

COMMANDER RIVER ASSAULT FLOTILLA ONE
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

1 November 1968

Dear Family and Friends of River Assault Flotilla ONE:

On November 3rd I will complete my tour in Vietnam as I turn over the helm to Captain Dale V. Schermerhorn. My new assignment will be in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D. C.

I make no apologies for saying that I am looking forward to being with my wife and family again, though one does build up a deep attachment for the men of a command such as this where teamwork, dedication to duty and a certain amount of hardships are so much a part of our everyday life.

I think Captain Schermerhorn is an excellent choice for this assignment. He has just completed a tour as Commander of Destroyer Squadron Four which only a few months ago made a deployment to the Western Pacific. Part of that deployment was spent off the coast of Vietnam.



He has had other sea tours aboard the aircraft carrier USS Hancock; the cruiser USS Wilkes Barre; the destroyers USS Rich and USS Everett F. Larson; and the mine force ships USS Gayety and USS Project. He has also served as Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander, Mine Force, Atlantic Fleet, attended the Naval War College, and served two tours in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

During my months in the Delta, the Riverine Assault Force has grown from 5 ships and 100 assault boats to 11 ships and nearly 170 boats. Our area of operations has been expanded from the Rung Sat and Central Delta to all the regions bordering the many tributaries of the Mekong River.

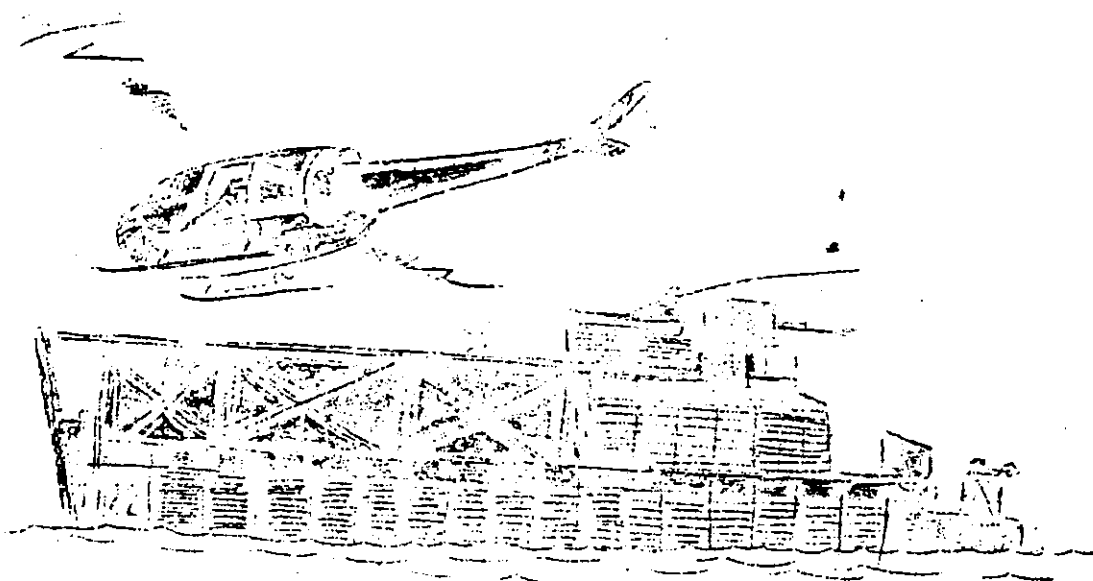
As I look back over the past year, I think that perhaps our most significant accomplishment came during the period of the Tet offensive when the Mobile Riverine Force went to the aid and defense of nearly every major population center in the Delta. Although it was touch-and-go for a few days, not one major city fell into enemy hands.

Lately, I have spent considerable time with Vietnamese civilian and military leaders in an effort to expand the scope of operations of the Vietnamese military forces. In the past two or three months we have conducted numerous small but important operations in which our assault boats have lifted and supported Vietnamese Regional Force and Popular Force companies. These troops, roughly equivalent to our National Guard back home, conduct operations only within the confines of their own province. To date we have been most encouraged by their progress.

In the near future I would hope that these Regional and Popular Forces would provide increased safety for the movement of commerce along both the highways and waterways of their particular localities. It would also have the effect of limiting movement of supplies by the Viet Cong.

At the moment both Task Groups Alfa and Bravo are working with regular force Vietnamese Marine Battalions. In the past, some of our most productive battles have been those in which we had the Marines with us, specifically December 4-6, 1967, when 266 VC were killed and in late July and early August, 1968, when another 250 were killed in action south of Can Tho. Large caches of enemy weapons were captured in both engagements.

The MRF continues to have a popular appeal to visitors touring Vietnam. Some of those who have come our way during the last two or three months are Vice Presidential Candidate Curtis LeMay; the Honorable Paul R. Ignatius, Secretary of the Navy; Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations; Admiral John S.



McCain, Commander in Chief, Pacific; Admiral John J. Hyland, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet; and Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., who became commander of all Naval forces in Vietnam on September 30.

In closing I want to thank you - our most avid supporters - for your many letters of encouragement, for providing me with such fine young men with whom to work, and most of all for your many prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R.S. Salzer'.

R.S. SALZER
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commander River Assault
Flotilla One