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DECEMBER 1966
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FOREWORD

In December, naval forces regained some of the momentum lost to monsoonal weather during November.

Although the weather continued to be fierce and erratic, especially in the First Coastal Zone, MARKET TIME and Vietnamese Navy activity increased. In DaNang and Saigon, the respective Support Activities surpassed certain prior achievements in the critical area of supply.

To the south, in a village in Kien Hoa province, military civic action and psychological operations were coordinated with precision in an aggressive venture called WHAMO 1-66. GAMES WARDEN units, meanwhile, continued to surprise and hurt the enemy in areas long considered relatively inviolate.

In a brief ceremony held at DaNang's Camp Hoskins on 9 December, Rear Admiral Paul E. SEUFER, CEC, USN, relieved Rear Admiral Robert R. WOODING, CEC, USN, as Commander THIRD Naval Construction Brigade. Admiral WOODING was presented with the Legion of Merit by Rear Admiral Norvell G. WARD, USN, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.

The month and the year ended on an ominous note with the discovery on 31 December of a Soviet-type contact mine in Saigon's main shipping channel. It was the first time a contact mine had been detected in inland waters.

Despite this new threat, in retrospect it was clear that during 1966 naval forces had wrested the initiative away from the enemy. Along the coastline, the enemy was finding it increasingly
LIST OF CHARTS/MAPS

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1. Contact mine discovered in inland waters (two views) 2A, 2B
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difficult to cope with the long arm of MARKET TIME. In the Delta, further refinements of GAME WARDEN tactics were cutting into the enemy's sanctuaries. At year's end, it was equally clear that the growing effectiveness of the naval effort was a vital factor in the Allied counter-offensive campaign.

* * * * *
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CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

2 Dec - Premier KY and General WALT visit Vietnamese Marines during Operation JU~. p. 79.
   - LTJG KLEIN, PBR patrol officer, killed during engagement with the Viet Cong. One Viet Cong killed and two wounded. p. 5.

4 Dec - MARKET TIME aircraft damaged during Viet Cong attack on Tan Son Nhut Airbase. p. 36.
   - PBRs, supporting a search and destroy operation, kill five Viet Cong and detain nine suspects. p. 12.

8 Dec - Forty-five adrift Chinese Communist fishermen and children assisted by MARKET TIME units. p. 35.

9 Dec - RADM SEUFER relieves RADM WOODING as Commander THIRD Naval Construction Brigade. p. 57.

10 Dec - Coastal Group Yabuta junk broaches; salvage attempt fails. p. 72.

11 Dec - Major Viet Cong crossing thwarted. Fifteen Viet Cong killed and 28 sampans destroyed. p. 16.

15 Dec - USCGC POINT GRACE struck by Viet Cong recoiless rifle fire. p. 38.

15 Dec - PBRs ambushed by a large Viet Cong force. PBRs, helicopters, RAGS, artillery and jet aircraft suppress fire. p. 9.

16 Dec - PBRs, supporting an ARVN operation, are taken under fire by a large Viet Cong force. Six U.S. sailors wounded; several Viet Cong casualties. p. 15.

23 Dec - Suspicious, steel-hulled trawler sighted and tracked by MARKET TIME units. p. 36.

28 Dec - PBRs kill nine Viet Cong in the first major fire fight in the Ham Luong River. p. 23.

29 Dec - WHAMO 1-66, a large-scale military civic action project, is conducted in Kien Hoa province. p. 60.

30 Dec - PBRs on the Sclrap kill two Viet Cong; at least four more probably killed. Two sailors slightly wounded. p. 30.

31 Dec - Contact mine discovered in inland waters. p. 2.

* * * * *
In December, the River Patrol Force continued to interdict enemy movements and inflict heavy losses on the Viet Cong along the major rivers of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone.

Enemy crossing attempts were disrupted by GAME WARDEN forces in the Soi Rap, Mekong (My Tho) and Ham Luong rivers. On one occasion, a PBR patrol boldly swept up a narrow canal and surprised a large number of Main Force Viet Cong preparing for a crossing. In the ensuing engagement, 15 Viet Cong were killed and 28 sampans destroyed.

Enemy activity in the Rung Sat increased sharply during the month as PBR patrols operating in the Soi Rap River engaged Viet Cong sampans on several occasions. In the Long Tau main shipping channel a minesweeper detected a large, contact mine containing a 500 lb. explosive charge. It was the first contact-type mine discovered in the territorial waters of South Vietnam.

SEAL teams operating in the Rung Sat Special Zone discovered several Viet Cong base camps and weapons caches. At one camp, during a mission in the mangrove swamp south of NHA BE, a team came upon and seized a number of automatic weapons and a large quantity of ammunition.

Support missions performed by GAME WARDEN forces ranged from providing cover and blocking forces for ground operations to evacuating sick and wounded Vietnamese from towns and outposts along the rivers. On two occasions during the month, GAME WARDEN helicopter fire teams came to the assistance of besieged outposts.
several miles inland from the major waterways of the Delta. PBRs continued to transport medical civic action teams to hamlets and outposts along the rivers as well as carrying Vietnamese Psychological Warfare Teams on loudspeaker missions.

Of notable significance was the growing mutual respect and confidence between the men of GAME WARDEN and the Vietnamese people. Tangible evidence of the extent of the rapport was the increasing volume and reliability of intelligence furnished river patrols by the Delta inhabitants. The GAME WARDEN support ship, USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-816), operated successfully during the early part of the month in sheltered waters near Can Tho. On 12 December, she returned to the mouth of the Bassac, and experienced great difficulty in handling PBRs and helicopters in the high winds and heavy seas of the Northeast Monsoon. At month's end certain aspects of the support ship concept were undergoing re-evaluation.

CONTACT MINE DISCOVERED IN INLAND WATERS

On 31 December, at 0815, the Petty Officer in Charge of MSB 52 spotted approximately 15 inches of a contact mine floating in the Long Tau River, near the junction of the Song Nga Bay and Song Dua rivers. Five contact horns were exposed. At 1000, the mine was disarmed by a Navy EOD team and taken to Nha Be.

MSB 52, in company with three other minesweepers, had been engaged in routine sweeping operations, which commenced at 0400.
from Nha Be. Two NSBs swept the center of the channel with Oropea gear on both sides, while the other two streamed close to the bank. The current was beginning to ebb at the time of departure, and the minesweepers completed their first pass at 0700; then the two boats along the bank changed to chain-drag sweeps for the return pass. Thus it was estimated that the boats had last passed the area where the mine was located at approximately 0615.

The mine, 34½ inches in diameter and 52 inches in length, carried an explosive charge of 500 pounds; twenty feet of anchor wire were still attached. The bitter end of the cable was frayed and shiny, indicating it had been cut recently.

The mine was coated with red lead, and its surface showed little rust; however the horn containing nuts and the locking ring on the arming device were heavily corroded. There was a single layer of fresh barnacles on the mine. Subsequent analysis indicated that the mine had been submerged in Vietnam's river water for approximately 12 months and that the mine was probably planted in the Long Tau the night before it was swept.

The mine resembled the Soviet MKB-Variation mine in every respect except for the absence of a mercury safety switch. Russian lettering was found on the booster cover and on the arming and depth-setting devices.

This was the first contact-detonated mine discovered in the inland waters of South Vietnam.
DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Lower Bassac River

At 2030 on 2 December, a PBR patrol in the lower Bassac River picked up two small, high-speed contacts moving from the northern end of Cu Lao Dung Island toward the west bank of the river. The lead PBR moved upstream to investigate and, at a range of 200 yards, illuminated the contacts—two motorized sampans. No one was visible and the patrol officer, LTJG Henry I. KLEIN, Jr., USN, fired two warning shots.

Suddenly the sampan's occupants began firing with automatic weapons. The PBR's searchlight was secured, and the sampans taken under fire. The PBR cover boat then moved in to support the lead boat's withdrawal. The PBRs' M-79 grenades and .50 caliber machine gun fire destroyed one of the sampans. One Viet Cong was killed and two were wounded.

LTJG KLEIN died of a gunshot wound in the chest. He was the first GAME WARDEN officer to be killed in action.

On 2 December, PBRs 58 and 60, acting on a detailed intelligence report, intercepted a junk carrying a shipment of medicine concealed in nuoc mam (fish sauce) jars. The junk was stopped in the vicinity of Cu Lao May Island and towed to Can Tho. Included in the cargo were 1,062 penicillin tablets, 20 bags of aureomycin, and 64 packets of hypodermic needles.

At 1555 on 3 December, PBRs 38 and 58 picked up a suspect wanted by the Ks Sach sub-sector; the apprehension occurred during
a routine ID card check in the vicinity of Cu Lao Nei Island. As
the patrol was taking the man to Can Tho for interrogation, it was
taken under small arms fire from Cu Lao May Island in the vicinity
of a known Viet Cong crossing route. Fire was suppressed by the
PBRs and the suspect was subsequently turned over to the Vietnamese
authorities.

On 10 December near Tra On, a PBR patrol discovered 10,000
units of US-made penicillin in a sampan that had been stopped for
a routine search. The sampan and its occupant were turned over
to the National Police.

On the afternoon of 16 December, while conducting a routine
search of river traffic near the northwest tip of Cu Lao May, PBRs
60 and 28 apprehended a Vietnamese with 80 gallons of kerosene, 27
bottles of glucose, 28 bottles of penicillin, and 500 feet of
copper wire in his sampan. None of the cargo was covered by the
manifest, and the suspect was subsequently delivered to the
Vietnamese authorities.

On 17 December, a special PBR patrol was stationed near the
southern tip of Cu Lao May in response to an intelligence report
that the Viet Cong would attempt a river crossing. At 1945 the
patrol observed what appeared to be a torch high in the trees along
the bank. As the patrol closed to investigate, it received sniper
fire. The PBRs retorted with M-16 and M-79 fire, and the torch
was seen to fall from the trees. No subsequent action developed.

On 27 December, a PBR patrol sighted a sampan with two
occupants standing out of the mouth of a canal near the northwest tip of Cu Lao May, three and one half miles southeast of Can Tho. The sampan ignored hails and warning shots and continued to evade. As the patrol approached, Viet Cong positions on the east bank of the river opened up with automatic weapons fire.

The PBRs took the sampan and the bank positions under fire. The sampan was sunk and its two occupants were killed. Fire from the bank was suppressed, and the patrol withdrew. Twenty minutes later the patrol returned and received small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire. Artillery support was called in from Tra On subsector, and the enemy fire was suppressed. There were no casualties to friendly forces; enemy casualties were undetermined.

Support of Friendly Forces

On 2 December, PBRs 39 and 40, in company with units of Coastal Group 36, with the Long Phu District Chief and his U.S. Army advisor embarked, escorted four Vietnamese LCVPs on a resupply mission to island outposts in the mouth of the Bassac.

At 0850, as the column entered the channel between Cu Lao Dung and Cu Lao Tron islands, the second LCVP was mined and sunk, wounding one Vietnamese. Simultaneously small arms fire broke out from the beach, and the PBRs suppressed the outburst with .50 caliber machine gun fire and M-79 grenades. The wounded Vietnamese sailor was evacuated to the Coastal Group 36 base by PBR. There were no U.S. casualties.

Subsequently, at the request of the Long Phu District Chief,
PBRs provided escort and fire support services as Vietnamese LCVPs engaged in salvage operations of the sunken LCVP. No enemy contact developed.

At 2340 on 10 December, PBRs 36 and 34 were requested by a Vietnamese LSIL to stop an evading sampan in a known Viet Cong crossing area near the northern end of Cu Lao May. The LSIL had detected two sampans attempting to cross from east to west after curfew, and had been taken under fire by the sampans. The LSIL sank one of the sampans, and the PBRs destroyed the other. There were no friendly casualties.

Other Assistance

PBRs in the Bassac conducted a number of evacuation missions during the month. The scope of the evacuations ranged from wounded Vietnamese military personnel to civilian victims of Viet Cong booby-traps to children suffering from serious illnesses. In all, 26 Vietnamese were evacuated.

Operations in the Co Chien River

On 7 December, PBRs 86 and 82 sighted a sampan lying close to the bank 25 miles southeast of Vinh Long. The patrol had been warned by a local Vietnamese outpost that a Viet Cong unit, equipped with a 57mm recoilless rifle, was in the area. Sensing an ambush the two patrol boats remained in mid-stream and hailed the sampan. Then warning shots were fired as the sampan continued toward the bank. Suddenly the Viet Cong opened up with recoilless rifle fire and numerous automatic weapons from positions on the bank behind
the sampan. The PBRs returned the fire, sank the sampan, and killed its two occupants.

The PBRs then cleared the area and requested artillery support from the Huong My sub-sector. Shortly, the ambush site was neutralized by 105mm artillery fire as well as M-79 grenades and M-60 and .50 caliber machine gun fire. There were no friendly casualties.

At 1300 on 15 December, PBRs 97 and 86 were taken under automatic weapons fire from numerous positions along the south bank of the southeastern tip of Cu Lao Giai Island. The Viet Cong used at least one .50 caliber machine gun in the ambush. The PBRs returned the enemy fire and cleared the area.

PBRs 117 and 82 joined the action, and the HC-1 (Det. 25) fire team was scrambled from Vinh Long. The helicopters drew heavy automatic weapons fire during all runs on the target. The four PBRs, marking the target area for the helicopters with .50 caliber tracers, also came under heavy fire.

As the helicopters finished their runs, units of VNN River Assault Group 23 moved in to bombard the enemy positions at close range. Then an Army helicopter fire team arrived and fired on the target area until the Navy fire team returned from rearming and refueling.

Upon completion of the firing runs by air and surface units, the Vinh Binh province 155mm artillery battery fired five rounds into the area. By 1610 the area was considered neutralized. There
were no friendly casualties; Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

At 1336 on 16 December, PBRs 111 and 113 came under heavy automatic weapons fire from the south bank of the river while the boats were searching a sampan. The enemy again used numerous automatic weapons, including at least one .50 caliber machine gun. The patrol cleared the area to the southeast, returning fire as it withdrew. PBRs 86 and 97 joined the engagement and came under fire from the south bank.

The four PBRs then stood by to the southeast of the kill zone as the Cang Long sub-sector artillery battery fired eight rounds of 155mm into the area. In addition, the Navy light helicopter fire team arrived and fired on targets marked by the PBRs.

At 1700, a section of jet aircraft delivered a strike into the area, and all firing ceased. During the engagement, PBR 111 had been hit in the radome, and PBR 113 had taken two hits in the hull. Helicopters destroyed one hut and initiated a small POL fire. There were no personnel casualties to friendly forces. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined; however, this locale, the scene of numerous ambush attempts earlier in the month, was not heard from again during December.

Support of Friendly Forces

On three occasions in December, PBRs came to the assistance of a Vietnamese outpost on the south bank of the Co Chien, 17 miles southeast of Vinh Long. In each instance the outpost was under small arms and mortar attack and in serious danger of being overrun.
The PBRs suppressed the enemy fire with .50 caliber and M-60 fire, and successfully broke up the three attacks. On 22 December a 20-kilo water mine was found in the approach to this outpost.

On 5 December in the Giao Duc sub-sector, a two-boat cover and blocking force supported a Vietnamese counter-assault against an outpost which had been overrun by an estimated company of Viet Cong, five miles north of Vinh Long on the Mekong. PBRs took station in the river, while an AC-47 and Army helicopters conducted reconnaissance by fire at the outpost and its environs.

At 1000, the PBRs rendezvoused with the Vietnamese reaction force, consisting of 130 troops embarked in three LCVPs and a water taxi. With PBRs 111 and 117 in the van, the force proceeded to the objective area at the mouth of a canal. The PBRs entered the canal and were taken under sniper fire, which they suppressed. As the LCVPs entered the area, they too were taken under sniper fire, which was quickly suppressed by the PBRs, and the troops were landed under covering fire of the PBRs. The Viet Cong retreated and the Vietnamese force reoccupied the outpost.

On 6 December, PBRs supported an outpost 25 miles downstream from Vinh Long, which was being harassed by the Viet Cong from the bank of a canal opposite the post. At 2000, as the patrol closed to within 500 yards of the outpost, it received seven rounds of small arms fire, which it returned. An adjacent PBR patrol moved in to block a Viet Cong crossing route in the area, in case the outpost attack was merely a diversion. The attack was successfully suppressed.
broken up by the PBR fire and no crossing materialized.

On 28 December, PBRs 86 and 113 were requested by an Army light helicopter fire team to deliver direct fire in support of two Regional Force companies which had been ambushed by the Viet Cong on the north bank of the Song Pang Tra channel, fourteen miles southeast of Vinh Long.

The Army fire team was under heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from the ambush area. The PBRs moved into firing position and fired 4,000 rounds of .50 caliber and 1,200 rounds of M-60 fire into the enemy positions, with the Army helicopters adjusting the fire. In addition, the Navy helicopter fire team from Vinh Long was diverted from a normal reconnaissance mission and helped saturate the target area.

Operations in the Mekong River

On 4 December, in Kien Phong province, PBRs operating as a blocking force for a combined U.S. Special Forces and Vietnamese Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) force search and destroy operation, sighted a sampan moving out from the east bank of the Mekong River, six miles below the Cambodian border.

The sampan opened fire on the patrol boats. The PBRs returned the fire, and killed one Viet Cong. Then the enemy opened fire on the patrol from the banks, and the patrol suppressed the fire. Special Forces and CIDG troops swept the beach area and discovered four Viet Cong bodies, two carbines, two M-1 rifles and a quantity of grenades and ammunition.
In addition to the five Viet Cong killed in the action, the PBR patrol turned over nine suspects to the Special Forces at Thuong Thoi. One of the suspects, a woman, had been apprehended using a horn as a warning device just prior to the fire fight.

In the Mekong on 9 December, a PBR patrol spotted a sampan in the vicinity of the northern tip of Cu Lao Ta Island, 35 miles northwest of Sa Dec. The patrol illuminated the sampan and hailed it to come alongside. The sampan's five occupants abandoned the craft and attempted to evade to the beach. Two were captured in the water and two were killed on the beach by M-16 fire. The fifth occupant, believed to be a woman, escaped.

The two bodies were retrieved from the beach and taken to Long Xuyen with the two prisoners and the sampan; the latter contained personal items and one homemade .30 caliber rifle. Interrogation of the prisoners revealed they were bandits who had terrorized the Kien Phong province area for several weeks. They were returned to the province to stand trial.

On 11, 24 and 26 December, Mekong river patrols received sniper fire from positions on the northern end of Cu Lao'Gien Island, 22 miles northwest of Sa Dec. At the time, the patrols were attempting to apprehend evading sampans. In each instance fire was not returned to avoid civilian casualties in a populated and predominantly friendly area.

On 19 December a PBR patrol on the upper Bassac sighted a sampan evading to the beach. Since there were many large junks in
the area, the patrol did not fire on the sampan to avoid endangering friendly Vietnamese. Two national policemen attempted to apprehend the fleeing Viet Cong but were unsuccessful.

At 2035 on 19 December, a patrol in the Mekong thirteen miles upstream from Sa Dec sighted a sampan in a channel between two small islands. The craft was hailed and brought alongside. Its single occupant had no ID card.

While the man was being taken into custody, the patrol received about 30 rounds of small arms fire from the beach; the fire was quickly suppressed by M-16 fire from the patrol. During the engagement, the sampan was sunk and its occupant killed.

Support of Friendly Forces

On 2 December PBRs provided indirect azimuth fire support for an outpost under attack twenty miles upstream from Sa Dec. The fire was requested by the District Chief of Than Binh District, Kien Phong province, who spotted for the PBRs. The boats delivered 1,200 rounds of .50 caliber fire, which effectively broke up the attack.

On the night of 9 December, at the request of the Lap Vo sub-sector advisor, PBRs 64 and 118 came to the assistance of an outpost under attack ten miles northwest of Sa Dec. The PBRs arrived at the outpost on the south bank of the river at 2010 and employed M-79 grenades, and direct M-16, M-60 and .50 caliber machine gun fire. At 2025, PBRs 80 and 81 arrived to assist in the direct fire on the withdrawing enemy. The Vietnamese observers reported the PBRs'
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fire was very effective and the enemy dispersed at 2035. Neither the boats nor the outpost personnel suffered casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

At 1000 on the 18th, the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) Ninth Division requested PBR fire support for operations involving the second and third companies of the 13th battalion in an area four miles northwest of Sa Dec. PBRs 84 and 118 were assigned, and continuous air coverage was provided by two armed helicopters and two forward air controllers.

At 1115, the patrol boats arrived on station in a narrow channel, and maintained position with the ARVN units to provide rapid reaction fire support. At 1430, the PBRs delivered 2400 rounds of .50 caliber fire at the request of one of the FAC spotters.

At 1525, PBRs 54 and 64 arrived with a resupply of ammunition and a hospital corpsman. The corpsman treated one ARVN wounded and one wounded Viet Cong prisoner. The four boats remained in the area, and continued to support the operations ashore throughout the day.

At 1935, after covering the extraction of the friendly forces, the PBRs began the return trip to Sa Dec. At 1940, they were taken under fire by an estimated Viet Cong company with at least 20 automatic weapons, two rocket launchers or recoilless rifles, and mortars. Two PBRs cleared to the east and two to the west, and took the enemy under fire with all available weapons at a range of 20-30 yards. Several of the enemy were seen being hit, and screams were heard from the bank. In addition, a secondary explosion was observed in the area.
The forward gunner in PBR 54 was seriously wounded in the chest, but continued to fire at the enemy until ordered by the boat captain to leave his post. Five others, including the element commander, sustained minor wounds in the engagement.

Since Vietnamese Army (ARVN) troops had canvassed the area less than 20 minutes before the ambush, the element commander concluded that the Viet Cong had been pursuing the Vietnamese troops and had taken the four PBRs under fire as a target of opportunity. The quick reaction of the Navy units in delivering fire at point blank range and clearing the area helped avoid a heavy casualty toll.

Other Assistance

At 1833 on 16 December a PBR patrol in the upper Mekong was hailed by a woman waving a white cloth from a water taxi. One PBR went alongside and found two wounded CIDG troops, who were evacuated to Long Xuyen. At 1900 the same day, U.S. Special Forces at Thuong Thoi requested MEDEVAC for three Regional Force troops wounded in a Viet Cong attack on their outpost, three miles south of the Cambodian border. The three wounded were taken to Long Xuyen for treatment.

On 25 December, PBRs evacuated one injured civilian from the town of Cho Moi to Long Xuyen for treatment.

Mekong (My Tho) Operations

Hostile Fire and Evasion Incidents

On 11 December, a bold sweep by a PBR patrol officer and a security lapse by the Viet Cong resulted in the rout of a large
MEKONG (MY THO) OPERATIONS
December 1966

SCALE:
5 Nautical Mile
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A enemy force and a major GAME WARDEN success.

At 0740 PBRs 98 and 106, on routine patrol west of My Tho, sighted a small sampan with two green-uniformed occupants heading out of a canal on the south bank of the river, near the western tip of Thoi Son Island. When the PBRs turned toward the boat, it headed back into the canal.

As the PBRs entered the canal in pursuit, they suddenly came upon a large group of green-uniformed Viet Cong, elements of the 263 Main Force Viet Cong Battalion, preparing to embark into about 40 sampans along the bank. The patrol immediately came under automatic weapons fire. The PBRs returned fire and continued up the channel, killing six sampan occupants as the elements along the bank fled to the underbrush in disorder.

As the PBRs withdrew, PBRs 103 and 110 arrived, as well as the Navy light helicopter fire team from JENNINGS COUNTY.

With the fire team providing cover and support, PBRs 98 and 106 re-entered the narrow canal and came under small arms fire from a hut on the west bank. As the PBRs continued their approach, four Viet Cong ran from the hut and were killed by PBR fire. The hut itself was set on fire, and a large secondary explosion demolished it, revealing an ammunition bunker.

The patrol officer, Signalman First Class C.B. SMITH, USN, then ordered the PBRs to withdraw because of the ebbing tide; the helicopter fire team covered the withdrawal and made additional firing passes on the area. The helicopters hit the bunker with rocket fire, which triggered another secondary explosion.
INTERDICTION OF VIET CONG CROSSING ON 11 DECEMBER 1966

SCALE:
0 Yards 500

LEGEND:
- Evading sampan
- PBR initial pass
- PBR second pass

Staging Area
Nine Viet Cong killed.
23 sampans sunk.

Sampan initially sighted

Hut containing ammunition exploded by rocket hit.
Six Viet Cong killed.

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The PBRs were taken under heavy fire during the withdrawal, and the after gunner of PBR 106 and a Vietnamese policeman in PBR 98 were wounded slightly; both refused to leave their posts. Three Viet Cong who crossed ahead of the patrol in an attempt to escape were taken under fire and killed. In addition, two tree snipers were killed. At 1230, a battalion-sized reaction force from the Vietnamese Army Seventh Division was landed in the area; no further contact with the enemy developed.

Results of the engagement were as follows: 15 Viet Cong killed, 28 sampans sunk, three sampans captured, one bunker destroyed, one hut destroyed and three huts damaged.

The next day, General WESTMORELAND sent the following message to Admiral WARD:

PBRS 98 AND 106 WERE RIGHT ON THE JOB ON THE MORNING OF 11 DECEMBER, RESULTING IN FINE VICTORY AGAINST THE ENEMY IN DINH TUONG. ATTACK BY PBRS AND LIGHT FIRE TEAM DISRUPTED LARGE VC FORCE AND WAS OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS OF GAME WARDEN. PLEASE PASS MY HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CONCERNED. WESTMORELAND SENDS.

On 12 December, nine to ten miles west of My Tho, PBRs 96 and 105 were harassed by sniper fire on three separate occasions. Three Viet Cong were killed and PBR 96 sustained two superficial hits in the bow. At 1840 that evening, in the same general area, a .30 caliber Viet Cong machine gun fired at a patrol from behind the shield of a 15 junk convoy proceeding upstream. The patrol officer held fire and numerous Viet Cong positions on the north bank were disclosed as the innocent convoy cleared to the west.
PBRs 96 and 105 then neutralized the enemy positions with .50 and .30 caliber machine gun fire.

On 16 December, an L-19 spotter aircraft on a routine reconnaissance mission sighted a sampan in a canal disembarking five green-uniformed men in a Viet Cong dominated area, ten miles west of My Tho. The L-19 made several rocket firing runs, and initiated a small secondary explosion in the sampan. Later, about a half-mile to the west, a second sampan was sighted. The L-19 fired a smoke rocket across the sampan's bow, and the occupants jumped overboard and escaped to the underbrush. The sampan was taken in tow by a PBR patrol in the area and delivered to My Tho.

At 2100 on 19 December, a Viet Cong attempt to sabotage the PBR pier at My Tho with a watermine failed when the mine exploded prematurely about 75 yards from the pier. The explosion shook PBRs and RAG boats at their moorings, but caused no structural damage. In another attempt, on 30 December, a U.S. Navy sentry was wounded when he attempted to fend off a mass of vegetation from the PBR pier. The Viet Cong had booby-trapped the vegetation with a grenade, and the seaman suffered facial injuries from fragments.

At 2000 on 19 December, a PBR patrol at the mouth of the My Tho River sighted an unlighted sampan moving from south to north, apparently heading for a village on Loi Quan Island. The lead boat, PBR 124, made a high speed run on the sampan, and was taken under small arms and automatic weapons fire from the boat at a range of about 50 yards. The cover boat, PBR 121, was also taken under fire
from the sampan, and from automatic weapons and small arms positions on the island.

As PBR 124 completed the first firing run, PBR 121 directed fire at the sampan and the positions on the bank. The fire from ashore stopped, but the sampan continued to fire, and the PBRs commenced firing runs. Each PBR made four runs on the sampan before it ceased fire.

The sampan was illuminated, and a total of five swimmers were seen in the water. Concussion grenades were used to capture three of the swimmers, while two surrendered voluntarily. One of the latter surrendered by holding up his rifle and shouting "Chieu Hoi."  

As PBR 124 closed the sampan, two Viet Cong still hidden in the boat threw grenades. The PBR cleared and took the boat under fire, killing both its occupants. Two Chinese Communist rifles, one grenade, five rounds of 7.62 ammunition, and a quantity of documents were recovered from the 25-foot sampan before it sank.

At 1755 on 27 December, PBRs 98 and 106 received approximately 600 rounds of automatic weapons fire from the south bank of the river, five miles west of My Tho. The patrol returned the fire and was joined by PBRs 105 and 107.

The four PBRs saturated the area with 5,500 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun fire, as well as M-79 grenades and M-60 and

1 "Open Arms" - The Vietnamese government program intended to induce Viet Cong to return to government jurisdiction. Among other inducements, it offers a bounty for weapons turned in.
M-16 fire. In addition, Vietnamese Army Seventh Division artillery placed 18 rounds of 105mm howitzer fire into the area, destroying three huts and initiating a 75-foot high secondary explosion.

The engineer of PBR 98 was wounded in the right arm from sniper fire; PBRs 98 and 107 each sustained three superficial hits in the hull.

That evening, four engagements occurred involving PBRs 105 and 107. In one incident, near the eastern tip of Bon Thon Island, PBR 105 took three hits forward, one of which destroyed her searchlight. There were no personnel casualties.

The four incidents occurred along the stretch of the Mekong River between Thoi Son Island on the east and Ngu Hiap Island on the west, the scene of numerous ambushes, harassments, and crossing attempts in the past. The narrow canal behind Bon Thon Island was the staging area for the crossing attempt broken up by GAME WARDEN forces on 11 December.

On the evening of 28 December, the first major fire fight in the Ham Luong River since random patrols were initiated in October resulted in nine Viet Cong killed and a quantity of enemy material captured. The action occurred when a PBR patrol interdicted a crossing attempt nine miles downstream from the junction of the Ham Luong and Mekong rivers.

At 1937, PBRs 101 and 107 sighted a 16-foot sampan crossing to the north. The sampan was hailed, but ignored the call. The sampan was illuminated, revealing nine occupants. When PBR 101
closed to 50 yards, the men in the sampan opened fire with small arms.

PBR 101 raked the sampan with .50 caliber fire, killing all nine of the enemy. PBR 101 took the sampan in tow as the cover boat, PBR 107, closed.

At this time, seven Viet Cong automatic weapons positions on the south bank opened up on the patrol; PBR 107 suppressed the fire after a heavy exchange. The PBR patrol then proceeded downstream to the town of Ben Tre to deliver the sampan and its contents to the Kien Hoa sector chief. Again heavy fire broke out from the south bank, and the PBRs had to fight their way through the kill zone to reach Ben Tre.

Of the four Viet Cong dead in the sampan, two were dressed in grey uniforms, one in green, and one in black pajamas. All appeared to be in their late 'teens. Material captured in the action included: seven Chinese Communist Mosin Nagant rifles, one Russian 7.62mm rifle, one U.S. M-1 carbine, 100 rounds of carbine ammunition, 147 rounds of 7.62 ammunition, four hand grenades, two grey uniforms, three bandoliers, three ponchos, a field pack, and numerous personal documents.

On 29 December, the Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer (NILO) at My Tho received information that a ten-man Viet Cong unit was operating from a nuoc mam factory in Phu Phong village, near the western tip of Ngu Hiep Island. The report gave the names of the nine men and one woman in the unit, and indicated its leader was
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a Vietnamese Army deserter named Nguyen Van Hai.

At 1000 on 29 December, PBRs 98 and 107 received sniper fire from a sampan which had beached on the north bank, one-half mile east of Phu Phong village. The sampan's lone occupant was wounded, and another man came to his assistance. The wounded man escaped, but the second man surrendered under fire. He was taken to My Tho where, under interrogation, he admitted he was Hai, the guerrilla unit leader.

Helicopter Operations

Helicopter fire teams of HC-1 Detachment 25, operating from USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-846), came to the assistance of friendly forces twice on 1 December. In the first incident, a rapid reaction helicopter strike was launched at the request of a forward air controller who had sighted 20 sampans in a canal, 20 miles west-southwest of Can Tho. In the action that ensued, the helicopters killed four Viet Cong, destroyed two structures and two sampans, and damaged three structures and eight sampans.

At 2000, Detachment 25 helicopters reacted to an emergency call from Ba Cang sub-sector where an outpost, eight miles northeast of Can Tho, was in danger of being overrun by the Viet Cong. The light fire team delivered strikes in support of the outpost, receiving moderate automatic weapons fire from the ground. The helicopters returned to JENNINGS COUNTY, rearmed and refueled in 12 minutes and returned to the outpost. During the second sortie, the enemy attack was broken.
On 7 December, at the request of the Tra On sub-sector advisor, Detachment 25 helicopters conducted two rapid reaction strikes in support of Regional Force troops in contact with the enemy on Cu Lao May Island. The helicopters killed three Viet Cong and wounded one, and destroyed one structure and damaged ten others.

On several occasions during the month, Detachment 25 helicopters were used in perimeter defense at Vinh Long airfield. On a typical mission on 14 December, the Navy light fire team killed or wounded four Viet Cong in response to a call from a forward air controller who had spotted the Viet Cong apparently marshalling for an attack on the airfield. Navy fire teams killed a total of 42 Viet Cong and wounded eight while engaged in perimeter defense missions at Vinh Long.

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE PATROL GROUP
Hostile Fire, Evasions and Interdictions

Enemy activity in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ) increased sharply during the month.

At 1430 on 2 December, a Vietnamese Regional Force outpost six and one-half miles southeast of Nha Be received 75mm recoilless rifle fire from the east bank of the Long Tau River. Nearby in the channel, the Saigon-bound French merchantman SINDH, laden with explosives, received similar fire. The SINDH's after superstructure sustained considerable damage and two crewmembers were injured.

Moments later, the Long Tau light helicopter fire team, based at Nha Be, arrived on the scene and launched a strike near the
mouth of Rach Muoi creek.

At 1530 the Regional Force outpost (Company 999) dispatched a patrol to search the strike area. The patrol discovered one dead Viet Cong, a belt of 7.92mm ammunition, two expended 75mm cases and traces of blood. At 1545 the patrol made brief contact with the enemy, then withdrew as U.S. helicopters and a Vietnamese Air Force fixed wing aircraft conducted additional strikes. Final results were undetermined.

At 2300 on 3 December, a PBR patrol came to the assistance of a Regional Force Company (601/783) outpost on the Long Tau. As the patrol approached the post, the PBRs came under heavy fire. The PBRs returned the fire, cleared the area, and called in artillery fire from the First Battalion, Seventh Artillery at Ly Nhon.

The PBRs spotted for the artillery fire until an L-19 aircraft arrived in the area to assist; a total of 129 artillery rounds were delivered. Also, an AC-47 conducted several strikes in the area. The enemy attack was successfully thwarted with no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

Most of the month’s activity occurred in the Soirap River and its environs.

At 0950 on 6 December, a Soirap PBR patrol came to the assistance of fishermen who were being harassed by sniper fire from the east bank of the river, seven miles south of Nha Be. The PBRs, assisted by the Army’s R5SZ light helicopter fire team, suppressed the enemy fire.
On 7 December a PBR patrol was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire from three positions on the west bank of the Soirap, 11 miles downstream from Nha Be. The PBRs returned the fire, then cleared the area and spotted while the First Battalion, Seventh Artillery fired 46 rounds of high explosive and white phosphorus charges into the area. The three enemy positions were neutralized.

About 1940 on 20 December, a Soirap PBR patrol sighted a sampan moving from east to west near the mouth of the Van Sat River. The sampan ignored warning shots and turned toward the bank. About 300 yards from shore, the sampan’s two occupants deliberately capsized their boat and attempted to flee. The patrol opened fire. One Viet Cong was hit in the throat by small arms fire, and died in a PBR enroute to Nha Be. The other man apparently escaped. The sampan and a handbag containing personal items and a hand grenade were captured.

At 2200 on 24 December, a PBR patrol noted two radar contacts lying close to the west bank of the Soirap, seven miles south of Nha Be. As the PBRs closed, they were taken under automatic weapons fire from five well-prepared positions along both banks of the river, and from a machine gun in the bow of one of the sampans. The patrol returned the fire, then cleared the area. An AC-47, aircraft and Army and Navy helicopter fire teams were directed to the scene and 4.2-inch mortar fire was requested from Quang Xuyen sub-sector battery.

The PBR patrol leader spotted for the AC-47 and the mortar
fire. At 2245 all fire ceased. Two Viet Cong were killed in the action, and one of the sampans was destroyed. One PBR crewmember was injured slightly.

On 30 December, a PBR patrol sighted a sampan with at least six persons aboard heading out of the mouth of the Vam Sat River and along the east bank of the Scirap, ten miles south of Nha Be. At 1920 the lead boat, PBR 73, closed to within 50 yards and was taken under fire from a machine gun mounted in the bow of the sampan and small arms fire from both banks.

Enemy fire severed the steering cable of PBR 73 and wounded two of her crew slightly. Despite loss of steering control, PBR 73 continued the engagement and scored a direct hit on the sampan with an M79 grenade; PBRs 73 and 26 then raked and raked the sampan with .50 caliber fire, while PBRs 21 and 94 suppressed the fire from the beach. Eventually PBR 73 secured her engines and was towed to Nha Be.

PBRs 17 and 25 arrived in the area and took the two wounded from PBR 73 to Nha Be. At 1933, the Navy helicopter fire team arrived on the scene; minutes later an AC-47 joined the helicopters in conducting reconnaissance by fire along the banks. Fire was not returned. Enemy losses were two killed and at least four more probably killed; captured were one U.S. M-1 carbine, one 40mm grenade, a stretcher, and documents. Vietnamese fishermen who were in the vicinity of the engagement subsequently reported to PBR patrols that the sampan had contained eight Viet Cong, all of whom had been killed in the action.
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SEAL Operations

At 0645 on 3 December, a SEAL fire team conducted a reconnaissance mission in the mangrove swamp 11 miles south-southeast of Nha Be. The team discovered a Viet Cong base camp, and captured one 57mm recoilless rifle with eight rounds of ammunition, one 7.92mm machine gun and 2,000 rounds of ammunition, two carbines, and a .45 caliber submachine gun ("grease gun") and 3,500 rounds of ammunition. The team spotted one Viet Cong, whose carbine was shot from his hands as the SEALs withdrew.

On 13 December, a SEAL team discovered a Viet Cong emplacement in the southern part of the Rung Sat. The SEALs found 18 trenches, six bunkers, ten grenade booby traps, eight rows of punji stakes, six punji traps, a sampan, ten batteries, four huts and miscellaneous cooking equipment. The team sank the sampan and destroyed other equipment prior to withdrawal.

On 21 December, four SEAL fire teams conducted reconnaissance and ambush missions in support of Operation CHARLESTON, a search and destroy operation conducted by the Second Battalion, 18th Infantry. The SEALs found a Viet Cong base camp about 12 miles from Nha Be. The camp contained 10 bunkers, 20 grenades and miscellaneous tools; all items were destroyed.

The SEAL teams used UH-1D "Slicks" (a term used to differentiate the transport version of the UH-1 from the "gunship") for insertion and extraction. The helicopters were used in areas...
inaccessible to boats, and provided the SEALs with greater mobility as well as more versatile fire support.

Other RSSZ Incidents and Events

At 2320 on 2 December, a PER in the Soi Rap River was mistakenly fired upon by an Army helicopter fire team. The incident occurred 12 miles southeast of Nha Be and was occasioned by a navigational error which led the fire team to believe the darkened PER was an enemy craft transiting a free fire zone. There were no personnel casualties; the PER received five superficial hits.

On 3 December, a RSSZ helicopter suffered engine failure and crashed during landing near the village of Ly Whon. Security forces from the Second Battalion, 18th Infantry were placed around the wreck, which was later removed by an Army HC-47 helicopter to Vung Tau. There were no personnel casualties.

On 22 December, the province chief of Go Cong province agreed to permit random PER patrols in the Vam Co River. The patrols will begin in January following psychological orientation to acquaint the river's inhabitants with the nature and purpose of the PER operations.

On 27 December, the Rung Sat Special Zone helicopter fire team was shifted from Nha Be to Cat Lo because of maintenance difficulties created by the sand surface of the helicopter pad at Nha Be. In recent months, three premature engine changes and one engine failure were attributed to compression blade erosion caused by sand ingestion.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

Despite the Christmas holiday truce period and continued heavy weather caused by the Northeast Monsoon, MARKET TIME activities showed a gradual increase during December. Coastal Surveillance forces detected 48,336 craft, 16,782 of which were inspected and 12,302 were boarded.

The arrival of PCF 101 and two LCPLs brought in-country assets to programmed levels. SEA SHARP (Southeast Asia Semi-Permanent Harbor Protection) units continued to relieve the mobile units.

MARKET TIME aircraft were damaged during the attack on Tan Son Nhut on 4 December. No personnel casualties were sustained; however, one aircraft took a direct mortar hit. Operations were affected only to the extent that one patrol flight was missed because of the attack on the airfield.

MARKET TIME units rendered assistance to Chinese Communist fishermen on two occasions during the month. On 4 December a Chinese junk carrying 43 persons was towed to Nha Trang by PCF 54. The junk had been swept from her normal fishing grounds by a storm and was in need of assistance. On 8 December, USCGC POINT ELLIS discovered two Chinese Communist fishermen adrift in their small junk. All the Chinese fishermen were residents of Hainan Island and arrangements were made through diplomatic channels to return them to their homes.

On 23 December, MARKET TIME air and sea units turned back a suspicious, steel-hulled trawler which was identified as being
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE OPERATIONS
DECEMBER 1966

First Coastal Zone - Area 1/2
Second Coastal Zone - Area 3/4/5
Third Coastal Zone - Area 6/7
Fourth Coastal Zone - Area 8/9

TIBURON Aground - 2h Dec
CHICOM Junk - 8 Dec
DANANG
Area 1
Area 2
QUI NHON
Area 3
CHICOM Junk
Area 4
NHA TRANG
CAM RANH BAY
Area 5
VUNG TAU
Area 6
PCF 2h - 11 Dec
PCF 6
6 Dec
AN THOI
Point Banks
7 Dec
Point Grace - 15 Dec

SCALE:
0 - 50
Nautical Miles

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similar to the infiltration trawlers of 10 May and 20 June.

The Christmas truce period, running from 0700 24 December to 0700 26 December, was observed by MARKET TIME forces in that no persons were detained and no gunfire support missions were conducted during that time. Enemy activity in MARKET TIME areas appeared to be significantly less during the truce period.

CHINESE COMMUNIST FISHERMEN INCIDENTS

At 1815 on 4 December, PCF 54 detected a heavily-damaged fishing junk ten miles northeast of Nha Trang. The 80-foot craft was carrying 36 men (and seven children) who were later identified as Chinese fishermen from Tanh Sien, Hainan Island, Communist China.

The junk’s cargo consisted of fish and fishing equipment. No contraband was found. Interrogation revealed that the junk had been damaged in a storm and had drifted southeast to the position where it was found by PCF 54.

At 2000 on 8 December, USCGC POINT ELLIS discovered a small non-motorized junk 28 miles northwest of DaNang. The two fishermen aboard the junk were determined to be residents of Tanh Sien, Hainan Island, Communist China. A storm had set the men adrift and separated them from their mother ship in the fishing grounds near Hainan Island. They stated that they had been drifting for eight days. The two were taken to Nha Trang to join the group of Communist fishermen assisted earlier by PCF 54.

Arrangements were made through diplomatic channels for the return of both junks and all occupants.
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TRAWLER SIGHTING INCIDENT

At 1145 on 23 December, a MARKET TIME aircraft from Patrol Squadron 16 sighted a heavily-laden, steel-hulled trawler maneuvering on various courses at 10 knots 80 miles northeast of Qui Nhon. At 1409, a second VP-16 aircraft held the trawler 70 miles northeast of Qui Nhon, at this time proceeding on a heading of 060° at 10 knots. By 1150 of the following day, the trawler was 225 miles northeast of Qui Nhon, maintaining course and speed.

Covert air surveillance was continued until 1214 on 25 December when USS HISSEM (DER-400) relieved the aircraft and tracked the trawler until it entered the Hainan Straits.

Photographic analysis indicated that the trawler had the same type hull as that of the trawler captured in June 1966. The latest incident was evaluated as an attempt to infiltrate cargo into Binh Dinh province.

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE AT TAN SON NHUT

At 0115 on 4 December, the Viet Cong attacked Tan Son Nhut Airbase with mortar and small arms fire. MARKET TIME personnel sustained no casualties; however, four of the five parked aircraft were damaged. One P2A Neptune of Patrol Squadron 17, Detachment A, received a direct mortar hit and sustained major damage. One received moderate damage and two others received minor damage while the fifth was unscathed.

Only one MARKET TIME flight was missed because of the attack.
as regular coverage was resumed at 1200. All damaged aircraft were back in operation within 48 hours with the exception of the heavily-damaged Neptune which returned to service within two weeks.

OPERATIONS

Hostile Fire and Evasion Incidents

Twelve hostile fire and evasion incidents occurred during December with no friendly personnel casualties while one Viet Cong suspect was killed and another was captured. The incidents are presented in chronological order. Distances are measured from the nearest Coastal Surveillance Center.

7 - At 2345 USCGC POINT BANKS sighted two evading sampans off the coast of Ca Mau Peninsula, 105 miles southeast of An Thoi. After the sampans ignored signal flares and warning shots they were taken under fire. One sampan was damaged while the other successfully evaded. The WPB received hostile fire from the beach in the vicinity of the damaged sampan. POINT BANKS' return fire produced three secondary explosions.

8 - At 1016 USCGC POINT ORIENT sighted an evading junk 85 miles northwest of DaNang near Pho Hoi village. The junk's six occupants ignored warning shots and beached their craft. A 3rd Marine Division reaction force was called in. When the Viet Cong suspects saw the Marine force they attempted to flee. One suspect was killed and one other was captured.

10 - At 1459 PCF 63 destroyed an abandoned basket boat 45 miles east of Qui Nhon after the boat had evaded and its occupants had fled.
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11 - At 1035 POINT BANKS sighted a sampan making for an island 40 miles off the tip of Ca Mau Peninsula. When POINT BANKS signalled and fired warning shots, the sampan attempted to evade. Two occupants abandoned the boat while the third tried to move it to the bank. The sampan was taken under fire and damaged.

- At 1400 PCF 75 detected an evading junk while inspecting a group of fishing junks 80 miles north of Qui Nhon near An Dinh village. The occupants of the junk ignored warning shots, beached the junk and fled. Later, the abandoned junk was destroyed by mortar fire.

13 - At 1745 USCGC POINT MAST sighted a sampan evading into a canal on the coast of An Xuyen province 80 miles southeast of An Thoi. An L-19 reconnaissance aircraft provided fire control assistance for the WPB. The aircraft received small arms fire from the area as three structures were damaged by POINT MAST's mortar fire.

15 - At 1955 USCGC POINT GRACE received recoilless rifle and small arms fire from a position at the mouth of the Bo De River on the Ca Mau Peninsula, 170 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Several rounds, including three 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, struck POINT GRACE causing considerable damage to the hull and superstructure. Despite the damage, the cutter remained in an operational status and suppressed the enemy fire. Later, BLANCO COUNTY (LST 345) assisted POINT GRACE with temporary
repairs. USCGC POINT GAMMON then escorted the damaged cutter to Cat Lo for repairs.

18 - At 1530 a reconnaissance aircraft received ground fire from an area on the coast of Cay Duong Bay, 58 miles east of An Thoi. PCF 91 provided return fire of 21 rounds of 81mm mortar. One camouflaged junk was destroyed.

19 - At 1845 PCF 90 sighted an evading sampan near the mouth of the Bay Hap stream on the Ca Mau Peninsula, 105 miles southeast of An Thoi. When a warning shot was fired the occupants of the sampan jumped overboard. PCF 90 received hostile fire from the beach and cleared the area.

20 - At 0105 PCF 20 destroyed two evading sampans 70 miles north of Qui Nhon after they had ignored illumination, signals and warning shots. Enemy personnel casualties were unknown.

21 - At 0135 USCGC POINT CAUTION illuminated and hailed a junk moving along the surfline near Tam Giang lagoon, 55 miles northwest of DaNang. The junk evaded to the beach and was abandoned. POINT CAUTION destroyed the junk with mortar fire.

Search and Rescue

In addition to assisting the Chinese Communist fishermen, MARKET TIME units conducted five other search and rescue operations.

At 0915 on 2 December, PCF 25 rescued ten persons and recovered one body after a junk had sunk 60 miles northeast of Vung Tau. Of the 22 persons who had been on board, 18 were rescued, one body was recovered and three were missing and presumed drowned. The survivors
were taken to the Coastal Group 31 base. A Vietnamese PGM assisted PCF 25 in the search and rescue. The operation was terminated at 1700.

At 1210 on 3 December, USS VIREO (MSC-205) attempted to assist a disabled junk 60 miles southeast of An Thoi off the Ca Mau Peninsula. VIREO's efforts to tow the junk to safety failed. Five of the junk's six passengers were rescued when the junk sank. A search for the missing passenger produced negative results.

At 1215 on 6 December, USS FORCE (MSO-445) was designated on-scene commander in a search and rescue mission initiated in an area from 25 to 45 miles southeast of Nha Trang in an effort to locate a missing U.S. Air Force F-106 aircraft. The operation was terminated at 2000 on 7 December with negative results.

At 1405 on 8 December, USS BLANCO COUNTY (KST-344) reported the crash of a U.S. Air Force B-57 140 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Local MARKET TIME units began immediate search and rescue operations. PCF 67 recovered both the pilot and the co-pilot in good condition. The rescued crewmen were transferred to BLANCO COUNTY for a subsequent helicopter lift.

At 1045 on 29 December, USCGC POINT LEAGUE discovered a burning junk 30 miles west of Vung Tau. The cutter rescued eight persons from the water and extinguished the blaze.

Other Incidents

At 0345 on 6 December, PCF 6 detained a sampan 45 miles east of An Thoi near Cai Ban Cape. Investigation revealed that the sampan was carrying 500 pounds of rice and that its lone occupant was a