In January, naval forces continued to frustrate enemy designs and movements amid indications that the enemy was desperately seeking a major victory prior to the start of the Vietnamese lunar New Year truce period. Viet Cong activity was particularly intense in the Rung Sat Special Zone, where firing incidents averaged more than one a day and attacks against minesweepers and merchant shipping threatened the main channel to Saigon.

To the south, MARKET TIME forces intercepted a steel-hulled trawler attempting to infiltrate supplies into the Delta, and GAME WARDEN forces broke up a number of river crossing attempts. Units of both forces provided sea and river blocking cover in support of the first combined U.S./Vietnamese amphibious landing in the Delta, DECKHOUSE V. Meanwhile, at Vung Tau, advance units of the newest member of the naval forces team, the Riverine Assault Force, began joint training maneuvers with elements of the U.S. Army NINTH Infantry Division.

To the north, the Naval Support Activity in Danang again set a new port record for processing cargo despite continued adverse weather. And, with typical resourcefulness, I Corps Seabees rebuilt in ten days 32 private homes destroyed by the crash of a commercial airliner into a heavily-populated area.

Psychological operations aimed at Viet Cong defection were intensified during January; special appeals were made stressing family reunion, as Vietnamese everywhere began to prepare for the
lunar New Year season.

The posture of the Vietnamese Navy continued to improve under the leadership of the new Commander in Chief, Captain Tran Van CHON. The aggressive support provided by the River Assault Groups during Operation CEDAR FALLS, in the Iron Triangle area north of Saigon, reflected the growing professionalism of the Vietnamese Navy.

* * * * *

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31 - Cargo Handling Battalion TWO completes 20 months of service in Vietnam. p. 53.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE

In January, the efforts of the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ) River Patrol Group to keep the Saigon channel open dominated the activities of the River Patrol Force.

The tempo of enemy activity in the RSSZ, which increased markedly in December, became intense during January. Firing incidents throughout the RSSZ averaged more than one a day. In the main channel there were 12 separate incidents, including mining attempts and automatic weapons attacks, as the Viet Cong mounted aggressive assaults against merchant shipping, minesweepers and patrol craft.

In the Mekong Delta, GAME WARDEN units operating in the lower Bassac River interdicted Viet Cong crossing attempts on five different occasions. On 26 January a crossing attempt by at least 600 Viet Cong was broken up by the combined efforts of PBR patrols and an AC-47 "Puff the Magic Dragon" aircraft.

In the Mekong River, the combined efforts of PBRs, helicopter fire teams, fixed-wing aircraft and Vietnamese Army artillery disrupted a crossing attempt by main force Viet Cong units on 15 January. During the engagement, at least nine Viet Cong were killed, and a number of enemy craft and structures were destroyed.

On the night of 15 January, My Tho-based PBRs rescued 22 persons from the dredge, JAMAICA BAY, which was mined by the Viet Cong while conducting dredging operations for the new Delta base at Dong Tam.
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In the Co Chien River, GAME WARDEN patrols engaged in a series of fire fights with Viet Cong forces ranging from minor harassments to attempts to overrun friendly outposts along the river. In the Ham Luong, patrols were in almost daily contact with the enemy during the latter part of the month.

The GAME WARDEN support ship, USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-846), suffered a serious casualty to her boat handling equipment in heavy weather off the mouth of the Co Chien River and had to return to Subic Bay for repairs. The second GAME WARDEN LST, USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821) arrived in country during the month and was stationed near Dong Tam to support patrols in the Ham Luong River.

In mid-January, GAME WARDEN units commenced Operation RAMPART, designed to block Viet Cong concentration in the Dong Tam area, where elements of the U.S. Army NINTH Infantry Division are now based. Patrol efforts were intensified in the lower rivers, and forces from the relatively quiet Long Xuyen area were deployed in the lower Bassac and Co Chien rivers to provide additional patrol density.

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

Incidents in the Long Tau Channel

During the month of January, Viet Cong in the Rung Sat Special Zone waged an intensive campaign against shipping in the Long Tau River, the main channel connecting the South China Sea with Saigon. All together, there were 12 separate incidents, including three mining attempts and six automatic weapons attacks.
Most of the attacks were directed against the minesweepers of the United States and Vietnamese Navies in a stretch of the river 11 to 17 miles downstream from Nha Be.

About 0640 on 1 January, MSBs 16 and 52 came under heavy automatic weapons fire from positions on the south bank of the channel, 17 miles southeast of Nha Be. The MSBs returned the fire, then cleared the area while a helicopter fire team delivered a strike, followed by PBR reconnaissance by fire. Additional helicopter strikes, as well as fixed-wing aircraft strikes, were conducted until the area was neutralized. Two U.S. sailors were wounded slightly in the engagement. Enemy casualties were undetermined.

At 1120 on 9 January, the British tanker, HAUSTRUM, was taken under intense automatic weapons and 57mm recoilless rifle fire from positions on each bank of the river, 11 miles downstream from Nha Be. A PBR patrol and U.S. and Vietnamese mine craft in the area were unable to suppress the enemy fire, and requested helicopter fire team assistance. When the fire team arrived, it was taken under fire from a tree line 500 yards behind the west bank of the Long Tau, as well as from four sampans in nearby Rach Don creek.

Two of the sampans were intercepted by PBRs and nine of the occupants detained. Initial interrogation indicated that at least 35 Viet Cong were involved in the ambush. During the attack, the tanker’s master was wounded and his quartermaster killed. A Vietnamese sailor and a U.S. advisor aboard a Vietnamese MINS were wounded.
On 10 January, MSB 16 swept a frustum-shaped, command-detonated mine in the channel, nine miles southeast of Nha Be. The mine was caught in the starboard wire of the Oropesa sweep gear and was removed and disarmed by Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel at Nha Be. The next day, two miles farther downstream, MSB 32 observed a medium-sized explosion close astern just after her drag chain had taken a heavy strain. The minesweeper and a PBR patrol conducted reconnaissance by fire in the area with negative results. Upon recovering her sweep gear, MSB 32 found the last two links of the drag chain badly bent.

On 23 January, two American sailors and the entire crew of an Army helicopter were killed during an hour-long fire fight near the mouth of the Song Dan Xay River, 16 miles southeast of Nha Be.

At 1610, MSBs 16 and 32 were struck by heavy automatic weapons fire from the west bank of the river. Two crewmen in MSB 16, Engineman First Class Donald G. PEDDICORD, USN, and Seaman Terry L. BRADEN, USN. were killed by the first burst.

Moments later, four PBRs and a helicopter fire team exchanged heavy fire with the enemy. About 1655, an Army helicopter fire team arrived to lend support. During a low level firing run, one of the Army helicopters was seen to explode under heavy ground fire and crash into the trees in flames. PBRs immediately lifted a Vietnamese Regional Force platoon to the area.

When the Regional Force troops reached the burning helicopter, they noted that the bodies of three of the crewmembers were still
inside the helicopter. A fourth burned body was found near the wreckage. The troops were unable to remove the bodies because of the intense heat. At 2000, when the troops were withdrawn by River Assault Group 22 craft, the helicopter was still burning.

At 0755 on 26 January, MSBs 49 and 51 were ambushed from positions on both banks of the main channel, near the mouth of the Song Dan Xay. Simultaneously, a large underwater explosion was observed astern of the minesweepers. A helicopter fire team covered the minesweepers' withdrawal and subsequently neutralized the area.

On 30 January, MSBs were taken under heavy automatic weapons fire from the north bank of the Long Tau less than three miles downstream from Nha Be. The minesweepers returned the fire, and a PBR patrol in the area came to their assistance. Then an AC-47 struck both banks of the river, and 76 rounds of 105mm howitzer fire, adjusted by an L-19 spotter aircraft, were delivered into the ambush area and likely escape routes.

At 1220 the same day, MSBs 32 and 49 and a Vietnamese M1MS were ambushed by Viet Cong using automatic weapons, a 57mm recoilless rifle and small arms from the south bank of the channel near the mouth of Tac Gong Tram creek. A PBR patrol in the area suppressed the fire, then came under fire from positions on the south bank about one mile to the west. A light helicopter fire team suppressed the fire, but was forced down when enemy fire struck the rotor blade. A fixed-wing air strike was then delivered to neutralize the enemy positions.
Table 1. RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

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1 LCDR COOGAN was wounded in action 20 January; LT MAUZ assumed his duties during the remainder of the month.

2 LT JONES was wounded in action 20 January; LTJG H.A. LEVIEEN, USNR, assumed his duties until relieved by LCDR C. MCRIIGHT, USN, on 24 January.
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SEAL Operations

On 6 January, two SEAL fire teams were transported into the Rung Sat Special Zone by an LCM-3 for a reconnaissance mission. While making their way along a narrow stream near Rach Muoi creek, the SEALs found a partially completed Viet Cong base camp containing fresh tracks, two finished bunkers, a cooking area, and a recently cleared building site. The SEALs destroyed the camp and a small quantity of ammunition in the area, and withdrew without incident.

On 9 January, two SEAL fire teams discovered a Viet Cong base camp in the vicinity of Rach Cat Lai Be creek, 14 miles south of Nha Be. While investigating a rice cache in a hut, one of the teams heard signal shots and spotted at least four armed Viet Cong moving into defensive positions. The SEALs withdrew silently from the camp, and swam downstream toward their helicopter rendezvous point.

Along the way, the SEALs heard voices and noted a large Viet Cong base area with a quantity of rice, fishing tackle and ammunition. Subsequently, based on intelligence furnished by the SEALs, the Viet Cong facilities were destroyed by an air strike.

On 12 January, SEALs destroyed eight Viet Cong water wells near Than Thoi hamlet in the lower RSSZ. Four days later, SEAL fire teams destroyed a large quantity of Viet Cong rice discovered in a base camp area twelve miles south of Nha Be. Six booby traps were found and disarmed, and then the entire area was destroyed by high explosives.

On 28 January, a SEAL ambush team killed two Viet Cong and
SEALS ALIGHT FROM AN LCX IN THE HUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE

Tom Swift and His Invisible LCX!
damaged a large sampan in a stream near the east bank of the Long Tau. The team then withdrew to its LCM-3 rendezvous point without further incident.

Other Incidents in the Rung Sat Special Zone

In the first hour of the New Year, a Seicap River PBR patrol interdicted a Viet Cong ammunition resupply junk attempting to infiltrate the Rung Sat Special Zone. At 0050 on 1 January, PBRs 69 and 70, patrolling the river near the mouth of Rach Bong Gieng Len creek, two and one-half miles south of Nha Be, made contact with the junk as it came out of the creek. PBR 69 promptly turned toward the junk while PBR 70 provided cover and blocking assistance.

The junk opened fire on PBR 69 at a range of about 75 yards. The PBR then raked the junk and silenced the enemy fire. Of the junk's five occupants three were killed, another fell into the water and was presumed killed and the fifth was captured. PBR 70 then went alongside the junk and began to transfer the large quantity of ammunition inside the junk.

There were no friendly casualties. The 30-foot junk contained one Chinese Communist Type-53 machine gun and nine drums of 7.62mm ammunition, 15 81mm anti-tank rockets, 45 rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle ammunition, 500 grenades, 10,000 rounds of 7.92mm ammunition, 10,000 rounds of 5.56mm ball ammunition, and several hundred feet of safety fuse.

A document captured later in the month indicated that a Viet Cong platoon leader and two squad leaders of the enemy's B51 Rear
Service Unit had been killed in the engagement, and that B51 had been forced to suspend operations.

On 20 January GAME WARDEN units joined U.S. Army forces and Vietnamese Regional Forces and River Assault Groups in a rapid reaction operation which dealt a serious blow to Viet Cong supply operations in an area just to the west of the Rung Sat Special Zone.

Interrogation of a captured Viet Cong had indicated that a large enemy quartermaster depot was situated at Long Hiep hamlet, about five miles south-southwest of Nha Be. Aerial reconnaissance subsequently confirmed the depot's location and on the evening of the 19th of January a planning conference was held with the staff of the Second Battalion, Third Regiment, of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Naval forces were organized into two blocking units: the Western Unit (one U.S. RPC, one ICM-3 and six PERs), which would proceed up the Rach Vang and Rach Ba Dang creeks; and the Eastern Unit (one U.S. RPC, one LCPL, four PERs, and one VNN commandament and two monitors), which would proceed through the Kinh Lo canal.

At 1032 on the 20th, the blocking units began moving into the narrow waterways. At 1105, the RPC in the Western Unit detected a reinforced Viet Cong platoon moving out of the area and took the enemy under fire. Four Viet Cong were killed, and at least 40 others were observed to fall under the heavy fire. The RPC was then hit by a 57mm recoilless rifle round, wounding three U.S. officers and four enlisted men. By 1130 the enemy fire, which included machine gun fire and B-40 anti-tank rockets, was suppressed.
ASSAULT ON VIET CONG QUARTERMASTER DEPOT
20 JANUARY 1967

LEGEND:
- Viet Cong Positions

SCALE:
0
1
Nautical Mile

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NHA BE
2 MILES

KINH LI
CANAL

EASTERN
UNIT

WESTERN
UNIT

RACH BA LANG

RACH LANG

COMPANY

PLATOON

PLATOON

11

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In the Kinh Lo canal, the Eastern Unit also came under heavy fire, which continued until 1130 when army troops were landed in the area by helicopters and all enemy resistance ceased.

Friendly casualties were: one Vietnamese Army officer killed, ten U.S. Navy personnel wounded (three seriously), two Vietnamese sailors wounded, and one HPC damaged. Enemy losses included: four killed, 10 possibly killed and 10 cases of TNT destroyed; captured were 30,000 pounds of rice, 40 pounds of documents (including a Viet Cong Operation Order), 12 bars of silver, and a large quantity of cloth, uniforms and miscellaneous material. In addition, 30 suspects were detained.

The U.S. and Vietnamese forces withdrew at 1605 without incident, taking with them the detainees as well as 120 refugees in the area. Interrogation subsequently revealed that most of the detainees were Viet Cong and that most of the refugees were Viet Cong dependents.

On 30 January, Army and Navy HSSZ helicopters killed approximately 20 Viet Cong in a reaction operation after the Viet Cong had killed four and wounded two civilians aboard a civilian craft. The helicopters came under heavy automatic weapons fire, and the Navy helicopter was forced to land when the rotor blade and fuselage were struck by .50 caliber rounds. Fixed-wing air strikes were then called in, and the area was neutralized. A Vietnamese Air Liaison Officer later reported that there were at least 20 dead Viet Cong at the scene of the air strikes. There were no personnel casualties to friendly military forces.
DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) and Ham Luong Rivers

On the morning of 3 January, PBRs 109 and 110 were taken under fire while the patrol was pursuing an evading sampan near the south bank of the Mekong River, six miles west of My Tho. When the patrol closed to within 75 yards of the beach, ten uniformed Viet Cong appeared from a nearby hut and opened fire. The PBRs returned the enemy fire, killing six Viet Cong and driving the remaining four into the underbrush. In addition, the enemy sampan was destroyed during the action. There were no friendly casualties.

On 3 January, the Viet Cong mined the dredge, JAMAICA BAY, at the Dong Tam construction site west of My Tho. PBRs 103 and 105, patrolling about a half-mile west of the site, heard the explosion and headed for the area. By the time the boats arrived, the dredge had already begun to list, and the two PBRs immediately began evacuating personnel, transferring 16 Americans and five Vietnamese to a tug anchored nearby. Then PBRs 101 and 107 arrived, and the crew of 107 went aboard the tug to administer first aid to the survivors while 101 provided cover for the rescue operations.

The crew of PBR 105 located a man trapped in the dredge and, by pinging on the hull with a hammer, led him to a main deck hatch 50 feet away. The hatch was covered with two heavy pipes and a tug was called alongside to pull them away. When the hatch was opened, only the man's nose was above the rising water. The PBR patrol officer, Boatswain's Mate First Class James E. WILLIAMS, USN,
jumped into the flooded compartment and removed the man. All survivors were taken to My Tho, where the Naval Support Activity detachment provided hot food, medical assistance, clothing and berthing facilities.

During the afternoon of 10 January, PBRs 123 and 126 came to the assistance of a Vietnamese outpost on the south bank of the river, near the river's mouth. The outpost was under heavy fire from numerous Viet Cong positions along a two and one-half mile front to the south and west of the outpost. PBR fire forced the enemy to break off the attack after a fire fight in which at least five Viet Cong were killed by heavy .50 caliber, M-60, M-16 and 40mm grenade fire from the two boats.

On 15 January PBRs of River Patrol Section 531 engaged at least three main force companies of the Viet Cong's 263rd Battalion in the narrow Nam Thon channel north of Ngu Hiep Island. One U.S. sailor was mortally wounded in the action; at least nine Viet Cong were killed and three were wounded; a large number of sampans and installations were destroyed.

About 1545, PBRs 103 and 105 received a report from a Vietnamese outpost on the south bank of the river that a large number of Viet Cong with heavy weapons were crossing the river from north to south about six miles west of the outpost. The patrol officer, BLT WILLIAMS, notified the Vietnamese Seventh Division tactical operations center at My Tho and proceeded to the crossing area.
As the PBRs approached the crossing point, they detected two heavily-loaded sampans in the channel. The patrol came under heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire from both banks simultaneously and small arms fire from the sampans. The patrol returned the fire into positions spotted and marked by an L-19 aircraft overhead. Enemy fire was momentarily suppressed and the patrol cleared to the west.

Artillery fire was then ordered into the area, followed by helicopter and fixed-wing air strikes. Upon completion of the air strikes, PBRs 103 and 105, joined by PBRs 96 and 104, entered the channel under cover provided by an Army helicopter fire team in order to investigate two enemy sampans which had beached during the fire fight. Several more sampans were discovered. Suddenly the enemy opened up again on the PBRs with heavy fire from both banks. While the patrol was trying to clear the kill zone, PBR 96's propulsion pumps clogged. The three companion boats remained in the kill zone to provide cover until the crew of 96 was able to clear the pumps. The four boats then withdrew together.

During the engagement the four boats killed nine Viet Cong and wounded three. In addition, nine Viet Cong sampans were sunk (one with over 2,400 pounds of rice), 17 structures were destroyed and eleven others were damaged. Four PBR crewmen were wounded, including the boat captain of PBR 103, Quartermaster First Class Terrell E. CARTER, USN. CARTER was evacuated to Saigon, but died in the hospital a few hours later.
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On 17 January, PBRs intercepted a large sampan in the Mekong, west of My Tho; its single occupant was carrying Vietnamese Army uniforms, bottles, rags, gasoline, batteries and copper wire. He also had in his possession a list of Vietnamese Army squad and platoon leaders. The possible saboteur was turned over to the Vietnamese authorities.

On 20 January, PBR patrols were taken under fire from Viet Cong positions on both banks of the Mekong, seven miles west of My Tho. At 1730, PBRs 98 and 105 received 200 rounds of automatic weapons fire from the north bank of the river near the Phu Phong village muc mam factory, a known Viet Cong stronghold. The PBRs requested assistance from the HC-1 (Det. 29) helicopter fire team. The helicopters made three passes on the target, producing one secondary explosion, then returned to HARNETT COUNTY to rearm. While standing by to spot for the helicopters, the PBR patrol again came under fire, this time from the south bank. Fire was returned and the enemy broke off the engagement. When the helicopters returned they made two more firing runs, destroying two huts and damaging two others. During the action one PBR crewman was wounded slightly, and one of the helicopters suffered minor damage from a premature rocket explosion.

During the last two weeks in January, there were a series of incidents along a six mile stretch of the Ham Luong River in the vicinity of the Pen Tre canal. Most of the incidents were minor harassments of PBRs, involving sniper or automatic rifle fire.
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On 24 and 31 January, however, PBRs received heavy automatic weapons fire four miles southeast of the junction of the Ham Luong and Mekong rivers. In each instance, artillery fire and air strikes were called in to neutralize the enemy positions. There were no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

Operations in the Co Chien River

Viet Cong activity along the Co Chien River was relatively constant throughout the month of January. Although most of the incidents involved harassment of PBRs and outposts in the vicinity of Cu Lao Giai Island, there were numerous minor incidents throughout the patrol area. Two harassments late in the month originated from Cu Lac Cai Cao, a small island five miles from Vinh Long and long considered friendly. The attacks marked the first recorded hostile fire incidents from this island since patrols began in the Co Chien in August of 1966.

On 10 January, a PBR patrol was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire while searching junks in a narrow channel north of Cu Lao Hay Island. Fire was returned and the patrol cleared the area and called in the light helicopter fire team from Vinh Long. River Assault Group 23 craft also joined the action, and the combined U.S./Vietnamese units suppressed the enemy fire. During the engagement PBR 141 sustained six superficial hits in the hull.

On 20 January, PBRs E6 and 111 sighted a group of sampans near the tip of Cu Lao Giai. As the PBRs turned towards the sampans, enemy bank positions opened up with heavy automatic weapons and
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rifle grenades. The PBRs returned the fire, cleared the kill zone and requested helicopter assistance from Vinh Long.

PBRs 50 and 52 joined to provide additional blocking cover, and were taken under fire from the south bank. When the helicopter fire team arrived, it received heavy automatic weapons fire from numerous positions along the river banks. Upon completing a series of firing runs, the fire team was relieved by the HC-1 (Det. 29) helicopter fire team from USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821), and an additional strike was delivered against areas marked by PBR tracer fire. Shortly thereafter all enemy activity in the area ceased. There were no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

At 1950 on 27 January, PBRs patrolling in the vicinity of Long Hoa village near the mouth of the Co Chien came under heavy automatic weapons fire. The PBRs quickly suppressed the fire, but less than an hour later an outpost in the same area was attacked by the Viet Cong. PBRs and the Vinh Long light helicopter fire team came to the outpost’s assistance and drove the Viet Cong away. There were no friendly casualties in either encounter. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

On 27 January, PBRs 53 and 60 were taken under fire on two occasions from positions on the south bank of the river near Cu Lao Giai. PBRs sustained a total of six hits during the two fire fights. There were no personnel casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.
Operations in the Lower Bassac River

On the afternoon of 2 January, PBRs 59 and 60 closed two large junk boats moving out of the mouth of a stream on the north bank of the Bassac River, 34 miles southeast of Can Tho. The junks promptly reversed course and headed for the stream. As the PBRs turned to intercept them, they were taken under fire from the bank. The patrol responded and set one of the junks on fire. A series of secondary explosions followed and the junk sank. Two Viet Cong were killed while several others escaped to the bank under fire. There were no friendly casualties.

At 2330 on 4 January, a PER patrol observed alternating red and white lights on both banks of the river, about three miles downstream from Can Tho. Shortly thereafter, a twin-engine sampan with three occupants stood out from the north bank and opened fire on the PBRs. The patrol boats killed the three occupants and the sampan began to run in circles. Then the patrol came under heavy .50 and .30 caliber automatic weapons and small arms fire from both banks. Within 20 minutes, a second PER patrol had joined the engagement, an AC-47 was overhead and units of River Assault Group (RAG) 25 were underway from Can Tho.

The action terminated at 0130 following bombardment of the enemy positions by RAG units using 40mm and 81mm mortar fire. Three of the enemy were killed. A Vietnamese National Policeman in the first PER patrol was wounded slightly. PBR 58 received 17 hits, including one six-inch hole in the bow, apparently caused by
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a 57mm recoilless rifle round.

GAME WARDEN units supporting Vietnamese Navy (VNN) Coastal Group 36 units came under heavy fire twice on 7 January. At 1300, while supporting a resupply mission on Cu Lao Dung Island, PBRs 37 and 38 were taken under small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire by about 30 Viet Cong from positions on Cu Lao Dung and nearby Cu Lao Tron Island. The patrol returned the fire and called in the HC-1 (Detachment 29) light helicopter fire team. The team made four firing runs on the enemy and the Viet Cong abandoned their positions and fled across the rice paddies.

Three Viet Cong were killed in the action and the resupply mission was completed successfully. There were no friendly casualties.

At 1450 PBRs 37 and 38 engaged an estimated 25 Viet Cong who were attempting to prevent a CJ 36 command junk from approaching a heavily-laden Viet Cong sampan beached on the west side of Cu Lao Tron. The enemy employed machine gun and automatic rifle fire from a bunker near the beached sampan. Enemy fire was suppressed by the PBRs and the sampan was destroyed. Two Vietnames sailors were wounded in the engagement. The Viet Cong sampan was sunk. There were no U.S. casualties.

On 14 January, PBRs 37 and 38 were taken under fire from the northern tip of Cu Lao Dung while pursuing an evading sampan. An estimated 400 Viet Cong in the area used heavy automatic weapons, rifle grenades, 40mm rockets and small arms fire in a concentrated
effort to drive off the patrol.

PBRs 37 and 38 were joined by a second patrol, a Navy light helicopter fire team and a VNN LSIL. Nine Viet Cong were killed in the engagement. The enemy also lost a sampan with 25 weapons aboard. There were no friendly personnel or material casualties.

On 21 January, PBRs 131 and 135 intercepted a sampan moving from the west bank of the river toward the northern tip of Cu Lao Dung. The sampan was illuminated at a range of 100 yards and two warning shots were fired. Nine persons were seen to jump overboard. Seven were apprehended and two were killed in the water. The seven Viet Cong were taken to the Coastal Group 36 base near Long Phu; one of them was subsequently killed trying to escape.

Interrogation by the Vietnamese authorities revealed that there had been eleven men in the sampan: six hamlet or village guerrillas, a district cadre, a commo-liaison cadre, a village military section assistant chief and a village party chief. The eleventh occupant was a 16-year old boy who had been pressed into service. Their mission had been to set up an ambush. Captured with the sampan were Mauser rifles, grenades and other small arms weapons.

At 1900 on 26 January, PBRs 31 and 32 were taken under heavy fire while attempting to intercept a sampan near Cu Lao May Island. Three other PBR night patrols set up blocking stations along adjacent crossing routes while a fourth patrol came to the assistance of PBRs 31 and 32.
An AC-47 arrived overhead and reported that there were approximately 400 Viet Cong troops, at least 15 automatic weapons positions and numerous sampans in the area, and that a large number of additional troops and sampans were fleeing to the west. The AC-47 joined the two PBR patrols in striking at the enemy and a heavy exchange continued until 2200, at which time all enemy fire was suppressed.

PBR 31 received four hits and PBR 32 received one; one crewman was wounded slightly. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

At 2045 on 27 January, the enemy launched a mortar attack on the Coastal Group 36 base. PBRs stationed at the base sortied and the enemy shifted his mortar fire to the patrol boats. By 2315 the combined fire power of four PBRs, two helicopter fire teams, an AC-47 and CG 36 base defense forces succeeded in suppressing the enemy fire. Two U.S. sailors and one Vietnamese sailor were wounded. Enemy casualties were undetermined.

On 28 January, Can Tho-based PBRs assisted in the evacuation of nine Vietnamese killed and 38 wounded during a fire fight involving an Army helicopter fire team, PBRs and Viet Cong units. At month's end the circumstances surrounding the incident were under investigation.

GAME WARDEN patrols in the lower Bassac continued to use sector and sub-sector "wanted" lists with success. During the month of January, 16 suspects on the Ke Sach sub-sector list and one on the Soc Trang sub-sector list were detained by PBR patrols conducting
routine searches; two of the suspects turned out to be Viet Cong.

A total of 17 Vietnamese were evacuated for medical reasons by lower Bassac PBRs during the month of January; the causes ranged from gunshot wounds to childbirth complications.

Operations in the Upper Mekong and Bassac Rivers

On the morning of 6 January, PBRs 77 and 81 were taken under heavy automatic weapons fire on two occasions while providing blocking forces for Kien Phong sector combined operations. In both incidents the boats suppressed the fire with no personnel casualties. In the first incident, PBR 77 sustained five hits in the coxswain's flat and one hit in the radome.

On the night of 9 January, Long Xuyen-based PBRs evacuated the wife of the hamlet chief of Tan Thanh, in Kien Phong province; she had been critically wounded and her husband murdered during an attack by the Viet Cong. She was taken to the Long Xuyen hospital.

On 28 January, PBRs 84 and 118, acting on an intelligence report that the Viet Cong were setting up a road block ten miles upstream from Sa Dec, engaged a number of Viet Cong tree snipers in the area. The enemy fire was silenced quickly, and there was no further activity in this area during January.

GAME WARDEN SUPPORT SHIP OPERATIONS

Foul weather in the South China Sea continued to plague GAME WARDEN support ship operations. On 11 January, USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-646) suffered a major casualty to her boat-handling equipment and the loss of PBR 30 while launching PBRs in support of DECKHOUSE V.
The mishaps occurred off the mouth of the Co Ch’en River when a sudden gust of wind caught PER 30, almost waterborne, and drove the boat so far aft that the cargo hook could not be tripped. The boat filled and swamped alongside the ship, and was eventually destroyed. Prompt action on the part of the boat crew and the JENNINGS COUNTY deck force prevented any personnel casualties; however, the ship’s rigging suffered extensive damage, and it was necessary for the IST to proceed to Subic Bay for repairs. The incident climax ed a series of setbacks occasioned by rough weather.

The second CAKE WARDEN support ship, USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821), arrived in country on 17 January. She was stationed in the Mekong River off Dong Tam, where she supported River Section 512 and HC-1 Detachment 29. HARNETT COUNTY experienced no significant difficulties while operating in the relatively calm waters of the upper river.

**M-18 Grenade Launcher**

During late December and January, the fire power of PBRs was increased by the installation of M-18 Grenade Launchers. The launcher, which is a simple, crank-operated weapon, can fire up to 250 40mm grenades per minute. It was mounted on the PBR’s after .50 caliber mount, above the machine gun.

Thus far the M-18 has proved to be an effective weapon, especially in areas where high banks are encountered. Initially, several cases of short rounds were reported. This difficulty was traced to excessive rotor gap clearance which allowed propellant
gases to escape; detailed instructions were issued to correct the problem.

OPERATION DECKHOUSE V

Operation DECKHOUSE V, the first combined U.S./Vietnamese amphibious operation in the Mekong Delta, was an assault against the Thanh Phong Secret Zone in Kien Hoa province.

The operation was scheduled to begin 4 January, but extremely adverse weather forced postponement until the morning of the 6th. MARKET TIME units provided exfiltration patrols before and during the landings, and helped guide LSTs and LSMRs into the shallow and unmarked channels of the Co Chien and Ham Luong rivers.

PBRs were stationed at the Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 35 base in the Co Chien and at the CO 36/37 base in the Ham Luong to provide blocking forces; helicopters of HC-1 (Detachment 29) were stationed at Tra Vinh because the poor weather precluded operating from JENNINGS COUNTY.

U.S. and Vietnamese marines encountered little resistance ashore amid indications that the main force Viet Cong had fled from the area. The operation was terminated 15 January.

***

GAME WARDEN STATISTICAL SUMMARY
January 1967

1. FBR Statistics:
   a. Total Patrols (two boats): Day 647 Night 753
   b. Total Contacts: Day 58,939 Night 10,375

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c. Total Inspected: Day 15,718 Night 3,614

d. Total Boarded: Day 21,949 Night 3,158

e. People Detained: 841

f. Sampans/Junks Detained: 174

g. Total Patrol Hours: Day 15,833 Night 18,588

2. Helicopter Fire Team Statistics:

a. Total Flight Hours: 297

b. Helo Missions:
   (1) Pre-planned strikes: 11
   (2) Reaction: 37
   (3) Targets of Opportunity: 5
   (4) Support: 56
   (5) MEDEVAC: 4

3. GAME WARDEN Totals:

a. Fire Fights:
   (1) PBR 91
   (2) Helo 5
   (3) MSB 6
   (4) RPC 2
   (5) LCM 3
   (6) LCP 1

b. Sampans: Destroyed 20 Damaged 1 Captured 2

c. Structures: Destroyed 16 Damaged 13

d. Huts: Destroyed 15 Damaged 0

e. Bunkers: Destroyed UNK Damaged UNK

f. Enemy: XIA 51 KIA(Poss) 72 WIA 0 Captured 10

g. Friendly: XIA 3 WIA 22

h. Friendly Battle Damage:
   (1) PBR 37
   (2) Helo 5
   (3) MSB 1
   (4) LCM 1
   (5) RPC 1

i. PBR MEDEVAC: 15

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On the first day of 1967, MARKET TIME units detected, attacked and set fire to a steel-hulled trawler attempting to infiltrate the Ca Mau Peninsula. During the first two weeks of January, MARKET TIME forces provided blocking and escort patrols in the coastal area between the mouths of the Co Chien and Ham Luong rivers in support of Operation DECKHOUSE V.

Additionally, the Coastal Surveillance forces were involved in 16 hostile fire, evading junk, and gunfire support incidents. In spite of the fact that the Northeast Monsoon continued to hamper MARKET TIME operations, the units detected 35,023 junks and sampans, 13,858 of which were inspected while 9,650 were boarded. STABLE DOOR harbor defense units inspected 3,029 craft and boarded 2,169.

On 27 January over 200 vials of penicillin and various other drugs were found in the possession of a 15-year-old boy aboard a junk which was detained by PCF 13, 45 miles north of Qui Nhon. The junk and its occupant were delivered to units of Coastal Group 15.

STEEL-HULLED TRAWLER INCIDENT

At 2115 on 1 January, PCF 71 closed a radar contact off the Ca Mau Peninsula, 165 miles southwest of Vung Tau. The contact was on a course of 098 degrees at 10-12 knots. At 2150, the SWIFT began challenging. All challenges were ignored and, at close range, the unidentified contact opened fire on the PCF. USCGC POINT GAMMON and PCF 68 quickly moved into the area in response to PCF
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE OPERATIONS
January 1967

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

LEGEND:
• Coastal Surveillance Center
X Incident

AN
THOI

PT GREY
6 Jan

TRAWLER
1 Jan

Scale:
0 100 Statute Miles

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7l's call for assistance.

At about 2245, POINT GAMMON illuminated and identified the contact to be a trawler with a blue-green hull and a cream-colored superstructure. At this time, in a position 10 miles from the point the trawler was first detected, PCF 68 closed the trawler directing .50 caliber and 81mm mortar fire against it. Several direct hits were scored as the trawler ran aground with her stern engulfed in flames. Five secondary explosions were observed as the fires spread to the pilot house area. Shortly after midnight the vessel disappeared. Subsequent analysis and evaluation of the incident concluded that, although heavily damaged, the trawler possibly could have escaped into a nearby stream. Six MARKET TIME personnel received minor wounds in the action.

SUPPORT OF GROUND OPERATIONS

Prior to the start of Operation DECKHOUSE V, MARKET TIME units established blocking patrols on 2 January off the coast of Kien Hoa province between the Co Chien and Ham Luong rivers. During the actual operation, which ran from 6 to 15 January, MARKET TIME craft escorted amphibious landing ships into and out of the area of operations.

The SWIFTS also supported Operation FARRAGOIT, which began on 25 January in the Phang Rang area. The PCFs were assigned the primary mission of preventing infiltration/exfiltration movements by the enemy along the coast. Also, they provided gunfire support and carried out psychological operations for the friendly forces.
operating in the area.

Additionally, Coastal Surveillance forces provided support for the following operations in January: 9th Vietnamese Army operations in the Long Toan District (8 to 17 January); Task Force X-Ray operations in the Duc Pho area (28 January); and 1st Marine Division Operation TRINITY in the second coastal area (30 and 31 January). Surfline operations continued throughout most of the month in areas 1, 2, and 6 with no significant results.

EVASION INCIDENTS

There were six incidents of junks or sampans evading MARKET TIME patrols during January. In all cases, no friendly casualties were sustained. The incidents are presented chronologically.

8 - At 0345, USCGC POINT GREY sighted an evading junk 55 miles southeast of An Thoi off the Ca Mau Peninsula. The cutter fired warning shots which were ignored by the 30-foot junk. POINT GREY directed .50 caliber machine gun and 81mm mortar fire against the suspect craft. The fire produced a series of secondary explosions aboard the junk. Enemy casualties were unknown.

12 - At 0650, USCGC POINT BANCORP sighted three evading sampans 60 miles southeast of An Thoi off the Ca Mau Peninsula. When the sampans ignored warning shots they were taken under direct fire by the cutter. One sampan was destroyed. Viet Cong personnel casualties were unknown.

22 - At 0503, PCF 91 detected a large contact on radar off the
tip of Ca Mau, 65 miles south-southeast of An Thoi. Upon closing the contact and firing illumination rounds, the SWIFT discovered two evading sampans and two others dead in the water. The evading sampans ignored warning shots and were taken under direct fire with unknown results. When PCF 91 approached the other two sampans, automatic weapons fire was received from the beach. The PCF returned fire to the beach and destroyed the sampans with direct fire. Enemy personnel casualties were unknown.

24 - At 1753, PCF 18 sighted five basket boats and one sampan evading toward the beach 65 miles southeast of Danang. When the SWIFT closed to investigate the evading craft, heavy weapons fire was received from the beach. The evading boats reached the beach and their occupants fled. An L-19 reconnaissance aircraft in the area reported that a number of Viet Cong were firing from trenches. The L-19 spotted for SWIFT gunfire and an air strike was called in. Results of the action were 15 Viet Cong killed, three bunkers destroyed and seven structures damaged.

25 - At 0001, USCGC POINT DUME sighted a sampan with four occupants moving toward the shore 80 miles north of Qui Nhon. The craft was beached and abandoned. Then the cutter took the sampan under direct fire and destroyed it, small arms fire was received from the beach. Fire was returned to the beach with unknown results.
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29 - At 1900, USCGC POINT ARDEN sighted an evading junk 40 miles northwest of Danang. All warnings to halt were ignored as the junk evaded into a river mouth area of the beach. POINT ARDEN then sent a small boat to board and search the craft. The junk's occupants explained that they were evading because a passenger, who had fled ashore, forced them to take evasive action. The accused passenger was subsequently apprehended on the beach and delivered to Coastal Group 12.

GUNFIRE SUPPORT MISSIONS AND HOSTILE FIRE INCIDENTS

In addition to supporting major combined operations, MARKET TIBE units conducted three gunfire support missions and experienced five hostile fire attacks. Friendly casualties were limited to one U.S. sailor slightly wounded. The incidents are presented chronologically.

6 - At 1200, USCGC POINT KENNEDY was hit by one 57mm recoilless rifle round 35 miles southwest of Vung Tau. The cutter, participating in Operation DECKHOUSE V at the time, sustained a 10-inch hole in the spray shield.

10 - At 0830, a reconnaissance aircraft reported that five Viet Cong were pinned down in a position 80 miles east-northeast of Vung Tau. USCGC POINT PARTRIDGE responded to a request for gunfire support by firing 81mm mortars into the area. The results of the mission were unknown.

23 - At 2040, PCF 11 provided 81mm mortar fire in support of
a reconnaissance aircraft receiving hostile fire 70 miles southeast of An Thoi, off Ca Mau. The hostile fire was coming from the vicinity of three sampans which were taken under fire. Two of the sampans were destroyed and one was damaged.

25 - At 1833, a P3A aircraft on regular MARKET TIME patrol received hostile ground fire while investigating suspicious contacts. When it became apparent that the aircraft had been hit, the P3A returned to Danang Air Base. An inspection disclosed that the port wing had been punctured and that fuel had been lost. The aircraft subsequently was flown to Naha, Okinawa for repairs.

26 - At 1345, USCGC POINT CYPRESS received heavy automatic weapons fire while approaching the beach to destroy an abandoned sampan 55 miles southwest of Vung Tau, off the Long Toan Secret Zone. A reconnaissance aircraft reported that 20 bunkers and three other junks were in the area. POINT CYPRESS fired into the area and an air strike was requested. Several bunkers were destroyed in the action and the junks were heavily damaged. Viet Cong personnel casualties were unknown.

27 - At 0240, PCF 35 received small arms fire from the beach 10 miles east of Vung Tau. Fire was returned while the SWIFT cleared the area. One U.S. Navyman was slightly wounded. He was taken to the 6th Evacuation Hospital.
28 - At 0200, PCF 23 and USCGC POINT GRACE received small arms fire from the beach on the Ca Mau Peninsula, 125 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Both units returned fire, damaging two structures and one sampan.

28 - At 2055, PCF 35 conducted a gunfire support mission against a Viet Cong beach position in the Long Toan Secret Zone, 55 miles southwest of Vung Tau. The SWIFT expended 62 rounds of 60mm mortars, resulting in one POL-type explosion. Enemy personnel casualties were unknown.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

MARKET TIME units were responsible for five search and rescue operations during January.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutters POINT PARTHIDE and POINT LEAGUE rescued six Vietnamese from their sinking junk on the afternoon of 6 January, 10 miles south of Vung Tau. The floundering junk had been discovered by the patrol craft the previous day and was being towed to Vung Tau. Within sight of Vung Tau, the junk began sinking and the six passengers were taken aboard POINT LEAGUE.

On 9 January, USS PIVOT (MSS-463) was directed to search for a missing L-19 aircraft in the area 90 miles northwest of Qui Nhon. Search aircraft reported sighting an oil slick and a possible dye marker. No debris was sighted. The search and rescue effort was terminated at 1610.
At 0515 on 15 January, LCPL 42 collided with a 25-foot fishing boat in Vung Tau harbor. All five occupants of the junk were taken on board the LCPL as their craft sank. One boy was taken to the hospital for treatment. There was no damage to the LCPL.

USCGC POINT ORIENT evacuated two wounded Vietnamese fishermen at 1000 on 23 January from an area 70 miles northwest of Qui Nhon. The fishermen were taken to Chu Lai. Both Vietnamese had been wounded by an unidentified aircraft. Two other fishermen were killed in the same incident.

HARBOR DEFENSE (OPERATION STABLE DOOR)

Four skimmers (16-foot Boston Whalers) which arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 3 January, increased the number of STABLE DOOR patrol boats to a total of 20. On 17 January, the communications advance base functional components arrived in country for installation at the four STABLE DOOR sites.

Inshore Undersea Warfare (IUW) Unit 3 conducted operations at Qui Nhon during January. One junk and 15 persons were detained for improper identification papers or because of suspicious actions.

At Nha Trang, Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance Unit 22 (MIUSWE 22) was relieved on 22 January by IUW Unit 4. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit 1, Team 23, consisting of one officer and three enlisted men, reported to IUW Unit 4 on 22 January and commenced operations on 28 January. During the month, three junks and 20 persons were detained for improper identification at Nha Trang.
IUW Unit 2 continued operations at Cam Ranh Bay during January. EOD Unit 1, Team 22, consisting of one officer and three enlisted men, reported to IUW Unit 2 on 14 January and commenced operations on the 20th. Two quonset huts were constructed during the month to serve as a mess hall and galley.

KIUWS 13 conducted operations at Vung Tau in January. Five junks and 61 persons were detained because they could not be properly identified or because of suspicious actions. On 15 January, LCPL 42 collided with a fishing junk which sank. The LCPL rescued all five of the Vietnamese crew.

MARKET TIME UNITS

On 14 January USS SUTTER COUNTY (LST-1150) relieved USS BIANCO COUNTY (LST-314) as the MARKET TIME support ship in Areas 7 and 8 off the Ca Mau Peninsula. The MARKET TIME support ship is a mobile platform for the support of PCFs at sea.

On 17 January, USS CURRITUCK (AV-7) established a seadrome at Cam Ranh Bay. P3B aircraft of Patrol Squadron 50 flew MARKET TIME patrols from the seadrome from 18 to 31 January.

Seven SP-2H aircraft (Patrol Squadron 17) flew MARKET TIME patrols from Tan Son Nhut Air Base during January while Patrol Squadrons 16 and 19 flew patrols from Naval Air Station, Sangley Point. In addition, a detachment of P3A aircraft operated from U Tapao, Thailand during the latter part (22nd through 31st) of the month.

In January the following Seventh Fleet ships operated as
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MARKET TIME units during the indicated inclusive dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DER 329</th>
<th>USS KREYCHMER</th>
<th>DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DER 331</td>
<td>USS KOINER</td>
<td>27-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DER 251</td>
<td>USS CAMP</td>
<td>9-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DER 400</td>
<td>USS HISSEM</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DER 328</td>
<td>USS PINCH</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DER 325</td>
<td>USS LOWE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSC 289</td>
<td>USS ALBATROSS</td>
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<td>USS BANNET</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSO 463</td>
<td>USS PIVOT</td>
<td>1-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSO 464</td>
<td>USS FRM</td>
<td>28-31</td>
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MARKET TIME: STATISTICAL SUMMARY

1. U.S. ships/craft:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total craft days on patrol</th>
<th>DER</th>
<th>MSO</th>
<th>MSC</th>
<th>WPB</th>
<th>PCF</th>
<th>LST</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Daily Average of craft on patrol | 5   | 5   | 3   | 14.3 | 28.6 | 1 |

2. U.S. Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL DETECTED</th>
<th>WOOD - DAY</th>
<th>23,400</th>
<th>WOOD - NIGHT</th>
<th>11,623</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL INSPECTED</td>
<td>WOOD - DAY</td>
<td>9,052</td>
<td>WOOD - NIGHT</td>
<td>4,806</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STEEL - DAY</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>STEEL - NIGHT</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY MARKET TIME UNITS

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150,000
140,000
130,000
120,000
110,000
100,000
90,000
80,000
70,000
60,000
50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000

JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

--- DETECTIONS
--- INSPECTIONS
--- BOARDINGS

1966
1967
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>TOTAL BOARDED</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>TOTAL DETAINED</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>WOOD - DAY</td>
<td>6,773</td>
<td>NIGHT 2,832</td>
<td>2,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEEL - DAY</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NIGHT 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Junks 15**
**People 146**

* * * * *
RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE

On 7 January, the first units of the newly-established Riverine Assault Force arrived at Vung Tau in USS WHITFIELD COUNTY (LST-1169). Organized as a result of a recommendation by Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, the new force is under the operational control of Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam; its mission includes the security, mobility and economy of waterborne forces in riverine warfare.

The Force will eventually consist of River Support Squadron SEVEN and River Assault Squadrons NINE and ELEVEN, and will carry out riverine assault operations in coordination with the U.S. Army NINTH Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone.

Each river assault squadron will consist of two command boats (CCBs), five monitors, 26 troop carriers, one refueler and 16 ASPBs. They will each be capable of providing lift support for a reinforced infantry battalion.

On 10 January, Commander, River Assault Squadron NINE, his staff, and River Division 91 commenced training operations off Vung Tau in River Assault Group (RAG) boats on loan from the Vietnamese Navy (VNN). On 15 January, the naval units were joined by elements of the NINTH Infantry Division; landing exercises for joint orientation and training began shortly thereafter.

In addition to the joint training aboard WHITFIELD COUNTY, River Assault Squadron NINE personnel were assigned to VNN RAGs in the Rung Sat Special Zone and the Mekong Delta as technical