



THE JACKSTAFF



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U.S. NAVAL FORCES II, III, IV CORPS VIETNAM

DEC. 7, 1966



GO NAVY . . . Lieutenant (jg) Philip Herr, Assistant Advisor to the Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 36 at Long Phu, supervises painting a "Go Navy" sign on the roof of the advisors' quarters. The sign serves as a reminder to U.S. Army helicopter pilots flying out of Soc Trang that they pass over "Navy territory". (Official U.S. Navy Photo)

'Free' Leave Is OKed

Personnel stationed in South Vietnam who extend their Vietnam tour of duty by at least six months are now authorized a "free" 30-day leave and government-paid transportation.

The special leave, authorized by Public Law 89-735, will be granted to those who, by way of reenlistment, extension of enlistment or other voluntary action, agree to extend their tour of duty in Vietnam by at least six months beyond their normal rotation date.

Round-trip transportation will be furnished at government expense to any desired location. Travel time will not count against the 30 days of leave.

The leave is to be taken in one increment and will not be charged to the serviceman's leave record.

The special leave will begin not earlier than 90 days before nor later than 30 days after the normal tour expiration date. If the serviceman starts his leave prior to his normal rotation date, the unserved period will then be added to the period of his extension.

Leave rations are also authorized during the leave and travel period.

Mined MSB Brought Up From Long Tau Bottom

Raising of the U.S. Navy Minesweeping Boat (MSB 54), mined and sunk by an enemy mine November 1, has been completed by a team of U.S. Navy salvage experts.

Salvage of the 54 was performed by Team Two of the U.S. Navy's Harbor Clearance Unit One, headed by Lieutenant Orlin A. Kohl.

The MSB was mined and sunk at 4:20 November 1 on the Long Tau River, the main ship channel to Saigon.

Casualties were heavy.

The companion MSB attempting an immediate rescue received intense Viet Cong small and automatic weapons fire from the riverbank.

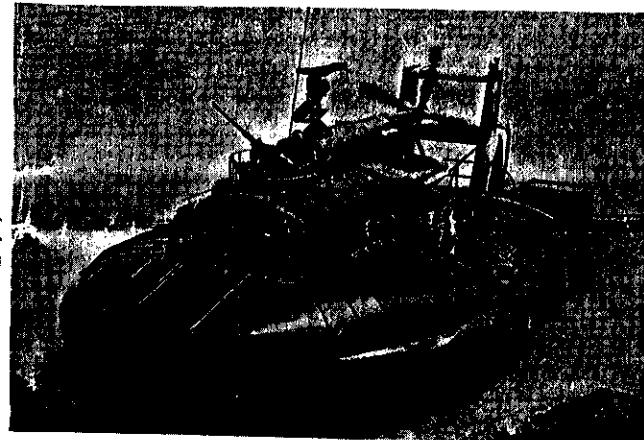
Fire was returned.

The MSB was lifted from the river bottom and moved to Saigon where salvage continued.

The mining of MSB 54 was the fifteenth Viet Cong attack on the wooden-hulled boats since their arrival in Vietnam from Long Beach, Calif., seven months ago.

Operating as units of Operation Game Warden, the boats comprise Detachment Alfa of Mine Squadron 11, based at Nha Be.

THE MOST! . . . This PACV (Patrol Air Cushion Vehicle) underway on Market Time patrol off Vung Tau is capable of speeds in excess of 50 knots when combat loaded. Using an airlift principle whereby it floats on a cushion of air, it can travel over water, swamps or even flat land! (Official U.S. Navy Photo by Lt. James Taylor)



DAMN THE MORTARS, KEEP IN STEP! . . . During the Vietnamese National Day celebration a detachment from the Naval Support Activity Saigon stepped smartly past the reviewing stand led by Lieutenant (jg) R.J. Humphrey. The sailors were undeterred by a Viet Cong mortar barrage that killed 13 bystanders.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by Larry Lindberg, PH2)

LDO Program Is Resumed

The Navy will reactivate its Limited Duty Officer Program in FY68 but will limit procurement to male chief warrant officers originally appointed after calendar year 1964 and serving in W-2 and W-3 grades.

Personnel selected under the new program will be tendered temporary appointments in the grade of ensign, commencing in FY69.

In the same personnel notice, Navy announced a concurrent warrant officer appointment program and its modifications.

Basic change is that only chief and first class petty officers, E-7 and E-6, will be considered for warrant officer appointments.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER**Is God Your Rudder?**

By Captain O'Brien

The rudder of a ship is a small piece of equipment but it carries a tremendous responsibility. Any ship, large or small, requires the rudder to give direction. Without it the ship drifts aimlessly about. It brings out the best in the ship and fulfills the purpose for which the ship was constructed.

The ship may be of the latest design, its electronic gear first-rate, officers and men well trained, and experienced. But a ship without a rudder is useless.

Similarly, a life without God lacks purpose and direction. An individual may be handsome, intelligent, strong, witty, and clever. What does it profit a man if he possesses these qualities but can not steer on course, reach his destination and fulfill his purpose? Without God we navigate a rudderless path on the sea of life, pitching and rolling from the mind of temptation and the wave of difficulty. When one's purpose in life is to seek pleasure and happiness at any cost, he flounders from one thrill to another, steered only by his bodily appetites.

How different the picture if God is the rudder of our ship. Then we steer a steady course on the stormy sea of life. His will as expressed in the Ten Commandments, is our guide. No longer do we ask: "What do I want?" Now the question is: "What does God expect me, His creature, to do?"

For the same reason that we put bits in horses' mouths and rudders on ships, so should our lives be controlled by God; and as we do His will and fulfill His purpose, we reach those ports that are worthy. A steering casualty comes when we forget who owns the vessel, where we are going, and why.

Your Career Counselor**Make Your 'Breaks'**

Have you ever noticed that there are some guys who always seem to be in the right place at the right time? They make First Class in 4 or 5 years, Warrant Officer in 6, and end up retiring as Lcdr. or Cdr. Some guys get all the breaks, I wonder why? Do you suppose they could have planned all this and made the breaks themselves?

A man has got to know where he is now to be able to see where he is going in the future. There are some guys, like the one described above, who know exactly where they are, where they want to go, and have initiated a positive plan of action to get there. But there are a great many more of us who haven't looked much further than our noses.

Sure we've set some goals, like what tomorrow, next week, next month, and I'm sure most of us have thought about what we want next year when we leave here. But how many of us have realistic, well thought out plans for two years from now, four years from now, or even fifteen years from now?

You might say fifteen years, that's a long way off, I've got plenty of time to think about that. Look back on the last couple of years, Did you make the most of them? I don't think most of us can honestly say we did.

This is where your Career Counselor comes in. If you haven't already set a goal for yourself, he has the information and facts that may help you make an intelligent decision.

There are many good men leaving the Navy simply because they are not aware of what the Navy has to offer. Most of the information they do have came from messcooks and bumdope artists.

The Career Counselor is there for one purpose, to present you with the straight facts on what the Navy does and does not offer, then leave you to make your own decision as to what course you're going to take,

Whatever you do—whether you ship over, or go into civilian life, get the straight dope and think over all the angles. Then consider what you want to do with your life and go after it. Once you've set your goal don't let anyone con you off the course you've set. It's your life and you're the one who's going to have to live it. Make your own decision, and MAKE IT A COOD ONE.

New Law Broadens Medicare Benefits

A serviceman gets a warm feeling when he knows his loved ones are well-cared for and safe.

American fighting men separated from their families because of an overseas assignment, or a service family assigned to a remote area, now have renewed insurance that dependents will receive adequate medical care.

The Military Medical Benefits Amendments of 1966 passed by the 89th Congress is now law.

If a Navy dependent has a baby in a taxicab, she no longer has to worry. The government will pay most of the expense. Not for the cab, perhaps, but certainly for the doctor called to the scene.

And if her back aches after her recovery, she may even be treated by a civilian osteopath. Her bunions removed by a doctor of surgical chiropody.



The bill, called the Military Medical Benefits Amendments, also authorizes tangible things like pills, crutches and artificial limbs. It pays for local ambulance service to or from a hospital for accident care. And it helps with rental of hospital beds, wheelchairs and iron lungs.

In a nutshell, the new health benefits fall into three broad categories:

Civilian outpatient care for the wives, children and dependent husbands of active duty personnel.

Civilian inpatient and outpatient care for retired members and their wives, children and dependent husbands, and the wives, children, and dependent husbands of members who died while on active duty or in a retired status.

Institutional care, training, rehabilitation, and special education in civilian facilities for wives, children, and dependent husbands of active duty members who are moderately or severely mentally retarded or who have a serious physical handicap.

The new law eliminates restrictions on types of hospitalization which may be provided dependents, such as treatment for nervous and mental disorders and chronic conditions.

If used wisely, the Military Medical Benefits Amendments of 1966 should prove advantageous to the serviceman and his family—providing the necessary health care for wives and children of those wearing uniforms of this country's Armed Forces.

The Jackstaff News

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Beer Nite on My Tho

By Lieutenant (jg) Bob Martin

Guns pointed, the Navy Patrol Boat eased alongside the massive Vietnam junk stopped in the water. The yellow-and-red colors of the government flag fluttered from the stern staff.

Seventy feet-or-so long, the junk towered above the smaller craft whose crew momentarily imagined the top-heavy-looking barge toppling over on them. Stacked high on the junk's deck, in irregular rows, were thousands of wooden crates whose contents were to be subject to the Navymen's intended search.

Until this moment, it had been a quiet patrol for River Patrol Boat 98—no suspicious craft encountered, no Viet Cong snipers contacted, nothing unusual for the PBR affectionately called "JoLisa". Named after the boat captain's children—a composite of Joe and Lisa—number 98 is one of ten river boats of River Patrol Section 531 based at My Tho in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. The area lies some 35 or 40 miles south-southwest of Saigon.

The appearance of the large shadowy craft in front of them, therefore, took the PBR-98 crew somewhat by surprise. Straddling half the width of the river, the junk appeared to be dead in the water. A single white light on the mast peeped through the darkness.

Cautiously, the patrol boat closed the distance between itself and the portentious object ahead.

Snapping on the spotlight mounted atop his .50-cal. machine gun, the forward gunner trained-and-elevated the weapon on the ominous silhouette.

Within 25 feet of the suspicious vessel, Minx, the Vietnamese interpreter on the Navy boat, switched on a hand-held flashlight and pointed it into the faces of the waiting crewmen on the other craft.

The after gunner now moved forward and tossed a line across the narrow span between the boats; the parties on the other side obediently grabbed it and tied it fast to a bollard.

Minx, followed by the boat captain—Petty Officer First Class Glen Engberg—jumped up onto the forward deck of the vessel.

"What are you doing here?" Minx asked in Vietnamese. "What is your cargo?"

The old man's words were spoken in rapid, gasping spurts with long pauses between. Minx translated almost as fast and two or three times. Boat Captain Engberg asked him to repeat what he said. As the conversation continued, the younger man on the junk began to unbolt the cover over the forward storage hold. Passing through metal loops, a steel rod ran the length of the

cover which was bolted at one end. The rod removed, the wooden cover was slid aside... and in somewhat eager anticipation, Minx and his U.S. Navy friends gathered around to see what lay below.

"Beer!" Their voices rang out in unison. Minx shook his head from side to side.

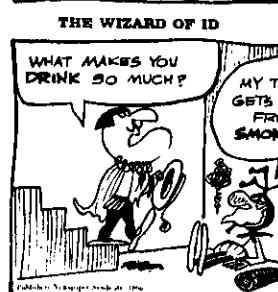
The search completed, the Navymen returned to their patrol boat. Though somewhat disappointed that their find was so legitimate—no enemy supplies, no contraband of any kind—they knew at the same time that their efforts and those of other U.S. Navy patrol boats which comprise Operation Game Warden on the Mekong Delta are having a marked effect on "Charlie Cong". At least, he wasn't out on the river tonight.

It was beer night on the My Tho and when they got back to base and off-duty, the men thought they might just try some of that local brand.

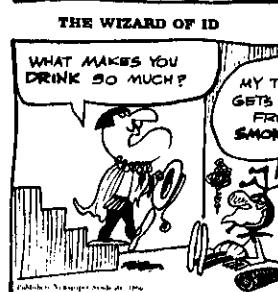
Wizard Is Gratis

The Wizard of Id comic strip which is appearing in "The Jackstaff News" beginning with this issue is being presented free to Navymen in Vietnam by creators Brant Parker and Johnny Hart and the Publishers' Newspaper Syndicate.

THE WIZARD OF ID



by Brant Parker and Johnny Hart



II-12



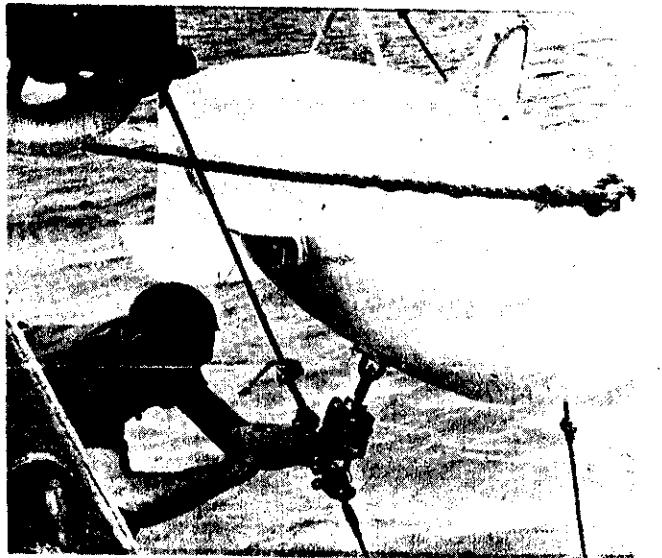
NAUTICAL BUT NICE!... Lovely Tina Louise losher oars while boating down the Mekong and wants some sailor to give her a lift. Any volunteers?



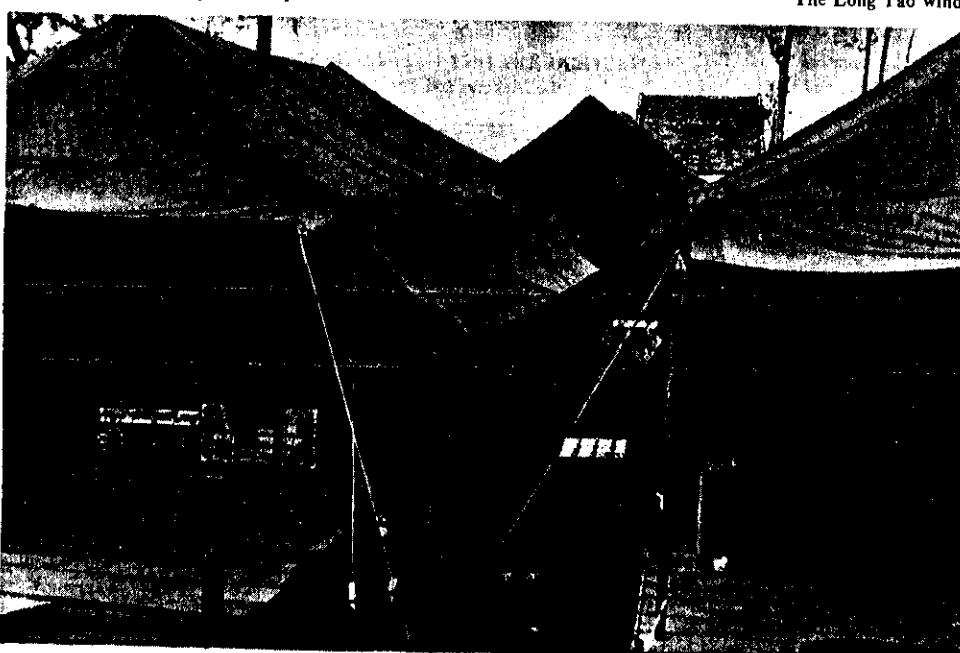
MSB SKIPPER . . . CPO Herman J. Carter, officer-in-charge MSB 17, checks his position during operations on the Long Tao.



VC MINE . . . EOD Expert CPO D. F. McMahon makes sure that a mine cut loose by the minesweepers is safe to handle.



RIGGIN' THE FLOAT . . . PO2 Paul Ginter prepares to put the float into the water after repairing the sweep wire.



NHA BE HILTON . . . "Home" for the MSB crews are these tents at Nha Be. They keep their weapons slung within easy reach and a mosquito net draped around their bunks to keep from being put out of action by malaria. (Official U. S. Navy Photo by John Scholzen, JOCM)

LITTLE BOATS —

(By Thomas L. Rainwater, JO1)

The U.S. Navy is meeting a Viet Cong challenge on the river approaches to the Port of Saigon.

Several times daily, small, wood-hulled U.S. Navy minesweeping boats (MSBs) sweep the Long Tao River and the Saigon harbor area where ships are bringing and unloading their valuable cargoes destined for the free world military forces in the Republic of Vietnam.

"If it weren't for this river," says Chief Petty Officer Herman J. Carter, of New York City, "I don't know what we would do for supplies." Nor does anyone else.

It's via the 45-mile long Long Tao that the bulk of supplies reach the Capitol City.

The Long Tao winds through the

heart of the Rung Sat Special Zone, a longtime Viet Cong haven, just south of Saigon. It's the major deep-water channel connecting the Port of Saigon with the South China Sea.

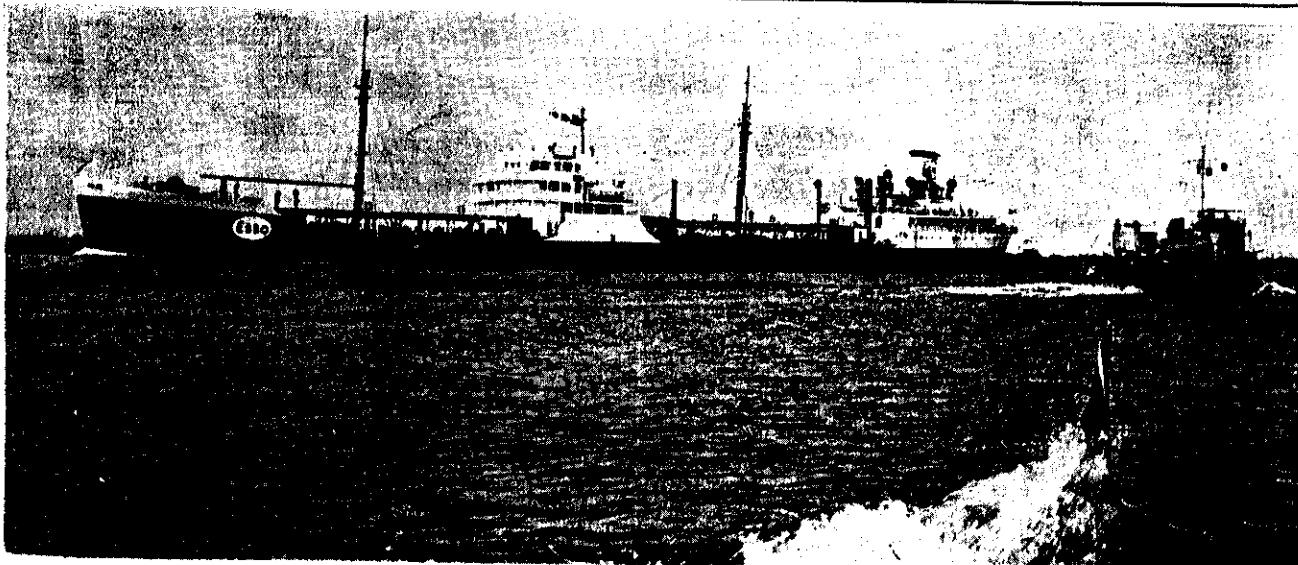
Chief Carter is Officer-in-Charge of MSB 17, one of 12 such boats operating from the small U.S. Navy base at Nha Be, seven miles south of Saigon.

The MSBs comprise Detachment Alpha of Mine Squadron Eleven. The squadron is homeported at Long Beach, Calif. Commanding the Detachment is Lieutenant W.D. Jones, of Stockton, California.

Nine of the boats are committed to the daily sweeping. An additional boat is on alert to assist in any maritime emergency.

Detachment Alpha moved to Nha Be from Danang early this year and began immediate operations on the Long Tao River and in the Dong Nai River north to Bien Hoa.

Since the Navymen began their mission of keeping the Long Tao channel free of mines only two merchant ships have been mined by the Viet Cong. Dozens of other ships have carried their vital supplies up the channel while the VC have watched in frustration from riverbanks.



SAFE PASSAGE, COURTESY MSBs . . . A tanker carries an essential cargo of oil to Saigon, passing one of the Navy minesweepers that make possible its safe transit of the VC-threatened channel.

WITH VITAL AND DANGEROUS TASK

The mining of the MSTS ship Baton Rouge on August 23 with seven killed illustrated the importance of the task and the necessity of eternal vigilance against the Viet Cong saboteurs. The Baton Rouge was heavily damaged and run aground to prevent its sinking. It still remains grounded; however the Viet Cong were frustrated in their attempt to block the channel.

The hazards of the job were tragically demonstrated on November 1 when one of the MSBs was mined and sunk with heavy casualties. A companion MSB attempting to rescue survivors came under heavy fire from the riverbank. It was the 15th VC attack against the 12 MSBs of Mine Squadron 11.

Although the MSB sailors have no positive way of knowing when they have cut loose a mine and prevented the sinking of a ship, mines of the types for which the MSBs sweep the river have been found in the Rung Sat Special Zone along the river bank and at Viet Cong base camps.

The crew of MSB 15 found a 6-lb spherical VC mine as recently as October 24. After examination by an EOD team headed by CPO D.F. McMahon, the mine was taken to Nha Be and destroyed after close examination. It was confirmed that the mine had been cut loose by a minesweeper.

Later the same day, MSB 49 spotted a green wire leading from the river up the riverbank.

The EOD teams were again called to investigate and they traced the wire down a stream where the wire stopped in a clump of bushes. Attached to the end of the wire were batteries used in the detonation of command detonated mines.

The end of the wire found in the water appeared to have been cut by an MSB. It is believed these wires were the control wires for the VC mine. That day tragedy had been averted.

Four MSBs operate on the Long Tao River daily.

The boats, working in pairs, sweep with equipment designed to cut the detonator wire of remote-detonated mines which are planted in the river channel. MSBs also sweep for moored mines which could be anchored to the river bottom.

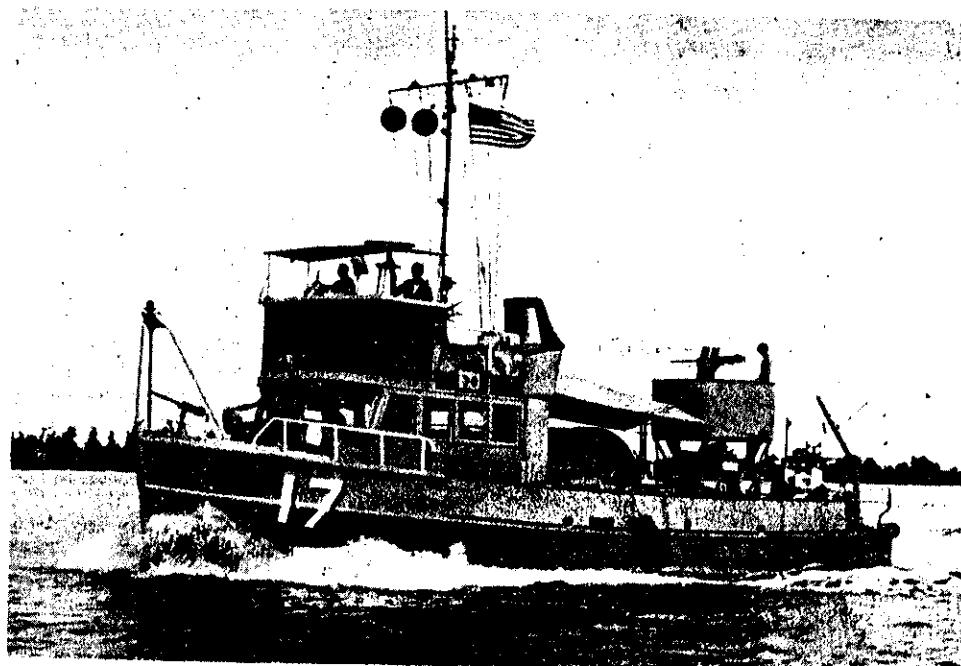
Between conducting the daily sweep and maintaining the boat at peak efficiency, the MSB's seven-man crew leads a life of long and demanding hours.

The MSB sailors live in tents ashore with the river patrol boat (PBR) Navymen at the Nha Be Navy base.

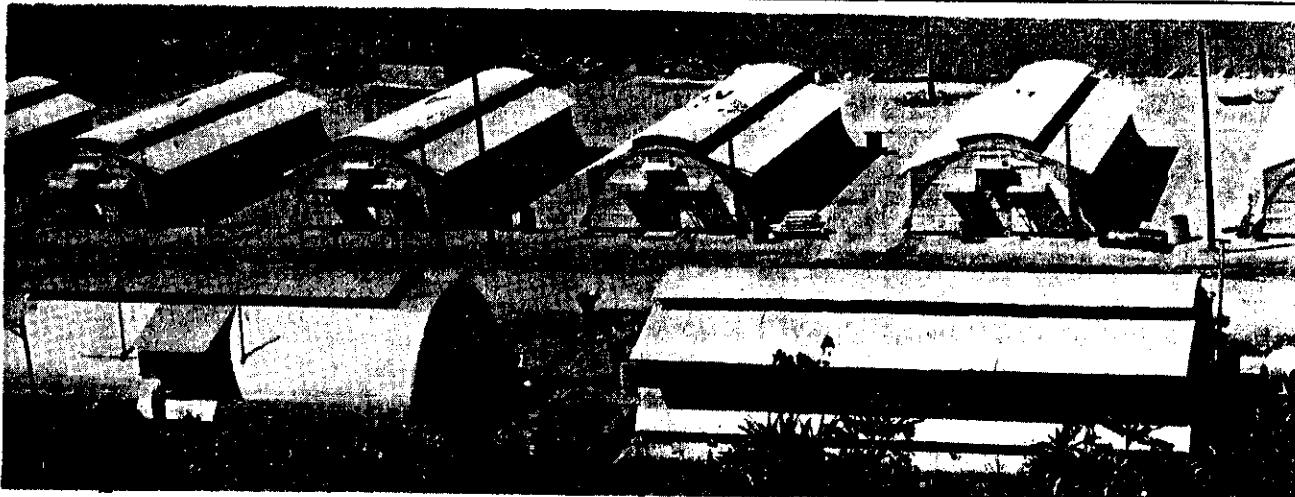
MSB sweeps of the river last as long as 10 hours with constant maintenance work required before and after each sweep. Added to this fatiguing schedule is the ever present danger of Viet Cong sniping from the river bank.

No waters of the river are left unswept when the workday ends.

According to Chief Carter, "Minersweeping is a constant and demanding task. However, we are rewarded by a feeling of accomplishment in fulfilling a vital job!"



LITTLE BOAT-BIG JOB! . . . MSB 17 sweeps the Long Tao channel to make it possible for vital cargo to move to Saigon.



IT'S NOT FANCY BUT IT'S HOME . . . for the Navymen at Qui Nhon, a typical detachment supporting the boats which are stopping communist water-borne infiltration of the Delta-area. (Official U. S. Navy Photo by Larry Lindberg, PH2)

VISIT TO QUI NHON **Beautiful Scenery But Not a Resort!**

By John Scholzen JOCM

It's newly developed on beachfront property hugging deep blue and crystal clear water. Food, prepared by the finest chefs in the world, is often flown in to meet special demands. Management spares no effort or expense to satisfy clientele. Employees know they are here to serve.

But those of faint heart need not apply for reservations or jobs. Those of more courageous bent should check with their Navy recruiter!

For the idyllic sounding haven is another of the U.S. Navy's support detachments which are springing up along the coastline and in the Delta region of this embattled Republic.

Officially known as the U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon Detachment Qui Nhon, the base provides repair, administrative and logistic support to coastal patrol and harbor defense units.

It's a far cry from a resort!

A visitor to the base finds it is still being built by the American

firm which is the Navy's construction agent throughout Vietnam. Most of the pre-fab buildings are up though and the base has been operating for months.

The relatively small encampment nestles in a sandy cove of a peninsula jutting from the central coast of South Vietnam, in the II Corps

area. The finger of land forms a natural harbor on the South China Sea coastline.

You travel by water to reach the base, unless you want to trudge miles through dense undergrowth and over sweeping hills.

On arrival, a glance at heavily armed Swift boats tied up at the pier tells you the main purpose of the base.

The speedy craft ply up and down the coastline on the lookout for Viet Cong trying to infiltrate men and equipment by sea. Other boats and crews patrol the harbor to protect shipping. It is the base's job to keep boats and crews on the line.

Arrive early or late, you'll find plenty of activity. The base is on a round-the-clock routine to support day and night operations. The men regularly work 12 to 16 hour days (or nights as the case may be).

In the early evening you'll see men shouldering rifles to take their turn at standing security watches in the hills surrounding the base. Fortunately, units of the Vietnamese and Korean armies are in the general area which keeps the VC threat down to snipers. Constant alertness is mandatory.

When you sit down to chow, you'll enjoy typically outstanding Navy chow, but don't linger please, there are others waiting to get in. By now you are aware that living conditions are austere, as elsewhere in the war-torn nation!

Any water you drink has been brought in by small boat. Take a shower, and you are using saltwater. Don't let the sand and insects bother you, but you had better have taken your malaria pill, it's highly recommended.

Because of its isolated location, what recreation there is, is mainly confined to the base. You can usually watch an outdoor movie, if it doesn't rain.

If you want to find out what the men have done with their very limited sparetime, wander into the Vietnamese village snuggled alongside the Navy facility.

The school house you see, not fancy—but serviceable—was built by the Navymen as a civic action project. The sailors are contributing enough money monthly to hire a teacher for the village kids too, most of whom have never seen a school before.

Assuming you stay the night, it'll be a bunk in a crowded Butler hut. But it's better than a tent and it's out of the rain. And by now you should be ready for sleep.

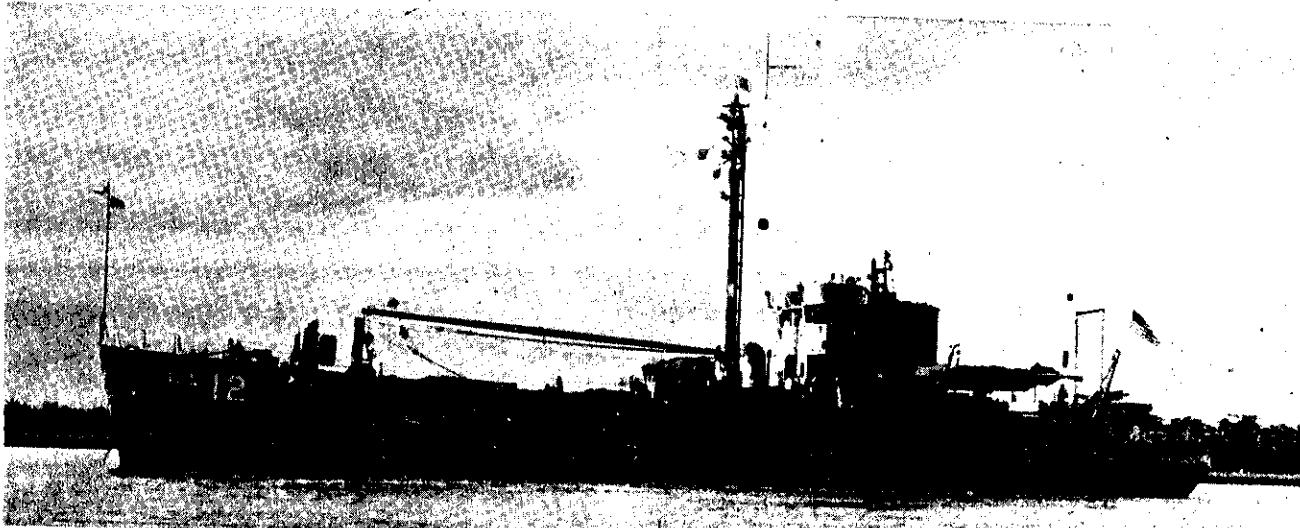
After you bid farewell to the base in the morning you won't have to worry about being pestered by brochures inviting you back to revisit the "Mecca of your dreams."

But you'll carry memories which will make you proud of your Navymen. They have a job to do in Vietnam....and are doing it well!



THEY BUILT A SCHOOL . . . Navymen at the Naval Support Activity Detachment Qui Nhon join Vietnamese children in front of the schoolhouse the sailors built in the village adjoining their base. Done in their sparetime, the work included desks and chairs. Thirty-one kids have started first grade. A local teacher has been hired with money donated by the Navymen. (OFFICIAL U. S. Navy Photograph by: Larry Lindberg, PH2)

Modern Day River Boat Supplies Attachments



By John Scholzen, JOCM

With due apologies to the Bard of the Mississippi, there is more than a similarity of names between the U.S. Navy's light cargo ship USS Mark (AKL 12) and Mark Twain.

With imagination supplying a paddlewheel and a tinhorn gambler, the ship Mark is operating on the rivers of Vietnam in much the same manner as the Mississippi riverboats glamorized by the humorist!

Change New Orleans to Saigon, replace the flavor of Hannibal, St. Louis and Natchez with Vinh Long, Sa Dec and Can Tho, and the story is familiar.

For the Mark is plying the rivers and waterways of Vietnam in support of the Navy's growing effort to prevent their use by the enemy to infiltrate men and equipment.

Viet Cong have replaced Twain's pirates and Indians, and mines have taken the place of logs as navigational hazards. When Mark ties up to load and unload supplies, there are Tom Sawyers and, Huck Finns aplenty in the gathering of Vietnamese children.

But that's where the comparison ends. The Mark is actually a clean-lined, 900-ton ship whose cargo is vital to the war effort in this embattled Republic.

Her ports of call, both on the rivers of the southern Delta region and coastal ports up and down South Vietnam, are base sites established to support Navy small-boat operations against the Viet Cong.

In her holds she carries everything from food and spare parts to guns and ammunition.

Some of her trips are far from routine. Last summer the Mark sailed boldly out of the mouth of the Bassac river and thereby eliminated one of the major obstacles hampering free navigation of one of the principal waterways of Vietnam's Delta region.

She was the first cargo carrier to negotiate the 47-mile run from Can Tho out into the South China Sea

in approximately 10 years.

Until then a combination of Viet Cong pressure and long-lost navigational aids had prevented anything larger than patrol craft from making the trip.

Lieutenant Francis Sanderlin, of San Diego, Calif., Mark's Skipper, who navigated the changed and forgotten channels, reported sufficient water at all times under his 10-foot-draft ship to insure the passage of other type ships operating on the river routes.

Mark was escorted by the Vietnamese Navy LSIL 331, a heavily armored patrol craft. An L-19 observation plane flew ahead and

helicopter fire support teams were standing by at Soc Trang while Mark ran past the Viet Cong infested area from Can Tho to the river's mouth.

The LSIL led Mark part way through the sandbars and mudflats to open water and from there she "felt" her way to sea.

Rear Admiral Norvell G. Ward, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, in a message commanding Mark for her transit of the Bassac, said the trip was ".... another concrete example of your "Can Do" spirit and the standing professionalism." "...absence of navigational aid and limited hydrography of

this area makes your effort even more significant."

Mark, and a like ship, USS Brule (AKL 28), are under the operational control of the U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon. The bases she serves are field activities of which provide administrative, logistic and repair support for Navy Forces in the II, III, and IV Corps areas of the Republic.

Built in 1944 for the Army, she was transferred to the Navy in 1948 and given her present name. Mark has been in the western Pacific for nearly 22 years, never having recrossed the International dateline.

Mark is 180 feet long, 33 feet wide and her relatively shallow draft of 10½ feet makes her ideal for plying the rivers.

There are four officers and 44 enlisted men in her crew.

In carrying out her assignments, Mark has come under Viet Cong shore fire on almost every trip and was severely shaken by a "near miss" underwater mine explosion. One crewman has been wounded.

Thanks in great part to these men and their "riverboat", the Navy has been able to set up inland support bases, thus extending the range of river patrol boat operations as far as the Cambodian border.

The results have been to diminish the Viet Cong's use of the waterways to move men and equipment.



ALWAYS ALERT . . . Two Mark Sailors stand ready for action at a .50 caliber machine gun as one of many sampans crosses their path during operations on the rivers of the Mekong Delta. (Both photos this page Official U.S. Navy Photos by Bruce Whitmarsh, PH2)

Navy Fights Unique War on Vietnam Delta

By D. G. Van Way, JO2

In every war the United States has waged the U.S. Navy has played a key role. The war in Vietnam is no exception.

But instead of sea battles and ship-to-ship engagements, the in-country U.S. Navy is fighting a small-boat sniping war on the inland waterways of Vietnam.

Operation Game Warden is the name given the Navy's effort to halt Viet Cong waterborne movement in the Mekong Delta, and in the Rung Sat Special Zone, 30 miles southeast of Saigon.

Mainstay of the operation are River Patrol Boats (PBRs) which conduct day and night patrols along the three major Delta Rivers.

The PBR's mission on the Delta waterways is to prevent enemy use of these main regional highways to transport men and supplies. In addition, the PBRs act as a blocking force to prevent enemy movement across the rivers from one area to another.

To accomplish these tasks, the PBR patrols constantly monitor all civilian sampan and junk traffic, boarding and searching when necessary to hunt for Viet Cong supplies and personnel.

The PBRs' work is punctuated by constant danger because of frequent sniper fire from Viet Cong hidden in the dense jungle along the riverbanks.

The four-man PBR is a fiberglass boat, redesigned from a civilian



INSPECTION . . . A Vietnamese sampan operator poles his tiny craft alongside a U.S. Navy River Patrol Boat for inspection. The water-jet patrol boats cruise the three main rivers of the Mekong Delta day and night, inspecting and sometimes boarding and searching native craft for Viet Cong and their supplies. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by J.C. Deckert, PHC)

pleasure craft for Game Warden, capable of 25 knots top speed and is extremely maneuverable. The boat is powered on a principle similar to that of a jet aircraft, using twin water jets to propel and maneuver.

Three .50-cal. machine guns and several individual weapons give the PBR withering fire power.

There are now eight PBR bases in Vietnam, with more than 90 boats manned and supported by nearly 700 people. The Game Warden force, Task Force 116, is commanded by Captain Burton B. Witham, USN, whose headquarters

is near Can Tho, 80 miles southwest of Saigon. The PBRs are directly responsible to Commander River Squadron Five, U.S. Navy Commander Kenneth H. Ruecker.

The Navy's UH-1B "Huey" armed helicopter, bristling with machine guns and air-to-surface rockets, is on patrol over the rivers, ready to assist any embattled river patrol. The small aircraft, an innovation in Naval warfare, can move swiftly into an area, deliver a tremendous volume of fire-power, and be gone in a matter of minutes.

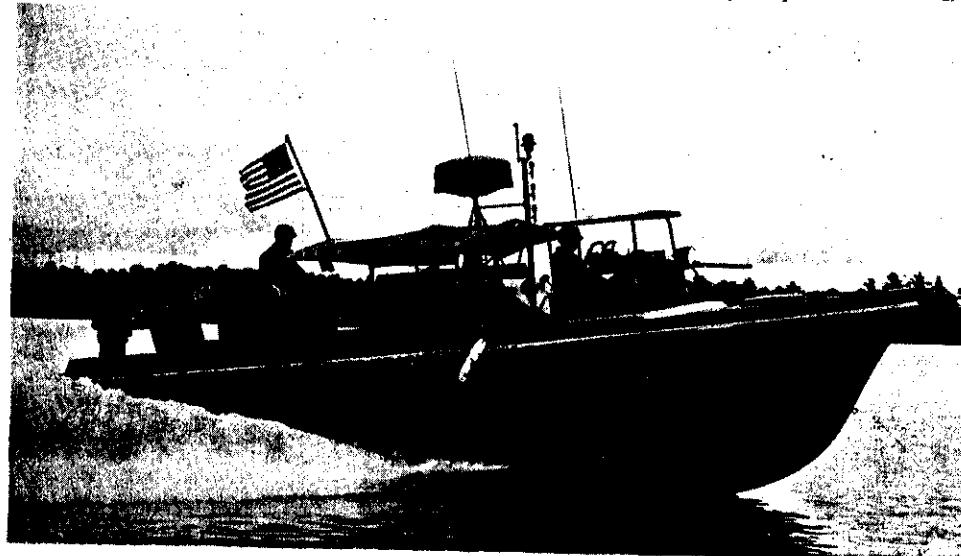
In addition to the PBRs and "Hueys" Operation Game Warden

includes Minesweeping Boats (MSBs). These 57-foot wooden-hulled boats sweep the Long Tau River shipping channel, which winds 45 miles through the Rung Sat Special Zone to the big port of Saigon. The MSBs' mission is to destroy Viet Cong mines which threaten both civilian and military shipping.

A ship sunk in this vital waterway could choke Saigon's civilian economy as well as cut an important free world forces supply route.

The MSBs' task is also a dangerous one. More than 15 times during their seven months in Vietnam the MSBs have come under VC attack, twice suffering heavy casualties.

It is too early to make a judgement on the effectiveness of Operation Game Warden, but the PBR sailors feel that their's is an important role in creating a free, peaceful Vietnam!



RIVER PATROL BOAT . . . A River Patrol Boat speeds along the My Tho River to overtake a sampan its crew has spotted attempting to cross the river. The PBR is a 31-foot fiberglass boat, powered by water jets that push this revolutionary craft to a top speed of 25 knots. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by J.C. Deckert, JO2)



"BUT WHY WOULD YOU PREFER LEFTOVERS, AT MY PLACE TO TURKEY ABOARD SHIP?"