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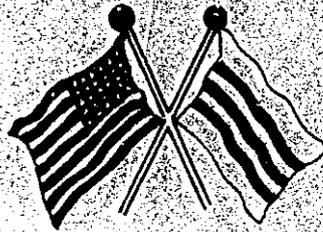
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U.S. NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM



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MONTHLY HISTORICAL
SUMMARY
MAY 1967

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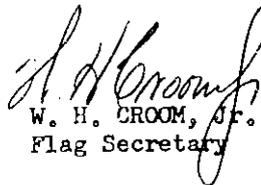
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UNITED STATES
NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM

MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

MAY 1967

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FOREWORD

The month of May was marked by numerous incidents involving underwater activity by the enemy. In the Mekong Delta, at least three Viet Cong swimmers were killed during a series of abortive attempts to sabotage units of Operation GAME WARDEN. In I Corps, a dredge and a lighter were mined in the Cua Viet approaches to Dong Ha, 85 miles northwest of Darang.

On 15 May and again on the 19th, elements of the Riverine Assault Force operating in the Delta experienced their first major contact with the Viet Cong. During the encounters, conducted at close range, the special armor of the assault craft proved effective against 57-mm. recoilless-rifle fire. However, 82-mm. caliber ammunition penetrated the armor.

The unit composition of Operation MARKET TIME underwent a number of changes in May. Two of the newly-constructed, high-speed gunboats (PGs) arrived for duty, and three high-endurance Coast Guard cutters (WHECs) arrived as replacements for DERs. In addition, two patrol craft of the Vietnamese Navy operated as MARKET TIME units during the second half of the month.

The continuing fierce tempo of combat operations in I Corps took its toll of Seabees in May as two battalions suffered 21 casualties. Most of the injuries occurred on 8 May, 2,000 yards from the Demilitarized Zone, when 13 men were wounded during an attempt by enemy troops to overrun a Special Forces camp the Seabees were building.

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Saigon's Naval Support Activity detachment at Nha Be battled two intense POL fires during the month. On 3 May, a 60-foot junk loaded with gasoline caught fire and eventually exploded after it was towed away from a fuel pier. On 11 May, a blaze aboard a Philippine tanker carrying 10,000 gallons of JP-4 fuel was finally brought under control after almost nine hours of sustained effort by detachment personnel.

In May the Vietnamese Navy activated a River Assault Group at the Coastal Group 12 base near Hue, marking the first time a RAG has operated beyond the Delta and surrounding region since South Vietnam became an independent nation. On 11 May, two of the four new motor gunboats (PGMs) recently acquired by the Navy completed underway training and were assigned to the Fleet Command.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE (TASK FORCE 116)

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

In May there was no major hostile fire activity in the Rung Sat Special Zone. In a series of minor incidents GAME WARDEN units engaged small groups of Viet Cong along enemy lines of communications and ambush sites.

On 18 May a helicopter fire team discovered a 50-foot watchtower overlooking the junction of the Lo Ren and Vam Sat rivers. The helicopters took the tower under fire and killed its two occupants while they were attempting to flee. That same day Navy helicopters supporting the operations of the ARVN 46th Regiment in Long An province, southwest of Can Giouc, killed at least five, and possibly ten more, Viet Cong. Two Navy pilots were slightly wounded during the engagement.

On the night of 25 May, a PBR patrol in the central Soirap River received about 30 rounds of automatic-weapons fire from a sampan near the north bank. The patrol returned the fire and was joined by a heavy helicopter fire team, which discovered and destroyed 16 sampans and two huts in the area. In addition, fire from the helicopters triggered one secondary explosion. There were no U.S. casualties. The extent of the enemy's personnel casualties was undetermined.

DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

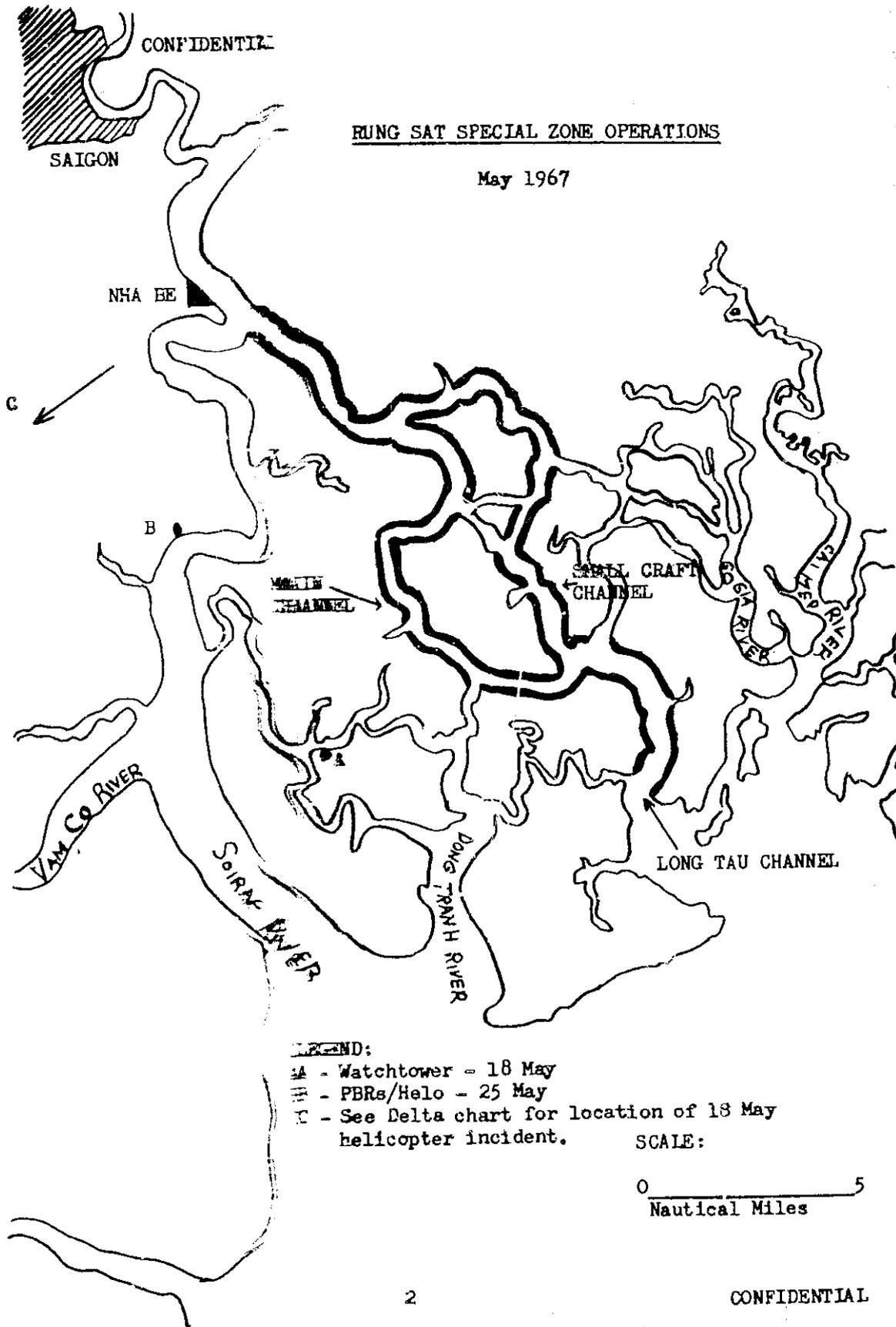
Operations in the Ham Luong River

During May most of the activity in the Ham Luong River occurred

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

May 1967



LEGEND:

- A - Watchtower - 18 May
- B - FBRs/Helo - 25 May
- C - See Delta chart for location of 18 May helicopter incident.

SCALE:
0 _____ 5
Nautical Miles

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near Cu Lao Oc, a long, narrow island three miles downstream from the mouth of the Ben Tre Canal. On 24 May the Officer in Charge, River Patrol Section 531, three PBR crewmen and a Vietnamese national policeman were killed by intense enemy fire from the north bank of the river, four miles downstream from Cu Lao Oc. Five other U.S. sailors were wounded during the action.

The patrol, composed of PBRs 101 and 106, was attacked by automatic-weapons and recoilless-rifle fire from several Viet Cong positions. The patrol returned the fire. Then a recoilless-rifle round struck the forward .50 caliber mount of PBR 101, killing the gunner, the patrol officer and the helmsman. The midships gunner was subsequently killed by machine gun fire as the PBR veered toward the bank out of control. The wounded after gunner finally managed to bring the boat under control and turned clear of the range of fire.

The Vietnamese policeman, embarked in PBR 106, was killed when a recoilless-rifle round struck the patrol boat amidships. The effects of the burst also seriously wounded the boat captain and the after gunner, and disabled the craft's port engine.

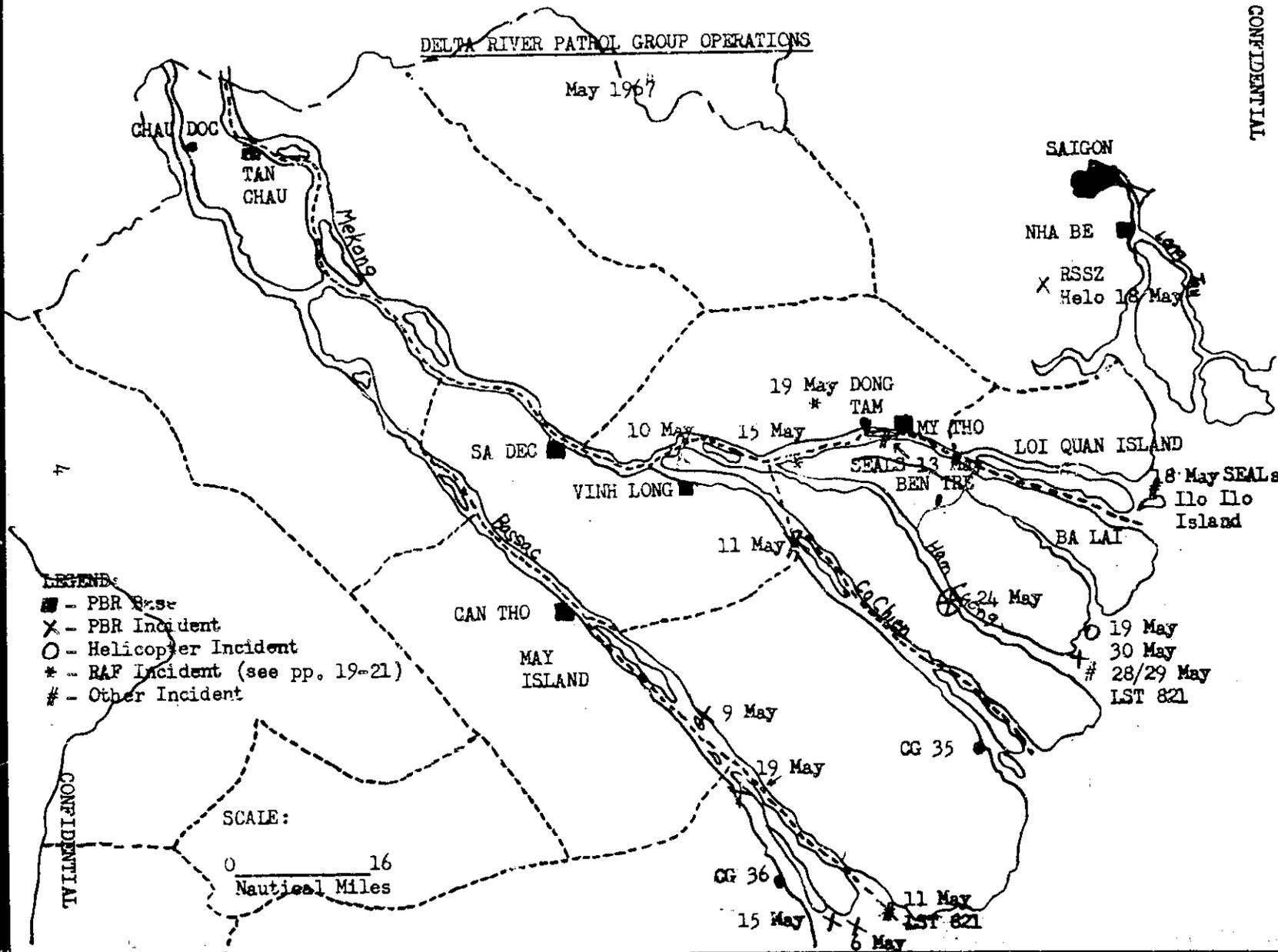
During the engagement armed helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft launched strikes against the ambush sites. Subsequent intelligence reports indicated that the air strikes and the PBR fire had killed at least 19 Viet Cong and wounded 36 others.

In early May, to meet the threat posed by the reported presence of about 3,000 main-force Viet Cong troops in Kien Hoa province, the commander of the Delta River Patrol Group redeployed certain forces

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DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP OPERATIONS

May 1967



LEGEND:

- - PBR Base
- X - PBR Incident
- - Helicopter Incident
- * - RAF Incident (see pp. 19-21)
- # - Other Incident

SCALE:
 0 ——— 16
 Nautical Miles

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○ 19 May
 ○ 30 May
 # 28/29 May
 LST 821

CG 35
 CG 36
 11 May
 LST 821
 15 May
 X
 X
 6 May

X RSSZ
 Helo 16 May

19 May DONG
 * TAM

10 May

15 May

SEALS 13 May
 BEN TRE

8 May SEALS
 Ilo Ilo
 Island

11 May

24 May
 LST 821

9 May

19 May

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(Operation OVERLOAD) in an effort to interdict enemy lines of communications within the province and from adjacent provinces. Units were moved from the upper rivers to provide increased patrol density in the My Tho, Bassac and Ham Luong rivers, and to pave the way for incursions into the Ba Lai, a narrow river running between the Ba Tri and Binh Dai areas of Kien Hoa province. During the latter part of the month helicopters conducting patrols along the Ba Lai (where a 24-hour curfew had been placed in effect) killed 22 Viet Cong, destroyed 25 sampans and 18 structures, damaged four sampans and five structures, and triggered three secondary explosions.

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) River

During May there was an increase in the number of hostile fire and evasion incidents along the My Tho stretch of the Mekong River.

On 10 May PBRs interdicted a crossing by three Viet Cong in a sampan three miles east of Cai Be. The three men took to the water upon being hailed and swam ashore; from the beach they opened fire on the patrol with small arms. The PBRs' return fire killed one man and wounded another, who managed to escape. The third Viet Cong was captured and delivered to the Vietnamese authorities at My Tho for interrogation.

On the morning of 13 May, a four-man SEAL patrol was landed on Thoi Son Island to set up a "listening post" near the house of a suspected Viet Cong. An hour later seven men were landed on the island by a water-taxi and entered the house. The SEALs waited 15 minutes, then called the group out. The men immediately tried to

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escape and the SEALs opened fire, killing two of the Viet Cong and wounding two others. Later, documents found on one of the corpses indicated that the man had been a member of a sapper squad (a Viet Cong sabotage unit). The incident also resulted in the capture of a quantity of documents, which included a muster list of a Viet Cong sapper platoon, descriptions of some of the platoon's past activities, and reconnaissance reports on potential targets.

On 18 May a seven-man SEAL reconnaissance team was landed on Ilo Ilo Island, near the mouth of the My Tho, in response to an intelligence report about a Viet Cong medical training center. The team found an aid station and confiscated assorted medicines, medical supplies and medical books. Moving southwestward, the SEALs discovered a camp containing three huts, two bunkers, numerous command-detonated booby traps, and six Viet Cong. The team killed five of the Viet Cong, wounded the sixth, and captured four Chinese Communist rifles. The SEALs then destroyed the camp and withdrew, with a number of Viet Cong in unsuccessful pursuit.

Operations in the Co Chien River

In May, most of the encounters with the Viet Cong along the Co Chien River involved PBR support for Vietnamese outposts under attack, or enemy fire directed at the PBRs from the river banks or from evading sampans.

On 11 May, PBRs pursuing an evading sampan were taken under small-arms fire from the south bank of the river near the mouth of the Mang Thit Canal. The PBRs suppressed the fire with M-16

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rifles and then embarked three Popular Forces troops at a nearby outpost in order to investigate the sampan, which had been abandoned a short distance up the canal.

Once inside the canal the patrol noted considerable sampan activity and again came under small-arms fire. The return fire from the PBRs triggered one secondary explosion from a sampan on the bank. The PBRs then came under heavy automatic-weapons fire, which was returned. Shortly thereafter, Vietnamese RAG units and an LSSL relieved the PBRs and the patrol withdrew, its supply of ammunition nearly depleted. The PBR fire had killed at least one Viet Cong and destroyed two junks and a sampan. There were no U.S. casualties.

Operations in the Bassac River

On the morning of 6 May the Viet Cong exploded a mine against a PBR patrol near the mouth of the Bassac River. At the same time heavy fire broke out from the bank on nearby Con Coc Island. The four PBRs returned the fire with their .50 caliber machine guns and 60-mm. mortars. The mortar fire triggered a series of secondary explosions which lasted for 30 minutes. Although the mine explosion had lifted one PBR about five feet out of the water, there were no U.S. casualties or material damage. At least one Viet Cong was killed during the engagement.

On 9 May, PBRs supporting a SEAL ambush team destroyed one junk and six sampans and killed at least two Viet Cong in a narrow channel between Tan Dinh Island and the north bank of the river.

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The PBRs had entered the channel in an attempt to draw Viet Cong units toward the northern end, where the SEAL ambush was set. However, the enemy opened fire on the patrol from two bunkers and from a junk. The PBRs silenced the fire from the junk and one bunker, and called in a helicopter strike, which neutralized the other bunker.

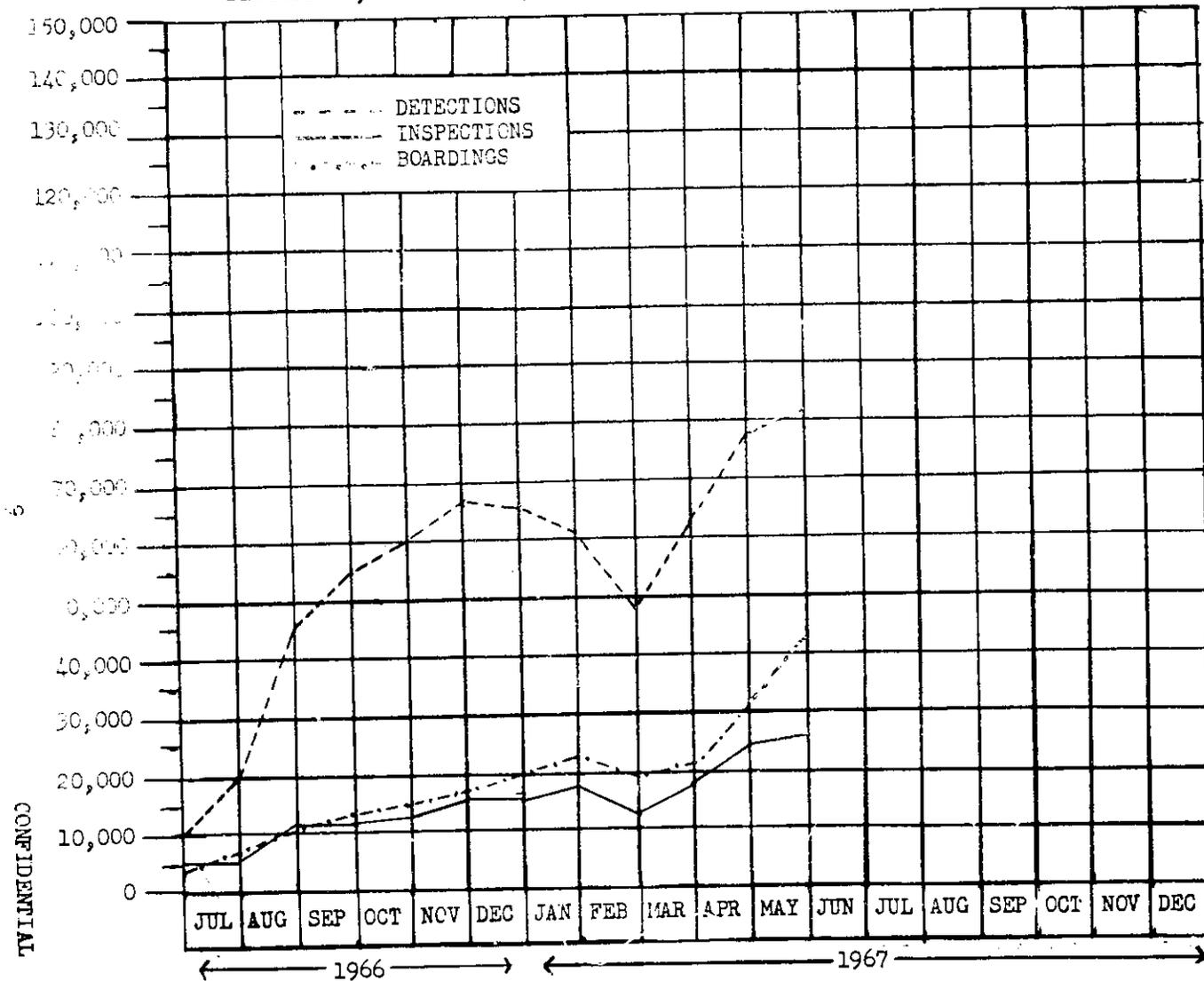
After the bunkers were silenced the PBRs continued down the channel, engaging snipers and automatic-weapons positions on both banks. With support from the helicopters, the PBRs suppressed the enemy fire.

On 19 May, PBRs disrupted a Viet Cong loudspeaker team which had been broadcasting propaganda in connection with the birthday of the North Vietnamese President, Ho Chi Minh. The river patrol, which had been informed of the team's location by the commanding officer of Coastal Group 36, surprised the Viet Cong as they were leaving Tron Island in sampans. When the sampans attempted to evade to the bank they were taken under fire, which resulted in seven of the enemy being killed.

GAME WARDEN Support Ships

On several occasions during the month, GAME WARDEN support LSTs conducted gunfire missions against targets of opportunity or in response to requests. On 11 May HUNTERDON COUNTY blew up an ammunition cache in the Long Toan Secret Zone. The ship had detected a moving contact on radar as it entered a canal. At the request of the Vietnamese Sub-sector Control Center, the contact

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY GAME WARDEN UNITS



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was taken under fire. A night observation device was used to spot the fall of shot as semi-automatic 40-mm. fire was "walked" up the canal. The fire triggered a secondary explosion 75-100 feet in height and several smaller explosions. Thirty minutes later the bright orange flash of another explosion, accompanied by a fireball 100-125 feet in diameter, erupted in the same area.

Viet Cong Swimmer Activity

During May, Viet Cong swimmers were encountered in several areas of the Mekong Delta amid intelligence reports that the Thanh Phu Secret Zone was being used as a sapper training area.

On the night of 15 May a PBR patrol killed two Viet Cong swimmers near Dung Island. On 19 May a Navy helicopter spotted six Viet Cong in black rubber suits and swim fins off the Thanh Phu Secret Zone. The helicopter killed one of the swimmers prior to being driven off by enemy ground fire.

Later in the month, several unsuccessful sabotage attempts were made against USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821) while it was anchored in the mouth of the Ham Luong near the Thanh Phu Secret Zone. On 28 May, when a deck sentry killed a man astride a log near the ship, a small secondary explosion ensued. On 29 May a sentry threw a grenade at a man who was seen in the water near the forward boat boom. Subsequent investigation disclosed that the boom had been tampered with.

On the morning of 30 May a PBR patrol engaged two swimmers

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near the mouth of the Ham Luong. Four rounds of M-79 grenades were fired at the swimmers, who disappeared.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE (TASK FORCE 115)

In May the unit composition of the Coastal Surveillance Force underwent a number of changes.

Early in the month the first of the newly-constructed gunboats-- ASHEVILLE (PG 84) and GALLUP (PG 85)--arrived and began MARKET TIME patrols. In mid-May the first three 311-Class, high-endurance Coast Guard cutters--BARATARIA (WHEC 381), BERING STRAIT (WHEC 382) and GRESHAM (WHEC 387)--chopped to CTF 115 as MARKET TIME replacements for SEVENTH Fleet DERs.

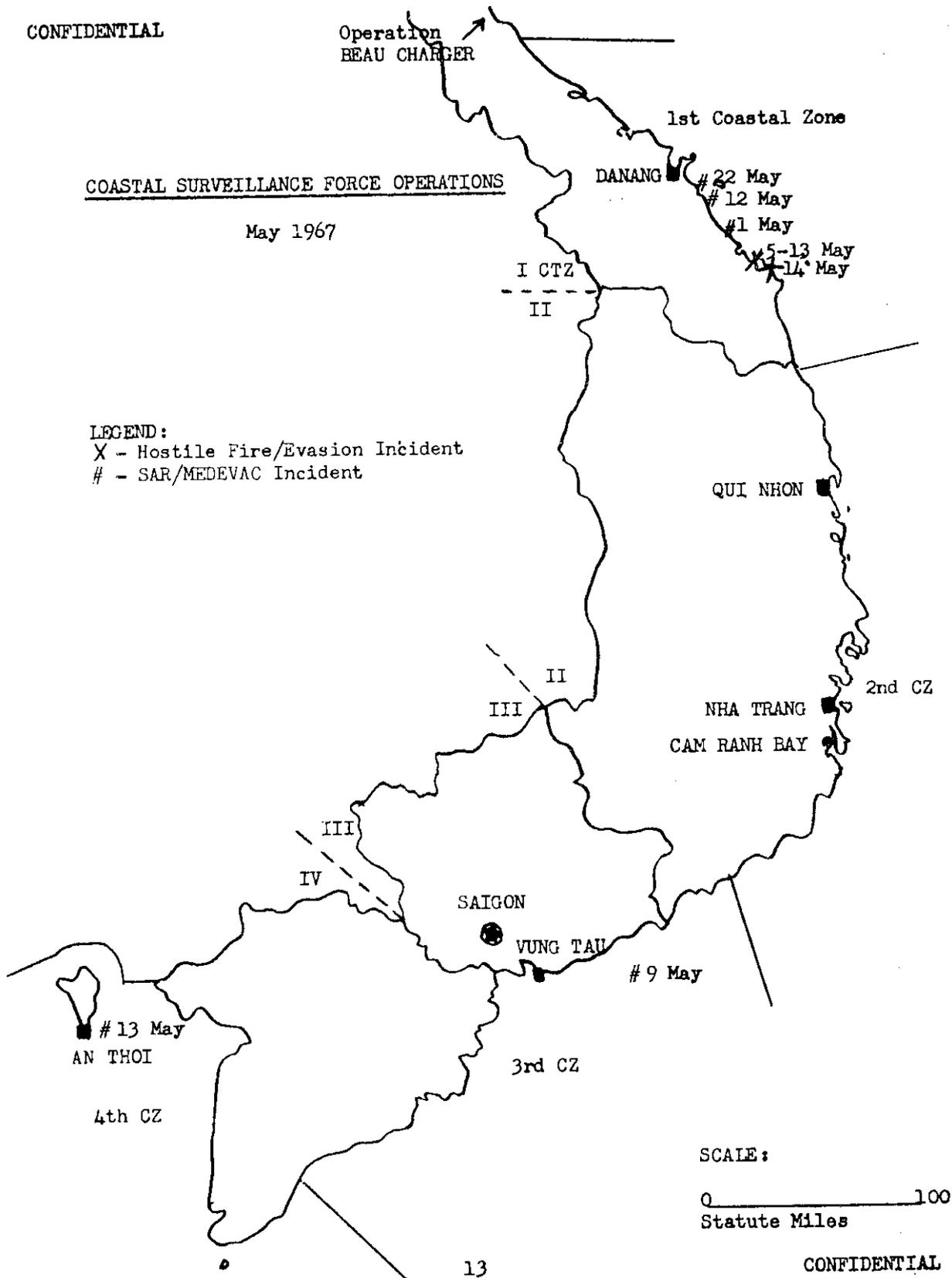
On 15 May, the Vietnamese Navy's PCE 08 relieved USS LUCID (MSC 458) of MARKET TIME duties in the First Coastal Zone and remained on station until the 29th. On 17 May, the VNN's PCE 12 relieved USS GANNET (MSC 290) in the Second Coastal Zone and conducted MARKET TIME patrols through the end of the month.

GANNET proceeded to the Fourth Riverine Area for special patrol duties. LUCID, meanwhile, proceeded to Danang for special mine-sweeping duty occasioned by the sapper threat to Danang's harbor and bay.

OPERATION MARKET TIME

In May MARKET TIME units detected almost 115,000 junks and sampans; over one-third of these were inspected and over one-fourth were boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of over 100 junks and nearly 1,500 suspects. In addition, MARKET TIME units detected over 700 steel-hulled craft during the month; over one-third of these were inspected or boarded.

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The month's MARKET TIME activity also included participation in eight ground operations, 20 gunfire support missions, 50 hostile fire incidents, 12 evasion incidents and six search and rescue missions.

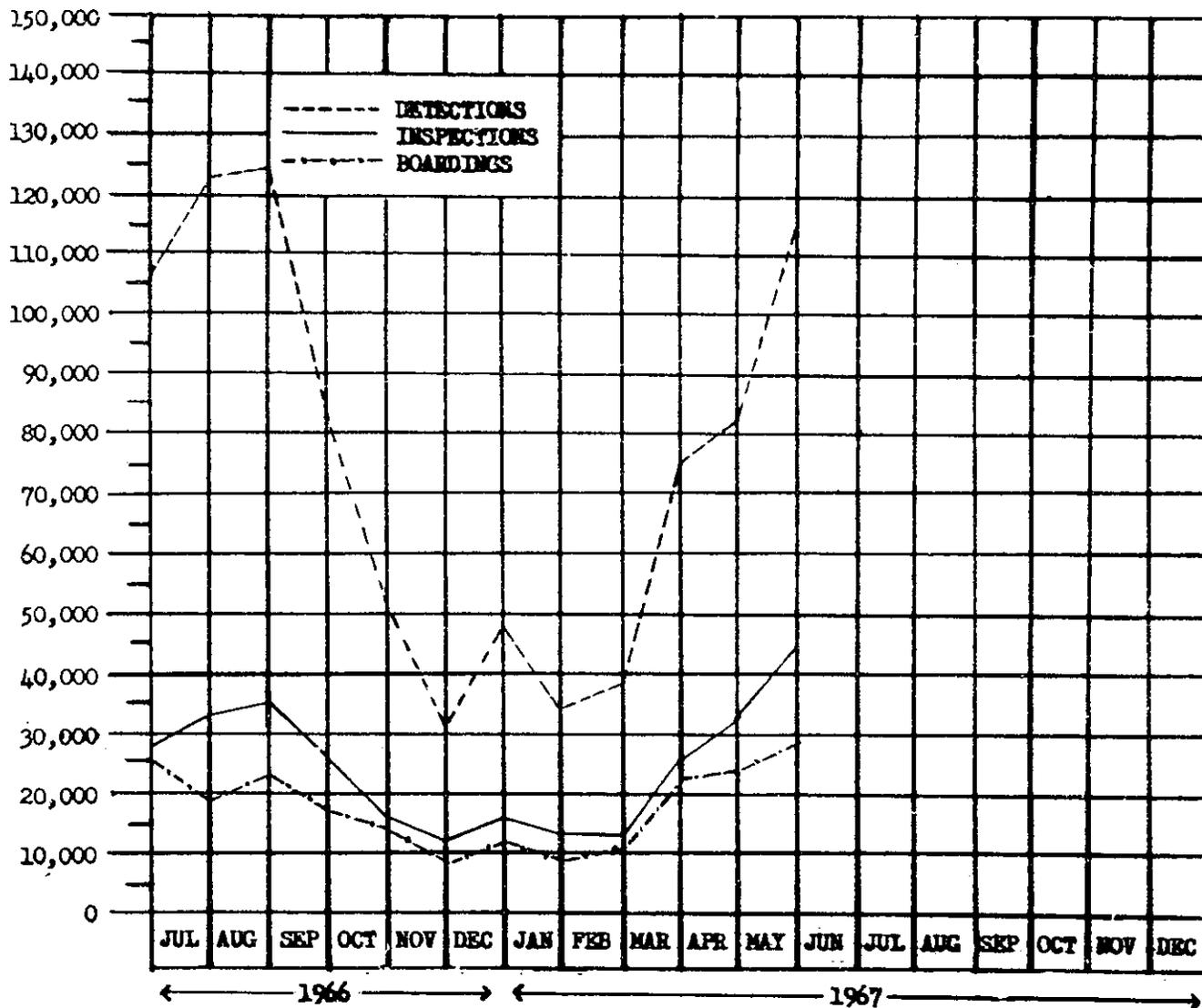
MARKET TIME Swift boats and Coast Guard cutters provided exfiltration patrols and gunfire support for four operations in each of the first two coastal zones. In the First Coastal Zone, support for a combined U.S. Army/R.O.K. Marine operation conducted 60 miles southeast of Danang from 5 to 13 May resulted in one Viet Cong killed by patrol units. Operation BEAU CHARGER, conducted from 19 through 26 May just south of the Demilitarized Zone, resulted in three Viet Cong suspects captured, and one junk destroyed and two damaged.

In the Second Coastal Zone, Swift boats and Coast Guard cutters conducted exfiltration patrols for four U.S. Army operations on 8, 9, 13 and 24 May. The patrols were conducted along 20 miles of the coastline in the northern part of the Zone and resulted, respectively, in the detention of 20 junks and 150 persons, four junks and 16 persons, eight sampans and 49 persons, and 66 junks and sampans and 324 persons.

May's 50 hostile fire incidents accounted for eight sampans and six structures destroyed and three Viet Cong suspects captured. On the afternoon of the 14th PCF 99 received hostile fire from the beach, 67 miles southeast of Danang, while broadcasting a "psywar" appeal. PCFs 19, 75 and 76 joined PCF 99 and returned the fire.

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY MARKET TIME UNITS

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Three sailors and one U.S. Marine were wounded during the engagement.

The month's 20 gunfire support missions resulted in two junks and nine sampans destroyed, 11 sampans damaged and one captured, 18 structures destroyed and 12 damaged, and 28 bunkers destroyed and 13 damaged. In addition, three secondary explosions and 11 secondary fires were observed.

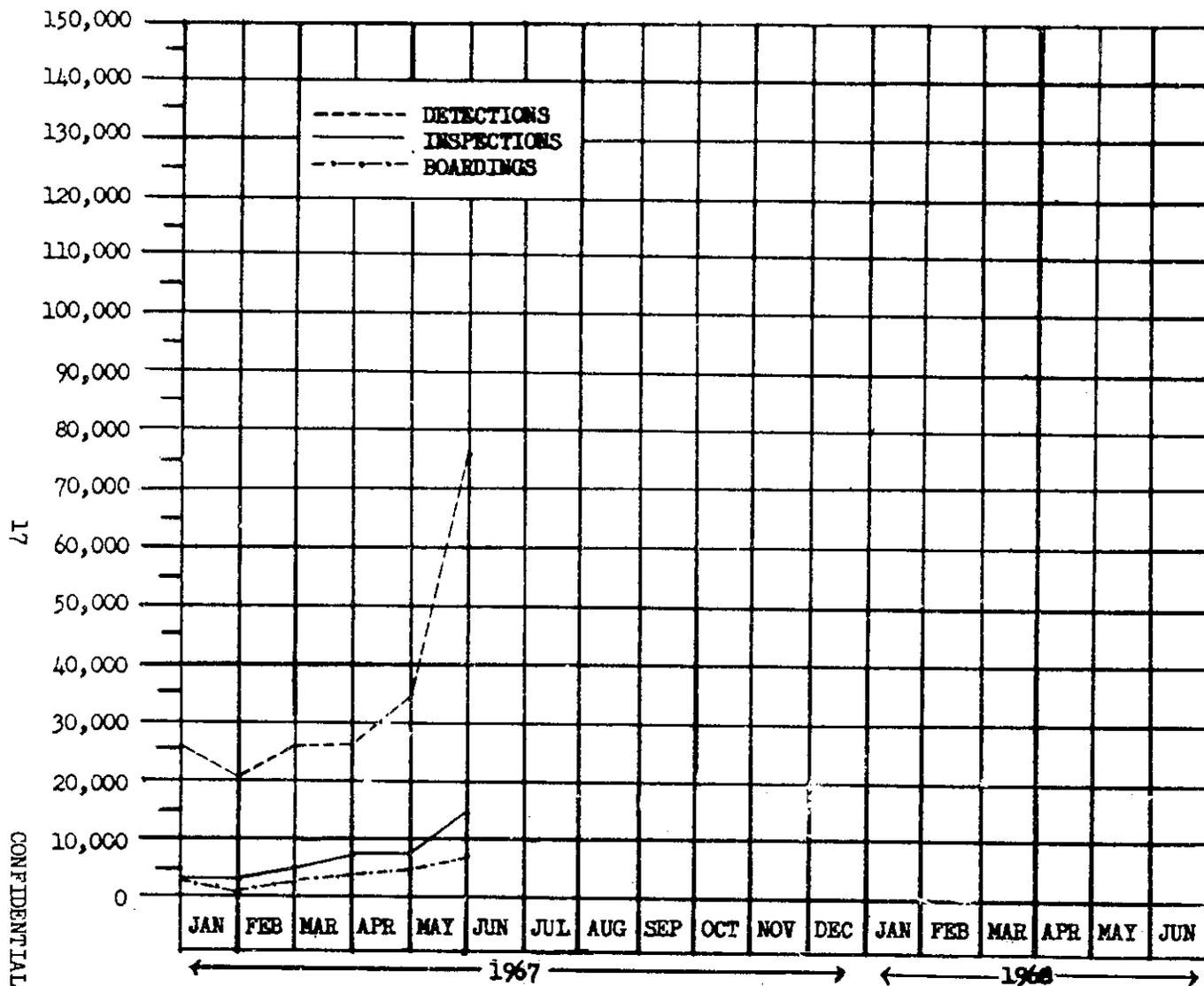
Three Viet Cong were captured and six were killed (probables) as a result of May's 12 evasion incidents. Also, four junks and two sampans were destroyed, two junks were damaged, and two basket boats were destroyed and three captured.

Two of the month's six SAR missions involved Marine CH-46 helicopters which crashed 31 and 18 miles southeast of Danang. Nine of the 17 persons aboard were rescued in the first incident; the bodies of the crew were recovered in the second incident. In a third aircraft incident involving MARKET TIME units, one crewman was rescued from a Navy US-2C which crashed six miles east of An Thoi; the bodies of the other two crewmen were recovered during subsequent salvage operations.

On 9 May, PCF 37 and USS KOINER (DER 331) assisted the U.S. tug OSCEOLA which had run aground 45 miles east of Vung Tau. The Swift remained on the scene until salvage tugs arrived. On 22 May PCF 16 found a drifting junk containing two adults and a boy, 16 miles southeast of Danang. The junk's occupants stated that they had been adrift for two weeks. The PCF towed the junk to the Coastal Group 16 base near Quang Ngai.

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY STABLE DOOR UNITS

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OPERATION STABLE DOOR

In May STABLE DOOR units detected over 75,000 junks and sampans; over 15,000 of these were inspected. Both figures more than doubled any previous month's total since STABLE DOOR operations began in November 1966. In addition, nearly 8,000 craft were boarded in May; 38 of these were detained together with almost 400 suspects.

On 9 May, harbor defense LCPLs and MARKET TIME PCFs rescued a number of Vietnamese civilians from Qui Nhon's inner harbor following a Viet Cong mortar attack on the port facilities. The mortars struck fuel pumps in the harbor and caused extensive damage.

During the month, the first four 45-foot harbor patrol picket boats arrived in country and were assigned to Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 1 at Vung Tau. In addition, IUWU 4 at Nha Trang received two more Skimmers.

In May IUWU 1 detained 35 junks and 182 persons; IUWU 2 at Cam Ranh Bay detained one junk and 40 persons; IUWU 3 at Qui Nhon detained two junks and 84 persons; and IUWU 4 detained 83 persons.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE (TASK FORCE 117)

On 15 May, the Riverine Assault Force experienced its first major contact with the Viet Cong when elements of Task Group 117.2 engaged enemy units armed with heavy automatic weapons and recoilless rifles 15 miles west of My Tho.

Initial contact occurred at 0815 while the monitor and four ATCs of Task Element 117.2.1.2 were proceeding to blocking stations along Tra Tan Creek after having landed U.S. troops participating in Operation HOP TAC XVIII, a multi-battalion search and destroy mission involving the Second Brigade, NINTH Infantry Division. The enemy opened fire on the riverine craft with small arms, then struck ATC 92-6 with a round of 57-mm. recoilless-rifle fire. The craft's special bar-and-plate armor checked the round's impact and helped avert serious structural damage. The enemy fire was subsequently suppressed and the task element continued north along the waterway.

At 1300, during a southbound sweep of Tra Tan, the element was attacked again by Viet Cong forces. A round of recoilless-rifle fire hit ATC 92-6, wounding three crewmen and the embarked river division commander. Two other ATCs and a CCB were also hit by recoilless-rifle rounds, but sustained no personnel casualties or material damage.

An hour later Monitor 91-2 took one of the recoilless-rifle positions under fire, killing one Viet Cong. At the same time four of the monitor's crewmen were wounded by small-arms fire. The

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riverine assault units then withdrew from the area while air strikes were delivered against the enemy sites.

About 1630, in the same general area, Task Element 117.2.1.4 (three ATCs) killed three Viet Cong before aircraft moved in to launch strikes against the withdrawing Viet Cong.

The encounters on 15 May were the major incidents between riverine assault units and the enemy during the month. On several other occasions units engaged in troop-lift, blocking or patrol operations exchanged fire with the enemy in the My Tho-Dong Tam area. Most of these incidents involved small-arms fire. However, on 19 May three ATCs were hit by three rounds of 82-mm. caliber ammunition (probably B-40 rockets) in the Xang Canal, just south of the Long Dinh Bridge. Three Viet Cong were killed by the ATCs' return fire, which also triggered a secondary explosion. Although the damage to the assault craft was relatively minor, it was found that 82-mm. caliber ammunition was capable of penetrating the ATCs' armor.

In the Rung Sat Special Zone, Task Group 117.1 continued to support Operation SPEARHEAD I until its termination on 11 May. The operation accounted for 13 Viet Cong killed, six more probably killed, and four captured.

During the remainder of the month Task Force 117 units in the RSSZ conducted advanced training exercises, security patrols and interdiction operations. In addition, periodic landing operations in the RSSZ were conducted with troops lifted from Dong Tam by

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Task Group 117.2 units.

On 2 May, with the arrival of USS COLLETON (APB 36), the Mobile Riverine Base was complete, and plans were formulated to move the MRB to Dong Tam in early June. By the end of May all LCM conversions, except for two command/control boats and four monitors, had arrived in country. The six remaining craft were expected to arrive in June.

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U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, DANANG

During May the Cua Viet--the major supply route to Dong Ha from the South China Sea--was the scene of several mining incidents. On 9 May the U.S. Army dredge HYDE was mined while operating in the Cua Viet entrance channel. HYDE was repaired and back in operation within 24 hours.

A second incident occurred on 15 May when NAVSUPPACT Danang's YFU 59 was mined while anchored near the LCM/LCU ramp at Dong Ha. The damaged craft subsequently returned to Danang and was drydocked for repairs. On 18 May, on the basis of intelligence received from local fishermen, a controlled mine containing 350 pounds of TNT and ten pounds of plastic explosives was found in the Cua Viet by Navy divers.

As a result of the ominous enemy activity, NAVSUPPACT instituted additional security measures. An LCPL and four divers were assigned to Dong Ha to augment the harbor and river security forces. At Danang the number of harbor patrol craft operating at night was increased from five to seven, and the Vietnamese liaison personnel aboard the craft were augmented by Vietnamese national policemen. Also, a floating-barrel fence was positioned around the APLs and the small boat basin to provide a barrier against swimmers.

During the month Danang harbor patrol craft apprehended a total of 70 sampans and junks for curfew, identification-card and restricted-area violations. On one occasion bubbles were observed in the water near the NAVSUPPACT boat house. A junk nearby was

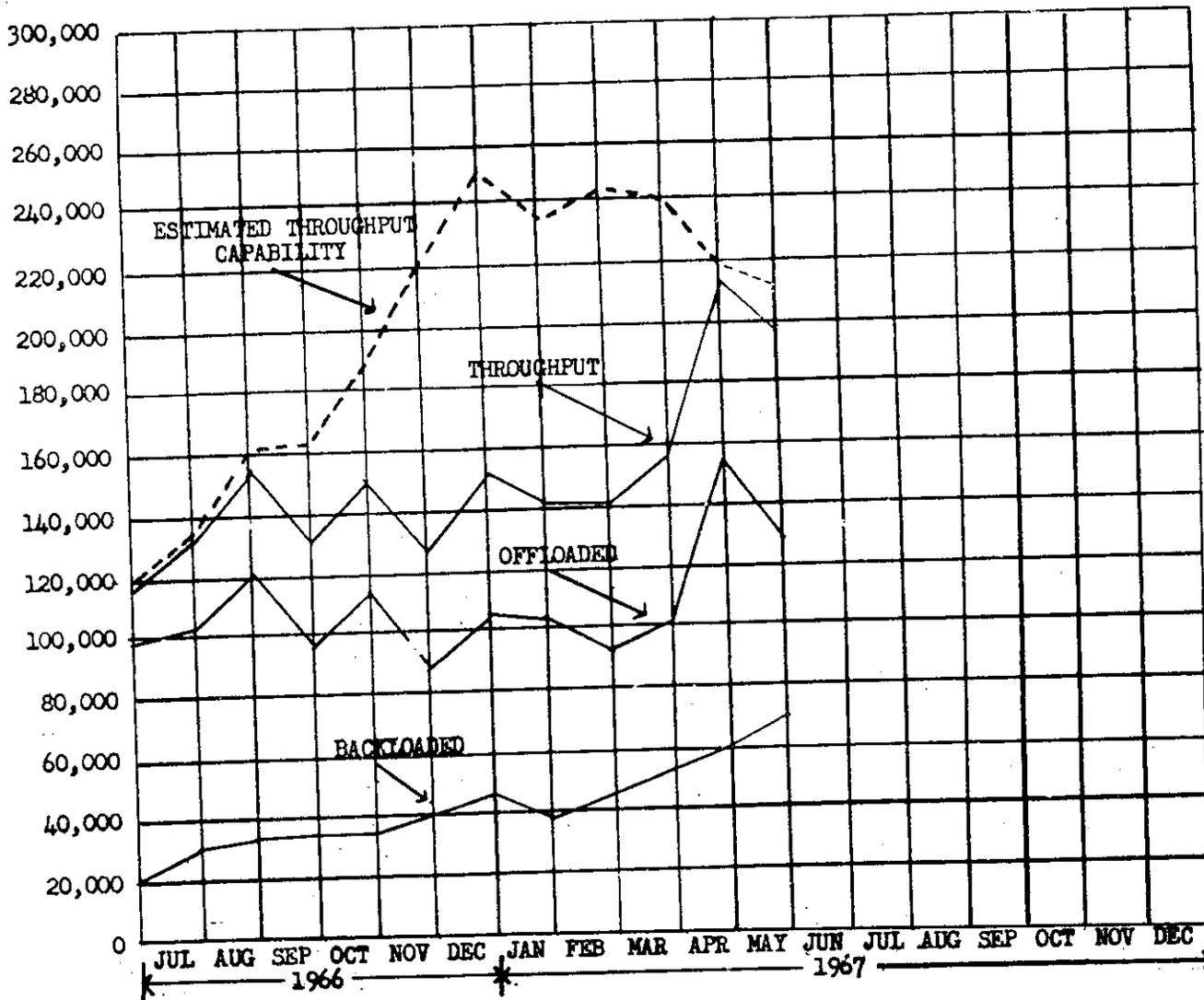
SHORT TONS

DANANG CARGO HANDLING

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boarded and found to contain two diving masks. However, an underwater search of the area produced negative results.

On another occasion, a patrol craft sighted an object in the water with strings attached. When a hand grenade was thrown near the object, a secondary explosion ensued. The incident took place approximately 200 yards from the barricade near the APLs.

Despite the sapper activity, the high level of cargo operations occasioned by the accelerated tempo of combat operations in I Corps was sustained throughout the month.

In the Cua Viet LCM-8s and YFJs continued to shuttle between the LST ramp and the LCM/LCU ramp at Dong Ha, transporting approximately 900 short tons of cargo and 40,000 gallons of POL daily. A total of 25,670 short tons of cargo was processed at Dong Ha in May.

At the port of Danang the volume of cargo back-loaded for transshipment to other ports--69,853 short tons--was the highest monthly total to date. The month's throughput for Danang was almost 200,000 short tons. The combined throughput for all I Corps ports was almost 300,000 short tons.

At 0110 on 13 May, the NAVSUPPACT Detachment compound near Chu Lai and the adjacent compound of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 8 were attacked by a Viet Cong force using 57-mm. recoilless rifles and 82-mm. mortars. One Seabee was killed in the attack; eight other Navymen and two Japanese nationals were wounded.

At the same time two USNS ships beached at the LST ramp were

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hit by 57-mm. recoilless-rifle fire, resulting in extensive damage to both ships. No major damage was sustained by the compound areas.

During the month there was continued progress in clearing the Cua Viet approaches to Dong Ha. On 29 May, dredging of the Cua Viet entrance channel as well as the turning basin by the LST ramp was completed. Meanwhile, action was initiated to procure the services of the suction dredge THUBON for the removal of two sandbars which, during periods of low water, impede craft transiting from the LST ramp to Dong Ha. The sandbars presented the only remaining natural obstacles to the unrestricted transit of the Cua Viet by lighterage.

On 31 May Naval Support Activity personnel strength (including APL strength) was 7,963. That same day the number of United States and other Free World Military Assistance Force personnel supported by NAVSUPFACT Danang reached 130,800.

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U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

On two occasions in May the efforts of NAVSUPACT detachment personnel at Nha Be helped avert major disasters.

On 3 May a 60-foot junk berthed at the Esso fuel pier at the Nha Be tank farm caught fire. The junk, loaded with sixty 50-gallon drums of gasoline and forty 55-gallon drums of other inflammables, was set adrift by its crew and subsequently became wedged between the pilings of a highway bridge, threatening the bridge and a heavily-populated marketplace and housing area nearby.

The detachment's fireboat, unable to extinguish the intense fire, towed the burning junk to an uninhabited rice-paddy area three-fourths of a mile away and pushed it against the river bank. As the fireboat turned clear the junk exploded, hurtling drums as much as 100 yards away. There were no injuries to the fireboat's crew; three members of the junk's crew were hospitalized for burns.

On 11 May the Philippine tanker MARIKADO caught fire while berthed near the Nha Be tank farm. The tanker had approximately 10,000 gallons of JP-4 fuel on board. The Nha Be detachment's LCM, assisted by PBRs, towed the burning vessel away from the pier to prevent the fire from spreading to the POL storage area. After almost nine hours of sustained effort, the fire was extinguished. Four detachment personnel were blown into the water by one of several minor explosions which erupted from the conflagration. None of the men suffered serious injuries.

On the night of the 7th, Can Tho detachment personnel were

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also called upon to assist in fighting fires after the Binh Thuy Air Base was shelled by Viet Cong using mortars and recoilless rifles. The enemy attack destroyed a number of structures and aircraft and started numerous fires. Fifty Can Tho detachment personnel joined with U.S. and Vietnamese Air Force personnel in evacuating aircraft and equipment and in bringing the fires under control.

During May the construction of interim and permanent facilities at GAME WARDEN and MARKET TIME bases continued to progress satisfactorily.

At Cam Ranh Bay, the installation and wiring of a 100-kilowatt generator and an electrical distribution system were completed at the Naval Air Facility. Construction of an ordnance storage area was begun.

At Dong Tam further improvements were made to the repair facilities, boat wharves and the sewer system. At the end of the month, preparations were being made for the construction of additional messing and berthing facilities. The facilities would eventually accommodate a total of 750 personnel.

On 1 May USS SNOHOMISH COUNTY (LST 1126) was placed under the operational control of NAVSUPPACT Saigon and began coastal and Delta resupply operations. On 7 May YFG 890 completed outfitting and made its first supply run to the Delta.

The ships and craft of NAVSUPPACT transported a total of 1,976 short tons of cargo during the month. Meanwhile, the

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NAVSUPPACT aviation section (Air Cofat) transported 2,906 passengers and 150.5 short tons of cargo.

On 31 May the number of personnel assigned to NAVSUPPACT Saigon was 1,870. The number of personnel provided logistic support by NAVSUPPACT headquarters in Saigon and its 11 detachments stood at 5,700 at month's end.

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THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

In May the number of Seabee casualties increased markedly. Most of the injuries occurred on 8 May, 2,000 yards from the Demilitarized Zone, when 13 men of a 23-man MCB-4 detachment were wounded by enemy forces attempting to overrun a Special Forces camp at Con Thien which the Seabees had been building.

In addition, MCB-8's camp at Rosemary Point in Chu Lai was struck by seven mortar rounds on 12 May, which killed one Seabee and wounded five others. On 10 May, south of Danang, two men from MCB-4 were injured when their truck hit a mine.

On 5 May the number of Seabee battalions in country increased to ten with the arrival at Phu Bai of an advance detachment from MCB-3. The detachment immediately began constructing base facilities for the battalion in the Gia Le Combat Camp, five miles northwest of the Phu Bai airstrip.

By the end of the month the detachment had completed 70 per cent of the facilities. In addition, work was begun on a Marine air group cantonment at the Phu Bai airstrip and a parking apron and hangar site for the U.S. Army's 131st Aviation Company.

Meanwhile, MCB-1 completed three 50-foot-high observation towers for Marines in the Dia Loc area, as well as a 600-foot timber bridge. And, in the Delta, a 64-man detachment from the battalion began constructing additional cantonments at Dong Tam.

MCB-4's "Liberty Bridge" project (which will span the Thu Bon River) was bolstered in May by the addition of a second crew. At

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month's end the bridge was 20 per cent complete.

At Chu Lai, members of MCB-8 and MCB-71 built a helicopter facility for the U.S. Army's Task Force Oregon in 15 days. In addition, MCB-8's personnel also completed a water and sewer system, a fire station and an electrical distribution system for the area's Naval Support Activity detachment.

At Dong Ha, MCB-11 began work on a cantonment for the Marines' Force Logistic Support Unit, and constructed a complex consisting of 16 Butler buildings for the THIRD Marine Division. At the same time, a 75-man detachment from the battalion was deployed to Khe Sanh to rebuild the airfield.

At Danang, MCB-58 completed several buildings for the Vietnamese Army's 801st Ordnance Platoon. The battalion also built communication centers for the FIRST Marine Division and the Marine Force Logistic Command.

At Danang East, MCB-13 extended the ARVN POW compound near Marble Mountain to handle an additional 500 prisoners. The battalion also built an LST pier near III MAF's headquarters, and started construction of a major ammunition storage area for the Vietnamese Air Force.

Major projects completed by MCB-62 in the Phu Bai area during May included an addition to the 131st Aviation Company cantonment, and the completion of galleys (each one able to accommodate 250 men) for the Third Medical Battalion and the Third Motor Transport Battalion. MCB-62 also improved the LST/LCU ramp at Hue and,

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together with MCB-3, started repair work on Route 1 between Phu
Bai and Hue.

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COMMUNICATIONS

The COMNAVFORV communications center processed 95,280 messages in May, the highest one-month total to date. The figure represented an increase of 6,965 messages over April's traffic.

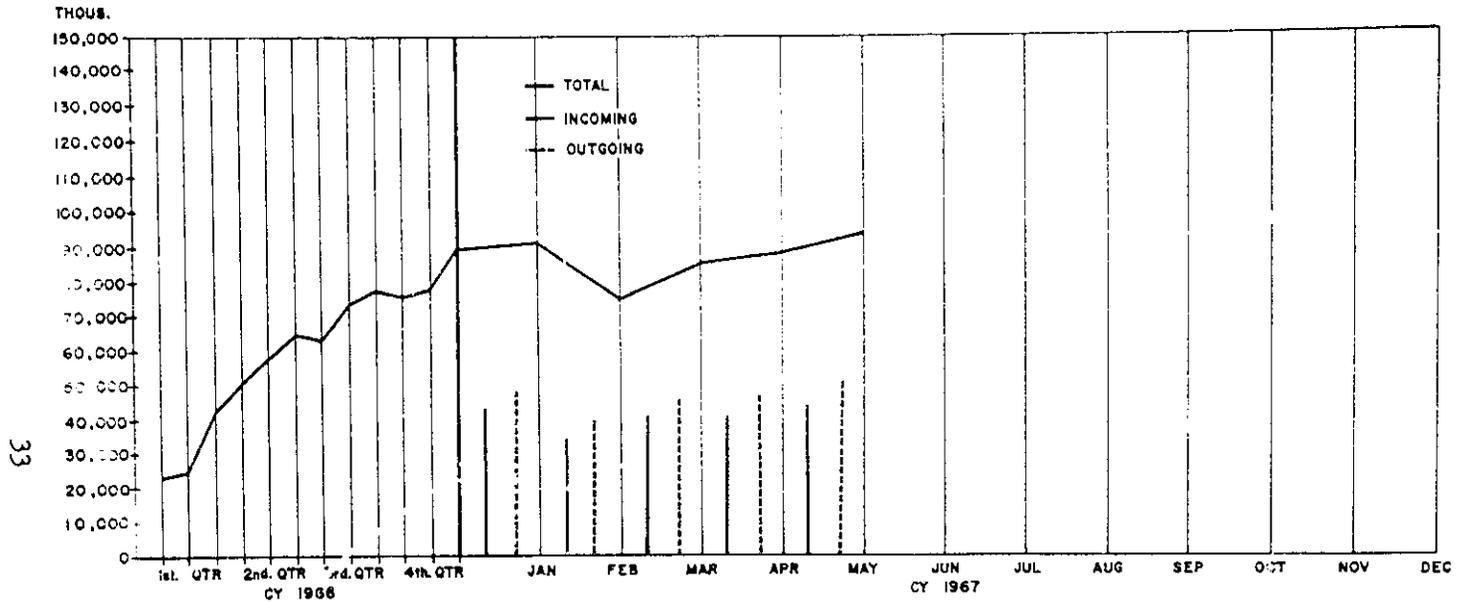
During the month the equipment installation phase of PROJECT SEARCHLIGHT was begun at Nha Be, where it was scheduled to be completed by 15 June. The project (the basic requirements for which were developed by a survey completed in 1966) is designed to improve the communications facilities at COMNAVFORV headquarters and at GAME WARDEN bases and the Coastal Surveillance Centers. Essentially the project entails procurement, installation and testing of the components required to upgrade voice and teletype communications. After the installation at Nha Be is complete a similar phase will begin at My Tho; the cycle will continue elsewhere as electronic materials become available.

In Project BOWLINE at Cam Ranh Bay, the installation of electronic equipment at the new communications center was 77 per cent complete; at the transmitter and receiver sites the percentage of electronic installation exceeded 85 per cent. Meanwhile, the construction phase was more than 90 per cent complete at each of the sites.

In Project SEA ANCHOR at Danang, construction work on the new communications center and the transmitter and receiver sites was 80 per cent complete. In addition, the power supply was 95 per cent complete in the communications center and 90 per cent complete

MONTHLY MESSAGE TRAFFIC

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PERCENT OF TOTAL

FLASH	1	1	1	1	1								
IMMEDIATE	21	20	19	18	16								
PRIORITY	60	61	63	63	66								
ROUTINE	18	18	17	18	17								

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at the receiver and transmitter sites. The installation of air conditioning was 80 per cent complete at all three sites.

On 26 May the establishment of a landline teletype circuit between the Naval Air Facility and the Naval Communications Station, Cam Ranh Bay ended the need for Air Transportable Communications Unit 100A. The following day the Unit returned to the Naval Communications Station, Philippines.

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ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

On 10 May Admiral Willard J. SMITH, USCG, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, arrived in An Thoi to begin a three-day tour of Navy and Coast Guard facilities in South Vietnam. Among the areas visited by Admiral SMITH were Binh Thuy, Saigon, Vung Tau, Cat Lo, Cam Ranh Bay and Danang.

On 12 May, Vice Admiral John J. HYLAND, USN, Commander U.S. SEVENTH Fleet, visited the headquarters of Commander River Patrol Force (CTF 116) at Binh Thuy. Vice Admiral HYLAND participated in a PBR patrol and observed certain phases of GAME WARDEN operations.

On 20 May, Admiral Ulysses S. Grant SHARP, USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, arrived in Saigon to confer with COMUSMACV. In the course of his visit Admiral SHARP was briefed by key officers of COMNAVFORV's staff, and visited Chu Lai and Danang.

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MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

During May psychological operations conducted by U.S. and Vietnamese naval personnel continued to produce encouraging results.

In the First Coastal Zone the efforts of Coastal Group 14 resulted in four Viet Cong, including an assistant village leader, returning to government jurisdiction on 18 May. With help from the Zone's U.S. Navy "psyops" officer, the Vietnamese took photographs of the returnees (Hoi Chanhs), obtained written statements, and had both imprinted on leaflets. In addition, interviews with the Hoi Chanhs were taped for broadcast purposes. During the next six days 100,000 of the leaflets were dropped throughout the area, and the former village leader made personal loudspeaker appeals from a Vietnamese Navy junk. As a result, three more Viet Cong rallied. All of the Hoi Chanhs proved cooperative and reported that other Viet Cong were close to defection.

In the Second Coastal Zone, loudspeaker missions conducted by Swift boats and junks in the Hon Heo Secret Zone resulted in two ralliers. In the Mekong Delta, a PBR patrol playing a taped message in a known hostile area in the Bassac River was taken under fire from three positions on Tan Dinh Island. The PBRs suppressed the fire and continued the mission, attracting a large crowd in the May Island area, a known enemy crossing route. At one point, a sampan was rowed out from the bank and its occupants thanked the patrol personnel for the broadcast and informed them

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that PBRs had killed two Viet Cong and wounded five others during a fire fight in the area the previous week.

Elsewhere in the Delta five Viet Cong rallied to PBRs in May, using the special USN-VNN amnesty leaflets first distributed in March.

In the Rung Sat Special Zone two ralliers, one of whom claimed to be a former Viet Cong platoon leader, turned in a .45 caliber machine gun and led Regional Force troops to an enemy camp. Following a brief fire fight with a Viet Cong platoon, the troops captured a machine gun, two mortars, two carbines and a large quantity of ammunition.

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NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP

VIETNAMESE NAVY

The personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy on 31 May was 15,998 officers and enlisted men. The number of personnel discharged during the month as deserters and the number of unauthorized absentees was 35 and 314, respectively; the figures represented a continuing decline in both categories.

In May, for the first time since an independent government was established in South Vietnam, a River Assault Group was activated outside of the Delta and surrounding region. The new group, comprising six craft, was established at the Coastal Group 12 base at Thua Thien, northeast of Hue. The primary mission of the RAG was to support ARVN FIRST Division search and destroy operations around the inland bays and rivers of the First Naval Zone.

On 11 May Patrol Motor Gunboats 616 and 618 were made available for assignment to the Fleet Command. Of the four new PGMs which arrived in April, these were the first to complete underway training. The formal transfer of ownership of the craft from the U.S. Navy to the Vietnamese Navy was expected to be completed in June.

Operations

In May the Fleet Command maintained 12 ships on stations along the coast, four ships on river patrol and one ship on convoy-escort

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duty between Vung Tau and Tan Chau. The missions of the ships included MARKET TIME patrols, escort patrols, gunfire support, and psychological warfare operations. During the month the ships fired 32 gunfire support missions, searched 939 junks and 4,377 persons, and detained four junks and 17 suspects.

On 15 May PCE 08 relieved USS LUCID (MSO 458) on MARKET TIME patrol in the First Naval Zone, and on 17 May PCE 12 relieved USS GANNET (MSC 230) in the Second Naval Zone. Each PCE remained on station for 14 days constituting the most significant integration of the VNN Fleet Command and USN Coastal Surveillance Force to date.

During the month Vietnamese Coastal Force units searched over 20,000 junks and over 80,000 persons. Thirty-three junks and 624 suspects were detained. On a daily average, 54 per cent of the force was employed on patrol.

In a "psywar" mission conducted on 9 May Coastal Groups 32, 33, 34 and 37, together with LSIL 327, LSM 404 and PCF 35 landed two companies of Regional Force troops and four landing parties of Coastal Group sailors 24 miles southwest of Vung Tau. Once the area was secured, VNN medical personnel provided treatment for approximately 80 villagers.

At 2350 on 22 May, a sampan manned by Coastal Group 13 personnel and U.S. advisors encountered two enemy craft on Cau Hai Bay, 28 miles northwest of Danang. The resulting 15-minute fire fight left 19 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong dead. Four more were

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probably killed, and one Viet Cong was captured. In addition, two carbines, ammunition and personal papers were seized. There were no friendly casualties.

During the month the River Assault Groups conducted two operations in the Third Riverine Area, six in the Rung Sat Special Zone, eight in the Fourth Riverine Area and one in the First Naval Zone. The RAG units also conducted escort duty, river patrols, base defense and psychological warfare missions. With a daily average employment of 70 per cent of the force, the RAGs searched 1,827 junks and 4,881 persons, and detained two junks and 11 suspects.

On 17 May, in the First Naval Zone, the new River Assault Group participated in its first operation, code-named TIEN SHA 1. The one-day operation included the transportation and support of a two-platoon Vietnamese Army and Security Group force deployed near Tien Sha Mountain, west of Danang.

On 5 May four craft from RAGs 25 and 39 conducted a psychological warfare mission near Long Phu, 34 miles southeast of Can Tho. Accompanying medical personnel treated 200 persons while the RAG sailors distributed gifts to 400 families.

On the same day a three-day operation, DUCK PIN, was begun along the Vam Co Dong River 15 miles southwest of Saigon. Conducted by units of the U.S. Army 199th Light Infantry Brigade and craft from RAGs 24 and 28, the operation resulted in the detention of

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five Viet Cong suspects. In addition, large quantities of medicine and medical supplies, explosives, and documents were seized; and several bunkers and foxholes and three emplaced 57-mm. recoilless rifles were destroyed.

During May the Vietnamese Navy conducted 19 logistical support missions, transporting 3,270 tons of cargo and 2,423 personnel. LSMs carried 47 per cent of the cargo and 81 per cent of the personnel; LSTs carried 47 per cent of the cargo and 19 per cent of the personnel; and LCUs carried 6 per cent of the cargo.

VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS

In May Brigade Force A, consisting of a headquarters, the 4th and 5th Marine Battalions, and Battery B of the Artillery Battalion, continued operations begun in April in the Bong Son area of the II Corps Tactical Zone. Light contact was made with the enemy through the month and resulted in 27 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese killed, 14 captured and 174 suspects detained. The Marines suffered 14 killed and 33 wounded.

Brigade Force B, composed of a headquarters, the 1st and 3rd Battalions, and Battery C of the Artillery Battalion, was activated on 24 May and transported by road convoy from Saigon to the Can Tho area. The Force operated as a reaction and search unit under the control of the NINTH and 22nd ARVN Divisions until 31 May when it was returned to Saigon. Two Viet Cong were killed and six

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