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To: Chief Navy Section, MAAG, Vietnam

Subj: After action report on completion of tour (U)

Ref: (a) NAVSECINST 5216.7

1. (C) The following report is submitted in accordance with reference (a):

a. Situation at time of arrival. Shortly after arrival in Vietnam, I relieved LT A. L. Abeyta, USN, as advisor to the following VNN ships: LSSL's 225, and 226, LSSL 331, YCG 470, and AKL 451. All of the ships were World War II vintage which had been given to the French during their war in Indo-China and the French had subsequently turned them over to the Vietnamese Navy in 1954.

The landing ships were being employed on patrol in the two primary patrol areas, Phu Quoc and Da Nang. The auxiliaries were employed in resupply missions to Con Son Island and in the Gulf of Siam.

The material and training readiness of the ships varied from ship to ship. In some instances the ships were unable to meet assigned patrol schedules and in other instances ships on patrol had to return to Saigon with casualties which precluded them from continuing on assigned missions.

The effectiveness of those ships that remained on patrol was hampered by casualties and the inability of the ships to effect their own repairs. As a result, the ships were often returning to Saigon on half engineering plant, no radar, and similar casualties.

Because Commanding Officers had little faith in the VN Supply System, US Advisors were heavily relied upon to procure both spare parts and consumables from the NSC. No valid information was available as to the level of on-board spare parts as this aspect of supply had been criminally neglected from the time the ships were given to the French.

The personnel situation on board the ships was critical in the technical fields of RD, RM, ET, and EN. In addition, personnel turnover was such that no continuity was possible and building pride and responsibility among the crew was nearly impossible.

The only field which might be considered as excellent were the gunnery departments.

Although I had been working with the PGM program, as a collateral duty, since 1 November, I did not officially become advisor to the 5 PGM's (Patrol Motor Gunboats) until 24 December. At this time the ships originally assigned to my cognizance were reassigned among the Sea Force
Advisors. The PGM's were newly constructed boats when they arrived in Vietnam on 26 December. In November when I first started working with the PGM program, no concept of employment had been drafted, there was no proposed repair or upkeep doctrine, the crews had received no indoctrination, and the capabilities of the PGM were not completely understood by either the MAAG or the VNN. I was ordered TAD to the Philippines to study the PGM's of the (Philippine) Navy, their utilization and any difficulties which has been incurred in their operation. On completion of the TAD a report was submitted to Chief Navy Section with comments and recommendations, several of which have been implemented at the time of this writing. The PGM MTT arrived 28 January 1963 and by this time the PGM's had crews assigned, all equipment installed and connected, spare parts stowed with a stock control card system in operation and a supply petty officer on each boat who had been trained by the NSC advisors. A basic plan for employment, repair and command responsibility had been drafted by the Sea Force Commander. In general the PGM's were ready for underway training which commenced in the Saigon River almost immediately after the arrival of the MTT.

On 18 February the PGM's became the advisory responsibility of MTT 2-63, and I was reassigned as advisor to the LSSL's 225, 226 and PCE's 08 and 09. The latter two ships were delivered to the VNN under the MAP, September 1962 and January 1963 respectively. The PCE's were in generally excellent material condition and the training level was high with the exception of ASW. The PCE's had never operated with a submarine and had received only a minimum of ASW training while in the United States.

b. Significant improvements. Guidelines are now well known by the VNN Sea Forces Ships in utilizing the Navy Supply System and the ships no longer rely upon the American Advisors for procurement of spare parts and consumables. The establishment of a quarterly budget allocated to each of the VNN ships for purchase of consumable supplies has been a step in the right direction toward the U.S. Navy OPTAR system.

In-country schools and off-shore training has alleviated some of the shortage in the critical rates, RD, SO, RM, and EN.

Translation of American publications such as diesel engine operation and maintenance and the theory and operation of evaporators has assisted the ships in maintaining their readiness status while on patrol.

The two landing ships under my cognizance have become increasingly competent in the delivery of gunfire support and shore bombardment. Both units have participated in support of Fourth Corps ARVN operations during the last 6 months.

Quarterly Employment Schedules and Monthly Logistic Lift Schedules are now promulgated on a regular basis by the VNN.
The Vietnamese Navy now has an ASW capability which was entirely absent one year ago. The ASW exercise held 7-14 April indicated that the VNN has a good potential. The arrival of 2 additional PCE's with scanning sonar under the MAP, and quarterly ASW exercises with a U.S. Submarine will give the VNN an adequate defense against conventional submarines. The VNN has taken increasing interest in developing their ASW potential and are highly receptive to the plan of conducting quarterly exercises with a U.S. Navy Submarine. For the forthcoming ASW exercise, 14-17 July, the VNN Sea Forces Operations Officer has worked with only a minimum of assistance from myself, as Project Officer, in accomplishing the following: Arrange for bathythermograph drops to determine the most favorable location for the operation, drafted a Vietnamese version of the Operation Order, assisted me in setting up refresher ASW courses, taken action to rectify deficiencies from the last ASW exercise, and arranged pre-exercise briefing for the ASW units which are on patrol and will not be in Saigon for the original conference. Generally speaking, the VNN is now fully aware of the ramifications that are involved in conducting ASW operations and in the future will require only a minimum of liaison assistance from MAAG when undertaking such operations.

c. Comments and recommendations.

(1) Comment: Available intelligence data reveals that in the last six months only 13% of confirmed Viet Cong captured by the VNN were from out of country. From this number only 6% were infiltrations across the 17th parallel, the incident being the capture of one boat with 3 VC on board. During this period the entire eastern coastal area from Da Nang South to Ca Mau Point has been patrolled only by the newly formed and somewhat limited Junk Force. The value of the Northern Patrol by Sea Force Ships would appear to be questionable. As mentioned above, the majority of the eastern Coast of Vietnam has never been patrolled by Sea Force ships where there is a possibility of stopping intra-coastal VC waterborne movement with the ships supplementing the PGH/Junk Force patrols.

Recommendation: The Sea Force Advisor is presently evaluating the patrols of the VNN Sea Forces. The following is just one possible alternative to the above situation: Establish a patrol plan dividing the Eastern Coast of Vietnam into approximately 7 sectors, from the 17th parallel to the Point of Ca Mau. Each sector will be approximately one degree of longitude and extend from the coast seaward 30 to 40 miles. Four ships should be assigned to this patrol each remaining in a different sector for 45 days. The appropriate authority would ensure that all sectors receive equal coverage over any given period of time.

(2) Comment: Continuity remains a problem aboard Sea Force ships although much improved over the last year. Nevertheless, Commanding Officers seldom remain with the same unit over 12 months and key enlisted personnel are often rotated after 12 to 15 months.
Recommendations:

Continue to assist VN N-1 in establishing a rotation schedule for commanding officers and enlisted personnel which will lend itself to greater continuity.

(3) Comment: The ability of the ships to effect many of their own repairs has increased over the last year but there are still too many jobs that are being approved by the Sea Force Maintenance Officer which are rightly within the capability of the ships force. Since shipriders are not always in Saigon when work requests are submitted it is not possible to screen all job orders and in addition, not all the shipriders had the training that would be required for such a screening job.

Recommendation: Assign an officer as the counterpart of the Sea Force Maintenance Officer who has the proper background and qualifications to screen all job orders from the Sea Force ships. Such action would help in establishing the ships as self reliant as well as ease the load on the NSY for more urgent work.

d. Current situation. The percentage of on board spare parts continues to be a current problem area on the older units of the fleet. However, Commanding Officers now seem to realize the importance of maintaining 100% on board spares and in most instances have initiated their own program for inventorying spare parts and correcting allowance lists. The NSC SOAP program has also alleviated much of the problem and the shortage of on board spares should not be of a lasting nature.

Ships presently returning from patrol are in many instances ready to turn around and go back out if required. This testifies to an increase in the ships force capability to undertake repairs while on patrol and also to the increased proficiency and availability of technically trained individuals.

The Vietnamese Sea Force has become a reliable and efficient Force during the last year. Over 50% of the Sea Force ships are employed on missions away from Saigon and over 70% of the ships are operational at all times. Such percentages compare favorably to the U.S. Navy.

Very respectfully,

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