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HISTORY OF

HELICOPTER ATTACK (LIGHT) SQUADRON THREE

Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE, or HA(L)-3 is the only helicopter attack squadron in the Navy. HA(L)-3 arose from the peculiar nature of guerrilla warfare in Vietnam and has played a major role in the Free World campaign to deny the Viet Cong use of the all important waterways of the Delta, while insuring their continued use to the local population and government personnel.

Vietnam military, political and economical developments in early 1966 led to the establishment of HA(L)-3. On April 10, the first River Patrol Boats (PBMs) went into action on the then treacherous Delta waterways, and it soon became apparent that quick reaction close air support would be indispensable if such river operations were to continue. At first, Army gunships provided the necessary assistance, but later the need for precise inter-unit communications, unity of command, and other considerations led to the decision to form a Navy helicopter unit responsible to the River Patrol Force (CTF 116).

Subsequently, eight UH-1B Hueys were borrowed from the Army in the summer of 1966, with U.S. Naval personnel manning the aircraft and the Army providing the pilot and crew training, ordnance, and maintenance. Four detachments (Dets), each containing eight aviators and eight crewmen from Helicopter Combat Support Squadron ONE (HC-1) at Imperial Beach, California, went into operation on September 19, 1966. Detachments were based at Tan Son Nhut (XS 319961), Bien Hoa (XT 993135), Vinh Long (XS 055321), and Soc Trang (YF 051610). (Refer to Appendix I, Item A)

The first major battle involving HA(L)-3, or the "SEAWOLVES", as they were now called, took place on 31 October 1966. In a co-ordinated attack by PBMs and Hueys near My Tho (XS 100149), over 50 of 75 enemy sampans and junks were sunk, and the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

During this period of operation, the first of specially configured helicopter capable Landing Ships (Tank) (LSTs), the JENNINGS COUNTY arrived at Vung Tau (YS 300473) facility and became the SEAWOLVES temporary headquarters. In conducting their far flung operations throughout the Mekong Delta, HA(L)-3 will utilize many LSTs as landing platform bases in order to insure both mobility and proximity to their own operations area and to debase chances of enemy ground and mortar attack.

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By the end of 1966, the SEAWOLVES still depended on the Army for major maintenance, as well as the preponderance of training. In January 1967, the River Patrol Force, through its Operation GAME WARDEN, announced that 22 aircraft, 94 officers, and 240 enlisted personnel would be provided in order to establish a completely new squadron to replace the existing detachments from HC-1. At that time, seven detachments were envisioned with a central Naval Maintenance Facility created at Binh Thuy (WS 804140), where GAME WARDEN headquarters would be. Meanwhile, the squadron would be based at Vung Tau (XS 300473), where Navy and Army maintenance personnel could work together in maintaining aircraft.

On 1 April 1967, HA(L)-3 was formally established by LCDR Joseph B. HOWARD with Commander Robert W. SPENCER assuming command of the squadron in May. For the first 18 months of the squadron's existence, the heaviest concentration of detachments was in the heart of the lower Delta from Binh Thuy (WS 804140) to Vinh Long (XS 055321) and Dong Tam (XS 425435). (Refer to Appendix I, Item B). There are four major rivers which run through the Delta, all of which are branches of the Mekong; the Bassac, Co Chien, Ham Long and My Tho. To cover these waterways and their tributaries, six detachments deployed from various bases throughout 1967 and most of 1968. From Binh Thuy, Det SEVEN covered the lower Bassac, assisted by Det ONE which, was also deployed from an LST. Det THREE guarded the Co Chien from its' base in Vinh Long. Det FOUR was based aboard an LST in the Ham Long until moving to Dong Tam in early 1969, and Det SIX covered My Tho, also from Dong Tam. Det FIVE at one time or another covered each of these rivers, according to the changing tactical situation and enemy threat.

Detachment TWO has been at Nha Be (XS 937800) since the days of the original HC-1 detachments. Their vital assignment has been to support operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone, the treacherous maze of swamp and canals that surrounds the vital shipping channel leading from the city of Saigon to the sea. This area has long been the target of Viet Cong ambush and mine activities. Det TWO became a "double det achievement" with four aircraft, and a corresponding increase in pilots and crewmen, in June of 1969 to ensure the required coverage.

Captain Arthur H. MUNSON succeeded Commander SPENCER in May of 1968 as Commanding Officer of HA(L)-3, and during his tour, the squadron continued to fulfill its basic mission. The command also undertook other expansion and transition through the summer and early fall of 1969. As a result of the increase in aircraft and personnel, all parts of the Delta were far more accessible to SEAWOLVES REACTION and maintenance operations.

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Toward the end of 1968 the need for a concentration of detachments in the lower Delta began to lessen, due to increased pacification of much of the area. In early fall, Det FIVE moved to Rach Gia (WS 105045) on the Gulf of Thailand, and in November the detachment moved aboard the YRLM-16 stationed near Chau Doc (WS 245715) on the upper Lassac only a few miles from the Cambodian border. Det FIVE's move signalled the beginning of a new phase in River Patrol Force operations; the interdiction of enemy troop and supply units into the Delta from the north. (Refer to Appendix I, Item C). In early 1969 Det THREE moved to the far northwest corner of the Delta, ha Tien (WS 445485) on the Gulf of Thailand, while Det SIX replaced Det THREE in the area of Vinh Long, taking up station aboard an LST. Later Det THREE moved to Moc Hoa (XS 039902) and then to a ship in the upper Mekong not far from Det FIVE.

The task of shutting off infiltration routes between the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong rivers was code named Operation SLINGSHOT, and HA(L)-3 played a major role in its eventual success. Det FOUR and SEVEN played a major role in this undertaking. Det FOUR participated in Operation SLINGSHOT from November 1968, while located at Dong Tam, and in early 1969 they moved to Duc Hoa (XS 594968) to be closer to their operation area. They moved again in June to Ben Luc (XS 618758), on the Vam Co Dong River, and at present are still participating in Operation SLINGSHOT, which has developed into one of the most successful campaigns in which the squadron has participated.

Det SEVEN also operated in the Giant Slingshot area, having moved from Binh Thuy to Tay Ninh (XT 203510) in June, 1969. For some time, intelligence reports had mentioned Tay Ninh as a prime enemy objective for use as a possible provisional capital. Near the border northwest of Saigon, Tay Ninh was considered highly vulnerable until allied forces moved into the area in large numbers and finally achieved an increased security level for the surrounding countryside.

Under Captain Reynolds HECKWITH, who succeeded Cayce in MUNSON as Commanding Officer in April 1969, the transition and expansion of the squadron continued. The redeploymennt of detachments from the lower Delta was nearly complete, and the squadron headquarters was moved from Vung Tau to the more centrally located Binh Thuy in May. In early July the first new detachment since the squadron's establishment was created (Det EIGHT), and it was sent to assist Det SEVEN in the Tay Ninh area. The creation of additional detachments was made possible by the acquisition of eleven new aircraft in June and July of 1969, and further expansion followed in September, with the creation of Det NINE at Binh Thuy.

These first months saw a new center of operations established in far western Vietnam. Det ONE had been deployed in the lower BASSAC until early 1969 when it was sent to the south.

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control over the Southern Delta by moving a string of barges into one of the waterways. The barges would act as a sphere of influence for the national government and serve as a market for local farmers who otherwise would be forced to sell their crops to the Viet Cong at enemy dictated prices.

Operation SEA FLOAT marked the start of a campaign to drive the enemy from his previously secure strongholds in western Vietnam, which gathered momentum in mid 1969. Soon after its formation, Det EIGHT moved from Tay Ninh to an LST off the coast of Rach Gia. Early in September, Det SIX, the last of the original lower Delta Detachments, joined Det EIGHT at Rach Gia on another LST. Later that same month, the Det SIX's mobile base steamed southward to the mouth of the Song Ong Doc, placing Det SIX midway along the coast between Dets EIGHT and ONE. Finally in early September, Det THREE moved to a point off Ha Tien (VS 445425) in the Gulf of Thailand. Thus a total of four detachments now guarded the western coast of South Vietnam.

Upon its formation, Det NINE moved to the same station (aboard a YREH) in the upper Mekong that Det THREE had once occupied. This left four detachments still guarding against border infiltration, with Det TWO continuing operations in the Hung Sat Special Zone.

Following the establishment of Det NINE in September 1969, the area of operation for all but one of HA(L)-3's detachments remained basically the same, with detachments occasionally moving locations, but covering the same general areas. This period of time, from September 1969 to October 1971, enabled each detachment to become well established, and extremely effective as indicated by an increase in strike results. (Refer to Appendix II).

On the 9th of May 1970, shortly after Captain Martin J. TWITI took command, Operation Tran Hung Dao XI, the Cambodian Campaign, began. The objective of the Cambodian operations was to hit VC/NVA staging and supply areas, disrupt their LOCs and find and destroy the Communist Party South Vietnam Headquarters. The role to be played by HA(L)-3 was to furnish quick reaction helicopters for boat operations along the Mekong River. Recently acquired U.S. Navy SEALORD (unarmored Navy utility helicopters) aircraft were utilized in passenger pickups and emergency medical evacuations (MEDEVAC). Elements of the first SEALORDs (HHRs, PCFs, and Helos) penetrated into Cambodia along the Mekong River to the Neak Loeng Ferry Landing (WT 320445), 21.7 miles from the Vietnamese border. Det EIGHT staged off the USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) frt Long Xuyen (S 521416) to just inside South Vietnam, near the Cambodian border on the Mekong, and assumed the duties of the primary tactical air support for the Naval units inside Cambodia. Dets FOUR and TEN acted as the secondary and reserve units. Dets FOUR and SEVEN were involved in the remote base Operation during the early part of the CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS. Dets ONE and Ha Tien, also contributed in the venture along the Mekong.

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Operation Tranh Hung Dao XI was officially terminated with the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Cambodia on 30 June 1970 and was considered extremely successful in its achievements in reducing the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese pressure on the Republic of Vietnam's borders.

The one major detachment relocation during the above period was Det THREE. Det THREE moved from Da Tien to Ca Mau (WE 196142) on 5 August 1970. Facilities at the Ca Mau long strip were nonexistent, with crewmembers sleeping on the tarmac and cooking their meals over fuel oil fires. However, after a relatively short period of time a hootch was built at the strip and quarters were made available at the MACV compound in Ca Mau City.

As areas of the Delta became more pacified, the need for a strong concentration of detachments in any one particular regions became less important. In May of 1971, with the squadron now under the leadership of Captain Charles O. LONGSTROM, Jr., Det SIX moved from an LST off the coast of the U-Minh, at the Song On Doc, to Phu Loi (PT 862158) Army Air Field north of Saigon. This move left the southern tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula to be covered by Dets ONE and THREE. Det SIX was given the responsibility of covering the Saigon River, a major infiltration route into the northern Saigon area.

Det NINE, in late June of 1971, moved from the YL-BM-21 at Tan Chau (WS 260935) to an LST off Kien Hoa and Vinh Binh Provinces on the eastern coast of the Delta. This left Det FIVE at Chau Doc solely responsible for Mekong River convoys to Phnom Penh, the Seven Mountains, and the western Plain of Reeds. Det NINE became very active supporting Army units in attempting to clean out the Ben Dai (IS 9219), Thanh Phu (IS 6700), and Long Toan (XR 6775) Secret Zones. Due to weather conditions off the coast in October 1971, Det NINE relocated to Linh Thuy and has served as an all purpose detachment supporting Det FIVE on convoy operations, and other detachments during peak activity periods. The Det NINE fire team also stages out of Thanh Phu at night, to support its old AO in Kien Hoa and Vinh Binh Provinces. At this time the nine H.A(L)-3 Detachments have the capability of covering more of the Delta Region than ever before. (Refer to Appendix I, Item D). So much for SEALOLF Gunship operations.....

As previously stated, in January of 1970, eleven AH-1G and UH-1L "Huey Slicks", or SEALOFGs were added to the squadron's inventory of aircraft. These Navy owned helicopters, in contrast to the Gunships on loan from the Army, were given the task of providing logistic support to the squadron's detachments and supporting various U.S. NAVY AND FREE WORLD units, thereby conserving vitally needed gunship flight time for primary combat role.

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The SEALORDS, based at squadron headquarters in Binh Thuy, have been instrumental in maintaining the detachment gunships in an "Up" status. This often involves night missions over extremely hostile territory, and under adverse weather conditions, carrying vital parts and personnel to the detachments. Often unheralded, these SEALORD flights are an important contributing factor in the SI AWOLVES outstanding record of destruction of enemy forces in the Delta.

The SEALORDS have as another primary mission the support of Delta Naval Forces and the Vietnamese Tran hung Dao Commands. This involves transporting key personnel and equipment to outlying bases, quick reaction support missions, example: flying fire fighting and other emergency equipment to bases in danger of destruction, carrying VIPs on fact finding missions, and providing area commanders aircraft for visual reconnaissance of their areas of operation.

SEALORDS also are involved in combat missions. These missions normally involve two SEALORDS inserting and extracting U.S. Navy SEAL Teams of fourteen to eighteen fully equipped combat troops. The coordination of two SEALORDS, a SI AWOLF fire team, and a SEAL platoon conducting covert operations in enemy held territory, has proved to be one of the most successful applications of U.S. Naval assets in a guerrilla warfare environment. Approximately 150 such missions have been successfully completed. Also, in the realm of actual combat, SEALORDS have been called upon to execute medical evacuations in life or death situations, often taking enemy fire during the operations.

Currently there are eight SEALORDS in the squadron inventory, three of the original eleven having been lost during operational commitments. Statistics concerning the SEALORDS are listed on page 19.

In the past year, October 1970 through October 1971, (particularly since August 1971) the level of enemy initiated activity has decreased significantly, causing a corresponding decrease in SI AWOLF scrambles and requirements. (Refer to Appendix III). The absence of U.S. controlled river patrol craft, U.S. advisors on the boats, and U.S. SEALS has left the SI AWOLVES supporting primarily VNN assets and ARVN troops in the field, and scramble situations involving attacks on isolated RF/PF fortifications.

In July 1971, under the coordination of Commander Det MICHAELS, a Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) Indoctrination and Familiarization (I&F) program started. The purpose of the program was to teach the Vietnamese SI AWOLF tactics, including night and instrument flying and problem involved in quick reaction gunship support of other Viet Cong units while operating from outlying bases and airfields. The first VNAF class, consisting of ten pilots and ten gunners, underwent the squadrons PILOT AND GUNNER'S ground school syllabus the first two weeks in July then a smaller team was sent to each detachment, with the exception of Det 740 which received two pilots and two gunners, where they were rapidly

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assimilated as SEAWOLVES. This first group finished it's SEAWOLF tour on 30 September 1971 with each participant logging approximately 75 flight hours. The qualifications attained by these Vietnamese aviators were, seven Attack Helicopter Aircraft Commanders (AHAC), two Attack Helicopter Pilots (AHP), and nine aircrew gunners, four of these gunners additionally qualified as plane captains.

A second group started the ground school syllabus on 20 September 1971. This unit is composed of an equal number of personnel as in the first group, with two pilots from the first group remaining on detachment because of their exceptional abilities and prospective attainment of Fire Team Leader (FTL) qualifications. This group will spend an additional month with the SEAWOLVES to terminate their tour on 31 January 1972. As with the first group, each Vietnamese pilot and gunner will fly a minimum of 25 or more hours per month.

The success of the HA(L)-3 Vietnamese Air Force I&F program in terms of personal achievement has been exceptionally impressive. By the 31st of January the Vietnamese Air Force "SEAWOLVES" assigned to HA(L)-3 are expected to have eight qualified Fire Team Leaders (FTL), ten Attack Helicopter Aircraft Commanders (AHAC), two Attack Helicopter Pilots (AHP), eleven plane captains, and nineteen aircrew gunners. These men will provide a strong nucleus for VNAF support of Vietnamese Naval craft and ARVN ground forces in the Mekong Delta should that service assume a role similar to one now being provided by the US Navy SEAWOLVES.

In order for the Vietnamese mission and tasks of the US Navy SEAWOLVES and SEALORDS to be assumed by VNAF, there are immediate steps that must be taken. These include the take-over of current HA(L)-3 forward operating locations (FOL) by VNAF with already qualified Vietnamese personnel, and the establishment of a Vietnamese logistic helicopter operating position in close proximity with Vietnamese Delta Naval Command Headquarters in Binh Thuy. As a minimum step toward Vietnamese assumption of HA(L)-3 mission, the forward operating locations (in MRIV) at Ca Mau, Rach Gia, Dong Tam, and Nha Be (MRIII) should be taken over or manned by VNAF. If the financial burden of maintaining these four locations is not within the limits of VNAF, then the positions should be maintained by the ARVN and VNN in support of the VNAF aircraft and crews operating there. With these four locations and the increased capability of VNAF's "H" model aircraft vice the "L" model aircraft currently being flown by this squadron (HA(L)-3), the area of operations now covered by the SEAWOLVES can still be adequately supported, although some increase in "overhead" response time in scramble situations will be experienced. Mekong River convoy support could be accomplished by stripships based at Binh Thuy staging out of Chau Lai or other locations on the border. Authorization for Vietnam to land at Kep (BLOC 310445), Cambodia negates the necessity FOR A DETACHMENT OF A CURRENT FACILITY

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such as Chau Doc would allow additional flexibility should that situation change appreciably.

With VNAF gunships based in four outlying locations and a fire team in Linh Thuy (VNAF or at the present U.S. Navy facility), the Vietnamese pilots and crewmen who have already flown as SEAWOLVES could be assigned to each location. This would place four experienced men at each location for the purpose of providing on-the-job training to follow-on Vietnamese personnel in night and instrument flying and gunship tactics. It is hoped that a minimal number of aircraft (two UH-1H Slicks) and crewmembers based at either of the Binh Thuy locations for the logistic support of Naval units operating in the Delta. If possible and feasible, existing SI AWOLF facilities at Nam Can, Chau Doc, Ben Luc, Phu Loi and Linh Thuy could be also taken over to provide for additional staging and maintenance support for both gunship and logistic helicopter operations. However, except for possibly the ready-made intermediate maintenance facilities that a portion of the present U.S. Navy Linh Thuy Complex would offer (Refer to Appendix IV) to the critically overloaded VNAF Fourth Air Division base at Linh Thuy, these additional bases or sites are considered "niceties" but not "necessities".

The basis of these recommendations rests on the fact that the Vietnamese will have adequate aircraft availability to accept the SI AWOLF mission. However, if this is not the case, there are alternatives that can be implemented to still provide the needed support. Following the daylight AIRCAV Pack Operations, gunships upon which only minor maintenance (refuel, rearm, minor checks, etc.) must be performed could be diverted to the already mentioned forward operating areas for the required maintenance. Then these aircraft could be utilized by the Vietnamese SEAWOLVES for night operations and scrambles as required. This mode of operation would also relieve the VNAF of a manpower drain, as the men on the forward operating locations would be flying only at night and a two crew allocation would not be necessary. Another alternative would be to stage fire teams at the forward operating locations on a rotating basis. This would be done with operational commitments and overlapping coverage of AOs taken into consideration.

In conclusion, the primary mission of quick reaction helicopter gunship support for ground units has been carried out by the U.S. Navy SEAWOLVES in a manner that has established a proud tradition of success and accomplishment. Through the SEAWOLVES' Vietnamese indoctrination and Familiarization program a firm foundation has been laid for the outstanding record of H(A(L)-3 to be continued by the Vietnamese Air Force and its most capable personnel. It is considered that this would substantially assist all RVN Armed Forces, particularly the Vietnamese Navy, in their valiant fight to destroy communism and to defend and return the Republic of Vietnam back to peaceful prosperity.

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NARRATIVE

On 1 April 1967, Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE (HA(L)-3) was formally established at Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam. This squadron is the first of its type in naval history and the first known aviation organization to be formed in a war zone.

The primary mission of the Seawolves at that time was interdiction of enemy forces in the Mekong Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone. Over the major rivers and tributaries seven detachments were deployed from various bases throughout the III and IV Corps areas.

Captain Arthur MUNSON succeeded Commander Robert W. SPENCER in April 1968, as Commanding Officer of HA(L)-3. Throughout Captain MUNSON's tenure as the Commanding Officer the Seawolves continued their basic mission in support of Operation Game Warden.

Detachment TWO has been at Nha Be since the inception of the Seawolves, with the mission to support operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone, a treacherous area of swamp and canals leading from Saigon to the sea. This area has long been the target of the Viet Cong mine and ambush activities. Detachment TWO was enlarged in June 1969 to four attack helicopters with corresponding personnel additions. This was done to enhance the success of the operation in such a large and complex area of operation.

Detachment SEVEN staging out of Binh Thuy covered the lower Bassac, up to and Detachment ONE which operated from an LST. Detachment THREE, while based at Long Long operated along the Co Chien River. Detachment FIVE operated from an LST in the Ham Long River but moved to Dong Tam on March 1970. Detachment SIX also located at Dong Tam covered the Phuoc Tuy River and all of the rivers at one time or another. The

the mission to support operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone, a treacherous maze of swamp and canals leading from Saigon to the sea. This area has long been the target of the Viet Cong mine and ambush activities. Detachment TWO was enlarged in June 1969 to four attack helicopters with corresponding personnel additions. This was done to enhance the success of the operation in such a large and complex area of operation.

Detachment SEVEN staging out of Binh Thuy covered the lower Bassac, as did Detachment ONE which operated from an LST. Detachment THREE, while located at Lang Long operated along the Co Chien River. Detachment FOUR operated from an LST in the Ham Long River but moved to Dong Tam in early 1969. Detachment SIX also located at Dong Tam covered the My Tho River. Detachment FIVE has covered all of the rivers at one time or another due to the changing shape of the river.

In early fall, Detachment FIVE moved to Rach Gia on the Gulf of Thailand, and in November the detachment moved aboard the KHEM-16 stationed on the upper Bassac near Chau Doc, only a few miles from the Cambodian border. Detachment FIVE's move signalled the beginning of a new phase in Riverine Naval Force operations: The interdiction of enemy troop and supply units in the delta from the north. In early 1970 Detachment FIVE moved to the far northwest corner of the delta to the Gulf of Thailand, far R. Tien, this detachment

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ment SIX replaced Detachment THREE in the area of Vinh Long, taking up station aboard an LST. Later Detachment THREE moved to Huc Hoa and then to a ship in the upper Mekong not far from detachment FIVE.

The interdicting of infiltration routes between the Van Co Tay and Van Co Dong rivers was code named Operation Giant Slingshot; HA(L)-2 Detachments are playing a major role in this operation. Detachment THREE took part in this operation while at Huc Hoa, and Detachments FOUR and SEVEN played an even larger part because of their respective locations. Detachment FOUR has been participating in Operation Slingshot since November 1968, from a location at D n Tam, and in early 1969 they moved to Duc Hoa to be closer to their area of operation. They moved again in June to Ben Luc, on the Van Co Dong river, and at present are still participating in Operation Slingshot which has developed into one of the most successful campaigns in which the squadron has participated.

Detachment SEVEN also operates in the Giant Slingshot area, having moved from Hoch Thuy to Tay Ninh in June 1969. For some time, intelligence reports had mentioned Tay Ninh as a prime enemy objective for use as a possible provincial capital. Near the border northwest of Saigon, Tay Ninh was considered highly vulnerable until allied forces moved into the area in later winters.

Captain Reynolds BEMKHILL succeeded Captain Arthur JUNIOR as Commanding Officer of HA(L)-3 in April 1969. The transition and expansion of the commandant's office. The redeployment of detachments from the lower delta to the upper delta. On 2 May 1969, HA(L)-3 moved its headquarters to Hoch Phu, where it would find its maintenance and administrative offices, mess hall, and the Detachment. In close proximity to Hoch Phu, the detachment would be situated in an area well removed from the main body of the delta.

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those of Operation Game Warden to Operation Sealords. Operation Sealords (South East Asia Land Ocean River Delta Strategy) is a mission of enemy harassment and interdiction. Its goal is to sever the enemy's lines of troop and supply infiltration into the Mekong Delta.

Captain BECKWITH's first months saw a new center of operations develop in south west Vietnam. Detachment ONE was redeployed in early 1969 from the River Bassac to Ca Mau peninsula, thus providing support for Operation Sea Floor. This operation marked the start of a campaign to drive the enemy from his relatively secure strongholds in that area. The Mobile Floating Base acts as a sphere of influence for the National Government and serves as market for local farmers who would otherwise be forced to sell their crops to the Viet Cong controlled prices. Soon after its formation, Detachment EIGHT moved from Tay Ninh to an LST off the coast at Rach Gia and in early September, Detachment SIX, the last of the lower Delta detachments, joined Detachment EIGHT at Rach Gia on another LST. Later that same month, the detachment's mobile base team moved southward to the mouth of the Song Ong Doc, placing Detachment SIX mid-way along the coast between Detachment's EIGHT and ONE. These redeployments of detachments ensured that the Uminh Forest area would be adequately covered.

Finally, in early September, Detachment THREE moved to an LST off the coast of Thailand. Thus, a total of four detachments now guard the western coast of South Vietnam. Upon its formation, Detachment NINE moved aboard a T-28 in the upper Mekong the same location that Detachment THREE had once occupied. This left four detachments still guarding against border infiltration, while the rest were continuing operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone.

Recent Navy leased aircraft of HA(1)-3 commanded operations for the detachment. The newly acquired Bell UH-1B model aircraft's passenger compartment has two rear engines and a greater speed rate capability than the CH-47 Chinook.

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1. At the continuing operations in the riverine war operations area.

The first Navy owned aircraft of HA(L)-3 commenced operations on 17 Dec 69. Four newly acquired Bell UH-1L model aircraft possessing improved rotor blade larger engines and a greater speed range capability than the UH-1B aircraft arrived. These new aircraft were christened Sealords as a way to differentiate these aircraft from the Squadron's attack helicopters. These aircraft will be of immense value for logistical support of the Navy units in the area.

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Enclosure (1)

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Wherever the River Patrol Force has gone to seek out the enemy, the Seawolves and Sealords have been standing by to provide aerial protection and the logistic support needed for a successful mission. From four detachments located in large urban centers along the coast or on the large rivers, the squadron has grown to nine detachments and eight support aircraft which are fan out over the entire delta to allow the crew to respond

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CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE - 1969

JANUARY

2 JAN Implementation of Operation Barrier Beef was completed with the interdiction lines from northeast of Saigon near Tay Ninh City to the Gulf of Thailand at Ba Tien. Dets 3, 4, and 5 were assigned as primary support units to the River Divisions.

FEBRUARY

FEB Interdiction operations in the Vinh To/Rach Giong; Thanh waterway were greatly expanded under the code name of Tran Hung Dao.

FEB COMNAVFORV approved the re-establishment of the Gano Harbor/Market Time demarcation line of the Co Chion River to the East-West grid line KS25.

11 FEB HA(L)-3, Det 3 (CTU 116.7.9) moved from Vinh Long to the RHM 20. Located at An Song upper Mekong River.

26 FEB Lieutenant Commander J. L. KEYES relieved Commander S. R. SNYDER as Officer-in-Charge, HA(L)-3, Det 3 (CTU 116.7.9).

MAR

11 R HA(L)-3 Det 3 (CTU 116.7.9) relieved HA(L)-1, Det 1 (CTU 116.2.1.5) at Ba Tien supporting Tran Hung Dao. HA(L)-3, Det 1 embarked on board USS HUNTERDON (LST 1177) and assumed (CTU 116.1.8).

12 R LCDR J. C. ALKIRE, USN, relieved LCDR P. F. FRANKLIN, USN, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det 4

13 R A Night Helicopter Fire Team of HA(L)-3, Det 3, embarked on a maintenance mission for SEAL operations to a remote mountain peak near Hill Dai Dang. The 3rd fire mission was

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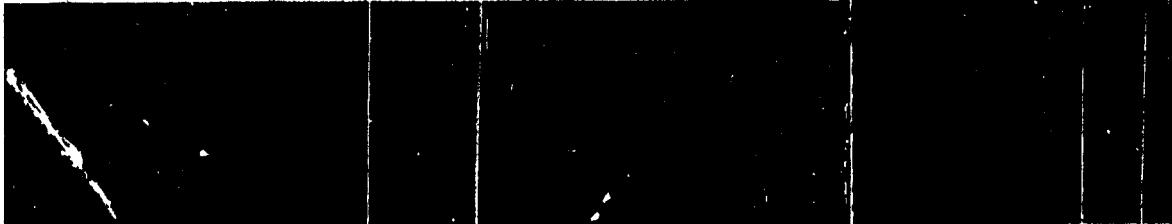
Mar A Light Helicopter Fire Team of HU(L)-3, Det 3, was on a reconnaissance mission for SEAL operations to reconnoiter a mountain peak near Nui Dai Dung. For this purpose, a SEAL named THOMAS was aboard Seawolf 305, which was acting as lead Aircraft. Upon arrival over the spot to be reconed, the Light Helicopter Fire Team came under heavy automatic weapons fire. The reconnaissance was immediately terminated, and a rocket and gun run was commenced on the suspected enemy position (VS 432 524). At the completion of first run, the fireteam circled loft to attack from a different direction. This run

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was made parallel to the Cambodian border about 200 meters inside Vietnam and overflow Nui Sa Ky, the reconnaissance objective. As Seawolf 305 completed his rocket firing and broke he had an engine failure. 305 continued the turn into the wind line and crashed into an open field (VS 430 520). An Army UH-1D of the 175th Aviation Company, Outlaw 21, responded to MAYDAY. The Aircraft Commander, 1/LT JAMES M. WILSON, responded

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wore he had an engine failure. His aircraft ran into a power line and crashed into an open field (VS 430 520). An Army UH-1D of the 173rd Aviation Company, Outlaw 21, responded to the MAYDAY. The Aircraft Commander, 1/LT WILLSEY was wounded on his first attempt to land, but was successful on the second, and he picked up three survivors. The co-pilot, LTJG Edward W. PAULOWSKI, USNR, 719635, and the gunner, ADJ3 Howard W. NEUTE, USN, B70 19 08, were killed in the initial crash. Seawolf 305 was later destroyed by Seawolf 309 and 323.

AWARD PRESENTED

LCDR William R. LANG	Distinguished Flying Cross
LT Milton E. DEFRIES	Bronze Star
LTJG Thomas J. SCOTT, Jr.	Single Action Air Medal
LTJG Louis P. CAMPANA	Single Action Air Medal
AM2 Earl J. GUTHMUS	Single Action Air Medal
AO2 Richard L. TOWLER	Single Action Air Medal
AD2 Robert D. EGGLISON	Single Action Air Medal

1. MAR At approximately 0020 on 26 March 1969, enemy forces mortared NSAD Dong Tam, where H-1(L)-3 Dets 4 and 6 were staging. During the attack Det 6 crews endeavored to man their helicopters and fly them to safety, but both helicopters were destroyed by an exploding ammunition dump. As a result of the explosion, LTJG Alfred A. SUMM, USNR, 713031, was killed. Following such destruction there were numerous acts of courage demonstrated by Det 4 and 6 personnel to rescue the injured pilots and other wounded men, as a result of the enemy attack, three H-1(L)-3 helicopters were destroyed.

DECLARATION

and conducted Operation Silver HADE II, the coastal interdiction arm of Operation Barrier Reef.

11 / F 1A(L)-3, Det THREE, dropped to OME 194.9 and assumed OME 194.9.8.3, staying at Mac Head.

23 / F At approximately 2330, a detachment FOUR helicopter struck a power line and crashed at On Rd. The crew chief, A01 Ollie J. GROSS, USM, 774 55 93 was killed in the accident. The pilot mistakenly started to land in the wrong area and realizing the error, commenced a unvoiced. The aircraft continued down the road, and the main rotor struck a power line and heavy supporting cable strung across Orna Road. The helicopter crashed and burst into flames. The pilot, co-pilot, and one woman safely evacuated the aircraft, but the crew chief, A01 Ollie J. GROSS, USM, 774 55 93, was pinned in the wreckage and burned to death. Would be rescuers on the scene were prevented from aiding GROSS because of ordnance aboard the aircraft.

25 / F Captain Reynolds DECKER, USM, relieved Captain Arthur H. MUNSON, USM, as Commanding Officer of 1A(L)-3.

25 / F LCDR E. R. YAEGER, USM, relieved LCDR W. R. LAM, USM, as Officer-in-Charge, 1A(L)-3, Det FIVE, stationed aboard the YHM 16 at Mac Head.

28 / F Seawolf 305 and 320 of 1A(L)-3, Det THREE, were a Light Helicopter Fire Team on surveillance patrol. The fire team received a target assignment of 12 to 20 sampans in the vicinity of 13 140° 3 1/2 kilometers from the Cambodian border. During the team flew across the border and were taken under weapons fire. The wing ship, Seawolf 320, was hit and crashed in Cambodian territory. The pilot,

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and gunner 403 Michael E. SCHAFER-OCKER, LAR, 871 62 40, were killed in the crash, and the crew chief, AW James B. PAGE, JR., was seriously injured. The lead ship, Seawolf 305, was hit in the engine oil system and a forced landing was made at approximately 1515Z986, near the wreckage of 320. The crew of 305 established defensive positions and returned fire to the advancing enemy. LCDR James L. KETES, the lead ship co-pilot, assumed command of the situation and was able to contact Outlaw 29, a UH-1D from the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company. ADJ1 Lloyd T. WILLIAMS exposed himself to great enemy fire in an attempt to rescue the crew of 320 and was able to save PAGE. After many courageous efforts to land, the Army Slick was finally able to pick up the survivors of both crews. As the helicopter was lifting in the air, LTJO Joseph F. HUMT, LAR, 705765, the lead ship pilot, was fatally wounded. The co-pilot, LCDR KETES; crew chief, ADJ1 WILLIAMS; and gunner AW Dennis R. HILLEY received no injuries. The observer AW Charles LUNSLIN was seriously injured by enemy fire.

AWARDS PRESENTED

AW1 Lloyd T. WILLIAMS	Navy Cross
AW1R James L. KETES	Silver Star
LTJO Joseph F. HUMT	Silver Star
LTJG Richard A. ADDON	Air Medal
LTJG Hal C. COWTLE	Air Medal
403 Michael SCHAFER-OCKER	Air Medal
AW Dennis R. HILLEY	Bronze Star
AW Clinton LARSEN	Bronze Star

20

AI Charles LUTHER	Bronze Star
WO1 Dennis J. MAMMAZZO	Silver Star
WO1 Michael K. BROWN	Distinguished Flying Cross
SP4 Donald K. VAN DYKE	Distinguished Flying Cross
SP4 Jack F. SILLERS	Silver Star

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1 MAY Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE (HA(L)-3) was assigned permanent duty station Binh Thuy vice Vung Tau.

16 MAY Bellwolf SH-3D of HA(L)-3, Det SIX, crashed due to mechanical failure on take off at My Tho. No personnel casualties occurred.

26 MAY CDR W. E. K. SERIO, USN, relieved LT H. E. L. NEL, USN, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det TWO, located at Nha Be.

LINE

11 LCDR W. F. FRANKLIN, USN, relieved LCDR Dennis STREY, USN, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det 6, aboard USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 705) at

in Charge HA(L)-3, Det 6, aboard USS GARRATT COUNTY (LST 786) a

With Long.

4 JUL Captain Joseph R. FAULK relieved Captain Arthur W. PRICE, Jr., as Commander River Patrol Force.

JULY

7 JUL HA(L)-3, Det SIX, arrived on board USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST 846).

8 JUL HA(L)-3, Det EIGHT was assigned to CTO 194.9 and temporarily assigned to Bay Minh to assist Det 7, providing close air support for naval units in the upper Van Co Dong River in Operation Sling Shot.

11 JUL USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST 846) logs its 3500th halo landing.

AUGUST

5 AUG HA(L)-3, Det ONE, moved from the USS WASHINGTON COUNTY (LST 1167) to the USS WINDHAM COUNTY (LST 1170).

9 AUG HA(L)-3, Det EIGHT, moved aboard the USS HANNAH COUNTY (LST 826) to be stationed off the coast of Rach Gia in the Gulf of Thailand.

10 AUG Formal training for headquarters fire team commenced.

12 AUG Seawolf 301, Jet EIGHT crashed on take-off from the USS HANNAH COUNTY. R. L. BROWN, USN, B71 35 61 was killed in the accident.

15 AUG Headquarters fire team became operational at Ninh Thuy with three crews assuming duty on a rotating basis.

16 AUG U.S HANNAH COUNTY (LST 826) became first ship of her class to log 5,000 accident free helicopter landings.

17 AUG Seawolf 300 of HA(L)-3, Det EIGHT, was brought down by enemy fire. One crewman, ADJ3 Daniel E. KELLY, B71 41 54, received serious wounds.

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15 SEP Seawolf 302, Det EIGHT crashed on take-off from the USS
MAGNUS COUNTY. ATG Stephen A. JOHNSON, USN, 623 06 42
and ATG Robert J. ARNOLD, USN, 696 83 45 were killed in the
accident.

27 SEP LCDR Walter B. WENZEL, Jr., USN, relieved LCDR Dennis W. STREI
USN, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det EIGHT, located at Rach

27 SEP HA(L)-3, Det EIGHT activated and chopped to OTG 194.0 and located
at Tay Ninh for operations in Giant Sling Shot.

~~SECRET~~

1 OCT CDR W. W. WENZEL, USN, relieved CDR W. E. E. SERIO, USN, as
Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det TWO at Nha Be.

NOTEBOOK

18 NOV CDR Kenneth A. HAMM, USN, 636376, relieved LCDR James C.
ALKIRE, USN, 629663, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det FOUR,
located at Ben Lao.

30 NOV LCDR Victor BECK, USN, 629515, relieved LCDR William P. FRANKLIN
USN, 616149, as Officer-in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det SIX, staging out
Song Ong Doe.

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6 DEC LCDR D. B. LEE, USN, relieved LCDR B. V. BORQUIST as Officer-
in-Charge HA(L)-3, Det THREE staging at Wing Gia.

11 DEC LT J. S. WOLNIIEWICZ relieved CDR W. W. WENZEL as Officer-in-
Charge HA(L)-3, Det TWO at Nha Be.

11 DEC Seawolf 313, Det TWO crashed on a low level reconnaissence
mission. ATG Edward P. JAHNKE 1941 620 08 01

23

Cherry (1940) 195-190 at 12th Rd.

14 DEC **Seawolf 313**, Det TWO crashed on a low level reconnaissance mission. MSG Larry R. JOHNSON, USH, 540 22 96 was killed in this operational accident.

18 DEC First four of an allowance of eight UH-1L's on board NSAD Binh Thuy and ready for SEALORD's Operations. When all eight UH-1L's are received the total number of A/C on board will be 41. Personnel allowance was increased to 161 officers and 439 enlisted.

23 DEC CDR W. J. PRICE relieved LT J. S. WOLNIEWICZ as Officer-in-Charge HIA (L)-3, Det TWO at NHA BE.

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<u>PELIO SOURS (U-13)</u>	<u>(U-11)</u>
<u>PREPANNED STRIKES</u>	
<u>RECTION STRIKES</u>	
<u>TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY</u>	
<u>SUPER ULSSES (U-13)</u>	
<u>PERFECTS</u>	
<u>(PERFECTED/IMPROVED)</u>	
<u>PERFECTED/IMPROVED</u>	