

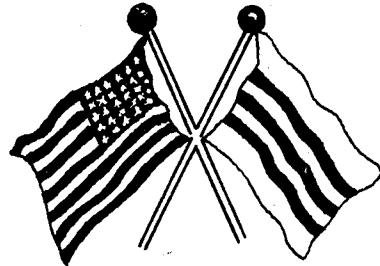
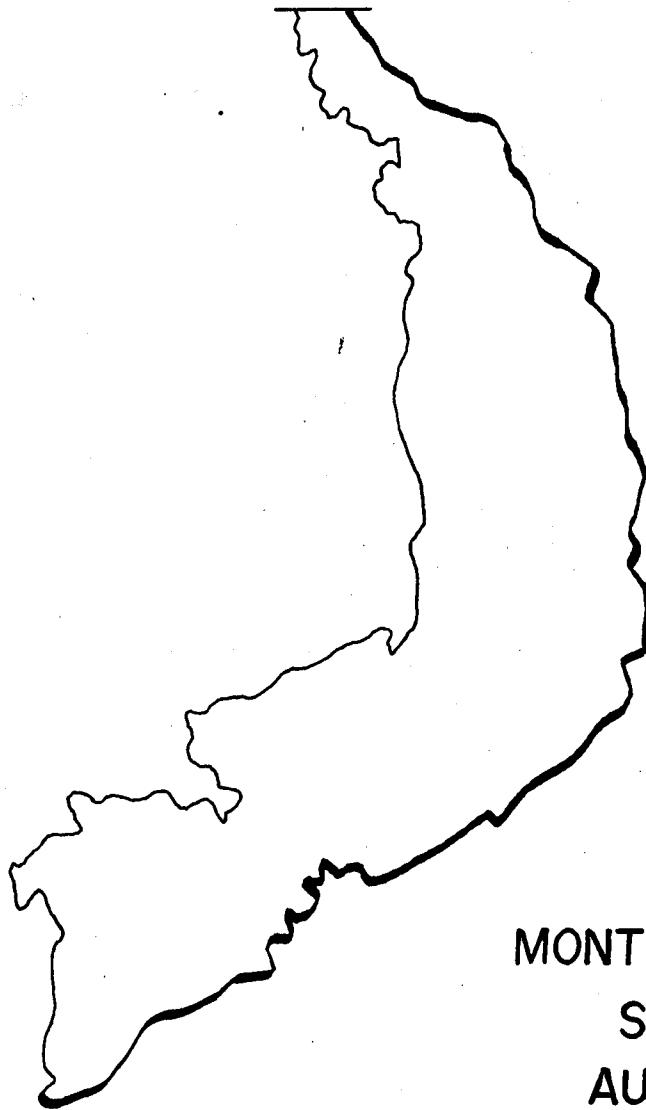
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U.S. NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM



MONTHLY HISTORICAL
SUPPLEMENT
AUGUST 1967

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE (TASK FORCE 115)

During August units of Operation MARKET TIME and Operation STABLE DOOR detected 168,000 craft along South Vietnam's coastline and harbors; almost one-half of this number were inspected or boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 130 craft and 1,098 suspects.

On 18 August Coastal Squadron THREE was commissioned in a ceremony held on board USS GALLUP (PG 85) at Cam Ranh Bay. Commander William P. HOLDEN, USN, Commander Coastal Squadron ONE, assumed the additional duty of COMCOSRON 3. The new squadron consists of GALLUP and USS ASHEVILLE (PG 84) and will include other MARKET TIME gunboats as they arrive in country.

On the evening of 23 August the radar surveillance site on Poulo Obi Island, 12 miles south of Ca Mau Point, became operational, providing the surveillance effort with an all-weather detection capability in the southern portions of the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones.

OPERATION MARKET TIME

In August Operation MARKET TIME units detected 114,000 junks and sampans; over 50 percent of these were inspected or boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 103 junks and 892 suspects. In addition, 676 steel-hulled craft were detected transiting MARKET TIME areas, 99 of which were boarded.

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The month's MARKET TIME activity also included 112 gunfire support missions, 35 hostile fire incidents, four evasion incidents, one medical evacuation and seven search and rescue missions, and support for four ground operations and two amphibious operations.

As a result of these operations, 30 enemy structures, five junks and 18 sampans were destroyed, and 28 structures and two sampans were damaged. In addition, 33 Viet Cong were killed (26 probables) and seven were wounded. Two Coast Guard officers and three Swift boat sailors were wounded during the month.

First Coastal Zone

MARKET TIME units in the First Coastal Zone detected over 49,000 junks and sampans during August. In addition, Swift boats and Coast Guard cutters provided exfiltration patrols and gunfire support for two ground operations and two amphibious operations. On 7 August, seven MARKET TIME craft came to the assistance of Coastal Group 16 when its base, 70 miles southeast of Danang, was assaulted by a battalion-size force of Viet Cong.

The attack on the base began at 0300. PCF 20 reached the area by 0315 and began providing 81-mm. fire at the request of the base's naval advisor; shortly thereafter PCF 75 and the Vietnamese Navy's PCE 10 arrived to lend additional fire support. By 0345, however, an advancing enemy contingent--approximately 300 in number--had overrun the base. At this time USS GALLUP (PG 85), USS CAMP (DER 251)

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and two other Swifts were in the area, furnishing fire support and exfiltration patrols, and helping to evacuate the wounded. Thirty-two miles to the northwest, USS WIDGEON (MSC 208) had assumed the duty of a relay station for communications between the battle scene and the First Naval Zone's headquarters unit at Danang. Since there was a possibility that the attack on the base might be combined with an infiltration attempt along the coastline, CTG 115.1, in Danang, ordered GALLUP to return to the southern portion of her patrol sector. Meanwhile, air and artillery strikes countered the enemy's movements within the Coastal Group base and two Vietnamese Army (ARVN) companies and one U. S. Army company were dispatched to the scene. By 0730 the Viet Cong were forced to retreat from the heavily-damaged base.

During the enemy attack Swift boats evacuated three Navy advisors and approximately 40 Vietnamese to USS CAMP for treatment and shelter; fifteen of the Vietnamese were subsequently transferred to the hospital at Quang Ngai by helicopter. CAMP remained on station until the 11th, providing illumination fire and gunfire support as the task of rebuilding the base was begun.

At 1400 on 9 August, 600 yards from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), PCF 51 was struck by small-arms fire from an enemy shore position. The Swift boat was soon joined by USCGC POINT ORIENT, and the PCF and the cutter each made a mortar-firing run past the

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enemy site, followed by machine-gun firing runs at close range. Air and artillery strikes were then requested, and a spotter subsequently confirmed that the enemy position had been destroyed and that at least one of the enemy had been killed. One member of the PCF's crew was wounded and was evacuated to Dong Ha for treatment.

On the 24th, one mile south of the DMZ, the commanding officer and the executive officer of USCGC POINT ELLIS were wounded by enemy fire while the cutter was firing a harassment-and-interdiction mission in support of an ARVN ground operation. The incident occurred about 1845 when two .30 caliber rounds struck the WPB's pilot house. The executive officer's wound produced paralysis and he was quickly transferred to PCF 80 and taken to USS REPOSE (AH 16) for surgery. The commanding officer's wound was less serious and he was treated on board as the cutter returned to continue and complete its mission.

On the evening of the 31st, four miles south of the Cua Viet, POINT ELLIS, POINT ORIENT and PCF 50 came to the assistance of an ARVN FIRST Division headquarters unit surrounded by a battalion-size enemy force. Firing in close support (200 yards) of the ARVN troops, the three craft helped keep the enemy pinned down until U. S. Air Force C-47s arrived to strike the enemy positions. The cutters were then released but the Swift boat remained on station, providing mortar fire until about 2315 when the engagement ended with the

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enemy in retreat.

Second Coastal Zone

In the Second Coastal Zone MARKET TIME units detected over 48,000 junks and sampans during August. The patrol craft also participated in four search and rescue missions and supported two ground operations.

Just before noon on 3 August, 43 miles south of Qui Nhon, PCF 60 rescued a junk containing seven South Vietnamese; the craft had become disabled in heavy seas. The Swift boat provided the occupants with first aid and food, then towed the junk a distance of four miles to the Coastal Group 24 base at Tuy Hoa. In a similar incident, on the 13th, PCF 57 towed a disabled junk with four persons on board to Qui Nhon.

Shortly after midnight on 27 August a Popular Forces unit on Hon Heo Peninsula was routed from its outpost by a Viet Cong attack and was forced to re-group in a nearby village. At 0315 PCF 91 intercepted a gunfire support request radioed to PCF 61 and, within 15 minutes, PCF 91 had reached the scene and was providing .50 caliber machine-gun fire along a stretch of the beach and up toward a hill beyond the village. The officer in charge of the Swift boat then received a report that the Viet Cong had taken refuge behind a ridge of the hill; accordingly, the OinC requested approaching PCF 61 to take the ridge under indirect mortar fire. PCF 61 commenced

firing at 0345 and struck the enemy positions with spotting assistance from an ambush party dispatched to the scene by Coastal Group 23. At this time PCF 88 joined the engagement and was directed to proceed to a position northwest of the peninsula and act as a blocking unit. By 0430 the enemy attack was completely disrupted and the Viet Cong dispersed, leaving behind five of their dead; several others, either killed or wounded, were carried away. One member of the Popular Forces was killed during the attack and another was wounded. There were no U. S. casualties.

At 1245 on 28 August PCF 82 ran aground on a sand and coral reef while investigating the source of tracer fire coming from the beach, 38 miles south of Nha Trang. Following a series of unsuccessful attempts by PCF 47 and an LCM from Cam Ranh Bay to free the Swift boat, a commercial tug, NEZ PERCE, pulled PCF 82 clear at 0335 on the 30th. The Swift boat was then towed to Cam Ranh Bay for repairs to its struts, shafts and screws.

Third Coastal Zone

MARKET TIME units patrolling the Third Coastal Zone during August detected over 8,000 junks and sampans. In addition, the patrol craft participated in one medical evacuation and two search and rescue missions.

On the afternoon of 14 August, PCF 68 came under heavy fire from Viet Cong emplacements while conducting a routine inspection

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of fishing junks. The incident occurred 700 yards offshore from the Thanh Phu Secret Zone, 36 miles southwest of Vung Tau. The Swift boat had just completed inspecting one group of junks and was proceeding to a second group when the enemy opened fire with at least one recoilless rifle and several machine guns and automatic rifles. Although none of the rounds struck the PCF, two rounds passed directly overhead and two others fell just short of the craft. After initially maneuvering away from the Viet Cong positions, the officer in charge of the PCF then ordered a reversal of course toward the ambush site in order to keep the fishing boats out of the line of fire. The Swift boat's machine-gun and mortar fire then suppressed the enemy's outburst and destroyed a trenchline. Subsequently, two Air Force F-100s and a Navy "Seawolf" helicopter team struck the Viet Cong site, destroying seven enemy structures and three bunkers. The extent of the enemy's casualties was undetermined.

On the evening of the 31st, 50 miles southwest of Vung Tau, USCGC POINT HUDSON conducted a gunfire mission against four Viet Cong junks in the Long Toan Secret Zone. The camouflaged 70-foot craft were initially detected by an airborne spotter who subsequently radioed corrections as the cutter's 81-mm. mortars struck the target area. The spotter reported later that the gunfire had damaged three of the junks extensively and that the fourth junk had sustained at least one direct hit.

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Fourth Coastal Zone

In August MARKET TIME units patrolling the west coast of the Ca Mau Peninsula and the waters surrounding Phu Quoc Island detected over 9,000 junks and sampans, and conducted a number of gunfire support missions. Most of the gunfire missions occurred either in the area located 30 miles north of Ca Mau Point or in the region that lies 15 miles northwest of Rach Gia.

On 3 August, USCGC POINT CLEAR fired 54 rounds of 81-mm. mortars against a Viet Cong supply site north of Ca Mau Point. The barrage detonated 12 secondary explosions and a large petroleum fire which burned for two hours and triggered 15 more explosions as fuel storage containers erupted. Later in the month, in the same area, four gunfire missions resulted in the destruction of two enemy structures and three sampans in addition to initiating secondary fires. On the 27th, five miles farther north, USCGC HALF MOON (WHEC 378) conducted a gunfire mission against a Viet Cong troop concentration. Subsequent intelligence reports indicated that the gunfire killed 11 Viet Cong, destroyed three enemy structures and extensively damaged 15 others, and destroyed or damaged a large quantity of equipment.

On 6 and 7 August there were four separate gunfire missions conducted against enemy positions northwest of Rach Gia. One of the missions--involving enemy craft along the shore--resulted in

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the destruction of three Viet Cong sampans. The other missions were directed against inland sites and resulted in the destruction of a trail and cave complex at a Viet Cong staging area.

MARKET TIME UNITS

During the month aircraft from four patrol squadrons provided air surveillance for Operation MARKET TIME. A detachment of Patrol Squadron 42 flew SP-2A Neptunes from Tan Son Nhut Air Base and a detachment of Patrol Squadron 1 flew Neptunes from Cam Ranh Bay. Meanwhile, a detachment of Patrol Squadron 5 flew P-3A Orion aircraft from the Naval Air Station, Sangley Point, and a Patrol Squadron 47 detachment flew Orions from U Tapao, Thailand.

In August the following U. S. SEVENTH Fleet ships operated as MARKET TIME units during the indicated inclusive dates:

DER 251	USS CAMP	1-23
DER 329	USS KRETCHMER	1-18
DER 322	USS NEWELL	23-31
DER 386	USS SAVAGE	18-31
LST 601	USS CLARKE COUNTY	1-15
LST 901	USS LITCHFIELD COUNTY	15-31
MSC 198	USS PEACOCK	1-19
MSC 208	USS WIDGEON	2-18, 19-31
MSO 488	USS CONQUEST	1-12
MSO 437	USS ENHANCE	18-31
MSO 439	USS EXCEL	1-31
MSO 447	USS GUIDE	1-31
MSO 490	USS LEADER	1-31
MSO 458	USS LUCID	12-31
PG 84	USS ASHEVILLE	1-18
PG 85	USS GALLUP	1-18
WHEC 381	USCGC BARATARIA	1-11