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* * * * *
The month of November ushered in the Northeast Monsoon season, which hampered the operations of MARKET TIME units. GAME WARDEN activities, however, continued to increase as the Viet Cong gave indications that the PEs were successfully interdicting enemy operations throughout the Delta.

The personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy grew in November as the desertion rate dropped off for the fifth consecutive month. For the first time the Vietnamese Marines participated in a combined American-Vietnamese operation (LAN Sun 328). During this successful operation, the Marine organization continued to exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

The most unique operation of the month involved the Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACVs) in Operation QUAI VAT, a search and destroy mission in the Noc Hoa area of the Delta's Plain of Reeds. The PACVs, which had enjoyed only modest operational success previously, proved their effectiveness in an environment especially suited to their capabilities. The U.S. Special Forces, with whom the PACVs operated at Noc Hoa, were enthusiastic in their appraisal of Operation QUAI VAT.

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CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1 Nov - MSB 54 mined. Two U.S. Navymen killed. p. 29.

7 Nov - PCF 67 sinks two junks. p. 44.

9 Nov - PBRs and Vietnamese Customs boat ambushed. One American and one Vietnamese wounded. p. 24.


12 Nov - PCF 65 fired on. One secondary explosion and three sampans destroyed by PCF 65’s return fire. p. 43.

15 Nov - PCF 77 broaches and sinks. Three crew members killed. p. 40.

16 Nov - Two PBR crewmen wounded during fire fight. Helicopters destroy two houses and eight huts. p. 25.

18 Nov - MARKET TIME units destroy one junk and trigger five secondary explosions. p. 46.


22 Nov - Viet Cong crossing broken up. Four Viet Cong killed. One hut and one sampan destroyed. p. 20.

26 Nov - GATE WARDEN helicopters kill ten Viet Cong. p. 29.

27 Nov - Vietnamese Navy (VNA) LCU 536 ambushed. Four VNN sailors killed and nine wounded. p. 60.

25 Nov - SHAIK kill one Viet Cong and capture sampan. p. 36.

30 Nov - GATE WARDEN helicopters kill two Viet Cong and destroy five structures. p. 29.

* * * * *
OPERATION QUAI VAT

Operation QUAI VAT (Monster), conducted in late November and early December, was an operation designed to test the capability of the Patrol Air Cushion Vehicle (PACV) to operate over marshy, submerged terrain. The Plain of Reeds in Kien Phong and Kien Tuong Provinces was such an area.

During the flood season, PBGs had conducted successful operations in this area, a region which had been under Viet Cong control for several years. As the floods subsided, boat operations were no longer feasible, but the zero draft characteristic of the PACV made it an ideal craft for the flat, open country of the Plain of Reeds, which was still largely underwater.

Liaison was established with U.S. Army Special Forces (USSF) Detachment E-41 at Koc Hoa. Special Forces were interested in two aspects of the PACV:

1. The psychological impact of the awesome appearance and noise of the vehicle. Word was spread throughout the area that the "Monster" was coming. The following is a literal translation of the Vietnamese leaflet dropped in the Plain of Reeds informing the Viet Cong of the capabilities of the PACV:

“One kind of modern machine just used by the Forces of the Republic of Viet Nam in IV Corps Tactical Zone. Air cushion boat does not care mud, canal and field as well as river because this kind of machine can travel on road and in river. The air cushion boat is also armed with automatic guns having a powerful fire power. Viet Cong have been foiled seriously by this kind of boat and Viet Cong troops have complained 'It is the time of the end of South Vietnam Liberation Front'.”

2. The mobility afforded by the high speed (60 knots) of the
Three PACVs were deployed from Cat Lo on 20 November, with refueling stops at My Tho, Vinh Long, and the Special Forces airstrip at An Long.

At An Long, the PACVs conducted a reconnaissance by fire mission in Cai Cai village with Special Forces and Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troop support. The PACVs encountered no hostile fire at Cai Cai, a known Viet Cong village. Fourteen huts and 12 sampans were destroyed.

On 21 November the PACVs, with ten CIDG troops and one USSF advisor embarked in each vehicle, supported by the GAMES WARDEN light fire team from Vinh Long, conducted search and destroy operations in a known Viet Cong base area to the east of Hoc Hoa. The Kien Tuong Province Chief and his intelligence officer were embarked in one of the PACVs for the day. The mission’s results were two structures and 12 sampans destroyed, and one Viet Cong captured, as well as 200 pounds of food, six documents and a medical kit.

On 22 November in the same area, five rifles were found by the CIDG troops. At 1040, GAMES WARDEN helicopters from HC-1 Det 25 received heavy automatic weapons fire from approximately 25 sampans in an area eight miles east-northeast of Hoc Hoa near the Cambodian border. Fire was returned by both the GAMES WARDEN fire team and an Army fire team in the area. When the PACVs arrived on the scene, the embarked CIDG troops made contact with an unknown number of Viet Cong. Kien Tuong provincial troops were landed by helicopter.
to provide a blocking force as helicopters, PACVs and airboats pursued the enemy. Upon landing, the provincial troops received fire from a village which had been flying a Viet Cong flag. The flag was hauled down and replaced by a Cambodian flag. To avoid a possible border incident, the troops were extracted from the area.

Then CIDG troops again were landed well inside the Vietnamese border and gained contact with the fleeing enemy. PACVs supported the troops with automatic weapons fire, killing six of the enemy and destroying six sampans. Helicopters killed an additional nine Viet Cong, and possibly 52 more, destroyed eight sampans and two huts, and damaged ten sampans and three huts.

The day's operation, which involved three PACVs, three Navy and three Army armed helicopters, six UH-1D transports, ten reaction force troops (Hmong tribesmen) in five airboats, 50 CIDG troops, and seven U.S. and four Vietnamese Special Forces troops, accounted for a total of 50 Viet Cong killed while 11 weapons, 25 booby traps and three kilos of documents were captured. Friendly casualties were two CIDG wounded.

On 24 November, the fourth day of Operation QUAI VAT, the allied forces destroyed 20 structures, sank 50 sampans and destroyed a hand printing press and numerous items of personal equipment left behind by the Viet Cong. Forty pounds of documents, leaflets and propaganda materials, 12 grenades, three outboard motors, and two pounds of radikal supplies were captured.

On 25 November, operations were conducted to the south and east
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of Moc Hoa. The PACVs killed 13 Viet Cong and captured six more, destroyed 25 sampans, and captured 40 pounds of Viet Cong equipment. GARELZ/AIDEN helicopters destroyed four huts and four sampans.

Original plans envisioned termination of the operation on 26 November. However, the Army requested that Operation QUAI VAT be extended for another week because the PACVs had proven so successful in the environment of the Plain of Reeds.

On 26 November, the PACVs returned to Cat Lo for intensive inspection and maintenance before beginning the second week of operations in Moc Hoa. On 30 November, the vehicles made no contact with the enemy during search and destroy operations west of Moc Hoa. Several suspected cache sites were inspected, with negative results. One sampan was destroyed, and one CING soldier was wounded by a booby trap.

Little contact was made with the enemy during the second period, but on 2 December, two Viet Cong were captured, 44 structures were destroyed, and two outboard motors, six documents, and numerous items of personal equipment were captured.

On 5 December, PACDIV 107 terminated Operation QUAI VAT and returned to Cat Lo. The operation was considered an unqualified success, both as a test of the abilities of the PACV to operate in the Plain of Reeds environment, and as an offensive operation. During the last week of the operation the water level in the Plain of Reeds was nearly back to normal, yet the vehicles continued to operate without difficulty. CPRODIV 107 stated that, with proper
logistic support, the craft could operate in the environment 12 months of the year.

The mobility provided by the PACV was the key to its tactical success. Troops could be moved rapidly through areas inaccessible to other types of vehicles, and in which even the mobility of foot soldiers was restricted by chest-deep water over a slimy bottom.

Troops riding on the outside of the vehicles were delivered to hooches (huts) and bunkers, with the machine guns and grenade launchers softening up the emplacements during the approach. The troops were then landed to search the area under the cover of the PACVs' .50 caliber guns.

Helicopters overhead were used to vector the PACVs to suspicious areas spotted from the air, to provide air support, and to assist in finding routes from point to point. While the PACVs could operate over dry land, low dikes, marshes, shrubbery and flooded areas, they were restricted by heavy woods and high banks in some areas. Helicopter reconnaissance was necessary to find routes in some areas.

The close coordination and cooperation of Navy and Army personnel on all levels was perhaps the key to the overall success of the operation. Special Forces advisors who knew the area accompanied the PACVs on all operations, taking them to known Viet Cong strongholds. The advisors also provided psychological warfare preparation for the operations as well as intelligence support.
RIVER PATROL FORCE

Viet Cong activity in the Mekong Delta rose sharply during November. Cu Lao Ka Island in the Bassac River, the Co Chien River near Cu Lao Giai Island, and the vicinity of Ngo Hiep Island in the Mekong River were centers of increased activity. Twelve separate hostile fire incidents occurred in a seven-mile stretch of the Mekong River between Ngo Hiep and Thoi Son Islands. On the Co Chien, six hostile fire incidents were reported in the area between 20 and 28 miles downstream from Vinh Long. The area between five and 13 miles downstream from Can Tho was the scene of three hostile fire incidents. In the same area, Can Tho SEAs came to the assistance of outposts in the Tra On Sector on 13 and 30 November, and on November a suspect was apprehended with contraband medicines.

The growing effectiveness of GAME WARDEN operations was indicated by the steadily increasing flow of intelligence from cooperative Delta inhabitants. The friendly, helpful attitude of the American sailors and the effectiveness of U.S. patrols in reducing Viet Cong "tax collections" were factors that helped win increasing acceptance for the SEAs. According to a "Hoi Chanh" who rallied at Ky Tho, Viet Cong "taxation" in that area had dropped from one million piasters in 1965 to 97,000 during 1966, primarily as a result of GAME WARDEN operations on the Ky Tho River.

1 A Viet Cong who has returned to government control. Literally, hoi - to return; chanh - just cause

2 Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer (N:110) Ky Tho msg 270427Z NOV
Further indications of the effectiveness of GAME WARDEN operations were the increased Viet Cong harassment of GAME WARDEN patrols and the psychological warfare campaigns waged against river patrol forces. In Sa Dec residents were warned by the Viet Cong to avoid contact with Navy personnel for their own safety because Vietnamese would be killed during attempts to assassinate U.S. Navy personnel.

Growing cooperation with Vietnamese government officials and armed forces on all levels was noted also during the month. On 9 November, the Commanding General, IV Corps, ordered his tactical zone commanders to provide six National Police or Regional Force troops to each river patrol section to assist in liaison with the local populace.

The first LST configured for GAME WARDEN operations, USS JERRELL'S COUNTRY (LST-146), arrived on station at the mouth of the Bassac on 15 November. Navy seas caused by the northeast monsoon and the long fetch over shallow water precluded satisfactory PHM operations. The LST was moved to Can Tho on 16 November.

The first successful mining of a U.S. Navy minesweeper in the Long Gat Special Zone (LG SZ) occurred on 1 November with the loss of two American lives. The mining was accompanied by heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from well-prepared ambush sites on the east bank of the Long Tau River.

On 7 November a crew member drowned when an Army gun ship crashed into the Soirap River in a driving rainstorm while approaching the

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3 Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer (NLLO) Sa Dec Dec 196502 KCV
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Nha Be helicopter pad with survivors of an earlier crash. Quick reaction by base personnel prevented further loss of lives. During the rescue operations, hostile fire was received on two occasions.

On 10 November a watermine, measuring two feet in diameter, was found in the Long Tau river. The mine contained 30 pounds of explosives and its location, 100 yards from the bank and ten feet below the water's surface, indicated that it was to be used against minesweepers or PERS.

On 25 November 15 miles southeast of Nha Be, a SEAL ambush team killed one or two Viet Cong, and captured two Soviet anti-tank rockets, six pairs of boots and a small plastic bag full of documents.

ARRIVAL OF GAME VANDEN SUPPORT SHIP (LST-846)

The first of the specially configured GAME VANDEN ISTs, USS JUNE CAPTAIN JONES (LST-846), arrived at Vung Tau on 11 November and relieved USS CAMELION (LST-19).

JUNE CAPTAIN JONES arrived on station at the mouth of the Essac at 1230 on 15 November. Considerable difficulty was encountered in positioning the ship because of heavy seas, high winds and a strong current. The initial attempt to anchor, heading into the wind and dropping the stern anchor first, failed when the ship's head slewed 100° before the anchor could be dropped.

On the third attempt, the stern anchor held, with the ship's roll steadying to 10-15 degrees. Attempts to launch PERSs on 16 November failed because of heavy seas. Finally, on 17 November,
two PBUs were launched while a third was set adrift and recovered later. Because of the difficulties in handling boats, JENNINGS COUNTY was shifted to Can Tho on 18 November.

Specific difficulties included: steel-wheeled dollies and forklifts with hard rubber tires would slip on the wet decks because of the ship's constant rolling; when the LST was anchored in a position where rolling was minimized, strong cross winds created problems in handling boats on the lifting hook; PBU and helicopter handling were incompatible in that favorable conditions for handling boats precluded helicopter-launching operations.

In subsequent operations conducted off Can Tho in relatively calm weather, it was found that helicopters could be refueled and rearmed more rapidly aboard ship than at a field. Fire teams were completely rearmed and refueled in 12 minutes, measured from touchdown to take-off. In addition, the ship's CIC kept relief crews abreast of the status of any action in progress.

DELTA RIVER, PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Lower Bassac River

On 17 November PBUs 35 and 36, while on routine patrol 13 miles downstream from Can Tho, observed a sampan with three persons aboard crossing from north to south on the Bassac River at 2115 in a known Viet Cong crossing area. The sampan directed five rounds of small arms fire at the patrol while making for the mouth of a small canal. The PBUs opened fire at a range of 150 yards as the patrol leader requested artillery support from Kesan sector.
The PEs expended 350 rounds of .50 caliber, 15 rounds of M-79, 200 rounds of M-60, and 40 rounds of M-16 at the sampan. Kesach subsector artillery delivered ten rounds of artillery to the north bank and 20 rounds to the south bank with unknown results. The sampan disappeared and was presumed to have been sunk with its three occupants.

A PER patrol observed a sampan attempting to cross the Bassac in a known Viet Cong crossing area five miles downstream from Can Tho at 2355 on 25 November. The sampan was illuminated and hailed. After the sampan had ignored the hailings, warning shots were fired. At this point, 30-40 rounds of small arms fire were directed at the PEs from the sampan and the bank. The patrol returned .50 caliber and M-79 fire, as enemy fire was quickly suppressed. No trace was found of the sampan despite a thorough search of the area.

On 26 November a fairly reliable intelligence agent reported that the patrol had broken up an attempt to move arms into a Viet Cong training area in Phong Dinh Province, killing ten Viet Cong on the bank and two in a sampan, and sinking two sampans with an undetermined amount of arms.

On 25 November PEs 37 and 36 were proceeding to rendezvous with Vietnamese River Assault Group (RAG) units after having served as a blocking force for a Tra On subsector operation on Cu Lao May Island. The District Chief and his U.S. Army advisor were embarked in the PEs, and were enroute to observe the RAG units conducting a training exercise to the south.
At 0550 the patrol received approximately 100 rounds of automatic weapons and 40-50 rounds of small arms fire from the north bank of the Bassac River 13 miles downstream from Can Tho. The patrol returned fire. Twenty-seven boats of RAGs 25, 26 and 29 supported the FERs with fire. The hostile fire was suppressed. Again at 1030, the patrol began to receive fire. FERs 59 and 60 joined the fight, and artillery and GAME WARDEN helicopter fire teams were requested. At 10:55 artillery fire commenced, and at 11:05 the first helicopter strike was launched by JENNINGS COUNTY, anchored off Can Tho.

The crew of JENNINGS COUNTY, although relatively new to GAME WARDEN helicopter operations, completely rearmed the helicopters twice with a turnaround time of less than ten minutes, and the fire teams were able to put three strikes in the area before fire was suppressed.

At 12:55, FERs 59 and 60 received a rifle grenade from a position one mile upstream from the initial ambush and, with FERs 37 and 38, took this position under fire. At 13:15, FERs 37 and 38 came to the assistance of an outpost nearby, and quickly broke up the enemy attack. All action ceased at this time.

There were no friendly casualties during the engagement, and no material damage to U.S. or Vietnamese craft. Enemy casualties in the battle were unknown.

Assistance to Friendly Forces

GAME WARDEN units in the lower Bassac assisted Vietnamese
forces with fire support or medical evacuation on three occasions during the month.

On 2 November, five wounded sailors from a Vietnamese LSIL, which had been hit by 57mm recoilless rifle fire at the entrance to the hinh Quan Chanh Bo canal near the mouth of the Bassac, were taken by SEa to an outpost near Cu Lao Cong Dinh Island where GAME WAH5II helicopters picked up the wounded for further transfer to Can Tho.

On 13 November SEs evacuated five wounded Vietnamese personnel from Tra On to Can Tho. They had been wounded in an attack on their outpost five miles northeast of Tra On.

At 1530 on 26 November, River Patrol forces suppressed hostile fire in response to a call for assistance from two Coastal Group 36 junks under attack at the tip of Cu Lao Hung Island in the mouth of the Bassac.

Other Incidents

On 5 November at 1100, PHS 30 and 31, engaged in a routine search of river traffic eight miles upstream from Can Tho, discovered 80,000 strings hidden under the after deck boards of a sampan. The sampan's occupant, who gave his name as Dam Van Thanh, had no identification papers and was turned over to the Vietnamese Navy for questioning.

On 15 November at 0300, while on routine patrol 17 miles downstream from Can Tho, PHS 30 and 41 observed a man throwing objects over the side of his sampan. The objects were discovered to be
nuoc mam (fish sauce) jars containing medicine. The suspect was
detained and turned over to Vietnamese Naval authorities who dis-
covered Viet Cong travel authorization papers on his person.

Operations in the Upper Bassac and Mekong Rivers

River Patrol Unit Bravo, based at Long Xuyen and Sa Dec,
patrolled the upper Bassac and Mekong Rivers.

On 8 November at 1114, PBs 61 and 62, operating 36 miles
northwest of Sa Dec on the Hekong, observed two men moving south-
west in a sampan. After the men ignored hails and warning shots,
they were taken under direct fire. One of the men was wounded in
the leg. The other man escaped into the brush. The wounded man
was questioned at Sa Dec, where he refused to name his companion.
He gave three different and conflicting reasons for his attempts
to evade. The man was turned over to the Australian Medical Team
for treatment, after which interrogation was continued.

Five miles east of Sa Dec, PBs approached two sampans in the
middle of the river at 1445 on 11 November. The sampans evaded,
refused to answer hails, and were taken under direct fire. The
action resulted in one probable kill. On 25 November, a similar
incident occurred 10 miles north of Long Xuyen on the Bassac when
two sampans were sighted close to the bank. The sampans' occupants
left their boats as the patrol received automatic weapons fire from
the beach. The PBs suppressed the hostile fire, sank one sampan
and captured the other.

On 26 November, three miles from the Cambodian border, PBs
136 and 138 hailed a sampan which evaded to the beach. The boat’s single occupant fled and was taken under direct fire and mortally wounded.

Support of Friendly Forces

River Patrol Unit Bravo forces provided support for friendly Vietnamese forces on seven occasions during the month. On 16 November, a Vietnamese civilian was taken from Tra On to the hospital at Long Xuyen after his foot had been blown off by a Viet Cong mine. On 25 November, another mine victim was taken from his Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) outpost to the Australian Surgical Team at Long Xuyen.

On 22 November, Sa Dec PBRs provided blocking forces for the 13th ARVN Battalion. During the operation, the patrol received five rounds of sniper fire, and returned M-60 and M-16 fire. There were no friendly casualties; Viet Cong casualties were unknown. On the same day, PBRs came to the assistance of an outpost which was under attack 25 miles from Sa Dec. The Thanh Binh District Chief directed the fire from the beach, and observed it to be very effective.

On 25 November, Sa Dec-based PBRs 80 and 81 provided indirect azimuth .50 caliber fire in support of an outpost near Tan Hoa hamlet three nautical miles inland from the Mekong River. The fire was requested by the assistant advisor, 3/13 Battalion of the Ninth ARVN Division, who observed and corrected the fire.

With the Senior Advisor, 3/13 Bn embarked, the boats took station in the river as close as possible to the outpost and opened
fire in a triangular area approximately 3000 meters on each side, with its base on the outpost and its apex approximately 015°true from the outpost along the line of fire from the boats.

The spotter reported that the fire was effective, and the attack was quickly broken. The PBIs expended 3250 rounds of .50 caliber. There were no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were unknown.

On 27 November, Sa Dec-based PBRs picked up a wounded Regional Force soldier from a sampan while friendly forces provided beach security. The wounded man was taken to the Sa Dec hospital.

**Operations in the Co Chien River**

Most of November's activity on the Co Chien River was in the vicinity of Cu Lao Giai and Cu Lao Hoi Islands, between 20 and 30 miles down river from Vinh Long.

**Hostile Fire and Evasion Incidents**

On 4 November, PBRs 86 and 100 received about 50 rounds of automatic weapons fire from the north bank of the river 20 miles downstream from Vinh Long at 1730. The patrol returned fire, and called in the Vinh Long heavy fire team (two UH-1B helicopter gunships and a .50 caliber armed UH-1). Viet Cong fire was effectively suppressed.

At 2203 on 4 November, PBRs 97 and 102, operating in the same area in which PBRs 86 and 100 were taken under fire earlier, observed a lighted sampan lying close to the north bank. As the PBRs closed to investigate, the enemy opened fire from both banks. The patrol,
returning fire with .50 caliber and M-79 weapons, cleared the area.

The helicopter fire team scrambled from Vinh Long, and PBRs 86 and 100 joined the engagement. At 2230, heavy fire again erupted from both banks, and the boats cleared the area. The four boats then began high speed firing runs, marking the area for the fire team.

The boats again cleared the area, and the helicopters took the enemy under fire. On the first runs, the helicopters reported moderate ground fire.

At 2325, 105mm howitzer fire from the battery at No Cay began as the helicopters spotted the fall of shot. When the fire team was forced to return to its base to refuel, the PBRs took over the spotting task, and a total of 26 rounds of 105mm were placed in the ambush area.

The target, believed to be bank security elements for an attempted communications-liaison crossing, was neutralized at 0050, 5 November, and the PBRs resumed normal patrols. PBR 66 received some superficial damage, but there were no personnel casualties.

On 14 November the Viet Cong attempted an estimated platoon-size ambush again from the area 20 miles downstream from Vinh Long. PBRs 66 and 117, while engaged in routine junk search operations, were taken under fire from the north bank. The boats, while clearing at high speed to the west, also received automatic weapons fire from a 30-foot sampan close to the north bank. The sampan was hit with .50 caliber and M-79 fire.
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PBRs 29 and 97 joined the fight and the GAME WARDEN helicopter fire team scrambled to the scene. As the four boats moved back into the area to mark the targets, they were taken under heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire. The boats reversed course as the fire team neutralized the area. Two huts and one sampan were destroyed by the fire team.

On 25 November, PBRs 29 and 102 observed two men in a sampan 25 miles downstream from Vinh Long. As the patrol closed to investigate, fire was received from the sampan and the bank. The PBRs returned fire, sinking the sampan and killing its two occupants.

At 1530 on 27 November, River Assault Group (RAG) 23 units, operating in the same area, sighted 12 armed men in black pajama uniforms moving through the paddies on the north bank. Then the RAG units fired on the men, they took cover behind a paddy dike, returning the fire.

Six PBR patrols in the area joined the RAGs to form a blocking force as GAME WARDEN helicopters scrambled. Vietnamese LSIL 328 arrived and took the enemy under 3"/50, 40mm and 81mm mortar fire. Popular Forces (PF) troops were landed about 1630 by the RAG to sweep the area.

The helicopters killed one Viet Cong, another was killed by RAG fire, and a woman Viet Cong cadre was captured by the PF troops. The troops reported numerous articles of bloody clothing in the area. Naval forces suffered no casualties, but two PF troops were wounded by a grenade booby trap.
On 30 November, FBRs 100 and 116 were conducting visit and search operations near the junction of the Mekong and Co Chien Rivers. At 1605, the patrol sighted two sampans close to the north bank. Then the boats were hailed, one escaped up a small canal, and the other beached. The three occupants of the second sampan took cover in vegetation on the bank. With FBR 116 covering, FBR 100 moved in to attempt to flush out the three evaders. Heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire broke out from the opposite bank.

FBR 116 cleared the area as FBR 100 made a high speed firing run on the enemy position. Because enemy fire could not be suppressed, the FBRs called for artillery support from Giao Duc subsector.

The Giao Duc battery opened fire within ten minutes after the request, and the FBRs remained 300-400 yards from the enemy position to spot the fall of shot. After firing 26 rounds of 105mm howitzer shells into the area, the battery checked fire as FBRs 100 and 116, with FBRs 60 and 111 in company, swept past the target. Since no fire was received from the enemy position, the target was considered neutralized.

Support of Friendly Forces

Vinh Long-based FBRs were active in supporting friendly forces during the month. In addition to the combined operation mentioned in the previous section, FBRs came to the assistance of outposts under attack on four occasions.

On the night of 6 November, after having been informed by the
commander of an outpost near Cu Lao Hai Island that the Viet Cong intended to attack his outpost at 2000 that night, the PBR patrol remained in the area and broke up the attack which had commenced at 1953.

On 9 November at 1955, PBRs and Army helicopters supported an outpost under attack by an estimated company of Viet Cong. The first two boats on the scene, PBRs 29 and 116, delivered 4000 rounds of .50 caliber and 1200 rounds of M-60 fire. PBRs 96 and 106 joined the engagement and fired 900 rounds of .50 caliber. An Air Force AC-47 also joined the engagement, and the combined firepower of friendly forces broke up the attack.

On 22 November, PBRs 66 and 117, patrolling in the vicinity of Cu Lao Hai Island, observed the outpost, which had been supported on 9 November, firing across an adjacent canal. The patrol was called in and informed the Viet Cong were attempting to cross the canal, and that the outpost had been holding down the enemy in hopes that PBRs would arrive soon.

Upon leaving the post, the two boats were taken under heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire, which they suppressed. An Army helicopter fire team arrived on the scene as heavy firing broke out again. The combined fire from the fire team and the PBRs soon suppressed the enemy fire. The helicopters reported that many of the enemy were along the bank, and many more were running across the fields.

The G-55E 'Al-Dek' fire team from Vinh Long joined the Army team
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in hitting targets in the area. The helicopters received heavy ground fire during their passes. A hut was destroyed, producing a small secondary explosion; one sampan was destroyed and six others damaged. Four Viet Cong were killed in the action which lasted from 1115 to 1500. There were no friendly casualties.

On 26 November, the same outpost which had been supported on 6 and 22 November was attacked again by the Viet Cong. PBRs 82 and 87 suppressed the enemy fire with .50 caliber and M-79 fire.

On 26 November, the commander of the outpost which had been supported on three occasions during the month stated that Viet Cong tax collectors with Government I.D. cards were operating in the vicinity of his post. The commander accompanied the patrol to aid in identification. At 1719, a sampan with four occupants was sighted crossing the Co Chien from south to north. As the patrol approached, all occupants immediately raised their hands without being ordered to. Normally, unless warning shots are fired, rivermen come alongside and produce I.D. cards without raising their hands. All the boat's occupants had valid I.D. cards, but the outpost commander identified them as the tax collectors in question. The suspects were taken to Vinh Long for further interrogation.

Mekong (My Tho) Operations

During November, friendly forces were taken under fire 12 times in a seven-mile strip of the Mekong River lying between Thoi Son and Ben Hiep Islands. Also, a large shipment of Viet Cong medicines was captured from a junk in this area.
Hostile Fire and Evasion Incidents

On 1 November at 1800, PBRs 56 and 105 received heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from the bank 11 miles west of My Tho. Then the bank was taken under fire, a large secondary explosion, producing black smoke rising 200 feet in the air, was observed. The Kam Long 105mm battery delivered 12 rounds on target at 1935. Friendly casualties were limited to one superficial hit on PBR 105.

On 2 November, PBRs approached a sampan near the south bank of the river, eight miles west of My Tho. At 1500 yards from the sampan, the patrol received small arms fire from the shore as the sampan disappeared into the brush. PBR 106 received five superficial hits in the forward part of the boat above the waterline. On 6 November in approximately the same area, PBRs 105 and 109 received 30 rounds of sniper fire. PBR 109 received a hit in the hull, one on an M-16 rifle barrel, and one on the starboard radio antenna. In both firefights, the patrols responded with .50 caliber and M-79 fire.

On 6 November, Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACVs) 1 and 3, operating at the mouth of the Mekong River, encountered hostile fire for the first time when they received 15 rounds of sniper fire which they returned with 100 rounds of .50 caliber.

On 7 November at 1425, PBRs 96 and 107 received 70 rounds of automatic weapons and small arms fire from a house on the south bank six miles west of My Tho. One crewmember of PBR 107 was wounded in the action and evacuated by helicopter to Saigon.
At 1610 on 9 November, PBRs 103 and 104, while escorting the Vietnamese Customs boat TD-10, received fire from the south bank of the river eight miles west of My Tho. Fire was returned by the PBRs and the enemy ceased fire. At 1730 on the return trip to My Tho, .50 caliber fire was received from eight positions along the north bank of the river. The first burst swept the deck of TD-10, wounding one Vietnamese and one American acting as radio liaison petty officer. The wounded were taken aboard the PBRs for evacuation.

As the patrol cleared the kill zone of the emplacement on the north bank, it entered another kill zone of a continuous ambush that ran for 5,000 meters along the south bank. PBRs 105 and 110, heading west from My Tho to support PBRs 103 and 104, passed through both kill zones to spot for the Vietnamese Army Seventh Division artillery.

At 1811, the first rounds of 105mm fire from the 72nd Artillery, Dinh Tuong sector, were walked up and down the north bank. The battery delivered 23 rounds of artillery, all on target.

The Vietnamese Navy LSSL 228 made a firing run past the north bank and put six rounds of 3"/50 and 100 rounds each of 40mm and 20mm fire into the ambush area. The naval gunfire and artillery were effective in silencing the enemy fire.

At 1825, PBRs 96 and 106, enroute to their western patrol sector, received approximately 400 rounds of small arms and automatic weapons fire from the south bank. The boats returned the
fire and continued upstream.

Two minutes later, PEs 101 and 107 passed through the embattled zone and received heavy fire. The Kien Hoa sector 105mm battery put several rounds into the area, suppressing the enemy fire. Despite blistering fire from both banks of the river, the only casualties were the two wounded from 72-10 who were evacuated to My Tho.

On 10 November there were two fire fights eight miles west of My Tho. At 0730, PEs 104 and 110 received 50 rounds of automatic weapons fire from two houses on the south bank. Seventh Division artillery totally destroyed one house and 13 rounds of 105mm, and damaged the second with 14 rounds. At 1405, the same patrol received automatic weapons fire from the damaged house and small arms fire from the tree line. The PEs and the GATIN DEK helicopter fire team suppressed the fire.

On 12 November, a PE patrol received 25 rounds of small arms fire and one rifle grenade from the north bank of the river. All enemy fire landed between the two boats. The patrol responded with .50 caliber and M-60 fire; Seventh Division artillery fired five rounds of 105mm.

On 16 November, there were three fire fights in the same area. At 0503, PEs broke up an attack on an outpost on the north bank eight miles west of My Tho. At 0505, PEs 109 and 110 received accurate, heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire on a house on the south bank in the same general area. Two crewmen were wounded, one seriously, before the area was neutralized by the PEs.
kien Hoa sector artillery, and the GAME WARDEN fire team. At 1620, PEBs 109 and 10 again received heavy fire from a house on the south bank. The helicopter fire team, supporting the boats, took heavy fire from the tree line around the house. The fire team destroyed six huts and damaged nine others. Two Army helicopter fire teams joined the action and damaged two houses and destroyed two huts. PEB 110 received two superficial hits.

On 17 November, PEBs 139 and 142 received approximately 50 rounds of automatic weapons fire at 1845 while on normal patrol 11 miles downstream from My Tho. The PEBs returned fire with unknown results. On 30 November in approximately the same location, the Viet Cong attempted to lure PEBs into a trap by floating a Viet Cong flag on a raft in the river. PEBs 140 and 144 ignored the flag and continued to patrol. At 1655 the patrol received 100 rounds of automatic weapons fire in the area and called for artillery. While standing by to spot, the PEBs received an additional 50 rounds of fire until the area was neutralized by artillery.

On 17 November, the Viet Cong again attempted a major ambush in the area to the west of My Tho. At 1410, PEBs 98 and 105 were taken under fire by snipers in tree tops on both banks. When the patrols returned the sniper fire, they were taken under .50 caliber and .30 caliber automatic weapons fire from eight positions on the north bank and five on the south bank. Approximately 40 rifles were being fired at the patrol from the north and 20 from the south.

PEBs 96 and 109 joined the action and artillery fire was
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requested. PER 105 spotted 13 rounds of 105mm which succeeded in neutralizing at least one of the automatic weapons positions on the north bank.

At 1515 helicopters from HC-1 Det 25 (Vinh Long) arrived, firing on Viet Cong positions and fleeing troops. One rocket salvo landed in the midst of a group of ten Viet Cong who were running across the fields behind the ambush site. All ten were killed. Four huts were destroyed and two more damaged before the helicopters departed to rearm at Ben Tre.

At 1618, the PBUs and helicopter fire team again entered the kill zone and came under heavy fire from the north bank. The fire team destroyed two automatic weapons positions in two huts. PER 105 spotted 11 rounds of Seventh artillery 105mm fire which destroyed three more huts and neutralized the north bank.

At 1735 the fire team made a pass down both banks without drawing fire in the area of the original ambush. However, small arms fire was received from the south bank about 50 meters east of the area. The fire team made several firing runs in the area, destroying six huts and damaging five.

Other Incidents

On 25 November the Viet Cong launched a mortar attack on the Dong Tam construction site about five miles west of My Tho. The mortar fire, which originated about one mile north of the site, missed the Jamaica Bay dredge, but hit a smaller dredge. One Vietnamese Army soldier was killed and another was wounded by the
mortar fire. Army helicopters, Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group units and Vietnamese Army artillery struck the enemy positions as PBRs evacuated the two Vietnamese casualties.

On 29 November, PBRs 98 and 106, while engaged in the routine search of a junk nine miles west of My Tho, discovered a large quantity of unmanifested medicine. Papers aboard the junk indicated that 37,000 piasters had been paid to the Viet Cong between July and November 1966. The sampan was turned over to the National Police. 

Game Warden Helicopter Operations

In addition to participating in most of the major actions involving GAME WARDEN forces in the Mekong Delta, the helicopter fire teams were involved in five incidents during the month of November which were not in direct support of PBR operations.

On 2 November, while escorting the Chief of Naval Operations, one armed gunship lost power on takeoff and crashed in the river at My Tho. Two persons were slightly injured and the helicopter sustained minor damage. The hulk was recovered with part of its armament and taken to Vung Tau by an Army Chinook helicopter.

On 5 November a helicopter fire team sighted three sampans heading for a canal at the mouth of the Bassac. The helicopters made low passes across the bow of the lead sampan and fired warning shots in an attempt to drive the boats back into the river where they could be inspected by an approaching PBR patrol.

The heavily-laden lead sampan continued to evade to the beach as the other two sampans surrendered to the PBRs. Upon beaching, the three male occupants of the lead sampan took cover in the brush.
At this time the fire team received automatic weapons and small arms fire. The fire team then destroyed the sampan and its contents. One of the two sampans that had surrendered was found to be carrying 200 pounds of rice, and was turned over to Coastal Group 36 by the PFNs.

At 1100 on 26 November, an Army forward air controller (FAC) in an L-19 reported approximately 50 Viet Cong camouflaged with grass in a ricefield seven miles south of Can Tho. The GAME FARDEN light fire team was launched from JENNINGS COUNTY in response to the FAC's report. After drawing light fire, the helicopter returned fire, killing ten Viet Cong and wounding ten. An estimated ten more Viet Cong were killed in the action, and four structures were damaged.

On 30 November, an O-1 aircraft spotted approximately 100 black pajama clad troops fleeing into high grass in a Viet Cong-controlled area four miles north of Bac Lieu. The Navy light fire team responded, and hit targets along a canal in the area marked by the observer. The fire team reported that two Viet Cong were killed and one was wounded. Five structures were destroyed, 15 structures and three sampans were damaged.

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE

At 0420 on 1 November, MSB 54, while engaged in a routine chain drag sweep along the east bank of the Long Tau River, was sunk by a large, moored, command-detonated mine, four and one-half miles downstream from Iaha Be. Two U.S. Navymen lost their lives. Four of the six crewmembers were rescued.
1 - MSE 54, 1 Nov
2 - Antibiotics discovered, 4 Nov
3 - LEBs, 2 Nov
4 - SEALs, 29 Nov
5 - MSEs, 28 Nov
6 - Mine, 10 Nov
7 - VAN EPC, 8 Nov
8 - VC Tax Collector, 29 Nov
9 - FBRs, 23 Nov
The mine explosion demolished the minesweeper from the bow to the after bulkhead of the pilothouse. A 57mm recoilless rifle round hitting the port quarter of the craft signalled the opening of heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from the banks. Approximately four minutes after the mine exploded, MSB 54 sank bow first, screws still turning, in seven fathoms of water.

MSB 45, which had been operating in company with MSB 54, immediately came to the assistance of the stricken craft, while MSBs 15 and 22, which had been engaged in an O-type sweep 2000 meters upstream, hurried to the scene. Two Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group (VNN RAG) craft, operating 1000 meters downstream, also supported the sweepers.

The enemy broke off the engagement after about ten minutes, as the lung Sat Special Zone (LS3Z) light fire team was called into the area to provide further support. A flare ship was called in to provide illumination. Four PEBs were ordered into the area to assist in suppressing fire and in search and rescue operations.

MSB 45 picked up two survivors from the river, both of whom were evacuated to Nha Be. The VNN RAG boats rescued two other survivors who had managed to swim ashore. Two of the survivors, including the boat captain, Chief Boatswain's Mate G. S. SONAPRANK, were seriously wounded, while the other two suffered from less serious wounds.

All units on the scene continued to search for the two missing members of the crew. Search and rescue operations were hampered by dense fog and heavy tidal current. The VNN LCM, which picked up two
of the survivors, was lost in the fog for approximately thirty minutes before locating two PBRs to take the wounded to Nha Be, where a helicopter was waiting to take them to the Third Field Hospital at Tan Son Nhut.

The channel was closed to shipping and extra PBR patrols were posted in the Nha Be anchorage area. Elements of the Third Battalion, 18th Infantry were inserted by LCMs into the area of the incident to provide static security for salvage operations. The Nha Be Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team was dispatched to the area, as well as a light lift salvage craft (LLC-2) and a Harbor Clearance Unit One team from Vung Tau.

Salvage operations began immediately and were periodically hampered by strong tidal currents in the area. On one occasion during the salvage operations, LLC-2 and the diving boat were swept out of their mooring by the heavy current, which also carried along part of the wreck. Dragging subsequently relocated the wreck, and on 3 November the wreckage was lifted and towed to the Vietnamese Naval Shipyard in Saigon.

Search and rescue efforts for the two missing crewmen, Engineman Second Class G. R. Weaver and Seaman Apprentice T. M. Moore, were unsuccessful. At 1000 on 3 November, the body of Seaman Apprentice Moore was recovered from the Long Tau; the body of Petty Officer Weaver was never recovered.

The mining of NSB 54 was the first successful mining of a U.S. Navy minesweeper in the Vietnam campaign. It was also the
first night mining attempt by the Viet Cong against U.S. minesweepers.

An inspection of the mining-ambush site disclosed 13 well-prepared foxholes, several large enough to hold more than one man. The Viet Cong had piled logs in front of each foxhole to support their heavy weapons. A maze of escape trails had been beaten in the dense, four-foot high grass.

On 2 November, HSBs 18 and 49 received ten rounds of small arms fire on the Long Tau, seven miles downstream from Nha Be. The minesweepers returned the fire, HSB 18 receiving one minor hit. On 28 November, the Viet Cong directed heavy automatic weapons fire at HSB 15, 11 miles downstream from Nha Be. The HSB returned the fire and cleared the area, and the RSSZ light helicopter fire team and a PBR patrol came to her assistance. HSB 15 received several hits in the superstructure, and one crewmember was wounded slightly.

At 1327 on 23 November, a PBR patrol on the lower Soirap was taken under automatic weapons fire from a sampan crossing the river ten miles south of Nha Be. The patrol returned the fire, wounding two of the sampan's occupants. The sampan beached on the west bank near the mouth of the Vam Co River, and its occupants fled ashore. An Army helicopter fire team was dispatched to the area, and received small arms fire from four persons embarking in a sampan near the beached sampan. As the sampan attempted to flee, it was taken under fire by the helicopters. Three of the occupants were killed, and the sole survivor was picked up by a PBR.

The first sampan was taken in tow, but sank enroute to Nha Be;
a portion of its contents, consisting of eight individual packs and personal papers, was salvaged. When the patrol left, artillery fire was directed into the area.

Two crewmembers of one of the Army helicopters were injured when a round exploded in a door gunner's M-60 machine gun.

On 25 November, the RSSZ air liaison officer, embarked in an L-19, observed an explosion about 100 meters off the starboard quarter of the merchant ship SS MCKAY as she proceeded down the Long Tau channel in the Nga Bay River.

The Long Tau light fire team was dispatched to the area, and conducted reconnaissance by fire along the west bank. An airborne observer saw a sampan darting out of the mouth of a stream apparently attempting to make a high speed run down the river. This sampan and two others were headed off by the fire team and stopped by a PFE patrol. The nine occupants of the three sampans were taken to Can Gio; the National Police were unable to connect them with the explosion, and all nine were released.

Support of Friendly Forces

At 1015 on 8 November, a VN River Patrol Craft (RPC) was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire from the north bank of the Soirap, six miles downstream from Nha Be. The RPC cleared the area, and the RSSZ light fire team delivered an air strike. Artillery fire was requested from Can Gio sub-sector. One hut was destroyed by artillery fire.

At 0040 on 13 November, a Viet Cong force, estimated to be a
reinforced platoon, attacked Ly Khoi village 14 miles south of Nha Be on the east bank of the Soirap. One member of Popular Force Company 362 was killed and four were wounded in the action. All casualties were evacuated by PBR to Nha Be.

Other Incidents

On 4 November, an upper Long Tau PBR patrol, while engaged in a routine search of the ferry, HEIP THAM, enroute from Saigon to Vung Tau, discovered 209 individual doses of antibiotics in the possession of a man who could offer no satisfactory explanation for having the medicine. He was turned over to VN authorities at Nha Be.

At 1850 on 7 November, during a blinding rainstorm, an Army helicopter crashed into the river about 500 yards from the helicopter pad at Nha Be. One crewmember was drowned. All available personnel and boats were dispatched to carry out rescue operations. Strong current, extremely low visibility in the driving rain, and Viet Cong harassment fire hampered operations.

The helicopter had been attempting to make a landing at the Nha Be helicopter pad with the survivors of another Army helicopter which had crashed a few minutes earlier. The crewmember who drowned was pulled down by his ceramic armor chest protector. His body was recovered on 9 November.

At 1100 on 10 November, elements of Regional Force Company 601 discovered wires leading to the river 11 miles downstream from Nha Be. A Vietnamese minesweeper confirmed the presence of a spherical, command-detonated mine moored ten feet below the surface of the Long
Tau, 100 yards offshore. The mine contained approximately 30 pounds of explosive. It was disarmed and taken to Nha Be by the U.S. Navy EOD team. The size of the mine and its location indicated that it was intended for use against minesweepers or PBRs rather than merchant shipping.

At 2030 on 23 November, four SEAL fire teams aboard an LCM-3, accompanied by two PBR patrols with a helicopter fire team providing air cover, departed Nha Be. At 2200, a large number of boats were discovered in the river four miles south of Nha Be in violation of the RPSZ 1800-0600 curfew. At the request of VNN authorities, 20 large sampans and one small sampan were corralled and towed to Nha Be by the LCM and PBRs. Army S-2 interrogation of the detainees established that the fleet of sampans had been engaged in illegal fishing. The 24 suspects were admonished and released.

On 29 November, a PBR patrol on the lower Soirap detected a sampan evading up the Rach Yang Creek at 1115. A few minutes later, the sampan was seen again trying to cross the river. The patrol intercepted the boat and its two occupants were identified as father and son. The son told the patrol leader his father was a Viet Cong tax collector, and both persons were taken to Nha Be, where interrogation revealed that the older man was a Viet Cong agricultural cadre.

At 2105 on 29 November, a SEAL fire team ambushed a sampan in the Tien Lieu Canal 15 miles southeast of Nha Be. A second sampan, following the first, escaped into the brush. One Viet Cong was
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killed and the sampan was captured. The craft contained two anti-
tank rockets and propellants, six pairs of boots and one small
plastic bag containing documents. The anti-tank rocket launchers
were labeled: Russian Anti-tank Rocket Launcher Model RPG-2.

As the SEALs were being extracted at 2130 by LCM-3, they
received small caliber automatic weapons fire from upstream. LCM-3
suppressed the fire and cleared the area with no casualties.

GAME WARDEN UNIT CHANGES

Changes in the status of PBRs in-country during the month were
as follows:

3 Nov - 14 PBRs were off-loaded from S.S. CALIFORNIA MAIL.

13 Nov - PBR 55 suffered strike damage when the after lifting
pad parted as it was being taken aboard JENNINGS
COUNTY at Vung Tau.

- PBRs 44 and 99 were loaded aboard COMSTOCK: for further
transfer to Ship Repair Facility, Subic Bay for repairs.

14 Nov - River Patrol Section 532 arrived at My Tho with ten
PBRs and commenced operations in the Mekong.

23 Nov - PBRs 12, 132, 151, 152, 153 and 160 arrived in-country
at Vung Tau.

25 Nov - PBR 114 was received from the Subic PBR pool.

As of the end of the month, the in-country PBR total was 118.

* * * * *
The Northeast Monsoon seriously hampered the operations of MARKET TIME forces during November. Heavy seas and high winds during MARKET TIME operations caused a sharp drop in detections, inspections and boardings for the month.

In October, a total of 51,248 vessels were detected, 16,639 inspected and 15,229 boarded; the figures for November were 31,461, 12,336 and 9,440 respectively.

On 15 November, PCF 77 capsized and broke up at the entrance to Hue Harbor as it moved in to assist PCF 22 in rescuing a man overboard. Three members of the crew of PCF 77 were lost. Five survivors of PCF 77 and the man overboard from PCF 22 were rescued.

On 15 November, Inshore Undersea Warf e Group One WESTPAC Detachment was activated as the immediate administrative commander of Harbor Defense Units in II, III and IV Corps, under the operational command of CTF 115.

On 22 November, SEA SHARP (Southeast Asia Semi-permanent Harbor Protection) Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit Three (IUW 3) replaced the Mobile IUW Unit 23 at Qui Nhon. On 30 November, IUW 2 arrived at Cam Ranh Bay.

MARKET TIME forces were involved in six hostile fire incidents during the month and four incidents of evading junkas were reported. Task Force 115 units provided Naval Gunfire Support for both Vietnamese and U.S. forces on 12 occasions. On seven occasions, MARKET TIME units provided U.S. Marine, U.S. Army, Vietnamese Army
Northern Surveillance Group - Area 1/2
Central Surveillance Group - Area 3/4/5
Southern Surveillance Group - Area 6/7
Gulf of Thailand Surveillance Group - Area 8/9

COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE
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and Royal Australian Army operations with blocking forces or exfiltration patrols.

In addition to the Search and Rescue operations in connection with the loss of PCF 77, MARKET TIME units conducted Search and Rescue (SAR) missions for a downed U.S. Marine helicopter and a capsized junk of Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 37, and assisted in extinguishing a fire in S.S. RUTGERS VICTORY.

On 5 November, two additional PCFs arrived in country to bring the total to 84. One SWIFT was assigned to Qui Nhon and one to DaNang.

On 12 November, two WPBs were transferred from Cat Lo to DaNang.

NORTHERN SURVEILLANCE GROUP

Loss of PCF 77

On 15 November, while attempting to cross the bar and enter Hue Harbor, PCF 22 lost one man overboard. PCF 77, also in the area, maneuvered to assist in rescue operations, broached and upended in the heavy seas, promptly sinking in 13 feet of water.

Helicopters in the area picked up seven people in the water, two of whom, Chief Machinery Repairman W. S. BAKER, U.S. Navy and Boatswain's Mate Third Class HARRY P. BROCK, U.S. Navy, were dead. The man overboard from PCF 22 was picked up by his own craft. Radioman Third Class B. A. TIMMONS, U.S. Navy, who was believed to be below decks at the time the boat capsized, was not recovered, and was listed as missing, presumed dead.

At the time of the incident, PCF 77 was outside the surfline,
standing by to assist PCF 22 as required. The Officer-in-Charge of PCF 77, LTJG David G. WILBOURNE, U.S. Navy, had previously ordered all hands into lifejackets, and was at the helm. About 20 seconds after the man was reported safely aboard PCF 22, a wave, estimated to be 25 to 30 feet high, lifted the stern of PCF 77 and drove its bow into the trough. The SWIFT boat flipped end over end. The pilot house almost immediately filled with water, although all doors and windows had been secured on the orders of the OinC. The survivors exited through the port pilot house door, which had sprung.

As the boat rapidly filled, LTJG WILBOURNE was responsible for rescuing one man from the stricken craft, and Chief Petty Officer BAKER, a qualified diver, was last seen entering the after compartment where Petty Officer TIMMONS was believed to be trapped. One and one-half minutes after upending, PCF 77 sank, keel up.

Security elements were provided by the Marine Corps, and the Salvagemaster of Harbor Clearance Unit One was dispatched to the scene. The bow section of PCF 77 was washed ashore 2500 yards north of the Hue River mouth. The rest of the boat broke up, and HCU-1 Salvagemaster reported that a salvage attempt could not be effected.

Hostile Fire and Exfiltration Patrols

From 0600 3 November to 0600 4 November, PCFs provided a blocking force and exfiltration patrol in support of operations of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, along the coast 32 miles south-
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southeast of DaNang.

While conducting a routine search of junks 55 miles north of Qui Nhon at 1010 on 8 November, PCF 76 received automatic weapons fire from the beach, taking two superficial hits. PCF 76 suppressed the fire with her .50 caliber machine gun with no friendly casualties.

At 0825 on 11 November, PCF 56 received small arms fire while searching a junk 100 yards off shore, 58 miles north of Qui Nhon. The SHIPT cleared the area, and expended 250 rounds of .50 caliber on the target. There were no friendly casualties. Enemy casualties were undetermined.

On 12 November, PCF exfiltration patrols supported an operation of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 56 miles southeast of DaNang. No significant results were noted. PCFs supported the same unit in the same area on 29-30 November.

CENTRAL SURVEILLANCE GROUP

On 2 November, at the request of the Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 25, PCF 51 fired illumination rounds from her 81mm mortar in support of a Popular Force outpost which was under attack by the Viet Cong 20 miles north of Nha Trang. Support was requested at 0130, and the enemy broke contact at 0200. There were no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

Between 0600, 9 November and 0600, 10 November, Qui Nhon-based PCF patrols furnished exfiltration patrols for operations of the First Cavalry Division 28 miles north of Qui Nhon. No significant results were noted.
At 0830 on 12 November while on routine patrol in area 3, PCF 65 sighted five beached junks 17 miles south of Qui Nhon. As the SWIFT closed to investigate the junks, it was taken under small arms fire from the tree line. Return fire by the patrol produced one secondary explosion in the tree line.

The Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 23 investigated the area on the beach, and reported fire from the SWIFT had destroyed three sampans and damaged two. The five 15-foot junks were carrying a cargo of fish and nuoc mam (fish sauce) which was confiscated by the CG 23 personnel.

A total of 20 persons were detained by MARKET TIME units supporting the Vietnamese Army Operation BINH HAI 804 which commenced at 0800 on 14 November 30 miles north of Qui Nhon. The cumulative results of the operation, which was terminated on 18 November, were five Viet Cong killed, 29 suspected Viet Cong detained and seven known Viet Cong captured.

At 2230 on 25 November, PCF 47 detected several lights and two small radar contacts close inshore in a known hostile area 16 miles north of Nha Trang. The SWIFT closed and illuminated the area, revealing 20-25 persons in the area. Artillery fire from a nearby Republic of Korea battery was called in with unknown results.

At 1000 on 30 November, PCF 43 received heavy automatic weapons fire from the beach 15 miles north of Nha Trang. The SWIFT returned fire and cleared the area. An air strike which had been requested destroyed the enemy position. There were no hits on PCF 43.