Last of Combat River Craft Turned Over
(See Pages 6+7)
North Vietnam
A Look At The Other Side

(Seventh in a series written by the Armed Forces Information Service and adapted from U.S. Department of State "Background Notes," Ed.)

THE PARIS MEETINGS

The only official U.S. contact with representatives of North Vietnam is at the Paris meetings. Hanoi and its southern agents (the Viet Cong) have from time to time demanded that the United States and its allies withdraw their forces from South Vietnam unconditionally, and that the United States "get rid of" the elected, legal government of South Vietnam. The Saigon government and the United States have consistently maintained mutual withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces and free elections—on which all parties, including Communist, can participate—under international supervision to determine South Vietnam's political future. To date, all U.S. efforts to get serious negotiations underway at Paris have failed.

ECONOMY

Although only about 15 percent of its land area is arable, 75 percent of North Vietnam's labor force is employed in agriculture; industry employs less than 10 percent. The gross national product is about $1.6 billion; GNP per capita is about $500.

INDUSTRY; RESOURCES

Industrial development proceeded at a fairly rapid pace until 1964, then it slowed down considerably, due largely to Hanoi's commitment of manpower and material to the war in the South. The U.S. bombing campaign also contributed substantially to the halt in economic development by forcing the regime to devote human and material resources to air defense and repair of bombing-damaged defense installations, communications facilities, and supply networks. Economic reconstruction has proceeded slowly since the bombing halt.

Food processing is North Vietnam's most important industry in terms of value of output. Rice, sugar, fish, and tea are the principal processed foods. Most North Vietnamese industry is in an embryonic stage of development. However, there is a large textile plant at Nam Dinh and a steel complex at Thai Nguyen, both of which were severely damaged during the war. North Vietnam's principal mineral resources, in order of importance, are coal, iron, apatite, and chrome. The major industrial crop is timber.

AGRICULTURE; TRADE

Agriculture is concentrated in the heavily populated Red River delta, where an elaborate system of dikes, dams, and reservoirs allows extensive irrigation during dry periods.

Much of the land is double-cropped. Rice is the principal crop, corn, sweet potatoes, and manioc are also grown. Despite government efforts to promote "technological revolution," North Vietnamese agriculture is largely unmechanized. Draft power is still provided by oxen and water buffaloes, and irrigation is accomplished with manual pumps.

North Vietnam has historically been a rice-deficit area. During the French colonial period the rice-rich Mekong delta in the South made up much of the food shortage in the North, but with the partition of Vietnam in 1954 rice inputs from this source stopped. The Hanoi government has made strong but thus for unsuccessful efforts to attain self-sufficiency in food grain production.

In recent years, because of inherent inefficiencies, bad weather, natural disasters, and increased attention on the part of the administration to the war in the South, rice shortages have reached critical proportions. At one point in 1968 the monthly "rice ration" of an average North Vietnamese was composed of only 30 percent rice, the remainder being wheat products, corn, and manioc. North Vietnam was forced to rely on massive imports of wheat and other food grains from the Soviet Union and China in order to maintain even bare subsistence levels.

Most of the farmers are organized into "voluntary" cooperatives whose affairs are managed by local party chapters. The Government claims that more than 90 percent of all farmers and 95 percent of the arable land belong to cooperatives. The planning function is monopolized by the central government.

North Vietnam has never enjoyed a foreign trade surplus. Despite efforts advanced through aid from Communist countries, with whom North Vietnam conducts nearly all its trade, the Soviets have been the major source of most imports. "Việt Nam" (Vietnam) goods are not available in the West, with the exception of a few items purchased at the annual trade fairs in Moscow. The North Vietnamese economy is basically subsistence in character, its most prominent exports being timber and wood products, fish, and industrial equipment to feed and raw textiles. The Government had not published trade statistics since 1963.
The U.S. Navy has forged ahead to a new milestone in the history of its involvement in the Vietnam war by taking a step backward. The landmark was passed when the U.S. Navy's River Assault Squadron (RAS) 15, the last American-manned riverine unit in Vietnam, left the Song Ong Doc naval base after being relieved by Vietnamese River Interdiction Division 43.

With this action in late November, the U.S. Navy stepped back and reverted to its former non-combatant role, except for its air assets and SEALS/UDT, of providing advice and logistics support for the Vietnamese Navy.

The last elements of RAS-15, eight assorted armored river assault craft, were stationed at the mouth of the Ong Doc River, 175 miles southwest of Saigon. The men of RAS-15 cast off their boats from Song Ong Doc for the last time at 4 a.m. on Nov. 26 and threaded their way through a maze of waterways to Dong Tam, more than 130 air miles to the northeast. They arrived there two days later to begin repainting and repairing their craft for turnover to the Vietnamese Navy. The last U.S. Navy personnel to be assigned to duty in Vietnam were advisors who arrived in August 1950. As the war expanded the U.S. Navy was asked to provide more concrete aid to help turn the tide against the communist invaders from the North.

The relatively large "monitors," inspired by the ironclad river craft of the Civil War, were thought of as the "battleships" of the riverine forces. Heavily-laden with armor and weaponry, they were used as inland naval gunfire support ships, easily able to spew out a virtual wall of hot lead at the enemy. Besides the monitors were other special-purpose boats, such as the "tango" (armored transport) boats with their mini-flightdecks for helicopters; there also were the "destroyers" of the riverine assault forces, the "alpha" (armored support patrol) boats to escort and protect the slower "tango" boats during troop transports. And there were floating, air-conditioned, command and communications centers called "charlie" boats.

In effect, the Brown Water Navy's fleet, cruising the rivers instead of the oceans, had nearly everything the massive blue water fleets had, only in miniature.

The last river assault craft to fight under the American Flag on the rivers of Vietnam were those eight river assault craft of RAS-15, based in the southwestern part of the delta at Song Ong Doc.

Commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Kennedy J. Rhea, RAS-15 conducted patrols, stood night-time waterborne guardpost duties and inserted troops for sweeps of the area. Lt. (j.g.) Joel D. Bean, a patrol officer for this last American river group, said "This is the end of a proud Navy unit, the likes of which will probably never be seen again."

Story and Photos by JO3 Don Gaylien
They call it the “mailboat,” but more than that it is a vital link connecting isolated Vietnamese civilian and military inhabitants of this remote advanced tactical support base with the outside world.

The river assault craft serves as a multi-purpose shuttle boat which has several names and means different things to the different people who depend on it.

The combination mailboat, liberty launch, water taxi, and “sodawagon” is provided by Vietnamese River Interdict Division 44, based at Tra Cu, to travel along 27 miles of the winding Vam Co Dong River between Tra Cu, 25 miles west of Saigon, and Ben Luc 20 miles southwest of Saigon.

The mailboat, as its name implies is primarily used to carry mail to and from American Naval advisors in Tra Cu. Chief Petty Officer Garland R. Sluder, of Candler, N.C. is often nominated to make the run.

To him it truly is a mailboat because he personally carries the outgoing mail from Tra Cu and brings the incoming mail back to anxious awaiting advisors.

The mailboat is something altogether different for the jubilant Vietnamese Navy officers and men on their way to enjoy a few days off. To them the boat is more of a “liberty launch” as they head for Ben Luc to visit family and friends or to go on into Saigon.

To thirsty Tra Cu sailors, eagerly awaiting a resupply of sparkling drinks, the mailboat is sometimes jokingly referred to as the “sodawagon.”

Cases of empty soda and beer bottles are stacked on the decks of the boat for the trip to Ben Luc city where sailors will claim their deposit, purchase more drinks, and then load the thirst-quenchers on the afternoon boat returning to Tra Cu.

One of the most important functions the mailboat serves is that of water taxi for families of Vietnamese Navy men at Tra Cu.

The routes between the Navy base and the nearest major markets frequently lead through enemy areas and the local inhabitants would rather not brave the long, lonely journey to buy necessities and to sell their own wares.

When they need to venture to the city on shopping trips the Vam Co Dong River is their lifeline. It is the job of Vietnamese River Interdict Division 44, made up of former U.S. Navy riverine combat craft recently turned over to them, to keep that river open and safe for commerce.

Chief Sluder said it all started as strictly a mail run. “But now look,” he said, indicating the crowd accompanying him on the journey, “there are all kinds of people aboard this patrol boat and they all have different but equally important reasons for needing the ride.” (NFV)
Crew—meet the turnover dead
Tarn in September and saw his hard working crew of 33 men. Lt Meiers arrived at Dong Jr., of Virginia Beach, Va., and commissioned for the first time at a Bremerton shipyard.

The YRBM-17 at the ceremony looked like and performed as the offical turnover of the YRBM-17 was completed in mid-November when its last two river divisions were transferred to the Vietnamese Navy at Moc Hoa.

RIVPATFLOT 5 was established at Binh Thuy September 1, 1968 to exercise administrative control over all of the 31-foot fiberglass-hulled river patrol boats serving in Vietnam. At one time the flotilla had under its command 27 river patrol divisions, each consisting of 10 boats and approximately 50 men.

The predecessor to the flotilla command, River Squadron 5, started as a subordinate command of the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force to direct the operations of river patrol boats which began patrolling inland waterways of the Republic of Vietnam in April 1966.

In January 1967, the command structure was changed, placing the river patrol units under the administrative control of the commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam. This was further changed in September 1968 when River Patrol Flotilla 5 was formed under the naval forces command to administer the river squadrons and divisions.

Red and gold will be the only combat colors flying over river warcraft from this day on.

A sight that has disappeared from Vietnam’s waterways: a PBR flying the stars and stripes.

On Tuesday, December 22, the U.S. Navy’s YRBM-17 was formally turned over to the Vietnamese Navy at a ceremony at Naval Support Activity Detachment Dong Tam.

The YRBM-17 had been in a state of almost total disrepair until a few months ago when it was decided that the floating barracks should become part of the Vietnamese assets. A crew of 33 men and four officers assigned the task of restoring the “17” to like-new shape.

Due to a mine explosion, the ship was in poor shape, there were virtually no systems aboard in operational order. No living support facilities such as a galley, bedding, and electricity were to be had at ready use. The YRBM-17 at the ceremony looked like and performed as though it had just been commissioned for the first time at a Bremerton shipyard.

Credit for the quick and thorough reconditioning goes to Lieutenant George C. Meiers, Jr., of Virginia Beach, Va., and his hard working crew of 33 men. Lt Meiers arrived at Dong Tam in September and saw his crew meet the turnover dead line on December 22nd.

The YRBM-17 is now the HQ 9610, a new and different type of support vessel added to the Vietnamese Navy, now the world’s seventh largest fighting fleet.

The senior officer present at the turn over ceremony was Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus, Commander Naval Support Activity Saigon. In a brief speech he praised the American repair team for its quick and complete overhaul of the YRBM-17 and expressed hope that the Vietnamese Navy will utilize the unit to its fullest capabilities.

Lt Meiers also voiced his appreciation to the crew for its performance and thanked them for making his brief tenure as officer in charge a memorable one before his retirement after 26 years of naval service.

The new OIC, Lieutenant Tranh Minh Tue, made a short statement to the assembled Vietnamese crewmen present and said the efforts of the 10 remaining U.S. Naval Advisors will be greatly appreciated.

The U.S. and Vietnamese crewmen, along with the guests enjoyed a steak fry and lobster dinner on the HQ 9610’s fantail marking an end of hard work and the beginning of useful service of one of the world’s largest Christmas presents.

The new officer in charge of the now HQ 9610, Lt Tranh Minh Tue signs the papers making the turnover of YRBM17 complete. Lt Meiers looks on. (Photo by Cal Williams)
The U.S. Navy turned over to the Vietnamese Navy the last of its small coastal and river combat craft today. This turnover completes a 23-month program designed to withdraw American sailors from coastal and river combat operations.

In a simple ceremony aboard a single river patrol boat moored at the Vietnamese Navy headquarters pier Vice Admiral Jerome H. King Jr. and Rear Admiral Tran Van Chon exchanged signatures on documents officially transferring the last 124 American small combat craft to the Vietnamese Navy.

Adm. King is the commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam and Adm. Chon is the chief of naval operations for Vietnam.

As the national anthems of both nations rang out over the Saigon River, the American flag was lowered and replaced by the Vietnamese colors on the lone craft which represented all those included in the final turnover.

Since November 1968, the U.S. Navy has been training Vietnamese sailors to replace Americans and then gradually turning over the craft to them under its ACTOV program.

Today's ceremony marked the end of small combat craft transfers and brought to 649 the number of boats changing hands under the program.

This number includes 293 river patrol boats, 223 river assault craft, 107 Swift boats and 26 Coast Guard patrol boats. They are valued at just over $90 million.

The Republic of Vietnam fleet now stands at nearly 1,700 coastal, river and ocean craft, and has a personnel strength of nearly 40,000 men.

With the combat craft turnover came the official end of America's coastal patrol force and also its unique Brown Water Navy.

The United States' coastal patrol effort here began October 30, 1965 when two 50-foot Swift boats began anti-infiltration operations along the Gulf of Thailand coast of southwestern Vietnam.

These fast, shallow-draft, aluminum-hulled craft continued to arrive in Vietnam and by mid-1968 were patrolling most of the Republic's 1,100-mile coastline.

The Brown Water Navy was started in September 1966, when River Assault Flotilla 1 was formed to interdict communist supply lines and assaulted enemy positions along rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta. Its name came from the caramel-colored waterways the boats patrolled.

This was the first river combat unit commissioned by the U.S. Navy specifically to fight on inland waterways since river gunboats of both the North and the South cruised the Mississippi during the Civil War.

River Assault Squadron 15 was the last unit of the Brown Water Navy to patrol in Vietnam under the Stars and Stripes. Its last eight river assault craft left the Song Ong Doc area November 26 for a meandering delta transit to Dong Tam to prepare for turning over.

At the height of Brown Water Navy operations American sailors covered the entire delta region—from the Rung Sat Special Zone on the outskirts of Saigon to the tip of the Republic, and from the South China Sea coast to the Cambodian border.

Vietnamese Navymen in taking over the American craft have also gradually taken over the same general operating areas to continue interdiction patrols and attacks on communist strongholds.

Most Americans who formerly manned these craft have been transferred to other commands in Vietnam or been reassigned outside Vietnam under normal rotation procedures. Some, however, will be remaining with the river units as advisors to the Vietnamese units which have replaced them.

From its peak strength of some 36,000 men in 1968, the U.S. Navy has reduced its forces in Vietnam to a current level of less than 17,000.

The only combat units of the U.S. Navy remaining in Vietnam are Light Helicopter Attack Squadron 3, which flies the UH-1 gunship, and Light Attack Squadron 4, with its OV-10 Bronco counterinsurgency fixed-wing aircraft. These two squadrons were commissioned specifically to support the Brown Water Navy and continue to provide air support to allied forces in the Mekong Delta.

Other American naval personnel still in Vietnam are assigned to duties concerned mainly with turning over remaining assets and responsibilities to the Vietnamese Navy. These include mostly logistical, maintenance and staff personnel.
It's All Turned Over To The

The U.S. Navy turned over to the Vietnamese Navy today. This turnover included the withdrawal of American sailors from coastal and river patrol duties in Vietnam. In a simple ceremony aboard a single river combat craft, Vice Admiral Jerome H. King exchanged signatures on documents officially transferring the craft and its personnel to the Vietnamese Navy.

Adm. King is the commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam, and he expressed his satisfaction with the transfer. "This ceremony marks the end of a chapter in the history of the U.S. Navy in Vietnam," he said.

"Since November 1968, the U.S. Navy has been working with the Republic of Vietnam to develop its own naval forces. Today's ceremony is a clear indication of the success of that effort. The Vietnamese Navy now has a personnel strength of nearly 3,000, and it is ready to take over the responsibilities we have been carrying out in the past.

Today's ceremony marked the end of the U.S. Navy's river patrol efforts in Vietnam. With the combat craft turnover came the retirement of the U.S. Navy's Brown Water Navy, which had been the backbone of the U.S. Navy's coastal and river patrol efforts in Vietnam.

The Brown Water Navy was started in 1964 when the U.S. Navy formed Flotilla 1 to interdict communist supply and infiltration routes along the Mekong Delta and other waterways in Vietnam. This was the first river combat unit to fight on inland waterways since river gunboat operations in the Civil War.

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As the national anthems of both nations were played, the U.S. and Vietnamese flags were lowered and replaced by the flag of the Republic of Vietnam. This ceremony marked the end of a chapter in the history of the U.S. Navy in Vietnam.

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VNN Now

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Air Carriers Schedule Leave Flights

Major scheduled and charter airlines have enthusiastically responded to the liberalized leave policy issued by the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. The traveling Navyman can fly either charter or regularly scheduled airlines and can choose between the sometimes risky military standby, the more definite confirmed roundtrip reservation, or the low-cost charter methods of buying his ticket.

The exact cost of his ticket will depend upon where he wants to go and how sure he wants to be of getting there in a reasonable period of time.

Presently, two charter systems are participating. United Service Women’s Club and Trans International Airways have combined to offer round trips to Oakland, Chicago, and New York at $369, $442, and $479 respectively. Pan American is acting as their Saigon representative.

Flights are presently scheduled for January 6, 13, 19, 26, and February 1, but more may be added. Tickets are available at the Pan Am military ticket office on a cash basis, but checks and national credit cards may be used in some cases. Information may be obtained by calling 922-3283.

The USO-World Airways system is offering round trip charter flights to Oakland for $350. Tickets and information are available from USO offices in Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay, Can Tho, and Saigon. The USO-World service is scheduling flights for January 3, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, 23, 25, 29, 31, and February 5, 7, 11, 13, 18, 20, 24, and 26.

Ticket sales are on a cash basis with $100 required for a reservation. The remainder will be paid prior to flight. Representives for the carriers have advised that flights are filling up rapidly.

A third way to travel is on scheduled service offered by Pan Am and Northwest Orient-Air Vietnam. Pan Am has a scheduled flight leaving daily at 12:50 p.m. with military standby available. Details of the combined Northwest Orient-Air Vietnam service are incomplete, pending Civil Aeronautics Board approval, but may involve flying Air Vietnam from a major airport in-country and connecting with scheduled Northwest Orient flights in either Hong Kong, Taipei, Manila or Tokyo. Sample round trip fares are expected to be: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle or Portland $484; Washington, $634; Chicago, $597; and $643 for New York. The fares guarantee confirmed reservations both ways. Information may be obtained by calling 924-4258.

Whichever transportation the Navyman chooses, he must have in his possession a confirmed return ticket before he will be permitted to leave country. Civilian clothing is authorized on charter flights, but military uniform is necessary for scheduled flights.

Military Assistance Command Vietnam also advises that travelers must be in possession of ID card, ID tags, immunization record and DD form 1560 with combat leave checked. Also, leave orders must be kept in the man’s possession at all times.

FSA Entitlement Expanded

President Nixon has signed three bills which create entitlement to Family Separation Allowance (FSA) in three separate situations where it was not previously payable. This action ends extensive effort to correct known inequities in the law and demonstrates congressional concern for members of the uniformed services. This legislation which was vigorously supported by the Department of Defense is another significant step toward improvement in the conditions in the service. The three new situations where FSA will now be payable are:

FSA will be paid to a member even though the member does not maintain a residence or household for his dependents subject to his management or control, if otherwise qualified.

FSA will be paid to a member who resides in government quarters, if otherwise qualified.

FSA will be paid on behalf of all members who are in a missing in action/prisoner of war status.

Implementing directives will be separately announced in the near future.

7th Fleet Music Makers Tour MR 1

Young and old alike gather around the United States Navy’s Seventh Fleet Band when it played recently for patrons at the Happy Haven Leprosarium near Da Nang. The band, presently making appearances in Military Region I, was the first professional entertainment group ever to perform at the United World Mission sponsored leprosarium. (Photo by PHI R. J. Sylvester)
Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus reads his orders directing him to take command of the Naval Support Activity, Saigon.

"I relieve you, Sir!" With this tradition-steeped phrase RADM McManus assumes command of NAVSUPPACT from Rear Admiral Robert E. Adamson, Jr. as Vice Admiral Jerome H. King, Jr., commander of naval forces in Vietnam, witnesses the occasion.

RADMs McManus and Adamson depart the podium following the change of command ceremonies.

SM2 Allan D. Brandsma of Gillette, Wyo. hands RADM Adamson his personal flag.

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Putting In Your Papers

The phrase “putting in your papers” should be a familiar one to all military men and women wearing ribbons or major hats on their sleeves. The “paper” is an application form (NAPERS 630) and the whole process to which the phrase refers is the application for transfer to the Fleet Reserve.

Although Fleet Reserve transfers are everywhere occurring, the processing of the forms and the policies concerning their approval or disapproval, and finally, the establishment of a transfer date, may not be so familiar to all hands. Here’s what happens to a Fleet Reserve Transfer Application when it reaches the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BuPers).

It is first sent to the Favorable Separation Board (RE22). A copy of the NAPERS 630 form is also routed to the applicant’s rating control officer and detailer. The detailer will provide information to the Favorable Separation Section about the applicant’s relief as well as any other comments.

The application is then referred to BuPers’ Enlisted Records and Services Division (E3) which is responsible for computing service for transfer to the Fleet Reserve, setting the transfer date, and issuing the authorization for transfer. Applications requiring special processing or that are from personnel who may be ineligible for transfer on the date they requested are processed in the Favorable Separation Section.

Some applications are returned to commands because errors were made or the individual submitted it too late for the date he wanted or perhaps he had insufficient obligated service. It is well to remember that applications should not be submitted more than 12 months prior to the requested Fleet Reserve date.

The best time to submit for transfer is during the first half of the year of the date you want.

To avoid hardships and misunderstandings, applications should be submitted with constructive time. Then the Fleet Reserve date may be authorized up to six months after TCD. In no case, however, will a member’s tour completion date be adjusted for a period longer than six months.

It may seem that Fleet Reserve transfers come about only after a series of obstacles have been hurdled and specific conditions have been met. But these requirements are necessary to maintain a degree of stability within the enlisted distribution system.

The Chief of Naval Personnel has expressed a desire to give all career Navymen the opportunity to transfer to the Fleet Reserve “when eligible and as requested.” You can be assured that everyone in the Bureau is working toward this end. (NAVNEWS)

Operation Helping Hand

Because of the wide appeal of Operation Helping Hand, it is attractive to many people of all walks of life. Some of America’s most distinguished citizens have agreed to sponsor the program. Included among these sponsors are The Reverend William F. “Billy” Graham, The Honorable Henry Cabot Lodge and Mr. Glenn Ford. Another sponsor, Mr. Paul H. Nitze, said: “I consider Operation Helping Hand to be a fine organization— not only in the immediate assistance it gives to members of the Vietnamese Navy and their families - - but in the excellent start toward helping their families individually and the productive members of the postwar Vietnamese society.”

Also sponsoring Operation Helping Hand are Dr. Robert E. Switzer, Mr. States M. Mee, Admiral A. Leigh H. Buckley, (USN Ret.), Professor Samuel Eliot Morrison, Mr. Thomas S. Gates, Jr. and Dr. Alah C. Enthoven.

I am impressed by the objective of the Foundation and for that reason I am pleased to be a sponsor,” says Congressman William S. Maillard. A fellow Congressmen, Mr. Crosmer, says: “I join in the strong endorsement of the Foundation’s purposes. It is my intention to do what I can in a personal capacity to assist the Hungarian, Yugoslav, and other refugees here and to be of more assistance than just as a sponsor.”

Private donations, which are tax deductible, may be sent to the Helping Hand Foundation, 414 Jackson Square, San Francisco, California 94111.

Catholic novice sisters of the Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) convent in Da Nang help YNI Jose Quegra of Phu, Geam, unload 26 mattresses and spring sets donated by the U.S. Naval Support Facility.

Gov’t Seeks Vets For Customs Work

If you enjoy long plane flights, meeting new people and visiting foreign countries, then consider a career in the Uniformed Services. U.S. Government as a Security Officer in the Customs Service.

As an armed Security Officer, you will be on guard to detect and prevent criminal acts aboard U.S. flag air carriers. You will experience considerable air travel, possess paralyzing ability in case you protect passengers, crew and members of aircraft, irregular, unscheduled tours and possible risk will test your mettle.

You will approach extended periods of flight duty and ground assignments during which you will have the opportunity to broaden your knowledge of many aspects and duties in such activities as predeparture inspections of passengers, security work in connection with arriving international passengers, and the prevention of smuggling and other crimes. You may become a full member of the customs team.

Security Officers are hired at grades GS-5, GS-6, and GS-7, depending on qualifications. If you are assigned to the New York and Newark metropolitan area, you may be assigned at the GS-7 step, subject to the effect of the new policy on the effect of the nature of air security officers, long flight provisions and opportunity for paid overtime.

In addition to overtime, accommodations in foreign countries will be available in many cases, and you may be eligible for extended periods of flight duty and ground assignments during which you will have the opportunity to broaden your knowledge of many aspects and duties in such activities as predeparture inspections of passengers, security work in connection with arriving international passengers, and the prevention of smuggling and other crimes. You may become a full member of the customs team.

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GUAM GIVES GIFTS TO MY THO ORPHANS

An American Navyman's concern for the orphans of South Vietnam resulted in a gift of 2,000 pounds of usable clothing, food, and medicine from his home town in Guam for an orphanage at My Tho, a delta city about 30 miles south of Saigon.

H.M. 3 Henry Guerrero of Talofofo, Guam visits the orphanages of My Tho on Medical Civic Action Project teams. One orphanage, a Protestant sponsored activity, has a number of children living in foster homes under their program. A Catholic orphanage has all ages of children, from newborn to school age. They also care for homeless aged and provide jobs for deaf-mute women there. These women sew delicately embroidered items for sale on order. Proceeds go toward paying their own expenses at the home.

It was on a MEDCAP visit that Guerrero became aware of a great need for this particular orphanage for more supplies and help in caring for the large number of its helpless, particularly the infants.

He wrote a letter home to the teen club of the Catholic church in Talofofo, Guam. They gave it to Father Timothy, priest of St. Michael's Church, who read it during a service.

The nursery was full of infants who had been left at the gate by parents unknown. Their conditions ranged from alert and healthy to barely alive. Those that survive will be part of a large family, they will grow up going to the orphanage's school across the street and become useful citizens.

Said Guerrero, "Seeing those babies really made me want to do something to help. So I wrote home to St. Michael's church and the entire town helped out. We have a box of hand candy we're saving for a little Christmas party which they otherwise wouldn't have."

Officers and men of Dong Tam contribute their time in helping the Sisters. Any aid is welcome considering the meager start the orphanage and donations.

Said Guerrero, "We're forced to give up the required ID photos the Sisters keep on file because we turned out the cost of processing the film on our own would be more than their present method of having a local photographer do all the work. But at least it shows the men are interested in helping the Sisters."

The men who visited the orphanage and delivered the donations were: SH1 Jeff Morrison, Amarillo, Tex.; SH2 Rick Gargano, Coning, N.Y.; MK3 Ken Sprouse, Lynchburg, Va.; EM3 William Yeaman, Chotaw, Okla.; SF2 James Hewitt, Cleveland, Tenn.; SF2 Denny Perz, Hampton, Ind.; BT1 James Johnson, Plymouth, Mich., and H.M. 3 Henry D. Guerrero.

Boys and girls of the My Tho Catholic orphanage gather around one of the men of NSAD Dong Tam. Any man carrying a camera like Seaman Denny Perz of Hammond, Ind., was the center of attraction. (Photo by Cal Williams)

Blue Eagles Decorated After Five Years Service In Vietnam

By PO 1/C BOB WILLIAMS

The U.S. Navy's Western Pacific Detachment of Geographical Development Squadron 8 has been decorated standing by the Republic of Vietnam for its nearly five years of service in Vietnam as a flying radio and television network.

The Chuong My Medal First Class, of the Republic of Vietnam award given to foreign military units, was presented to Lt. Cmdr. John W. Denzler, office-in-charge of the detachment, who accepted it on behalf of the men in the unit.

Presented at the award at the Ministry of Information in Saigon, on behalf of the President of the Republic, was Ngo Kao Thib, the minister of information.

A citation accompanying the medal praised the detachment for having "performed an outstanding service for the Vietnamese people and giving them confidence in their government, in the struggle against communist aggression..."

From Feb. 7, 1966 to Sept. 30, 1970, the "Blue Eagles" (nickename of the detachment, the planes and the crewmen) broadcast on sight television and radio in areas of Vietnam that ground stations could not reach.

The aircraft, with its special electronic equipment, served as airborne transmitters to relay Republic of Vietnam Government broadcasts throughout the country. They also brought American radio and TV entertainment to U.S. military men stationed in Vietnam.

After ground stations were completed last September, the detachment began redploying to its home base, the Pensacola River Naval Air Station in Maryland.

Through their achievements, the citation said, the detachment made a great contribution to the anti-communist struggle and reconstruction program of the people of the Republic of Vietnam.

In January 1969, the Blue Eagles received the Vietnamese Government's Psychological Warfare Award First Class.

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