspected before being unloaded.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO)

CKS OUT ENEMY

by Tompkins
 ically all of the equipment and supplies enter South Vietnam,
 rating harbor defense units.



shore Undersea Warfare Group ONE, West
 n, is the official emblem of "Operation Stable

NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN CHARLES BOPP)

s, take every
 tunity to dam-
 sink the sup-
 Because of the
 saboteurs, the
 d EOD teams
 extreme care
 n of efforts to
 the enemy.
 rd to the ships
 es from enemy
 on destruction
 supplies within
 e ships. Using
 nks, the enemy
 swimmers and
 to the harbors
 e of directing
 ructive means
 the floating
 ps waiting to
 To the enemy,

it would be much easier to
 eliminate the supplies while
 they are still afloat, than to
 wait until they are offloaded
 and being transported overland.
 Because of this threat, each
 and every craft entering the
 harbor must necessarily be
 stopped and searched. Only
 in this way can the possibility
 of the enemy sneaking through
 be eliminated. This means
 lots of work and many long
 hours of doing nothing but
 checking and rechecking small
 craft.

The Stable Door units are
 responsible for only the ships
 at anchor. Once the ships
 have tied up to a pier, the
 become the responsibility of
 Port Security, usually provided

by the U.S. Army. Because of
 this responsibility, the harbor
 entrance command post must
 maintain running logs of ship
 arrivals, movements and de-
 partures. And, with the large
 number of ships entering a
 harbor, anchoring, moving to
 the pier and departing within
 a month's time, the command
 centers are always a beehive
 of activity.

The backbone of the harbor
 patrol elements are the LCPLs
 and Boston Whalers. They
 are the last ones to check the
 contents of sampans and junks
 before they reach the anchor-
 age areas. Operating on the
 concept that harbor defense
 is based on the rapidity with
 which armed patrol boats can
 respond to any given situation
 within the anchorage area,
 these boats are constantly be-
 ing directed to investigate
 suspicious craft. Because
 of this, these patrol boats can
 be seen speeding across the
 inner harbor almost any time
 of day or night.

Patrolling the outer harbors
 are the picket boats. These
 45-foot, heavily armed patrol
 boats are kept near the harbor
 entrances, for theirs is the job
 of first intercepting and board-
 ing incoming civilian craft.

The major part of all the
 boats' daily routine is spent
 checking fishing boats in the
 harbors. Approximately 500
 are checked each week. But
 even though the majority of
 the craft they check are harm-
 less, the sailors of IUWG-1
 never let down their guard,
 because the next one boarded
 may have enough material
 aboard to sink a large ship
 and create a navigation hazard
 in addition to losing the valu-
 able cargo it is carrying.

Spending up to 12 hours on
 each patrol, the officers and
 men of IUWG-1 have some-
 times put in more than 84
 hours-per-week guarding the
 supply life-lines to American
 and Free World Forces.
 Through their tireless efforts,
 they have prevented the enemy
 from doing but very little in
 the way of sabotaging the
 ships at anchor in the harbors.
 Their successes in searching
 for and eliminating the
 dangers before they ma-
 terialize, have resulted in
 fewer attempts by the enemy.
 In fact, it is now a rare oc-
 casion that an enemy agent is
 stopped in one of the harbors.

But the search continues,
 and will as long as there is the
 slightest possibility that some-
 one will attempt to penetrate
 the Stable Door harbor de-
 fenses and get near a ship at
 anchor.



PICKET BOAT — A U.S. Navy 45-foot Picket Boat cruises the outer edges of the harbor on Operation "Stable door."

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JOI E.T. (TOM) TOMPKINS)



COMMAND POST — From the Harbor Entrance Command Post (HECP) tower, U.S. Navymen watch over the ships at anchor in the harbor.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN CHARLES BOPP)



a U.S. Navy Personnel Landing Craft (LCPL)
 re entering the harbor.

NAVY PHOTO BY PHAN CHARLES BOPP)



INSPECTION — Crewmen of Landing Craft Personnel large (LCPL 43) closely inspect a sampan that has entered the harbor.

(OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO)

THE HEART OF NAVSUPPACT

By JO3 W. Kobler

A Navy yeoman at Sadec reaches into his desk drawer, pulls out a sheet of paper, inserts it into his typewriter and begins to type a letter. At Nha Be a commissary man lifts a full pot of vegetables onto a stove and begins to cook them for the evening meal, while at the maintenance shop at Vinh Long a machine repairman is busy manufacturing a new wearing ring to be used for a river patrol boat (PBR) engine.

Although they seem to be only remotely connected, these everyday occurrences at Navy bases throughout Vietnam all have one very important thing in common; they all require the need of particular supplies in order to be successfully carried out. Wherever men are working they must have the tools of their trade at hand in order to get the job done.

The need for supplies, whether they be a pencil or an engine block, is ever present in the support of the war effort in Vietnam. It is the job of the U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon to provide units of Operation Market Time, Game Warden, Stable Door and the Mobile Riverine Force with provisions, general supplies and, most important of all, repair parts for all boats. This feat is accomplished by the NAVSUPPACT Supply and Fiscal Department under the direction of CAPT. Joseph J. Hein, SC, USN. The unique task involves more than one would ordinarily think. Each detachment of the Naval Support Activity, Saigon must be equipped to provide supplies to the units it supports. Cargo must continually be carried from Saigon to detachments, from one detachment to another as well as to LSTs and the Riverine Force and food must be provided for all personnel in the field.



PAY TEAM—DK3 A.J. Daniels, left, DK1 L.A. Reyes, center, and DK3 C.F. Reyna load the pay box aboard a helicopter before taking off to pay Navymen at various detachments throughout the Mekong Delta. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH1 C. Williams)

Supply support was first provided to units of Operation Market Time in 1965. At that time the only units providing supplies were the YR-71 from the north and the APL-55 from the south. In May of 1966 the Naval Support Activity, Saigon was established and six months later the Supply and Fiscal Department acquired an inventory of spare parts from the Naval Supply Depot, Subic Bay in the Philippines to help support the WPBs,

PBRs and the PCFs. The Supply and Fiscal Department has since vastly expanded its stock of spare parts for these boats by ordering from Naval Supply Center, Oakland. Each detachment of NAVSUPPACT is now staffed with its own supply department and at least one supply officer.

Supplies are also provided to River Flotilla One, the Navy's Mobile Riverine Force, operating in the Mekong Delta. NAVSUPPACT detachment Dong Tam serves as the "homeport" of the MRF providing supplies and repair capability in addition to that provided by the USS

Askari. Provisions and general supplies are shipped by NAVSUPPACT's resupply LSTs to the Mobile Riverine Force, wherever it may be, through the Navy's Vung Tau Liaison Division of the Supply and Fiscal Department.

Because repair parts are the most important items carried by the Supply and Fiscal Department, it is interesting to see how these parts are obtained. Whenever an operating unit is in need of a part, it orders it from the detachment; if the part is not available there the detachment supply officer sends a requisition to Saigon. Saigon either issues the part or, if it is not

available, sends the requisition to Naval Supply Center, Oakland by message or AUTODIN (Automatic Digital Network). For parts which are required immediately, Saigon will also screen all detachments at the time the order is sent to NSC Oakland.

If the part is not in stock at Oakland the requisition will in turn be passed on to either the Ships Spare Parts Control Center (SPCC) in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania or the Electronics Supply Office (ESO), Great Lakes, Illinois. If it is not available through SPCC or ESO it will be ordered from commercial sources.

Requests for support of new boats are originated via Commander Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSERVPAC) and are sent via systems commands to SPCC and to ESO. SPCC or ESO then makes up a list of parts called a load list, which includes the material to maintain and repair the boats and the stock numbers and part numbers for this material. This list is then forwarded to Saigon to the Supply and Fiscal Department for procurement of the parts that are not already in Saigon. The funds for these parts are provided by COMSERVPAC. The new parts are then obtained through stateside supply channels by NSC Oakland, SPCC, ESO or other control points and are forwarded to Saigon for use.

Keeping an up-to-date inventory of repair parts for the PBRs, WPBs, PCFs, PGs,



FILLING AN ORDER—AN F.G. White pulls the materials necessary to complete an order at a supply warehouse in Saigon. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH3 F.C. West)



ORIGIN POINT—SN T.J. Campbell makes the initial recording of supply requisitions when they are received by the Saigon office. Here he checks the incoming requisitions for accuracy of job order numbers. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH1 C. Williams)



INVENTORY CHECK—SK3 J.C. Tyner checks to see whether an item is in stock in the general supply warehouse at NAVSUPPACT Detachment Nha Be.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo By PH1 C. Williams)

ATCs, Monitors, refuelers, ASPBs, etc., is no easy task for the Supply and Fiscal Department. River craft are constantly in need of the newest equipment available and it is up to the Supply and Fiscal Department to see that it is provided. A PG, for example, requires some 17,000 parts alone and must continually be supplied in order to achieve the most effective operation.

Repair parts, however, are not the only items that are provided by the NAVSUPPACT Supply and Fiscal Department. All types of items, from a small box of paper clips to a 600 cubic foot reefer, are made available and the number of those items is constantly increasing from month to month. In October 1966 there were approximately 15,000 line items on inventory in Saigon. Due to the increase of naval operations during the past year, this has been increased to over 59,000 items on inventory with another \$3,000,000 on hand at the detachments. Items on hand at the detachments are backed

up by the stock in Saigon warehouses.

Provisions and general supplies are also furnished to all Navy field units and detachments by the Supply and Fiscal Department through the Interservice Support Agreement (ISSA) which allows the Navy to requisition supplies from the Army. Food is obtained from the Army 506th Field Depot in Saigon, loaded aboard the two YFRs, operated by NAVSUPPACT, and shipped to several detachments and the LSTs. Certain detachments; Qui Nhon, Binh Thuy, Cat Lo, Dong Tam, My Tho and Cam Ranh Bay, obtain provisions from Army units near the detachment. At Vung Tau the food obtained from the Army is loaded aboard the resupply LST and delivered to the Mobile Riverine Force.

Petroleum, a most important product in the area of transportation, is also secured from the Army through the provisions of the ISSA. All NAVSUPPACT detachments obtain fuel from local Army depots, with the excep-

tion of the An Thoi detachment which receives its supply from 7th Fleet ships. An oiler, the YO-131, has recently arrived in Vietnam and will carry fuel to detachments and support ships in the future.

Whenever supplies are acquired they must naturally be paid for. Sometimes the funds available are insufficient to procure completely what is desired. In order to make the most out of what is on hand, the Supply and Fiscal Department has instituted a program called Selective Item Management to help give better stock control of supply items. Under this program each field detachment submits a monthly report to the headquarters in Saigon stating which items in its inventory it issues regularly (at least twice in six months). From this report the Supply and Fiscal Department can determine what items are



LOADING UP—Supplies headed for NAVSUPPACT detachments are loaded by truck aboard the USS JEROME County (LST 848) at the Vung Tau Supply Liaison Division. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH2 R.C. Evans)

in excess at each detachment. When a detachment runs short on an item the Saigon office may instruct another detachment to help out if ample quantity is held.

The Supply and Fiscal Department in its entirety covers a wide scope. Besides maintaining a requisition processing office in Saigon, the department has a Fiscal Division which handles the accounting work for all the Navy in the II, III and IV Corps including financial statements, ledger work, etc. The Fiscal Division also handles the bookkeeping records for 23 different military activities besides NAVSUPPACT, one of which is the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) headquarters.

The disbursing section of the Supply and Fiscal Department is responsible for paying all naval personnel in the II, III and IV Corps areas of Viet-

nam. Disbursing clerks fly all over the country to pay sailors, with the exception of the Cat Lo and Qui Nhon detachments and NAVSUPPACT Cam Ranh Bay where there are local disbursing offices.

The Supply and Fiscal Department is acquiring an IBM 407 Data Processing Installation. The first job for the new Data Processing Division will be to mechanize the stock control and requisition processing functions.

The importance of the Naval Support Activity, Saigon's Supply and Fiscal Department cannot be over emphasized. Its unique and unparalleled function of providing logistic support to Navy units throughout Vietnam clearly establishes it as a most vital element in NAVSUPPACT's contribution to the complex network of naval operations in South Vietnam.



WAREHOUSE—Storekeepers in the supply warehouse at Nha Be are continually checking price listings and stock numbers to keep PBR spare parts inventories up to date.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH1 C. Williams)



UP AND AWAY—SK1 V.H. Brion utilizes a fork-lift to move crates of paints and chemicals from a supply warehouse in Saigon.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH3 F.C. West)

OICC Earns MUC

The Secretary of the Navy, Paul R. Ignatius has announced the awarding of the Meritorious Unit Commendation to the Officer in Charge of Construction, Republic of Vietnam.

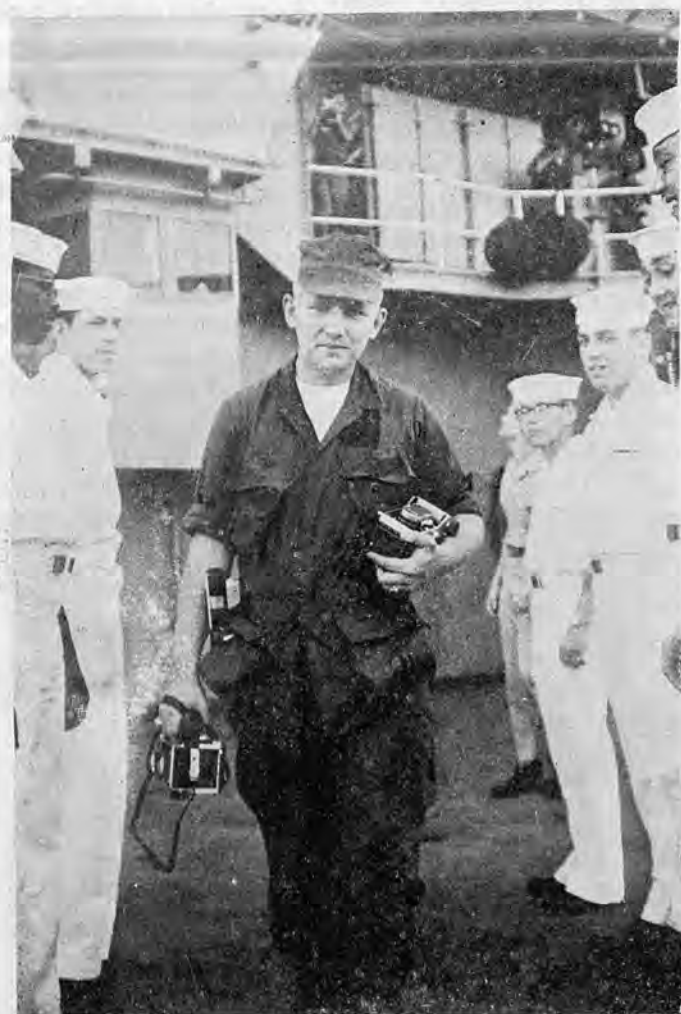
The award presented for meritorious service from January 1, 1966, through March 31, 1967, cited OICC, RVN for its efforts on an "assignment unparalleled in Navy or United States Military History". That being "the administration, direction, and management of a billion-dollar military construction program performed by a civilian contractor in a combat area."

The citation said, "The performance of duty of all personnel assigned to the Officer in Charge of Construction, U.S. Naval Facilities Engineering Command contracts, Republic of Vietnam, resulted in increasing the work-in-place level from less than \$6 million per month in July 1965, to \$45 million per month in November 1966, despite enemy harassment, local revolution, insufficient geological and climatological data, monumental logistical

problems, and personnel casualties as a direct result of enemy action."

"The officers and men of this organization continuously demonstrated their exceptional professional competence in all phases of planning, engineering, and construction endeavors, successfully meeting all urgent support requirements of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Through their managerial ability, they skillfully coordinated and integrated more than \$160 million in equipment, \$460 million in material and up to 51,000 employees, at more than 40 geographical locations in Vietnam, to produce airfield, port, petroleum and communication facilities, along with ammunition depots, hospitals, countenments and countless other auxiliary structures, in an area where only a few short months earlier, sand, water, mud and rice paddies existed."

Sideboys for a Private



FIRST CLASS ARRIVING ?—The expected arrival of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, aboard the amphibious assault carrier USS Valley Forge off the coast of Vietnam, brought many photographers and journalists to the scene, like Marine Journalist Robert Henson of Special Landing Force Bravo. As the Marine journalist made his way onto the flight deck, one sideboy turned to his buddy and asked, "Just how many sideboys do you give a Private First Class?" (Official U.S. Navy Photo by JO3 Lee Goldberg)

MRF Ambushed

"From where I was standing, I could see the VC firing from spider holes and trees less than 100 feet from where we beached. The troops couldn't see them because they were running up the ramp. I stood up with my bullhorn and started yelling at them to keep down, trying to tell them where Charlie was. All of a sudden I felt like somebody hit me in the back with a baseball bat, and I was thrown to my knees."

Boatswain's Mate First Class R.D. Sullivan shifted uncomfortably as he spoke. In the pale blue pajamas of the Navy sick bay, he looked strangely out of place. He had the tanned, weatherbeaten face of an outdoorsman, and he was obviously uncomfortable in his confinement.

Sullivan, the captain of a Navy armored troop carrier attached to River Assault Flotilla One in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, was describing the battle which had landed him in the hospital.

It was the afternoon of February 6, when Sullivan's boat, in company with six other assault craft, navigated the Rach Cai Cam Canal near Vinh Long. They had been called into the area as a reaction and reinforcement force following heavy enemy contact by other Mobile Riverine Force units in the area earlier in the day.

"The canal was only about 100 feet wide," Sullivan recalled. "We were under fire as we approached the beach, but that was nothing compared to what we were in for later."

Sullivan's boat, armored troop carrier 111-10, was carrying a platoon of infantrymen of the Second Brigade, Ninth Infantry Division, the ground unit of the Mobile Riverine Force. The

battle in which they were engaged was one of many in Operation Coronado X, a campaign designed to free the delta area south of Saigon from the Viet Cong terrorism which has gripped it for several years. As the boats moved down the narrow canal, it became obvious that the VC were lying in ambush.

Sullivan shook his head. "They were waiting for us, closer to the beach than we expected. We beached the boat under fire from both banks. I was standing between the two .50-caliber machine-gun mounts high above everyone else. The Army was running up the ramp into the fire and couldn't see what I could. While I was yelling at them, a rifle grenade bounced off the 20mm cannon mount right behind me and detonated."

As captain of the 56-foot converted landing craft, Sullivan's duty station is outside the boat above the conning station. Wearing battle gear, protective body armor and a helmet, he is able to direct his boat's activities while commanding an unobstructed view of the surrounding area.

"I give credit to my flak jacket and helmet for saving my life," Sullivan declared emphatically. "As it was, I

was able to walk below after I told the kids I was hit. They put battle dressings on me and took me to a medical aid boat. In ten minutes I was on a helicopter and on the way back to the Mobile Riverine Base."

Sullivan moved stiffly as he talked, turning his whole body to look at people who walked by. He was still heavily bandaged and doctors had not yet released him for duty. His back and shoulder wounds were minor only because he had been wearing the body armor.

The "kids" of whom Sullivan spoke are the members of his crew. Although he referred to them as kids, he certainly did not describe them as such. "They did well," continued. "They learned fast, under fire. There are no mistakes allowed here."

After taking the wounded boat captain to a medical clearing station, the crew returned to the battle area, beached the boat and resumed their mission. Before that day was over, 15 of their fellow combat sailors had been wounded. But they routed the VC who left 86 dead and 27 assorted weapons in their wake.

No Freeze on Discharge

"There is no 'freeze' on discharges and retirements in any of the services," the Department of Defense said the last week in January, replying to rumors following the call-up of certain reservists. At present there is no authority to extend enlistment contracts for enlisted men.

Referring to the status of regular officers, DOD said all services use a selective involuntary retention program.

There is an individual determination as to whether a regular officer's request for voluntary retirement or resignation will be accepted or deferred because his services are needed. The same applies for voluntary retirement for Reserve officers.

Reserve officers' requests for release from active duty are being approved unless the officer has not completed a term of active duty to which he is obligated or for which he consented.

The call-up of certain

Ready Reserve units of the Air Force and Navy and the Air National Guard was taken as "a precautionary measure to strengthen our forces" following the capture of the USS Pueblo by North Koreans on January 23.

Although there was no call-up of Army and Marine Corps Reserve units, procedures on exemptions were spelled out should the situation change:

1. If Army Reserve and/or National Guard units are called to active duty, exemption policies are covered in AR 601-25.

2. If any Marine Corps units are called, the Marine Corps will decide at that time

who, if anyone, will be exempt. At this time, no one would be exempt.

For the services — Navy and Air Force — involved in the recent call-up, "all high school students are exempt."

In addition, the Air Force is looking into all other possible exemption areas.

In the Navy, high school graduates or drop-outs are scheduled for call-up. College students can be deferred until the end of their current quarter, semester or trimester. College seniors can request an additional quarter, semester or trimester if this would permit them to graduate.

"Bishop" of Vietnam

By

LTJG T.S. Storck

His diocese is Vietnam—from the Demilitarized Zone in the north to An Thoi in the south—and he administers the sacraments at mighty cathedrals, at lonely outposts, in barracks and in messhalls.

He travels by helicopter, by jeep, by plane, by boat and by any other means of transportation he can find in this war torn Southeast Asian nation. For Captain James J. Killeen is a U.S. Navy chaplain in Vietnam and wherever his men are, he is in the midst of them.

This includes Catholics, Protestants and Jews, because Captain Killeen, as Force Chaplain for U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, acts as "bishop" to all Navy chaplains regardless of faith. In fact, of the 29 chaplains he commands, only five are Catholic as he is.

He says his chaplains are "terrific." They carry out their busy schedules "with enthusiasm and disregard to their own personal comforts." "They are," he continued, "salesmen who go from place to place with never enough time to establish rapport which would enable them to exercise their influence and give them a real sense of belonging."

When Chaplain Killeen travels, it means carrying his Mass kit of vestments, chalice, candles, hosts, wine, bell and the various items necessary to say Mass and administer the sacraments.

But as the "bishop" he does more than just administer. Each day he is in his office in Saigon answering letters, seeing men, planning activities and visiting troops in area hospitals.

Monsignor Killeen does more than just work as a Navy chaplain. He also spends many hours with civilian priests, American and Vietnamese, and works with the U.S. Army, Air Force, United Servicemen's Organization and Vietnamese groups.

While the Mass he says each Sunday noon in the Saigon Cathedral is designed for the military man, he adds a "touch of homelife" for the English-speaking civilian in Saigon," he commented.

During the Korean War, Chaplain Killeen served on the Philippine Islands with the Navy's Seabees at Cubi Point. Prior to reporting to duty here in Vietnam in June 1967, he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Memphis.

One of his more interesting duty stations was the nuclear powered aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise, where he was noted to have the "Parish that Travelled Around the World" during the ship's round-the-world cruise in 1964.



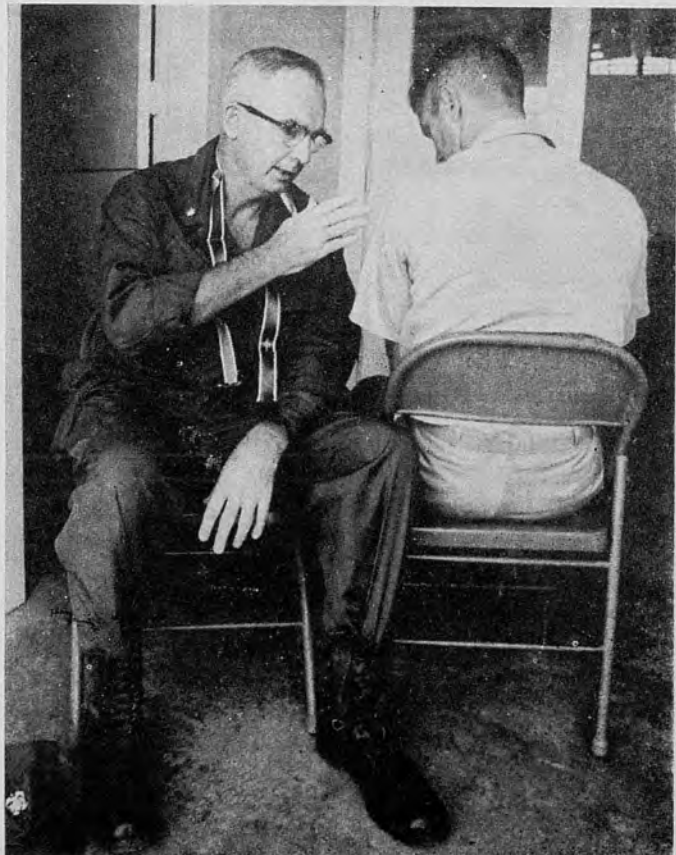
VISITS THE SICK—Chaplain Killeen talks with a USAID employee at the 17th Field Hospital in Saigon.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by D.S. Dodd)



OFFERS MASS—Chaplain Killeen offers Mass in his office at U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, headquarters in Saigon.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by LTJG T.S. Storck)



HEARING CONFESSIONS—Chaplain Killeen gives absolution after a confession at Nha Be.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH1 T. Lawson)

A Tug Goes to War

Even people who have never seen a bustling seaport know the resolute little tugs that moves the oceangoing giants deftly into the piers. From "Little Toot" of children's story books to the inevitable film clips of New York's harbor used in so many movies to identify the city, the tug symbolizes determination and strength. But, despite these laudatory qualities, tugboats don't go to war.

Battleships, cruisers, destroyers—all of these fleet ships can be expected to steam bravely into the beach in the face of enemy fire, but not tugboats.

U.S. Navy YTB-785 is a tugboat. YTB-785 is determined and strong. But YTB 785 is something that most tugboats are not. She is at war. And late in January, YTB 785 was the target in a VC rocket attack on the My Tho River.

"I was at the helm, and we were in the main channel of the My Tho," recalled Boatswain's Mate Second Class William C. Stout. "Suddenly I heard a terrific bang and

realized we had been hit. I turned the wheel hard to the left to keep her in the channel and dove for the deck."

Stout had a good reason for diving to the deck. Since the tug is not a warship, she does not possess the heavy armor of her larger counterparts. Every day, however, she steams the rivers of the delta in support of the Navy's Task Force 117, the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF).

YTB-785 is attached to River Assault Flotilla One for the purpose of towing a non self-propelled barracks barge, APL 26, throughout the delta. This barge is one of five ships which make up the

Mobile Riverine Base (MRB) from which Army and Navy units of TF 117 launch search and destroy operations against VC guerrillas.

On the day of the rocket attack, YTB-785 was carrying replacement troops and mail from the Dong Tam Army Base to the MRB.

Many of the troops aboard the tug were new to the delta war. They were not yet used to operations on which they would ride even smaller boats down even narrower canals in deliberate search of the enemy. But this is the mission of TF 117.

A unit of the Amphibious Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, the

MRF is unique in contemporary American warfare. Heavily armored Navy assault boats, such as the 56-foot armored troop carrier provide close logistic and fire support for Army elements of the Second Brigade, Ninth Infantry Division. Boats are the only feasible means of travel in the delta where the major communication routes are streams and canals.

YTB-785 supports this operation, helping the MRB move closer to current area of operations, bringing in supplies and mail and pulling

the larger ships free from the mudbars that plague them. But this was the first time she had received more than occasional sniper fire.

Navy river patrol boats, came immediately to the aid of YTB-785 and suppressed the enemy fire. Assault support patrol boats, the destroyers of the MRF fleet, were dispatched to escort the tug back to the MRB. But when she got there, everyone looked at her in a little different light. After all, here was a tug that had been to war.

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