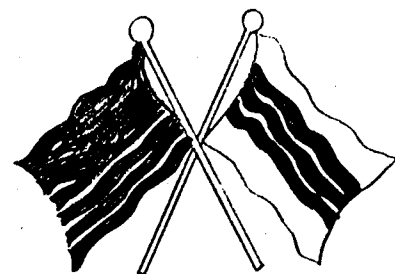


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U.S. NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM



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MONTHLY HISTORICAL
SUMMARY
DECEMBER 1966

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

Despite the Christmas holiday truce period and continued heavy weather caused by the Northeast Monsoon, MARKET TIME activities showed a gradual increase during December. Coastal Surveillance forces detected 48,336 craft, 16,782 of which were inspected and 12,302 were boarded.

The arrival of PCF 101 and two LCPLs brought in-country assets to programmed levels. SEA SHARP (Southeast Asia Semi-Permanent Harbor Protection) units continued to relieve the mobile units.

MARKET TIME aircraft were damaged during the attack on Tan Son Nhut on 4 December. No personnel casualties were sustained; however, one aircraft took a direct mortar hit. Operations were affected only to the extent that one patrol flight was missed because of the attack on the airfield.

MARKET TIME units rendered assistance to Chinese Communist fishermen on two occasions during the month. On 4 December a Chinese junk carrying 43 persons was towed to Nha Trang by PCF 54. The junk had been swept from her normal fishing grounds by a storm and was in need of assistance. On 8 December, USCGC POINT ELLIS discovered two Chinese Communist fishermen adrift in their small junk. All the Chinese fishermen were residents of Hainan Island and arrangements were made through diplomatic channels to return them to their homes.

On 23 December, MARKET TIME air and sea units turned back a suspicious, steel-hulled trawler which was identified as being

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similar to the infiltration trawlers of 10 May and 20 June.

The Christmas truce period, running from 0700 24 December to 0700 26 December, was observed by MARKET TIME forces in that no persons were detained and no gunfire support missions were conducted during that time. Enemy activity in MARKET TIME areas appeared to be significantly less during the truce period.

CHINESE COMMUNIST FISHERMEN INCIDENTS

At 1815 on 4 December, PCF 54 detected a heavily-damaged fishing junk ten miles northeast of Nha Trang. The 80-foot craft was carrying 36 men (and seven children) who were later identified as Chinese fishermen from Tanh Sien, Hainan Island, Communist China.

The junk's cargo consisted of fish and fishing equipment. No contraband was found. Interrogation revealed that the junk had been damaged in a storm and had drifted southeast to the position where it was found by PCF 54.

At 2000 on 8 December, USCGC POINT ELLIS discovered a small non-motorized junk 28 miles northwest of DaNang. The two fishermen aboard the junk were determined to be residents of Tanh Sien, Hainan Island, Communist China. A storm had set the men adrift and separated them from their mother ship in the fishing grounds near Hainan Island. They stated that they had been drifting for eight days. The two were taken to Nha Trang to join the group of Communist fishermen assisted earlier by PCF 54.

Arrangements were made through diplomatic channels for the return of both junks and all occupants.

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TRAWLER SIGHTING INCIDENT

At 1145 on 23 December, a MARKET TIME aircraft from Patrol Squadron 16 sighted a heavily-laden, steel-hulled trawler maneuvering on various courses at 10 knots 80 miles northeast of Qui Nhon. At 1409, a second VP-16 aircraft held the trawler 70 miles northeast of Qui Nhon, at this time proceeding on a heading of 060° at 10 knots. By 1150 of the following day, the trawler was 225 miles northeast of Qui Nhon, maintaining course and speed.

Covert air surveillance was continued until 1214 on 25 December when USS HISSEM (DER-400) relieved the aircraft and tracked the trawler until it entered the Hainan Straits.

Photographic analysis indicated that the trawler had the same type hull as that of the trawler captured in June 1966. The latest incident was evaluated as an attempt to infiltrate cargo into Binh Dinh province.

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE AT TAN SON NHUT

At 0115 on 4 December, the Viet Cong attacked Tan Son Nhut Airbase with mortar and small arms fire. MARKET TIME personnel sustained no casualties; however, four of the five parked aircraft were damaged. One P2A Neptune of Patrol Squadron 17, Detachment A, received a direct mortar hit and sustained major damage. One received moderate damage and two others received minor damage while the fifth was unscathed.

Only one MARKET TIME flight was missed because of the attack

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as regular coverage was resumed at 1200. All damaged aircraft were back in operation within 48 hours with the exception of the heavily-damaged Neptune which returned to service within two weeks.

OPERATIONS

Hostile Fire and Evasion Incidents

Twelve hostile fire and evasion incidents occurred during December with no friendly personnel casualties while one Viet Cong suspect was killed and another was captured. The incidents are presented in chronological order. Distances are measured from the nearest Coastal Surveillance Center.

- 7 - At 2345 USCGC POINT BANKS sighted two evading sampans off the coast of Ca Mau Peninsula, 105 miles southeast of An Thoi. After the sampans ignored signal flares and warning shots they were taken under fire. One sampan was damaged while the other successfully evaded. The WPB received hostile fire from the beach in the vicinity of the damaged sampan. POINT BANKS' return fire produced three secondary explosions.
- 8 - At 1016 USCGC POINT ORIENT sighted an evading junk 85 miles northwest of DaNang near Pho Hoi village. The junk's six occupants ignored warning shots and beached their craft. A 3rd Marine Division reaction force was called in. When the Viet Cong suspects saw the Marine force they attempted to flee. One suspect was killed and one other was captured.
- 10 - At 1459 PCF 63 destroyed an abandoned basket boat 45 miles east of Qui Nhon after the boat had evaded and its occupants had fled.

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- 11 - At 1055 POINT BANKS sighted a sampan making for an island 40 miles off the tip of Ca Mau Peninsula. When POINT BANKS signalled and fired warning shots, the sampan attempted to evade. Two occupants abandoned the boat while the third tried to move it to the bank. The sampan was taken under fire and damaged.
- At 1400 PCF 75 detected an evading junk while inspecting a group of fishing junks 80 miles north of Qui Nhon near An Dinh village. The occupants of the junk ignored warning shots, beached the junk and fled. Later, the abandoned junk was destroyed by mortar fire.
- 13 - At 1745 USCGC POINT MAST sighted a sampan evading into a canal on the coast of An Xuyen province 80 miles southeast of An Thoi. An L-19 reconnaissance aircraft provided fire control assistance for the WPB. The aircraft received small arms fire from the area as three structures were damaged by POINT MAST's mortar fire.
- 15 - At 1855 USCGC POINT GRACE received recoilless rifle and small arms fire from a position at the mouth of the Bo De River on the Ca Mau Peninsula, 170 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Several rounds, including three 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, struck POINT GRACE causing considerable damage to the hull and superstructure. Despite the damage, the cutter remained in an operational status and suppressed the enemy fire. Later, BLANCO COUNTY (LST 344) assisted POINT GRACE with temporary

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repairs. USCGC POINT GAMMON then escorted the damaged cutter to Cat Lo for repairs.

- 18 - At 1530 a reconnaissance aircraft received ground fire from an area on the coast of Cay Duong Bay, 58 miles east of An Thoi. PCF 91 provided return fire of 21 rounds of 81mm mortar. One camouflaged junk was destroyed.
- 19 - At 1845 PCF 90 sighted an evading sampan near the mouth of the Bay Hap stream on the Ca Mau Peninsula, 105 miles southeast of An Thoi. When a warning shot was fired the occupants of the sampan jumped overboard. PCF 90 received hostile fire from the beach and cleared the area.
- 20 - At 0105 PCF 20 destroyed two evading sampans 70 miles north of Qui Nhon after they had ignored illumination, signals and warning shots. Enemy personnel casualties were unknown.
- 21 - At 0135 USCGC POINT CAUTION illuminated and hailed a junk moving along the surfline near Tam Giang lagoon, 55 miles northwest of DaNang. The junk evaded to the beach and was abandoned. POINT CAUTION destroyed the junk with mortar fire.

Search and Rescue

In addition to assisting the Chinese Communist fishermen, MARKET TIME units conducted five other search and rescue operations.

At 0915 on 2 December, PCF 25 rescued ten persons and recovered one body after a junk had sunk 60 miles northeast of Vung Tau. Of the 22 persons who had been on board, 18 were rescued, one body was recovered and three were missing and presumed drowned. The survivors

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were taken to the Coastal Group 31 base. A Vietnamese PGM assisted PCF 25 in the search and rescue. The operation was terminated at 1700.

At 1210 on 3 December, USS VIREO (MSC-205) attempted to assist a disabled junk 60 miles southeast of An Thoi off the Ca Mau Peninsula. VIREO's efforts to tow the junk to safety failed. Five of the junk's six passengers were rescued when the junk sank. A search for the missing passenger produced negative results.

At 1245 on 6 December, USS FORCE (MSO-445) was designated on-scene commander in a search and rescue mission initiated in an area from 25 to 45 miles southeast of Nha Trang in an effort to locate a missing U.S. Air Force F-4C aircraft. The operation was terminated at 2000 on 7 December with negative results.

At 1405 on 8 December, USS BLANCO COUNTY (IST-344) reported the crash of a U.S. Air Force B-57 140 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Local MARKET TIME units began immediate search and rescue operations. PCF 67 recovered both the pilot and the co-pilot in good condition. The rescued crewmen were transferred to BLANCO COUNTY for a subsequent helicopter lift.

At 1045 on 29 December, USCGC POINT LEAGUE discovered a burning junk 30 miles west of Vung Tau. The cutter rescued eight persons from the water and extinguished the blaze.

Other Incidents

At 0345 on 6 December, PCF 6 detained a sampan 45 miles east of An Thoi near Cai Ban Cape. Investigation revealed that the sampan was carrying 500 pounds of rice and that its lone occupant was a

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free by the WPBs and major salvage operations were initiated on 25 December.

A three-phase CORRAL operation was begun on the morning of 26 December off the coast of Phuoc Tuy province in an attempt to curtail Viet Cong use of innocent fishing fleets as a cover for supply movements. Two PCFs, one LSIL and Coastal Group 31 junks participated. During the first phase (0700-1146), 56 junks were detected; 47 of these were boarded and seven were inspected. Nothing suspicious was observed. Phase II, which was a blocking operation, was terminated with negative results at 0700 on 29 December. Phase III was cancelled because of inclement weather.

During periods when the 50-foot SWIFT boats were restricted to harbor areas because of heavy weather, Operation RED DOG, a search of all craft in a relatively sheltered area, was scheduled. On 27 December a RED DOG was conducted on the Thi Vai River 15 miles northwest of Vung Tau. Three PCFs searched 16 junks with nothing suspicious being detected.

During the week of 19 December the first six EX-15 Ordnance Locators (metal detectors) were distributed to MARKET TIME units. The EX-15 is an experimental, light-weight searching device designed to aid in inspecting junks for contraband. The portable unit, equipped with earphones and a 36-inch probe with a sensor tip, will emit electronic signals when metals are present. The probe can be thrust into a hold of fish and ice or into rice or other loose cargo, thereby saving much time and effort in searching wooden junks.

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hard core Viet Cong. The sampan had been stolen to be used for transporting rice.

At 0600 on 11 December, PCF 24 ran aground 55 miles southwest of Vung Tau in the mouth of the Co Chien River. Protection and assistance were requested and received from Coastal Group 35 units, PBRs and a helicopter fire team from Vinh Long. USCGC POING SLOCUM also arrived to assist. At 1200 PCF 24 was freed and was towed into the channel by Coastal Group 35 junks.

At 1215 on 12 December, PCF 98 supported Coastal Group 32 and 33 units during an amphibious landing 15 miles west of Vung Tau. Small arms fire was received as the SWIFT conducted a sweep of the area. Six bunker positions were located and one Viet Cong suspect was detained. The suspect did not have identification papers and was carrying 55,000 \$VN (\$465). He had no explanation for possessing so large a sum of money and was taken into custody by Coastal Group 33 personnel.

At 1930 on 15 December, PCF 97 detained a sampan carrying one Viet Cong. The man indicated a desire to become a Hoi Chanh (returnee) under the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program and was taken to the Coastal Group 32 base for interrogation and processing.

At 1948 on 24 December, a Patrol Squadron 16 aircraft reported that a steel-hulled craft was beached 70 miles northeast of DaNang. USCGC POINT LOMAS and POINT ELLIS proceeded to the location and identified the craft as the Philippine tug, TIBURON. The tug, under contract to Naval Support Activity, DaNang, could not be pulled

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The Air Deployment Delivery System (ADDS) was expanded to include service to MARKET TIME craft in southern areas 6 through 9. This system permits aircraft, flying out of Tan Son Nhut, to rush high priority items to ships in MARKET TIME waters. Small engine parts, radar or weapons parts and other small items can be parachuted to the units on station.

HARBOR DEFENSE (STABLE DOOR)

With the arrival of 16 skimmer crew personnel on 1 December STABLE DOOR forces in Vietnam reached a total of 496 men. The new arrivals were divided between Cam Ranh Bay and Qui Nhon. The Inshore Undersea Warfare Group 1, (IUWG-1), WESTPAC Detachment, was moved from Saigon to Cam Ranh Bay on 5 December.

Cam Ranh Bay

Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance Unit 11 (MIUWS-11) was relieved at Cam Ranh Bay by Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 2 (IUW-2) on 9 December. Cam Ranh Bay received two additional LCPLs to increase the patrol boat strength to six. Construction was started on two quonset huts for a galley and mess hall and a potable water system was installed at the Cam Ranh Bay harbor defense base.

Nha Trang

At Nha Trang MIUWS-22 continued operations during the month. On 1 December heavy weather caused the LCPL pontoon pier to sink.

On 5 December, two men were detained for pilfering a barge at anchor in the harbor. The following evening a sailor on duty

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aboard the same barge prevented another attempt to pilfer goods. The sentry fired warning shots toward the persons attempting to board. While fleeing to the beach, one suspect was wounded and subsequently died.

During the month three junks and 40 persons were detained for not having proper identification papers or for acting in a suspicious manner.

Qui Nhon

IUW-3 personnel detained nine junks and 60 persons during December. Again the reasons for detention were improper identification or suspicious actions.

Vung Tau

MIUWS-13 personnel detained six persons for having improper identification during the month.

On the evening of 10 December, GRAYLING, an Army contract tugboat, collided with LCPL-35. The LCPL was on routine patrol in the harbor when the tug struck the boat's starboard quarter. There were no personnel casualties and only minor damage was inflicted on the boat.

Construction was started on four barracks and plans were drawn for the erection of a quonset hut for administrative and recreation spaces.

STABLE DOOR Statistics

Personnel (Officers/Enlisted):

Cam Ranh Bay	6/118	Vung Tau	6/136
Nha Trang	6/101	IUW Det	2/4
Qui Nhon	7/120	Total	27/469