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U. S. NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM
MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY
OCTOBER 1966

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APPENDIX I  MARKET TIME Statistical Summary, October 1966
APPENDIX II  GAME WARDEN Statistical Summary, October 1966
APPENDIX III  Revised Rules of Engagement - GAME WARDEN
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CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

27 Sep - Flood operations in the Plain of Reeds resulted in a large number of enemy killed; junks, sampans and structures destroyed; and quantities of Viet Cong supplies captured. p. 3.

17 Oct - Flood operations in the Plain of Reeds resulted in a large number of enemy killed; junks, sampans and structures destroyed; and quantities of Viet Cong supplies captured. p. 3.


3 Oct - SEALs killed two or three Viet Cong and captured one CHICOM carbine. One SEAL wounded. p. 31.

4 Oct - Sampans, three CHICOM rifles, two bandoleers, ten grenades and a grenade launcher attachment for a rifle captured and three Viet Cong killed by PBES. p. 13.

- Vietnamese Navy FOM mined and destroyed. p. 66.

- PCF 21, while conducting RGFS, killed three Viet Cong and destroyed three bunkers. p. 42.


6 Oct - Attempted mining of Vietnamese Navy TMA and attack on U.S. MGes in the area. p. 32.

- Viet Cong fired mortars at PBESs on Long Tau River. Minor material damage; no personnel casualties. p. 33.

7 Oct - Viet Cong ambushed SEAL LCM-3. Fifteen U.S. personnel wounded when mortar round hit the LCM. p. 33.

12 Oct - PCF 72 and UC-504 COMFORT conduct RGFS mission. Spotter aircraft reported one bunker and three structures destroyed and five other structures damaged. p. 43.

- S3 CLAASENBURG VICTORY struck a submerged wreck. p. 52.

16 Oct - MARKET TIME units provide RGFS for Operation PEPPER BUSH.

26 Oct - on Phu Quoc Island. p. 44.


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19 Oct - GAME KARDEN helo fire team destroyed or damaged seven sampans. p. 16.

Numerous Vietnamese casualties; no U.S. casualties. p. 17.

22 Oct - PBKs detained three Viet Cong suspects. p. 18.
- GAME KARDEN helos destroyed 20 sampans and eight huts and killed two Viet Cong. p. 19.

26 Oct - PBKs and helos thwarted Viet Cong crossing. One U.S.
Navyman killed. Four Viet Cong confirmed killed and one sampan burned. p. 22.

27 Oct - PCF 66 and USCGC POINT GAMMON destroyed two junks and
damaged seven. p. 41.

28 Oct - PCF 66 fired on junk which was destroyed by a secondary
explosion. p. 41.

31 Oct - Captain Tran Van CHON appointed Commander-in-Chief of the
Vietnamese Navy. p. 61.
- PBKs and helos interrupted major Viet Cong crossing.
Fifty-seven junks and sampans destroyed and six junks and
sampans captured. Two Viet Cong confirmed killed. No
U.S. personnel casualties. p. 25.

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OCTOBER 1966 GAME WARDEN

KIEN PHONG SECTOR
27 SEP -10 OCT
TRAM CHIN

KIEN
6 O'C

TOR

TRAN

CHIN

LONG XUYEN

CAO LANH

VNH LSL 227
MINED 2 OCT

NHA BE

SAIGON

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HELO, 18 OCT

PBRs 27 OCT

PBRs, 20 OCT

PBRs, 17 OCT

TRA ON, 21 OCT

CANS THOS
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RIVER PATROL FORCE

During the month of October, the River Patrol Force continued to carry out its mission of denying the waterways of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone to the Viet Cong, and, in a novel operation in the flooded Plain of Reeds, extended its operations into areas long under Viet Cong domination.

On two occasions, Task Force 116 units broke up estimated battalion size Viet Cong river crossings. On 26 October, Binh Thuy based PBs of T2 116.1.1.1 stopped a crossing in the Bassac downstream from Can Tho, and on 31 October CAGE WARDEN forces captured six enemy craft, destroyed 50 Viet Cong sampans and junkets, and damaged seven sampans in the Mekong near Ny Tho.

The development of helo fire team/PBR tactics continued. In all the actions mentioned above, Navy helicopters were used as rapid reaction forces and/or for armed reconnaissance in support of the River Patrol boats.

On 21 October, Can Tho PBs evacuated 49 victims of a Viet Cong claymore mine from the town of Tra On. Sailors from the CAGE WARDEN base at Binh Thuy also gave blood to aid the victims of the terrorist blast. CAGE WARDEN helos evacuated wounded Regional Force troops from their outpost near Can Tho on 15 October, and PBs MEDVACED wounded Vietnamese troops on 19 and 23 October.

On 19 and 23 October, PBs came to the assistance of Vietnamese outposts under attack by the Viet Cong. PBs provided blocking forces and fire support for Vietnamese ground operations on 22 and
31 October in the Mekong Delta.

During the support of the ground operations on 31 October, Binh Thuy PBKs, with an Army airborne observer spotting for them, delivered the Navy's first recorded indirect fire with an M-79 grenade launcher.

SEAL teams operating in the Rung Sat Special Zone killed two Viet Cong in an ambush on 3 October; then suffered 15 wounded when their LC-3 was ambushed by the Viet Cong on 7 October.

The Viet Cong attempted to mine a Vietnamese Navy minesweeping launch on the morning of 6 October during an ambush in the Rung Sat Special Zone. On 6 October and again on 24 October, Viet Cong mines were found in the LSSZ.

In the Delta, the Vietnamese Navy USS 227 was the victim of a mining near Ky Tho when two charges blew holes in the hull in the early morning of 2 October.

During the month of October, CASE VARIETY forces detained a total of 494 persons. Among the detainees were a suspected Viet Cong "tax collector", three persons detained during the Vietnamese ground operation on 22 October, and a woman who was found with Viet Cong papers and 1,000 pounds of unmanifested rice aboard a ferry on 28 October. A suspected deserter was detained when he attempted to escape from the same ferry in which the woman suspect was found on 28 October.

Revised rules of engagement for River Patrol forces went into
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Effect on 21 October. Basically, these revised rules allow PBRS to direct fire against an evading junk or sampan, after all other methods have failed to stop it.

FLOOD OPERATIONS IN THE PLAIN OF REEDS

By the latter part of September, it had become apparent that the Mekong Delta would be flooded to a greater extent than usual, providing an excellent opportunity to use PBRS in areas where they could not normally operate. At the same time, the floods would serve to hamper enemy operations by restricting his movements and by denying him cover along the river banks.

CMG 116.1, in concert with the Senior Advisor, IV Corps, and the Regional Director, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), set up a plan designed to exploit the advantages mentioned above. PBRS, Army and Navy helicopters, and local troops (Civilian Irregular Defense Group and Regional Force/Popular Force) operating from swimmer boats were used to reach the Viet Cong in areas where he had normally operated with impunity, and to carry out flood relief programs under the auspices of USAID.

The objectives of the operation were as follows:

1. To separate the Viet Cong from the civilian population in the Plain of Reeds, an area where the Viet Cong had long held control.

2. To reconnoiter actively in order to locate and destroy enemy forces and arms caches.

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1 See Appendix III for the Revised Rules of Engagement
3. To utilize the mobility and security of seaborne forces to destroy the enemy, and to maintain contact with him while directing supporting arms.

4. To provide blocking forces for the Republic of Vietnam Army search and destroy and reaction forces.

5. To gather intelligence and historical information on Viet Cong activities, and to gather topographical and hydrographic data on the area for future operations.

6. To provide forces and material for psychological operations, and to provide flood relief for the populace.

In addition, the flood operations would provide an opportunity to test the capability of the PBR to operate in a novel environment, away from their normal bases, and with a minimum of support. What support was available was what could be carried on the boats themselves or brought in by helicopter. Personnel from NSAS Detachment My Tho accompanied the boats during their deployment at Moc Hoa in the Plain of Reeds.

While most of the two sectors, Kien Phong and Kien Tuong, were flooded to sufficient depth to float a PBR, rice stalks, grass and debris frequently plugged the PBR pumps and hampered the boats' speed and maneuvrability.

Kien Phong Sector

Flood operations in Kien Phong Sector commenced on 27 September, when two Platoons from Tu 166.12 (Sa Dec) formed a night reaction force to defend against Viet Cong attacks on Agroville hamlets, and to
provide day flood relief operations, such as transporting a Korean innoculation Team. The two FRRs were based at Tram Chin hamlet, and operated in conjunction with units of RAG 23, providing blocking forces for a Kien Phong Sector operation which was conducted in phases on 3, 4, 5, 7-8, 10-11, 13 and 16 October. The FRRs were fueled by a Vietnamese Navy LSIL anchored near Cao Lanh on the Mekong. Helo fire teams operating from Vinh Long (TE 116.1.9.3) and Phu Thuy (TE 116.1.4.2) provided air support on 10-11, 13 and 16 October.

The FRRs accounted for three Viet Cong killed and 12 sampans destroyed; the helo fire team for 29 Viet Cong killed, six Viet Cong wounded, 37 structures damaged or destroyed and 39 sampans sunk. The Regional Force/Popular Force troops, operating from swimmer support boats, and supported by the Navy PBK/helo fire team, accounted for another 97 Viet Cong killed, 130 Viet Cong captured, numerous small arms and ammunition (including 1,559 grenades in a weapons factory), mines and documents captured.

Kien Tuong Sector

The Kien Tuong Sector campaign began on 5 October, when eight FRRs from TU 116.1.3 (My Tho), with support elements from NSAS Detachment My Tho, got underway for Hoc Ha as TE 116.1.3.5. In transit, the FRRs got some taste of the difficulties which would lie ahead; e.g. plugged pumps and low bridges which, because of flood conditions, had to be bypassed.

The task element arrived in Sa Dec, topped off fuel, and
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departed for the Tram Chin outpost, three hours behind time and proceeding against the current. After spending the night anchored off Tram Chin, the element was underway at 0800, heading east on the Kinh Dong Kien Canal, then turned into the Kim Cung Canal, arriving at Kinh Quan at 1100.

At this point, a footbridge crosses the canal with insufficient clearance for a PRR to pass under. One PRR managed to struggle through mud and grass and get around the bridge. The rest of the boats were towed around the bridge, and an hour later were headed fair up the canal for Xoc Hoa where they commenced both independent reconnaissance operations as well as acting in support of U.S. Special Forces and subsector Civilian Irregular Defense Group troops.

On 7 October two PRRs supported subsector operations, while the remaining six boats conducted independent reconnaissance. On 8 October six boats supported subsector Operation BISMARK I, a Civilian Irregular Defense Group operation, while two boats remained in Xoc Hoa for maintenance. The next day, two of the BISMARK PRRs returned with wounded while four remained in rich Than Thong subsector in support of BISMARK II. On 10 October six PRRs conducted aerial reconnaissance while two remained at Xoc Hoa.

Reconnaissance and search and destroy operations, which covered approximately 30% of Kien Tuong Sector, were conducted on 11 and 12 October. As of 12 October, results were as follows:

2 USN wounded (neither seriously)
1 Viet Cong killed
36 Viet Cong huts destroyed
4 Viet Cong bunkers destroyed
10 Viet Cong bunkers discovered, beyond capability of PBRs
to destroy
1 Viet Cong sampan destroyed
3,280 lbs rice, 120 lbs salt, 300 lbs manioc and 10 gallons nuoc
man captured or destroyed
1 booby trap destroyed
1 sewing machine plus miscellaneous equipment, vases, clothing,
utensils, etc. captured or destroyed

As of 13 October, Nha Hoa units had made no contact with the
enemy in force. Likewise, logistic difficulties had plagued the
helicopter team and severely limited their operations so that there
had been no real test of PBR/helicopter coordinated operations.

On 14 October at 1145, PBRs 110, 111 and 113 spotted two large
sampan crossing north in the Van Go Tay River about 20 miles ESE
of Nha Hoa. Approximately 15 men in a nearby rice paddy opened
fire on the PBRs who promptly returned the fire, killing two Viet
Cong (confirmed) and an estimated 20 to 30 Viet Cong. PBR
111 captured one sampan.

At 1144, a USAF Forward Air Controller and an Army helo fire
team arrived on the scene. The fire team estimated that an enemy
company was in the area, and an immediate air strike was launched.
The PBRs moved east in the river to block a possible escape route
in a canal. One of the PBRs spotted many sampans moving north on
a stream, apparently heading for the III Corps Tactical Zone.
USC troops in swimmer support boats, with PBRs providing covering
fire, moved in to search huts in the area while a helo fire team
furnished air support. One Viet Cong was killed and two wounded
were found in a hut. The wounded were transferred to PBR 111.
PEEs 101, 106 and 117 joined at 1607, and the six boats formed a mobile blocking force. At 1610 the Navy helo fire team arrived on the scene to provide support. When the helos retired at 1630, the CIDG troops began extracting under the guns of the PEEs. Four PEEs remained in the area overnight to provide a blocking force.

In addition to the Viet Cong killed by the PEEs, the helo fire team accounted for three Viet Cong killed, two Viet Cong wounded, 30 weapons destroyed and a Viet Cong plastic assault boat, five rifles of documents, one rifle and two sampans captured.

No further contact was made with the Viet Cong company whose attempt to cross from III Corps Tactical Zone into III Corps Tactical Zone was broken up by the quick reaction of the PEEs, Air Force sporters, Army and Navy helo fire teams, and Vietnamese ground troops.

Operations continued through the 17th when all units got underway for their normal operating area. There was no further major contact with the enemy.

The sectors in which the flood operations were conducted had long been regarded as Viet Cong territory. Yet, the PEEs were able to move with impunity over the 30% of the territory which was navigable. The same flood waters which allowed the afloat forces to move freely denied the enemy cover, and often made survival his primary concern.

The psychological effect of the PEEs on the Vietnamese troops is perhaps best expressed by a quote from one of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group men who participated in the subsector
operations supported by the PEs, "We feel much braver with those big .50 caliber machine guns to help us."

In all, the PEs supported six sector or subsector operations, which resulted in the following:

- 139 Viet Cong killed
- 36 Viet Cong captured
- 94 weapons captured (including 1 AA machine gun, 2 BAEs, 2 Thompsons and an assortment of U.S., CFICON and Russian rifles)
- 60 mines captured or destroyed
- 102 grenades, 2,000 rounds small arms ammo, 30 kilos documents,
- 30 kilos of rice, 3 motor boats and 1 sampan captured
- 70 sampans, 1,000 kilos of rice, 5,000 kilos of flour and 162 structures destroyed

Support rendered sector and subsector operations included gunfire support, blocking forces, flank security and providing a ready reserve.

In addition, both PEs and helos provided flood relief and civic action programs for the civilian population. One hundred PayOpe buckets (a small plastic bucket containing soap, cloth, needles and thread and Government literature), ten cases of soup, nine cases of canned milk, 50 lbs of salt and hundreds of pro-government leaflets were distributed to the local populace. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided an additional 250,000 dong for flood relief as the waters receded.

Lessons Learned

1. While the operations were largely successful in attaining their goals, they probably would have been much more effective had the boat been positioned before the floods reached their maximum stage. It became apparent that the Viet Cong may have abandoned the area to seek higher ground, either in Cambodia or in Dinh Tuong.
Province to the south where lack of water depth hampered PBR mobility. Had the PBRs been operating in the area before the Viet Cong movement started, much more dramatic results might have been gained.

2. Airborne spotters, both fixed wing and helo, were helpful in assisting boats to find clear water areas where PBRs could utilize their speed and maneuverability. In areas where grass and rice broke the surface, the mobility of the PBR was severely restricted.

3. Swimmers should be employed to clean bottoms and intakes for the PBRs. Intakes continually become clogged and divers must be used to clear the rice, grass and snakes from the pumps.

4. When operating in shallow water, PBRs should maintain speed and keep going as long as possible. This may result in a strung-out formation, but it is the only way to effect rapid movement in this type of environment.

5. Initial problems involving helo/pka operations included too little fuel, poor communications, diversion of helos for MEDEVAC and too few helicopters to perform all the missions desired. However, toward the end of the period, helicopters were being utilized in support of PBRs and their effectiveness is illustrated by the results of the major engagement on the 14th.

6. During the engagement on the 14th, the Viet Cong moved in open country in squad-sized groups which stayed close together. The men remained hunched over in their "black pajamas" uniforms which, to the naked eye, gave the appearance of a group of water buffalo
moving through the paddies. Binoculars were necessary to make positive identification.

7. The Viet Cong had well-developed facilities in the area. Many of the huts destroyed were well hidden; made of rice stalk material and hardly distinguishable from the surrounding terrain. Nearly every hut had a mud bunker nearby where the Viet Cong could seek shelter from air attack and direct fire at ground troops during the dry season. Viet Cong strongholds were composed of separate, spread-out buildings generally well-concealed from the air, the surface and even each other.

8. Many platforms were noted in the trees along waterways from which the enemy could direct plunging fire at passing watercraft. The FEIs were not engaged by any of these prepared positions. It was believed however, that the platforms were too flimsy for heavy machine guns or recoilless rifles, and that with the water level being what it was, that there would have been no particular trouble in dealing with them.

9. Of historical interest is the "War of 1812 Lesson Learned" that the ancient practice of kedging was found to be the only effective method of moving through some of the old canals which had been grown over by an "indescribable mossy quagmire." It was apparent from this operation that the combination of
imagination, initiative, careful planning and close co-operation between services had overcome obstacles ranging from enemy fire to improbable operating conditions, in order to make a major contribution to the allied effort in the Delta. This can be summed up in the following message sent by COMNAVFORV to all hands participating in the operation:

181102Z OCT 66
URCIA
DELTAFLOODOPS
1. EXTEND TO ALL UNITS CONCERNED MY PROFOUND APPRECIATION FOR THEIR IMAGINATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPECCABLY SUCCESSFUL DELTA FLOOD OPERATIONS.
2. IT APPEARS AS IF THE SAFETY VALVES IN ORIGINALITY, FLEXIBILITY AND INDIVIDUALISM FOR ALL PHASES OF THIS EXCELLENTLY COORDINATED VENTURE, THE PERFECT TEAMWORK, AGGRESSIVE FORAYS AND INGENUITY DEALT THE VIET CONG A SURPRISING AND STUNNING BLOW AND YET PROVIDED IMMENSE MORALE AND MATERIAL SUFFERING TO OUR ALLIES.
3. THE SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE YOU CAUSED THE ENEMY IN PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL HAS INHIBITING ASSISTED IN ATTAINING THE FREE WORLD FORCES GOALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.
4. TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS UNIQUE ENDEAVOR I EXTEND A SINCERE WELCOME. LADH Vald Snds.

DELTAFLOODOPS

While some of the forces assigned the Delta River Patrol Group were diverted to the flood operations during the first half of October, regular river patrols were maintained at their normal level by increasing the load on units not directly involved.

The following is a summary of the month's operations by the Delta River Patrol Group:

1-6 October

On 1 October PBRs 32 and 99, patrolling on the Bassac River 46 miles southeast of Can Tho, hailed a sampan. Then the sampan
A U.S. Army "Chinook" helicopter drops a day's fuel supply in the form of a net of 55-gallon fuel drums for the ARVN based at Noc Hoa.
Your return from the crew which secured rice captured at one of the Whangpoo stations, also engaged in the special rice force, is announced. A large quantity of rice, estimated at about 800 metric tons, has been shipped to the interior.
failed to respond, the PBRs fired warning shots, whereupon the sampan directed fire on the patrol craft. The PBRs made several firing runs on the fleeing sampan which ceased fire. Despite a careful search the sampan was not located and it was believed to have been destroyed. (CH 116:14 msg 301830Z SEP 66)

The next morning at 0231, the Vietnamese Navy LSSL 227, with members of the Vietnamese Asian Games swimming team aboard, was mined at anchor about 800 yards west of the PBR base at My Tho and settled quickly with about one foot freeboard aft and fifteen feet forward.

Her crew was able to keep her afloat with two pumps, and VNN Liver Assault Group LCH-6s took her under tow to the NAG base at My Tho. Flooding was stopped, and two six-foot holes, one on each side were patched by the ship's company. Close investigation revealed a charge had been placed on each side of the ship. The ship was later towed to Saigon, and, after a survey of the damage, the Vietnamese Navy decommissioned it.

On 4 October at about 2030, PBRs 97 and 102, while patrolling the Cc Chien river about 17 miles east-southeast of Vinh Long, picked up a radar contact at about 600 yards crossing from the south bank to the north. When the contact had closed to 100 yards it was illuminated.

The sampan's five occupants immediately jumped over the side and swam toward the north bank. After hailing the swimmers and firing warning shots which were ignored, the PBRs took the dispersing

4 Senior Advisor, Vietnamese Navy Headquarters Historical Summary for October
swimmers under fire with M-16s. One swimmer was hit in the head and was last seen floating face down into the bushes along the bank. Another swimmer was hit and sank out of sight.

Two of the swimmers were taken under fire by .50 caliber machine guns and an M-79 grenade launcher. One was hit by a burst of .50 caliber in the back which lifted him out of the water and onto the bank. The sampan's other two occupants apparently escaped.

The sampan was recovered and was found to contain three CHICOM rifles, two bandoleers, ten grenades, a grenade launcher attachment for a rifle, a diary or notebook, a propaganda bulletin in comic book format and two ducks. (CTE 116.1.3.4 msg 041414Z OCT 66)

6-16 October

On 6 October FISIs 34 and 39, operating from Can Tho, received one round of mortar fire on the Bassac River about five miles downstream from Can Tho in an area where the Viet Cong had threatened to "Get a PBR." No damage was done and the boats did not return the fire. (CTE 116.1.1.1 msg 061645Z OCT 66)

The CAME LADER helo fire team of Detachment 29, Helicopter Combat Support Squadron One evacuated six RF/PF wounded from their outpost 11 miles southeast of Can Tho to the Can Tho Airport on the morning of the 15th.

In the evening of the same day, HC-1 (Det 29) helos conducted a planned air strike on structures designated by the subsector commander at Tra Or. Three structures were destroyed and eight others damaged. (HC-1 Det 29 msg 151723Z OCT 66)
ON 17TH A PER PATROL, WITH AN NAMED HOSPITAL CORPSMAN, VISITED THE HAMLET OF PHONG NAM 16 MILES SOUTHEAST OF CAN THO FOR A MEDICAL CIVIC ACTION MISSION. THE CORPSMAN TREATED 65 VILLAGERS, AND FOUR SERIOUS CASES WERE TAKEN TO CAN THO FOR FURTHER TREATMENT.

AT 1715 ON THE 17TH, PER 37 AND 38 RECEIVED APPROXIMATELY 150 ROUNDS OF SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM AN ISLAND IN THE BASSAC RIVER. THE FIRE WAS SUPPRESSED BY THE PERs AND AN ARTILLERY STRIKE FROM THE TRA ON SUBSECTOR, VINH BINH PROVINCE WAS REQUESTED. THE REQUEST WAS REFUSED BECAUSE THE ISLAND WAS SECURED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

(CTE 116.1.1.1 msg 171050Z OCT 66)

AT 2335 ON 18 OCTOBER, NAVY HELICOPTERS BASED AT VING LONG CAME TO THE ASSISTANCE OF PCF 39 WHICH WAS UNDER ATTACK BY .50 CALIBER MACHINE GUN AND 57MM RECOILLESS RIFLE FIRE AT THE MOUTH OF THE CO CHIEN RIVER OFF THE COAST OF THE THANH PHONG SECRET ZONE. THE HELICOPTER ILLUMINATED THE AREA AND PROVIDED LOW LEVEL AIR SUPPORT FOR THE PCF UNTIL 0055 ON 19 OCTOBER WHEN CONTACT WAS BROKEN.

(CTE 116.1.9.3 msg 181818Z OCT 66)

AT 0000 ON 19 OCTOBER, RIVPATSEC 512 PERs, WHICH HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY BASED AT CAN THO AWAY FROM THEIR NORMAL BASE ON USS COXSTOCK (LSD-17), REDEPLOYED FOUR WOUNDED VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM AN AH-1H OPERATION IN PROGRESS ABOUT 45 MILES SOUTHEAST OF CAN THO ON THE BASSAC RIVER FOR TREATMENT AT CAN THO. FOUR ADDITIONAL RIVPATSEC 512 PERs AND A HELICOPTERCREW WERE DISPATCHED TO ASSIST IN THE OPERATION.

(CTE 116.1.1 msg 190510Z OCT 66)
At 1520 a GAME WARDEN helo fire team from Det 29, HC-1 sighted five 30-foot camouflaged sampans about 42 miles downstream from Can Tho, with two additional 30-foot camouflaged sampans about two miles away. All were taken under fire at the request of the Long Toan District Chief and either damaged or destroyed. (OIMC DET 29 msg 191442Z OCT 66)

While this action was in progress, a Vietnamese outpost upstream on the Bassac River were being harassed by approximately 40 Viet Cong. PEs 24 and 40 came to the aid of the outpost located about 17 miles downstream from Can Tho, and at 1311 provided M-79 grenade, M-60 machine gun and rifle fire until 1315 when firing ceased on both sides. (ATE 116.1.1.1 msg 190643Z OCT 66)

On the Co Chien 18 miles southeast of Vinh Long, PEs 29 and 66 took 50 rounds of automatic and 15 rounds of small arms fire from the north bank at 1526 on the 14th. The boats returned the fire with their .50 caliber machine guns and grenade launchers. A helo fire team supported the PEs with rockets and M-60 machine guns.

Eight minutes later the boats were again fired upon from the north bank about three miles downstream, with possibly one 57mm recoilless rifle being used as well as automatic weapons and small arms. The PEs returned with .50 caliber and grenades, but the helos were unable to assist because of a friendly outpost in the area. PEs 26 sustained some minor hits during the actions, but there were no personnel casualties and the boats were able to continue their patrol. (ATE 116.1.1.4 msg 191237Z OCT 66)
On 20 October My Tho based PBERs, with English speaking Vietnamese embarked, began random patrols on the Ham Inong river, last of the major branches of the Mekong River not regularly patrolled by GVN VARDEN forces.

Prior to commencing patrols, the Kien Hoa Province Chief was briefed, all friendly outposts on the river were visited, a helicopter reconnoitered the river and the operations were cleared by the ARVN Seventh Division.

The Viet Cong in the area 11 miles downstream from Can Tho fired between 25 and 50 rounds of small arms at PBERs 34 and 40 at 1850 on 20 October. The PBERs returned fire with 400 rounds of M-60, 40 M-79 grenades and 100 rounds of M-16. The enemy still claims they will "Get a PBER" in this location. (GTE 1161.1.1.1 msg 20115Z OCT 66)

Terrorism at Tra On

Since refrigeration is limited in Vietnam, the custom is for the farmers to bring their wares to market early in the morning so that fresh produce can be purchased and cooked before the heat of the day. At eight o'clock on the morning of 21 October, the market place of Tra On was crowded with Vietnamese intent on their daily marketing.

At 0810 a Viet Cong claymore detonated in the Tra On Market.

At 0830 six PBERs from Can Tho arrived on the scene to provide MEDVAC services. A total of 49 people, all Vietnamese, were taken to Can Tho. One small boy with both legs blown off died en route.
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At 0940 PER 30 sighted a sampan with two Buddhist monks and an injured young girl heading for Can Tho. The PER took the girl on board. At 1005 the same boat took two wounded on board from a ferry. At 1025 one military wounded died in PER enroute to the Can Tho hospital.

PER crews and base support personnel not actually engaged in the MEDEVAC efforts proceeded to the Can Tho hospital to give blood for the victims of the blast. Three entire PER crews and 20 support personnel donated blood.

The known casualties of the terrorist mining are: four military killed, 15 military wounded; five civilians killed, 33 civilians wounded. Many of the wounded were not expected to live. No Americans were involved in this incident. (CTC 116.1.1.1 msg 211030Z OCT 66)

While the victims of Viet Cong terrorism were being evacuated to the hospital, Can Tho PERs responded to another call for help. A Civilian Irregular Defense Group airboat capsized about three miles west of Can Tho. An airborne spotter requested assistance, and PER 36 took the craft in tow at 1045. It was towed to Binh Tuy where the Viêt-Côngs' crane righted the airboat. None of the three persons aboard the airboat was injured.

On 22 October, four PERs from TE 116.1.1.1 provided a blocking force in support of a regional Force operation on the northeast and southwest sides of Cu Lao May Island in Tra On District. One of the Viêt-Côngs picked up and detained a Viet Cong attempting to escape.

Shortly after the first detainee was taken, the PERs received
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word that two more Viet Cong were hiding along the bank. The PBRs proceeded to the area, took two more detainees and resumed station. All three detainees were turned over to the Regional Forces at the completion of the operation.

In another Regional Force operation in Kien Phong Province, six PBRs from T3 116.1.9.3 provided fire support and a blocking force for the Kien Van Regional Force Company. The GAME WARDEN helo fire team was called when contact was made at about 0815 and sank eight sampans, destroyed five huts and killed two Viet Cong.

At 1130 the helo fire team returned to the area and struck 12 sampans and three huts, destroying them all and inflicting unknown Viet Cong casualties.

The Regional Force company, supported by U.S. Naval forces, killed three Viet Cong and detained 13 suspects. In addition, five grenades, two kites of documents and one sampan were captured.

T3 116.1.9.3 PBRs detained one Viet Cong suspect, who was taken with his sampan and two CHICOM grenades.

At 0755 on 22 October, PBRs 54 and 65, patrolling three miles east of Sa Dec, hailed three sampans to come alongside. When the sampans ignored the hail and beached, their occupants were taken under fire as they fled to the rice paddies. The sampans were destroyed with small arms fire.

On the Bassac, about thirty miles downstream from Can Tho, PBRs sighted a sampan proceeding close to the bank at about 1300. As the PBRs closed to investigate, the enemy opened fire from the
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banks with small arms. The boats suppressed the small arms fire, but were unable to get the sampan. Another PBR, not involved in the engagement, was hit by a stray round near the bow, causing minor damage. Neither the 32 boat nor the 99 boat, who were directly involved, was hit.

At 1937 on 23 October, PBRs 29, 111, 113 and 116 sighted a prearranged distress signal from an outpost 30 miles down the Co Chien River from Vinh Long. The boats hurried to the area and made firing runs on the Viet Cong, quickly suppressing his fire. After each boat had made one firing run, two of the boats resumed their normal patrol while two remained in the area to support the outpost in the event that fire was resumed.

The next day, PBRs 63 and 143, with a Seventh ARVN Division PsyWar Team embarked, were broadcasting a Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) appeal in a known Viet Cong area about six miles southwest of My Tho on the Hekong. At 1920 the Viet Cong opened up with Browning Automatic Rifles and small arms, expending about 30 rounds of the former and ten of the latter before .50 caliber and small arms fire from the PBRs suppressed the hostile fire. Friendly forces suffered no casualties and continued their operations.

Tax Collection Interrupted

PBRs 63 and 143, patrolling 21 miles northwest of Long Xuyen on the Bassac River, sighted a large motorized sampan with five persons aboard and five smaller boats alongside at 1023 on the morning of 25 October. As the two PBRs closed the group of sampans,
the motorized sampan moved toward the mouth of a nearby stream.

The fleeing sampan ignored the PERs' hails and made good its escape into the stream. The PERs refrained from firing warning shots in order to protect innocent sampans in the area.

The patrol proceeded up the stream a short distance, hoping to locate the sampan and draw him into the open. The sampan did make an attempt to escape into the river, but spotted the patrol and again evaded. This time the patrol was able to fire warning shots, but the sampan continued his efforts to get away, ignoring the shots.

At 1106 another sampan started out of the creek with two women and one man aboard. The man was dressed in a green shirt identical to that worn by one of the occupants of the motorized sampan in question. This time the patrol was able to stop the craft and the man in the green shirt was detained for having no I.D. card.

At 1123 the motorized sampan was again sighted, hailed and warning shots were fired. Again the sampan ducked back into the safety of the stream. The patrol officer requested permission from CTF 116 to take the sampan under direct fire the next time it was sighted, provided there was no danger to innocent shipping. Permission was granted, but the motorized sampan did not make another attempt to get back into the river, and the patrol departed the area about 1200 to deliver their detainee to U.S. Army Special Forces Intelligence at Chau Phu. The detainee is believed to be a Viet Cong "tax collector" who was caught in the act of extorting
"taxes" from river traffic.

Viet Cong Crossing Thwarted - Death of FM2 FREUND

At about 1430 on 26 October, PBRs 34 and 40, on normal patrol 42 miles downstream from Can Tho on the Bassac River, sighted three armed men in a sampan emerging from a stream on the southwest bank of the river, in an area known to be heavily infested with Viet Cong.

The patrol gave chase and fired two warning shots at the evading sampan before opening fire with 70 rounds of .50 caliber which set fire to the sampan. The boat reached the beach and its occupants took cover in the tree line. One 0.50 round was fired into the area.

A Vietnamese National Policeman embarked in one of the PBRs directed a civilian sampan to attempt to recover the Viet Cong craft, but heavy fire broke out from the shore and the salvage efforts were abandoned. The patrol raked the brush along the river bank and quickly suppressed the fire coming from the area near the beached sampan.

When fire from the immediate area ceased, the enemy opened fire from farther downstream with a .30 caliber machine gun. The forward gunner in PER 40, Radioman Second Class Terrence Jay FREUND, 540 65 07, U.S. Navy, was hit in the chest by the first burst and knocked to the deck. He struggled to his feet, told the patrol officer he was "okay" and resumed fire, then slumped again.

Once again Petty Officer FREUND returned to his post and continued to fire at the Viet Cong positions. He slumped to the deck for a third and final time. Petty Officer FREUND had fired over 200 rounds of .50
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caliber at the enemy between the time he was hit and the time he died.

At 1630 the GAME WARDEN helo fire team arrived on scene and began to take the enemy under fire. At 1640 PBRs 37 and 38 arrived in the area and were taken under fire by rockets and grenades from the beach.

At 1645 U.S. Army helicopters joined the battle, and at 1710 Vietnamese Navy RAG boats joined PBRs 37 and 38 in making firing runs on the beach for 40 minutes when they cleared the area for a U.S. Air Force F-100 strike which was later cancelled.

At 1752 the Army helos, freshly rearmed, delivered more fire at the ambush positions. The Navy helos also returned to the area after rearming and carried on the attack.

River Assault Group 25 of the Vietnamese Navy, supported by the PBRs, entered a canal in the area and set up a blocking force behind the ambush. At 1904 a RAG monitor entered the stream with two LCVPs and two 50Ms and delivered 40mm fire. Shortly after the monitor raked the area the Viet Cong broke contact.

The engagement claimed one American life. There were four confirmed Viet Cong killed, one sampan burned and an estimated battalion-size crossing thwarted by the combined efforts of U.S. and Vietnamese Navy units, and Army and Navy aircraft.

Two River Patrol seamen were wounded in another engagement four miles southwest of My Tho at 1845 the same day when PBRs 96 and 110 were hit by automatic weapons fire from the bank of the
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Mekong. The patrol returned fire with .50 caliber and M-79 grenades. PBK 96 took two hits in the awning and four in the hull with two of her crew receiving superficial wounds.

PBK 96 took one additional hit less than an hour later in an area two and one-half miles downstream from the first incident when the enemy opened up with small arms fire. The patrol suppressed this quickly with the .50 caliber and M-79 and suffered no further casualties.

While inspecting a ferry boat in the Co Chien River 35 miles downstream from Vinh Long on 28 October, PBKs 22 and 55 apprehended a deserter who abandoned the boat as the PBKs came alongside.

The PBKs then searched the ferry and found a Vietnamese girl with 12 bags of unmanifested rice, improper papers and Viet Cong documents on her person. The two detainees and 1,000 pounds of rice were turned over to Coastal Group 35.

On 29 October Can Tho PBKs evacuated four wounded ARVN troops from an outpost in Sa Huynh Sector from Dai Ngai to Can Tho, 29 miles downstream.

At 1450 the same day, PBK 109, while on a patrol with PBK 107, took three automatic weapons hits in the after hull section when a Viet Cong opened fire 16 miles west-southwest of My Tho. The boats returned fire with .50 caliber and small arms. There were no personnel casualties. The Viet Cong fire was more accurate than usual with all rounds landing within a 50-yard radius of the lead boat.
Indirect fire by K-79

On 31 October PERs 39 and 41 provided a blocking force for a Vietnamese Army/Regional Force operation on Cu Lao May Island eight miles downstream from Can Tho. At 0930 the boats were fired on from the beach, but were unable to return fire because of the proximity of friendly forces.

Two hours later, faced with almost the same situation, the PERs were able to return fire on an estimated ten Viet Cong who were observed firing on the boats from well fortified bunkers along the bank. An overhead L-19 "Shotgun" (spotter aircraft) spotted indirect fire from the patrol crafts' K-79 grenade launchers. A total of 36 grenades were fired at the bunkers in this manner with excellent results reported by the spotter aircraft.

Viet Cong Battalion Crossing Stopped

Commander, River Division 53 (LCDR M. E. TOOLE, USN), believing that the Viet Cong would be forced out of their operating areas in the Plain of Reeds by high water in late October, set up a special 24 hour patrol in the vicinity of Ngo Hiep Island in the Mekong where the Viet Cong were known to have a well established route into Kien Hoa Province to the south.

At 1758 on 31 October, PERs 105 and 107, with Boatswain's Mate First Class J. E. WILLIAMS as patrol officer, were conducting the special patrol in the area, when a sampan with one occupant was sighted heading out of the Nam Thon River on the northern edge of the island. As PER 105, covered by PER 107, closed the sampan, it
darted into the flooded paddies and its occupant fired two rounds of small arms at the patrol boat.

A second sampan, with two occupants aboard, opened fire on the PPRs who took it under fire with .50 caliber. The occupants jettisoned their rifles and abandoned their sampan. Both Viet Cong were killed by PPR 105's guns before they could reach shore.

During the short fire fight, a junk and several sampans were sighted. Because of the high tide and flood conditions, the PPRs had an unobstructed view over the island and could see the first sampan proceeding through the paddies as well as the other craft.

The patrol entered the Ham Thon river and immediately came under heavy fire from the north bank and from two large junks in an inlet. Eight small sampans, with eight to ten green-uniformed men in each boat, were seen astern of the junks. Fire from the PPRs sank two of the sampans and their survivors took to the brush. The remaining sampans took cover in the dense woods along the bank.

As the PPRs withdrew along the southern edge of a small island in the Ham Thon, they spotted an additional 75 sampans and seven junks, all abandoned or in the process of being abandoned by troops who were retreating to the north. The PPRs fired on the fleeing Viet Cong with .50 caliber and small arms fire and called for the VNAF Long Binh air force team which was scrambled to join the fight.

The PPRs withdrew to the eastern end of Kgo Hiep to await the arrival of the helicopters which were on the scene within 15 minutes. Upon arrival of the fire team, the PPRs deliberately drew fire to
locate the enemy's positions for the helos.

The fire team made its first pass as the boats withdrew under heavy fire from about ten positions on the bank. PBR 105 took a hit forward and one aft, with no serious damage or personnel casualty. As the PBRs withdrew to give the helos a clear field of fire, they continued to pour .50 caliber into the junks, causing one secondary explosion.

On their second pass on the junks, the helos observed a secondary explosion which reached an estimated height of 300 feet. Enemy troops, retreating through knee-deep water to the north, were taken under fire by the PBRs who were joined by two additional two-boat patrols.

Enemy fire had slackened to a few sporadic bursts of small arms fire, and PBRs 106 and 107 moved in to commence salvage operations on the sampans in order to gather intelligence. Fire had ceased completely by 2045. By the end of the engagement, eight PBRs, one LCM-6 from LEXINGTON BUT MY THO and two U.S. Navy helos were on the scene.

No material of intelligence value was recovered from the sampans which could be reached by PBRs. Many sampans had drifted into brush and were inaccessible. Debris, clothing and seven large pools of fuel were floating in the area of the battle.

Fire from the PBRs claimed the only two confirmed kills, 28 sampans and seven junks sunk, and three junks and three sampans captured. The captured craft were towed to My Tho by the LCM-6.
The helo fire team claimed 15 sampans sunk, and at least seven damaged in addition to the ammunition junk which had been blown to bits. Helicopter reconnaissance reported the area covered with burning sampans.

There were no U.S. personnel casualties and only one superficial hit in addition to the two previously mentioned. PBR 107 took a bullet forward on the starboard side. During the engagement 3,000 rounds of .50 caliber, 100 rounds of K-16, 430 rounds of K-60 MG and 16 M-79 grenades were expended by the PBRs.

The engagement, in which an estimated battalion sized troop crossing was thwarted, illustrates the value of the coordinated fire/helo fire team in providing rapid response when the enemy accepts an engagement.

The helicopters took less than 15 minutes to get from their base at Vinh Long to the scene of the action 22 miles away. Communications were excellent, and coordination and cooperation between the airborne and waterborne units was outstanding.

The engagement illustrates the value of well-planned, aggressive patrolling based on good intelligence and knowledge of the area and the enemy's habits. Specific items of intelligence pointed to the exact night that the Viet Cong would cross the river at this point; however, LCDR. TOWLS believed that at this point and about at this time, the enemy would have to attempt a crossing.

While the Viet Cong excel at taking advantage of the knowledge of his enemy's habits in setting up ambushes, he too is a creature
of habit who tends to use the same routes. The combination of this knowledge, and an excellent appreciation of the enemy's problems in the floods, enabled COMDIV 53 to position his forces to stop this crossing whenever the Viet Cong attempted it, as he was almost bound to do.

LCDR TOOLE feels that had the trap been sprung a few minutes later, the results might have been much more spectacular in terms of personnel casualties inflicted on the enemy. By waiting until it was obvious that a major crossing was in progress, Petty Officer WILLIAMS probably could have trapped more troops in midstream and avoided warning those in the assembly area until it was too late to make good an escape.

However, COMDIV 53 also feels that, with no knowledge that this was a major crossing, Petty Officer WILLIAMS was correct in closing the sampan. As can be seen by numerous incidents during the month, such as the one on 1 October on the Bassac, sampans and/or their occupants can quickly elude a PBR into the brush or shallow water if the patrol does not intercept immediately.

Viet Cong sampans seldom venture far from cover unless they are reasonably certain that no patrols are in the area. At the time of the initial sighting the water was high, and the sampans could travel very close to the dense underbrush along the banks.

Since the engagement, Viet Cong harassment of My Tho PBRs has

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\[\text{CTE 116.1.3.1} \text{ MAG 311865Z OCT 66 and interview with LCDR M. E. TOOLE, LSN at My Tho, 2 Nov 66} \]
been intensified, and the patrols are often taken under fire almost as soon as they are under way.

The Viet Cong attempted to sink the ammunition junks before they were blown up, which indicates that they prized these highly. While their personnel losses, other than the two confirmed kills, are only a matter of conjecture, it seems reasonable to term them "heavy", especially in view of the large pools of blood observed during the salvage operation that followed the engagement.

Evaluation of the operation by COMUSMACV was expressed to the forces involved as follows:

"WESTMORELAND SENDS
SUBJ: CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

AGGRESSIVE ACTION BY PH'VS OF RIVER SECTION 531 AND HELICOPTERS OF DETACHMENT 25 PAID HARDGOWN DIVIDENDS ON NIGHT OF 31 OCTOBER NEAR MY THO IN BINH TUYEN. IN COMPLETLEY DISRUPTING LARGE SCALE RIVER CROSSING BY VC AND CARRYING MANY SAMPAIS AND JUNKS, ONE VALORE HAS HURT THE ENEMY AGAIN.

SWEET CONGRATULATIONS." 6

LONG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Long Sat Special Zone during the month of October were characterized by ambushes by both sides and indications of increased enemy activity in the area.

Evidence of even more intensive enemy activities in the months to come is shown by discovery of Viet Cong documents indicating a reorganization of its forces in the HSSZ on 20 October, with emphasis on river mining and ambush.

Three Viet Cong platoons, which had operated separately in the

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6 COMUSMACV msg 0313472 Nov 66
Rung Sat, plus a recoiless rifle element were reformed as a company size element to be known as "Unit Three", consisting of a Command Committee, Administrative Staff, a reconnaissance platoon, 75mm recoiless rifle and 81mm mortar platoons and a River Mining Squad.

The mission of Unit Three, established by a conference held after the mining of a U.S. LCM-3 on 7 October, is to conduct "Quick and Clean" offensive operations against shipping along the Long Tau, Nha Be and Song Bau Rivers.7

The first action of the month of October involved six SEALs from Nha Be who were inserted in an ambush site 17 miles southeast of Nha Be at the junction of three streams running between the Go Gia river and the Nga Fay river at 1845 on 3 October.

The SEALs were subdivided into three two-man teams, sited about 15 yards apart in a manner which would provide effective fields of fire on all three streams.

At 1935 a heavily-laden sampan, with two or three occupants, was sighted heading northwest in the Each San. One man was in the bow, rifle at the ready. The boat approached the ambush site cautiously and silently as if searching for something or someone.

As the sampan reached a position within six to eight yards of two of the SEAL teams, they opened fire on the boat. The occupants were knocked from the sampan and their bodies sank immediately. There were two, and possibly three, persons in the boat.

The sampan was allowed to drift from the area since the SEALs

7 COUSMACV msg 165930Z 10Y 66 - Data taken from 30 Viet Cong documents captured by elements of 3d Bde, 4th Inf on 15 Nov 66
noted a flame sputtering in the boat and thought that this might be the fuse on a demolition charge. It was later evaluated as a burning tracer bullet.

One SEAL was slightly wounded in the foray, either by hostile fire or by fire from the party of the northwest bank of the Rach San. The SEALs extracted from the area, to return the next morning.

At 0900 the next day, the SEAL team returned in an LCM-3 and found a CHICHE carbine sticking muzzle down in the mud. Despite an intensive search of the area, the sampan was not located. Results of the incident were: two (possibly three) Viet Cong killed, one SEAL wounded and one carbine captured. (CTG 116.1 msg 041425Z OCT 66)

On 6 October at 0530, the U.S. advisor aboard a Vietnamese minesweeping motor launch reported that Viet Cong had attempted to mine the KMS, and then had taken it under fire six miles ESE of Nha Be in the Long Tau river.

Two U.S. Navy KSEs in the vicinity were also taken under small arms and automatic weapons fire from the bank. The SEALs were dispatched from Nha Be to provide additional fire support, as the ROSE Senior Advisor ordered the Long Tau helo fire team into the area.

The SEAL team arrived on the scene at 0945 and conducted reconnaissance by fire as a fixed wing air strike was called in and U.S. Army artillery fire from a battery at Than Tom Hiet was directed into the area of the enemy fire.

Through the combined efforts of air, sea and ground forces, the
Viet Cong fire was quickly suppressed and the minesweepers resumed operations. (CTG 116.2 msg 060830Z OCT 66)

At 2045 the same day, PBRs 45 and 67, enroute from Nha Be to Cat Lo, took five mortar rounds from an undetermined location ashore, about 15 miles southeast of Nha Be. The first round landed ahead of the first boat, PBR 67, and the second close aboard, while the third landed close aboard the 45 boat. As the patrol gained speed, the last two rounds hit well astern.

PBR 67 sustained a radio casualty from the second round, while PBR 45 was hit by shrapnel which did no significant damage. There were no personnel casualties and the boats continued their transit. (CTG 116.2 msg 061425Z OCT 66)

On the night of 7 October, the SSAL LCM-3, on the way to set up an ambush, was taken under fire by mortars, automatic weapons and small arms fire in the mangrove swamp about six miles southeast of Nha Be.

The first indication of the attack came when a mortar round landed about 150 yards ahead of the LCM. This was followed by unusually accurate automatic weapons and small arms fire from the beach.

The LCM was hit by one mortar round near the starboard .30 caliber mount, about 3/4 of the boat's length from the bow. The boat returned the fire and turned to clear the area despite engineering and steering difficulty, and a helo fire team and a flare aircraft were called in.
The LCM proceeded to a Regional Force outpost where five critically wounded personnel were evacuated to Nha Be by helicopter. The LCM, with ten less seriously wounded aboard, was escorted by a P3R patrol and two MSBs and returned to Nha Be under its own power.

Because of the heavy casualties suffered by the SEALs, the ambush mission was abandoned. Had it been carried on, it probably would have resulted in heavy contact with the enemy, because at 0240 the next day, a P3R patrol was taken under heavy and accurate automatic weapons and small arms fire from a position less than 100 yards from the proposed SEAL ambush site on the west bank of the Song Dua.

The P3Rs cleared the area and returned the enemy fire, which, unlike previous night firing incidents, was accurate and well directed. In the past P3Rs noted that the Viet Cong generally fired high and well astern of the moving boats.

One of the boats, P3R 74, sustained some minor hits which did not affect her ability to carry out her mission. (CTG 116.2 msg 071852, 071932Z and 080051Z OCT 66)

At 1110 on the same day, a P3R patrol in the Long Tau River, about 14 miles southeast of Nha Be, sighted a quarter-inch wire leading into the brush from the river's edge just downstream from an RF/FF outpost.

Vietnamese authorities dispatched a platoon from RF Company 999 to investigate the discovery. This company had earlier found a ten kilo mine and food and fresh water in this same general area. The
Vietnamese troops traced the wire into the river and found a large mine which was recovered by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from Nha Be.

The HF platoon also found a well-laid ambush site with three foxholes, aiming stakes, a claymore mine facing the river and two spools of wire.

Regional Force Company 508, acting on an intelligence report, later found three more large water mines in the vicinity.

On 23 October MSB-52 reported striking a submerged object with one or her screws. The next day an MSB patrol, on the Long Tau six miles southeast of Nha Be, sighted a mine on the east bank of the river within a short distance from the previous day's incident.

After the boats of River Assault Group 22 reconnoitered the area by fire, EOD personnel, embarked in PBVs with the MSB element undercovered, recovered a 24-inch command detonated mine with command wires attached.

The 60-pound mine had two dents in its spherical surface and several bronze scrapings, indicating that this was probably the object struck by the minesweeper the previous day. Evidence (wire length and the reported position of the object struck by MSB-52) indicated that the mine had been planted about 70 yards from the bank, an excellent position to mine an MSB conducting a chain drag sweep.

At 1730 MSB 45 sighted a green wire attached to a nylon line leading into a small inlet about a mile and a half downstream from
the mine found earlier in the day.

Once again the EOD team was dispatched in PBRs as FAC 22 conducted reconnaissance by fire. This time the EOD team found a wire leading up a small stream to a clump of bushes, where it was secured with sticks and mud. The wire was cut at the river end, and the end appeared to match the wire found on the mine in the morning.

While standing out of Iha Be Harbor on the night of 28 October, the SEAL team LCH-3 received sporadic small arms fire from the east bank of the harbor, and then from two sampans attempting to cross the harbor from the east bank.

Two PBRs and a helo fire team were dispatched to the scene. The LCH and the PBRs took the sampans under fire and destroyed one. The second sampan ran up the Ha Chong Thuoc and was lost.

On 29 October at 2030, PBRs 73 and 94, while patrolling 11 miles south of Iha Be on the Soirap, received automatic weapons and small arms fire from both banks of the river.

At 2044 the GAME WARDEN helo fire team conducted reconnaissance by fire along both banks, and at 2055 a C-47 flare aircraft illuminated the area as the helicopters again reconnoitered with fire. The fire team reported fire from several locations, and the C-47 saturated the area with her mini-guns.

During the engagement, which was possibly a Viet Cong river crossing attempt, one helicopter took a bullet in a rotor blade, but returned safely to its base.
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

BEACHED JUNK INCIDENT

On 19 October at 1200, PCF 15 observed a large junk aground 40 miles southeast of DaNang. Its cargo was being offloaded by approximately 300 persons who dispersed when PCF 15 approached. Almost immediately, small arms fire was directed against PCF 15. As PCF 15 returned the fire, other MARKET TIME units proceeded into the area to assist.

At 1315 an airstrike set the junk afire. At about 1700, helicopters from Chu Lai landed U.S. Marines who swept the area, killing one Viet Cong and capturing six Viet Cong suspects. The Marines reported that the junk was 60% destroyed by fire and that its cargo, consisting of coffee, beer, furniture, auto tires, bales of cotton rags, bulk cardboard boxes, etc., valued at 10,000,000$VN (about $45,000 U.S.), was littered about the beach. The Marines withdrew about 2000.

Three of the junk's crew were picked up in the Marine sweep; the others made their way to DaNang during the fighting. Interrogation of the crewmen revealed that the junk and its crew had been captured by 40 Viet Cong.

The junk "HAI AHOM" had been hauling legitimate cargo from Saigon to DaNang when it was run aground deliberately on the night of 18-19 October because of engine trouble. At dawn of the 19th, the Viet Cong commandeered the junk and crew and set about offloading
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the cargo. The arrival of MARKET TIME forces foiled the Viet Cong's plans and allowed the crew to escape.

Intensive investigation revealed that the beached junk incident was not an infiltration attempt and that the junk's crew was innocent.\(^8\)

PACV/PBR COLLISION

On 5 October at about 2020, PBR 44 and PACV 2 collided about three miles west of Cat Lo.\(^9\) Two crewmen on the PBR and one on the PACV sustained minor injuries. Both boats sustained heavy damage; however, both returned to Cat Lo under their own power.

At 1950 PBRs 43 and 44 were returning to Cat Lo after PBR 43 had experienced radar failure while enroute to their Long Tau River patrol area. PBR 44 was the forward boat with masthead, recognition and running lights showing. The patrol was moving at a speed of 20 knots.

PACV 2 departed Cat Lo at 1955 proceeding at an estimated 20 knots on the starboard side of the channel, running darkened in accordance with operating instructions. A moving contact was detected on radar and visually bearing 345° (relative) approximately 500 yards away. PACV 2 went into a starboard turn, evaluating the situation as a port to port passing. When the contact, PBR 44, was 100 to 200 yards away, the PACV began ditching (setting the craft down into the

\(^{8}\) CONFNAVFORV msg 220030Z OCT 66

\(^{9}\) Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the collision of PACV 2 and PBR 44 at about 2020 hours on 5 October 1966, near Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam by Lieutenant Commander Joseph L. Wall, USA, 305412/1100 with NAVFORV FIRST ENDORSEMENT PP5-16/07.1:a:p 5630 ser 2658 dated 14 Nov 66