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To: Chief Navy Section, MAA, Vietnam

Subj: After Action Report on Completion of Tour

Ref: (a) CHEM 67MMAA 95V 5216.7

1. As directed by reference (a) the following comments and recommendations are submitted:

a. Situation at time of arrival. Upon arrival in Vietnam on 31 July 1962 I was assigned as shiprider for LSILs 327, 328, 329, 330 and in December 1962 LSIL 331. During January 1963 when LT PALMER was reassigned as PGM Advisor, I was temporarily assigned LSIL 225 and 226. LT PALMER resumed LSIL shiprider duties in February 1963. In May I was relieved as LSIL shiprider by LT RICHTER and as Sea Force Maintenance Advisor by LT ELLIS. The remainder of the tour was spent as Administrative Assistant to the Sea Forces Advisor.

The LSILs are all of World War II vintage; they were originally given to the French during the Indo-China War and in 1954-55 were turned over to the Vietnamese. No new ones have been delivered nor are any programmed.

In general, LSILs were deployed on either the Danang or Phu Quoc patrols with the LSILs, PCs, NSCs, AIL and later on the PCEs. In addition, there was an occasional request from JGS for the assignment of a ship (LSIL, LSSL) to a Corps Commander for gunfire or logistical support of operations along the coast or rivers. This assignment however, was only temporary and never lasted more than a week.

The operational readiness varied from ship to ship. Four of the five LSILs were scheduled to complete overhaul and four weeks of refresher training between July 1962-1963. Some of the equipment such as installed and portable fire pumps, refrigerators, evaporators and fathometers were inoperative and had evidently not been operated in several years. There were instances of missed commitments or failures to carry out assigned missions, due to engineering casualties. In some cases the ship would remain on patrol with less than half an engineering plant. On the other hand, the gunnery and communications equipment on the LSILs varied from excellent to good.

The commanding officers had little knowledge of the workings of the VN Supply Center. Many requisitions were being submitted by the ships but rarely was any follow-up action being initiated if the requested item was not in stock. As a result, the U.S. advisors were often asked by their counterparts to intercede on their behalf and procure the part.
The personal situation on the LSDs was critical in the following technical rates: RD(E), PN, EN and ED. There were no RD(E) assigned and only two of the ships had electrician mates. In addition the ships were operating with only three officers which was not even enough to stand 3-section OOB watches.

In order to avoid the implication of an unsatisfactory situation at the beginning of my tour, it must be restated that the ships were satisfactorily operating and, in general, were carrying out their assigned missions but were plagued by engineering casualties as a result of the lack of trained personnel and insufficient preventative maintenance procedures and on board repair capabilities.

b. Significant accomplishments

(1) Deployment. The LSDs are being more fully deployed in order to meet increased commitments. In addition to the two primary patrol areas of Danang and Phu Quoc, the ships are deployed on the new patrol areas between Vung Tau, Puolo Cercio der Mer and Con Son, the Strategic Hamlet Defense Patrol at Nam Can and the Hobong River Patrol along the Cambodian Border. During periods when the ships are not being deployed on operational missions, scheduled repairs and upkeep, LSD is being scheduled.

During the period December 1962 through April 1963 an LSD was assigned to the operational control of the 22nd Mobile RAG which was temporarily based at Nam Can. This assignment was similar in concept to the Dismantle units used by the French during the Indo-China War. The LSD provided the RAG with gunfire support, fuel, ammunition, fresh water, some technical assistance, and the strategic hamlets along the Cua Long and Be De rivers with timely and effective gunfire support during Viet Cong Attacks. The assignment of the LSD to the RAG has provided the ship with actual combat experience, enabling the crew to physically participate in the war. (The Commanding Officer of the LSD 330 was recently awarded a medal for his participation on the Be De and Cua Long rivers during the Camau Operations). At present the LSD and LSSL are the only Sea Force ships that are directly inflicting casualties against the Viet Cong.

(2) SPF. The RAG publication concerning the preventative maintenance and operation of diesel engines has been translated into Vietnamese and promulgated to the ships. The Sea Force Training Officer has prepared a Gunfire Support Manual which is presently being reviewed by a Sea Force Advisor. Sea Force directives on preventative maintenance, submission of repair requests for overhaul and restricted availability are being reviewed by the Sea Force Commander with the assistance of the Maintenance Advisor.

(3) Material Readiness. Some improvement has been made in this area. On only two occasions during the last seven months were the LSDs
unable to meet a commitment or carry out an assigned mission. The two LSILs that participated in the camar operation remained operational throughout.

LSILs 327, 328, 329 and 331 have all satisfactorily completed a three month overhaul during the last year. As a result much equipment as fire pumps, refrigerators, evaporators and fathometers are now operating for the first time in several years.

(4) **Spare parts.** Although the on-board percentage of spare parts of the Sea Force ships is below Navy standards, steps have been taken in the direction towards the U.S. Navy Optar System. For example, a quarterly allowance for consumable supplies has now been established for the ships. LSILs 323 and 324 have completed SOAP; this has greatly increased the ship's percentage of on-board spare parts and removed many not supportable and beyond repair items. With the assistance of the U.S. Supply advisors, three LSIL commanding officers were thoroughly briefed on the operation of ANM and given a tour of some of the storage rooms. As a result of this indoctrination the commanding officers are now taking follow-up action when requested items are not immediately available.

(5) **Training.** During the past year the LSILs have received a significant increase in training. From July through December 1962 Mobile Training Team 7 provided daily on-the-job training in port and on occasion underway. LSIL 327, 329 and 331 satisfactorily completed four weeks of refresher training, and, in spite of the increase of patrols during 1963 the ships are being scheduled for periods of ES/ES. The end result has been a substantial improvement in the operational readiness of the ships and their ability to carry out their missions.

(6) **Personnel.** The Naval Academy, the in-country and off-shore schools have done much to alleviate the critical personnel shortage, particularly in the technical rates of USN(T), RM, RT and RR. All the LSILs now have a RD(EY) and an E5; and there are five officers assigned to each ship which enables the commanding officer to assign officers to engineering, gunnery and deck departments. The increase of personnel has resulted in more efficient battle readiness, underway watches and an improvement in the preservation of the ship.

c. **Comments and recommendations**

(1) **Deployment.** With the delivery of the R6S and the improved operational readiness of the other patrol ships, the LSILs and LS5L are being deployed more on the rivers and less on the two primary patrol areas of Danang and Phu Quoc. In comparison to the other type ships used on the two latter patrols, R, R6S and NSC, the LSIL and LS5L are slower, and with the exception of the R6S are repatriated ships.
from the French and as such have seen greater active service than the other ships. With their shallow draft, relatively heavy armament and their amphibious capabilities (LSSL does not have a bow door) the LSSLs and LSSLs are well suited for deployment in the rivers and the shallow deltas as proven by their performance on the rivers during the last eight months. In addition, they have the logistical capability to transport fuel, ammunition, troops, subs, spare parts, food and a limited amount of fresh water.

Recommendation. It is recommended that the LSSLs and LSSL be continue to be used in support of ROK operations and river patrols. After the remaining two PCs arrive in-country in 1964 it is recommended that an LISL or LSSL be deployed, in addition to the existing river patrols, on the Hanong, Bassac and Saigon Rivers and adjacent coastal areas to support ROK, junk and ARVN units.

(2) Maintenance. Although there has been some improvement in the preventative maintenance, on-board repair of casualties and NSY repair capabilities maintenance is and will remain for some time to be the big problem of the Sea Force Ships. There are many factors which contribute to the problem: the shipyard's personnel shortage, the increase in the number of ships, nice-to-have work requests, inadequate preventative maintenance procedures, inability of the ship to perform repairs, the difficulty of maintaining a high percentage of spare parts on the older ships, and finally the lack of coordination between the ships, NSY ANM and the staff. In May 1963 I was assigned the collateral duty of Maintenance Advisor at which time initial efforts were made to assist the Sea Force Maintenance Advisor in screening job orders and in reviewing existing Sea Force directives on overhauls and repairs. In June 1963 an engineering graduate of the Merchant Marine Academy assumed the duties of Maintenance Advisor. In order to assist in coordinating Sea Force spare parts requirements with NSY, the Sea Force Commander has recently added the billet of Sea Force Supply Officer to his staff.

Recommendation. That a ship's driver be permanently assigned to the billet of Sea Force Maintenance Advisor and another to that of Sea Force Supply Advisor. It is also recommended that this advisory proposal be augmented by a Mobile Training Team consisting of an engineman, electrician, electronic technician, gunner's mate and shipfighter.

The 1964 NSY Training program has requested the services of an ASW Mobile Training Team. Considering the excellent results of the two 1963 NSY Exercises and the present NSY counter-insurgency requirements, the training funds might be more fully utilized in support of a Maintenance Mobile Training Team.
The VN has an excellent band which is capable of playing popular as well as military music. The band plays every Sunday morning at colors, at all VN official activities including parties and several members even perform at the local night clubs.

Recommendation. It is recommended that the VN band perform an occasional Sunday afternoon or evening "concert" for the public. The quay area in front of pier Charlie would be a suitable location.

d. Current situation. Presently Sea Force has more than 70% of its ships operational and 50% deployed on missions; the HQL performance compares favorably with the above percentages. In addition to patrols at Phu Quoc and Panang, the ISIL and LSIL are deployed on three other patrols: the Vung Tau, Phu Loi Island & Sea and Con Son Patrol which was initiated in June 1963 to intercept intra-coastal Viet Cong waterborne movements; the Strategic Hamlet Defense Patrol along the Ho Bo and Cua Long Rivers and the Makong River Patrol in the vicinity of the Cambodian border which was established in June 1963 to intercept contraband crossing the Cambodian border. These patrols have a ship assigned at all times; they are providing the ISILs and LSILs with combat experience in return for which the ships have given both combat and logistical support for RNs, junk and AVN units as well as strategic hamlets. With the increase of the ships experience and subsequent effectiveness in river operations, greater demands will be placed upon the Navy to participate and to initiate counter-insurgency operations.

Although the Sea Force operational readiness has significantly improved over the last twelve months, the maintenance problem persists. There has been an increase in the number of Sea Force ships without a commensurate expansion in repair capabilities. Furthermore the repatriated ships are becoming older and requiring increased technical care to keep them operating efficiently. With the assignment of a full-time Sea Force Maintenance and Supply Advisor, these problems will receive the proper attention.

In addition, the ISILs are competently fulfilling their assigned missions with few exceptions and acting aggressively under actual combat conditions.

Very respectfully,

W. E. E. HURFORTH

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