blown over the side by the rocket concussion. About five seconds later, a second B-40 rocket impacted against the lead boat causing a four-inch hole about six inches above the first hole, and knocked two more crew members overboard. Meanwhile, PBR 117 commenced a furious retaliatory attack into the ambush position, but the hidden enemy continued firing rockets at the PBRs. After the second rocket explosion, a fire erupted in the coxswain's flat of PBR 116. The boat coxswain, with his clothes and hair on fire, leaped over the side to douse the flames. Meanwhile the forward gunner extinguished the fire and maneuvered the boat to recover his shipmates. Approximately 70 seconds after the second rocket hit, a third B-40 rocket hit PBR 116 at the waterline in the same location as the other rockets. Shortly afterwards, a fourth rocket exploded in the water about three feet astern of the boat. With all crew members safely aboard, PBR 116 rejoined PBR 117, and the two boats suppressed the enemy fire as they cleared the kill zone. Friendly casualties were six U.S. sailors wounded in action, one radar and two radios destroyed, one PBR coxswain's control console heavily damaged and three holes in PBR 116. There were two Viet Cong killed in the brief fire fight.

During the afternoon of 28 September, PBRs 86 and 100 were investigating sampan traffic in the Cai Coi Canal off of the Mekong River about five miles north of Vinh Long. While in the process
of checking a sampan, PBR 100 was ambushed with a B-40 rocket round and small arms fire. The PBRs evaded to the west to clear the ambush site. Four Navy UH-1B armed helicopters scrambled to escort the river boats as they transitted east back through the enemy positions to reenter the main river. Upon approaching the ambush site, a B-40 rocket struck the lead boat, PBR 100, inside the coxswain's flat and exploded. Three U.S. sailors and one Vietnamese policeman were blown over the side from the explosion which started a raging fire aboard the craft. PBR 100 went out of control and beached on the south bank of the river, where it was completely consumed by fire. Meanwhile PBR 86 recovered the three U.S. sailors from the water as the overhead helicopters made attacks into the ambush area to drive any looters away from the stricken PBR. The Vietnamese policeman could not be found initially, but was later recovered in the main river by a passing sampan. Later that evening, Vietnamese Navy RAG units salvaged two .50 caliber machine guns and one gun mount from the demolished boat. The bodies of Engineman Second Class J. T. MUSETTI, Jr., and Seaman G. J. GRAHAM were not recovered, but a survivor's eyewitness account stated that MUSETTI was cremated aboard the boat, and GRAHAM was not seen after the first explosion. Pending further investigation, both of these men are officially considered missing in action. There were also four sailors wounded in this encounter.
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Viet Cong casualties were unknown.

**Operations in the Ham Luong River**

On 3 September, two UH-1B armed helicopters from HUNTERDON COUNTY patrolling the Ham Luong River about 17 miles southeast of Ben Tre, spotted several camouflaged sampans loading cargo. The helicopter light fire team conducted an attack into the area and destroyed three sampans and damaged another. Four hours later, another light fire team from Dong Tam struck at the suspected Viet Cong supply cache with rockets and machine guns resulting in a large secondary explosion which burned for several minutes. These attacks were conducted in a known commo-liaison supply route from the Thanh Phu Secret Zone to Kien Hoa main-force units.

On the 6th, two Navy gunships, "Seawolf 41" and "Seawolf 43", while on an armed reconnaissance of the Ham Luong River, 14 miles southeast of Ben Tre, observed several large heavily-loaded sampans in an area of known Viet Cong activity. Upon receiving permission from the Giong Trom Senior Advisor, the Navy helicopters destroyed two sampans, damaged four others and killed three of the enemy. Continuing their airborne surveillance patrol 14 miles upriver, the same gunships detected three more sampans with men and cargo aboard in a 24-hour curfew enemy resupply route. The "Seawolves" launched a rocket and machine gun attack and killed four more Viet Cong and destroyed the three sampans.
Early in the morning of 11 September, 23 miles southeast of Ben Tre, HUNTERDON COUNTY, at anchor in the Ham Luong River, experienced a large underwater explosion in close proximity to the ship. A thorough inspection revealed no damage to the ship and there were no personnel casualties. Although the origin of the explosion was not positively known, it was believed to have been a command detonated mine planted on the bottom of the river.

Operations in the Co Chien River

On 4 September, five Vinh Long-based PBRs, patrolling along the Pang Tra River, about 12 miles southwest of Ben Tre, were ambushed with automatic and semi-automatic weapons from six to eight well-bunkered positions along the north river bank. The river boats retaliated with a series of firing runs into the two mile long ambush site. A Navy helicopter heavy fire team of four gunships arrived on the scene, and the GAME WARDEN team conducted several coordinated rocket and mortar attacks to prevent the Viet Cong from exfiltrating. Four additional PBRs joined the battle and assisted in routing out the enemy and suppressing the fire. At the end of the three hour battle, Viet Cong casualties were two killed with nine structures destroyed and 30 damaged.

In the early afternoon of the 15th, three PBRs from USS BARRETT COUNTY (LST 621) and three Vinh Long-based patrol boats rendezvoused in the middle of the Co Chien River, 25 miles southeast
of Vinh Long, in order to transfer mail and personnel. They were promptly taken under automatic-weapons fire from four different locations on the river bank. The six PBRs immediately dispersed and commenced taking the ambushers under fire. A Navy helicopter heavy fire team scrambled to the ambush area and made two rocket strikes. Enemy casualties were undetermined, however the fire was suppressed. There were no friendly casualties. Personnel and mail transfers had previously been conducted in this vicinity in the past. A lesson learned from this episode is that rendezvous positions should be relocated each time to avoid establishing a pattern.

Operations in the Bassac River

In the early morning hours of 1 September, a GAME WARDEN UH-1B helicopter gunship crashed while scrambling off the deck of GARRETT COUNTY, anchored at the mouth of the Bassac River. The co-pilot and one crew member were immediately rescued by PBRs, however the pilot, Lieutenant Commander Robert D. JOHNSON, and Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class E. L. OTT III, USN, a crew member, were killed in the mishap. Later that evening, four PBRs scrambled from Binh Thuy to suppress a heavy mortar attack on Tra On. After silencing the attack, the boats provided medical evacuation for 12 Vietnamese to Can Tho. There were no U. S. casualties.

On 8 September two PBRs on a blocking station at the mouth of the Cai Trung Canal, 20 miles southeast of Can Tho, evacuated
seven civilians who were seriously wounded by friendly artillery
and air strikes in the area.

Through a joint U.S. military air rescue effort, all four
occupants of a Navy helicopter gunship, which crashed on 11 Sep­
tember while on a training mission about 20 miles south of Can
Tho, were recovered. While Army and Air Force spotter planes flew
overhead cover, a Navy "Seawolf" helicopter and an Army helicopter
rescued the slightly injured Navymen, and evacuated them to the
3rd Surgical Hospital for further observation. An Army Chinook
helicopter later recovered the fuselage.

On 15 September, Operation CRIMSON TIDE I was conducted 15
miles southeast of Can Tho, along a five-mile stretch of the Bass­
sac River on the mainland opposite Tan Dinh Island. The Viet Cong
had long held control of this area, and had fortified the banks
against PBR river transits. Utilizing nine PBRs of River Section
511 and 512, eight RAG 25 craft, an armored LCM-6, three SEAL pla­
toons, three Navy "Seawolf" helicopters and GARRETT COUNTY, the
combined force inflicted a heavy toll of destruction on the well­
entrenched enemy. At 0749, five PBRs began making high-speed
transits through the canal to draw fire and to identify the Viet
Cong positions. The RAG units and an armored LCM-6 entered the
target area and commenced landing the SEALs after suppressing
the hostile fire emanating from the strike zone. The three-man
landing parties immediately began capturing weapons and documents and destroying enemy fortifications and sampans. Meanwhile, the support boats moved slowly down the shoreline, providing gunfire support, and repeatedly re-embarked and re-landed SEALs. Shortly afterwards, as Navy "Seawolves" provided overhead cover, the PBRs began landing boat crew personnel at several different locations in order to inflict additional destruction on the enemy stronghold. The operation terminated at 2200 with GARRETT COUNTY saturating the area with 40-mm cannon fire. The cumulative destruction inflicted on the enemy was: five Viet Cong killed, 168 houses, 120 sampans, and 75 bunkers destroyed. There was one sailor slightly wounded in the encounter.

On the morning of the 25th, PBRs 127 and 146 and a U. S. Navy LCM with six Regional Force soldiers aboard, discovered a 22,000-pound Viet Cong rice cache in An Thoi hamlet of Ba Xuyen Province, 17 miles southeast of Can Tho. Led by a Hoi Chanh (Viet Cong returnee), the combined USN/Vietnamese venture destroyed the cache, and also captured two fleeing enemy soldiers and one sampan.

Later, on the same day, the lead PBR of a three-boat patrol, about 34 miles southeast of Can Tho, was ambushed by extremely heavy and accurate automatic-weapons and 81-mm mortar fire from the river bank. Maneuvering at maximum speed and still under continuous mortar fire, the boat proceeded to the opposite bank,
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awaiting the arrival of the two supporting PBRs. Meanwhile, the
awaiting boat received four rounds of recoilless-rifle fire which
exploded close aboard and lifted the stern out of the water. Navy
helicopters entered the melee and made two rocket and machine gun
attacks into the area, both under intense automatic-weapons fire.
The PBRs then made high-speed runs into the area, and once again
were taken under heavy automatic-weapons and mortar fire. Enemy
fire was still not suppressed. Two hours later, two well-placed
fixed wing airstrikes were made, resulting in a large secondary
explosion with an orange fireball and heavy white smoke. PBRs, in
company with Coastal Group 36 junks, then transitted the battle
area without further incident. During the engagement, PBR 58
received 17 automatic-weapon and multiple shrapnel hits. Three
navy sailors received minor wounds in the encounter.

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GAME WARDEN UNITS

On 5 September, YREB-16 was relocated from the mouth of the
Hassac River to a location opposite Ben Tre District town on the
Ham Luong River. The embarked River Section 522 provided escort
security during the transit, and assumed duties as TE 116,1,3,4
under the operational control of Commander River Division 53 (CTU
116,1,3) upon arrival.

On 11 September, River Section 53,4 was activated at Nha Be
with Lieutenant R. M. WOLIN, USN, as the Officer in Charge.

On 15 September, HUNTERDON COUNTY departed from the mouth of the Ham Luong River en route to I Corps and Operation GREEN WAVE with Commander River Division 53 (CTU 116.1.3) and River Section 521 (CTE 116.1.3.3) embarked.

On the 21st, SEAL Team TWO, Detachment ALFA platoons were re-assigned and relocated under the operational control of the Task Unit Commanders. The Fifth SEAL platoon remained at Binh Thuy, assuming TE 116.1.1.0; the Fourth SEAL platoon moved to My Tho, assuming TE 116.1.3.0; the Sixth SEAL platoon moved to YNB-16 at Ben Tre, assuming TE 116.1.3.7.

On 25 September, GARRETT COUNTY with River Section 511 embarked moved its patrol sector from the lower Bassac to the central Bassac River.

Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE, Detachment SEVEN, was activated at Binh Thuy on 28 September with Lieutenant Commander W. D. MARTIN, USNR, as the Officer in Charge.

On 30 September, a dedication ceremony was held at the GAME WARDEN headquarters at Binh Thuy for a newly erected memorial to American and Vietnamese personnel killed in action with Task Force 116. Captain Paul N. GRAY, USN, Commander River Patrol Force, made the opening remarks, and the dedication address was delivered by Major General Nguyen Van VANH, IV Corps Commanding General.

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GAME WARDEN STATISTICAL SUMMARY
September 1967

1. PBR Statistics:
   a. Total Patrols (two boats): Day 593, Night 637
   b. Total Contacts: Day 63,104, Night 5,208
   c. Total Inspected: Day 13,975, Night 746
   d. Total Boarded: Day 39,954, Night 3,756
   e. People Detained: 606
   f. Sampans/Junks Detained: 25
   g. Total Patrol Hours: 30,962

2. Helicopter Fire Team Statistics:
   a. Total Flight Hours: 781.4
   b. Helicopter Missions:
      (1) Pre-planned strikes: 88
      (2) Reaction: 23
      (3) Targets of Opportunity: 99
      (4) Support: 292

3. GAME WARDEN Totals:
   a. Fire Fights:
      (1) PBR 23
      (2) Helo 17
      (3) LCM 1
      (4) LCPL 1
   b. Sampans: Destroyed 176, Damaged 32, Captured 10
   c. Junks: Destroyed 1
   d. Structures: Destroyed 237, Damaged 65
   e. Bunkers: Destroyed 86, Damaged 2
   f. Enemy: KIA 40, KIA (Poss.) 30, WIA 16, Captured 12
DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY GAME WARDEN UNITS

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g. Friendly: KIA 3  WIA 10

h. Friendly Battle Damage:
   (1) PB: 47
   (2) Helo 74

i. PBR MEDEVAC: 74

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An ATC(H) tows AIC 51-10 which was hit by a 540 rocket in Ben Tre creek on 27 September. Medical personnel treat a wounded crewman near the bow; the body of a sailor killed during the engagement lies amidships. Back aft, a sailor on the 20-mm gun turret guards five suspects detained after the ambush.
RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE (TASK FORCE 117)

The month of September found the Riverine Assault Force (RAF) exercising their primary capabilities to the fullest—mobility and naval gunfire support coupled with the striking power of the embarked assault forces. Conducting operations throughout the various regions of the III and IV Corps areas, the Mobile Riverine Force inflicted heavy losses on the Viet Cong. These losses totaled almost four hundred of the enemy killed and the capture or destruction of tons of enemy supplies and munitions. U. S. naval personnel of the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) suffered their heaviest losses since the MRF was activated on 28 February 1967. Six Navymen were killed in action and 84 wounded during the month of September. Most of these casualties were caused by shrapnel from the large caliber RPG-2 and RPG-7 rockets. The introduction of the heavy armor-penetrating (11-12 inches) RPG-7 rocket, with its increased range (500 meters), posed a much more serious threat to the assault craft of the RAF than did the more familiar RPG-2 (B-40), with a penetration capability of 6-7 inches and effective range of 100 meters.

From 1 to 4 September, the MRF, operating from the Mobile Riverine Base at the junction of the Vam Co and Soirap Rivers, provided close support to units of the Second Brigade, U. S. NINTH Infantry Division, primarily the 3/47th and 3/60th Infantry Battalions which conducted Operation CORONADO IV in the Go Cong and Long An.
Provinces. While contact with the enemy was light during this
period, the very presence of the MRF in the backyard of the Viet
Cong was considered instrumental in the large election day turn­
out (92.2%) of voters in the Can Giouc area. The commanding offi­
cer of the 26th ARVN Division and the commanding officer of the
46th ARVN Regiment both commended the MRF for supporting their
areas of responsibility.

Meanwhile, on 4 September, the Riverine Survey Team completed
survey operations along the Soirap River, an important waterway
route to and from Saigon. On the 8th, ground troops attached to
the RAF discovered a large unoccupied Viet Cong base camp and
field hospital in southern Bien Hoa Province.

On 11 September, the MRF shifted its anchorage from Vung Tau
Harbor to Dong Tam to commence Operation CORONADO V, a riverine
search and destroy/water isolation operation. On the 15th of the
month, units of the RAF, while proceeding up Ba Rai Creek about
47 miles southeast of Saigon to insert troops, came under intense
enemy rocket and recoilless-rifle fire from both banks of the creek.
As a result of this ambush, three U. S. sailors were killed and 77
were wounded. Two U. S. Marines attached to the Riverine Survey
Team were also wounded. During this phase of CORONADO V, which
ended on 16 September, heavy losses were inflicted on the Viet
Cong with 213 killed and 64 probably killed, U. S. Army casualties
consisted of 12 soldiers killed and 67 wounded.

Operation CORONADO V continued, and on 27 September, the RAF commenced landing troops on the west bank of Ben Tre Creek in Kien Hoa Province after an extensive artillery barrage and air strikes. While proceeding to patrol/blocking stations along Ben Tre Creek, the two lead armored troop carriers (ATCs), which were being used as minesweepers, received heavy enemy fire from both banks. Firing at point-blank range, the ATCs suppressed the fire, killing at least two Viet Cong. This engagement, which was practically a repetition of the 15 September encounter along the Ba Rai Creek, resulted in the death of three U.S. sailors and the wounding of six others.

Operations in the Go Cong and Long An Provinces

On 1 September, the two-man TF 117 EOD Detachment assisted Company of the 84th Engineer Battalion in the demolition of a sunken concrete float and underwater piling at the Cau Noi Ferry in the Vam Co River, eight miles northeast of Go Cong. The Cau Noi Ferry had not been able to transport vehicles for the past several months due to the sunken float. The restoration of this ferry site, an important economic link connecting the Go Cong and Long An portions of National Highway 5, was considered to be a significant contribution to the Revolutionary Development Program.

Mobile Riverine Force operations on 2 and 3 September consisted
of prosecuting CORONADO IV in the Can Gioc District of Long An Province. This operation was designed primarily to provide the area with a reasonable degree of security in order to permit the local populace to participate in the National Elections. As evidenced by the large election day turn-out of voters (92.2%) in this district, the pacification mission was considered a success.

At approximately 1230 on the 2nd of September, ATC-91-9 observed and took under fire five Viet Cong employing evasive tactics in Can Gioc Creek. This action resulted in two of the enemy killed. At 2210 on the 3rd, ATC-111-9 received one round of RPG-2 from the north bank of the Soirap River about five miles southeast of Can Gioc. One sailor received a slight shrapnel wound. Fire was returned into the area with unknown results. Later in the night at 2330, ATC-91-11 observed about seven suspects evading behind bunkers about five miles northeast of Can Gioc. The bunkers were taken under fire with unknown results.

Operations in Bien Hoa Province

Commencing at 0230, 6 September, the 11th relocated from its position at the junction of the Soirap/Vam Co Rivers to Vung Tau in order to project strike operations into the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). This search and destroy operation was directed against the Viet Cong 8th Binh Rue Service Group in Bien Hoa Province.

On 3 September, in the southwestern Long Thanh District of
Bien Hoa Province, during Operation CORONADO V, ground elements attached to the MRF discovered an unoccupied enemy base camp. This camp contained the largest cache of weapons and supplies captured to date by the MRF. The cache consisted of 97 individual weapons, eight machine guns, 53,150 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 165 grenades, 50 rounds of 75-mm howitzer shells, several mortar rounds and numerous booby traps. Shortly afterwards on the same day, an unoccupied hospital complex, consisting of 30 huts and many bunkers, was also discovered in the same general area. This cache consisted of over 850 pounds of assorted medical supplies including 500 bottles of streptomycin, glucose and sulphur. The hospital probably served elements of T-10, the RSSZ Viet Cong headquarters.

Operations in the Dinh Tuong Province

The Mobile Riverine Base (MRB) shifted its anchorage to Dong Tam on 11 September in order to support Operation CORONADO V (12-16 September). Other forces included the 3/47th, 3/60th and 5/60th Infantry Battalions, 2nd Brigade, U. S. NINTH Infantry Division, the 41st Rangers (ARVN) and the 10th Infantry Regiment (ARVN). The objective was to locate and destroy Viet Cong local and main forces and installations in the Cam Son Secret Zone, Dinh Tuong Province.

On the morning of 15 September, Task Group 117.2 proceeding up the Ba Sai Creek, about 47 miles southeast of Saigon, to insert troops was ambushed along a two-mile stretch from well-prepared
fortifications and dense foliage on both banks of the creek. At the time of the ambush, the task group was conducting reconnaissance by fire. During the ensuing four-hour battle, the river assault craft came under the heaviest fire that they had experienced to date. In all, eighteen boats received battle damage.

Lieutenant Commander Francis E. RHODES, COMRIVRON 11 and CTO 117,2 was in command of the 23 riverine assault craft, which had elements of the 2nd Brigade, NINTH Infantry Division embarked. LCDR RHODES was on board CCB-111-1 when the command boat was hit by two rockets, knocking him and his crew to the deck. Although stunned from momentary unconsciousness, he stationed himself in an exposed position on his command boat and in the face of direct enemy fire from close range, quickly noted the condition and disposition of his units. Taking personal command of all of his units by radio, he ordered them out of the enemy fortified area. He then regrouped his forces, transferred his dead, evacuated his seriously wounded men and reassigned personnel so that all of his boats were properly manned. Then he reentered the melee with his task group, suppressed the heavy enemy rocket and recoilless-rifle fire and successfully landed his assault troops.

In fighting its way past the entrenched, hard-core Viet Cong 263rd Main Force Battalion, the task group inserted a block which prevented Viet Cong exfiltration from the area. Despite the heavy
barrage of fire from 57-mm recoilless rifles, RPG-2 (B-40) and RPG-7 (B-41) anti-tank grenades, automatic weapons and small arms, not a single boat was placed out of action. Two boats did leave the area for repairs, but were combat-ready within four hours. This attests to the rugged construction of these boats.

Three U. S. Navymen were killed and 77 were wounded in this action. Viet Cong casualties consisted of 213 killed with 66 probably killed. Individual acts of heroism were abundant with wounded sailors refusing to be sent back to the ships of the Mobile Riverine Base so that they could sit with their boats and continue to fight. As a result of this battle, CTF 117 has recommended that the following awards be given to the brave sailors of the RAF: three Navy Crosses, 23 Silver Stars (three posthumously), 34 Bronze Stars, and 10 Navy Commendation Medals.

On 17 September, the commanding general of the U. S. NINTH Infantry Division sent the following congratulatory message to Commander Task Force 117 and the Commanding Officer, 2nd Brigade, U. S. NINTH Infantry Division:

**ROSEBOROUGH SENDS FOR COMMODORE W. C. WELLS:**
1. PLEASE CONVEY MY CONGRATULATIONS TO TF 117 AND ESPECIALLY RAS-11, COMMODORE RHOSES, AND RAS-9, COMMODORE HOROWITZ, FOR THE COURAGE AND DETERMINATION THEY DISPLAYED IN SUPPORTING THE SECOND BRIGADE, NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION IN OPERATION CORONADO V. YOU ARE PARTICULARLY COMMENDED FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN CLOSE COMBAT IN THE CAM SON SECRET ZONE ON 15 SEPTEMBER.
2. THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION, "OLE RELIABLES", ARE
indeed fortunate to be associated with such a splendid professional military organization, our highest compliments to you and all your fine seamen.

Lessons learned from this encounter were:

1. That during riverine operations, it was necessary to have the tactical coordinator airborne in a command helicopter for coordination of waterborne units and for direct liaison with friendly Army units ashore.

2. That the requirement existed for walking artillery and gunship support fire up the river banks when transiting waterways where contact with the enemy was highly probable.

3. That continuous heavy enemy fire from both river banks required long range flamethrowers on the monitors of the task force.

4. That the ATC being used as a minesweeper was entirely too slow for these chain drag sweeps. It slowed down the assault force and doubled the exposure time in the kill zone. It further dramatically demonstrated the need for assault patrol boats (ASPB) to perform minesweeping functions at the earliest possible date.

5. That Boston Whalers with gasoline outboard motors should not be carried on river assault craft. During the battle at Ba Rai South, fire engulfed the fantails of three ATCs as a result of ignited gasoline which spilled from the outboard motor gasoline tanks.

6. That the ATC(H) was again proven an invaluable asset to MRF operations on 15 September, when 52 battle casualties were treated.
and/or medevaced from one ATC(H) battalion medical aid station. The presence of the ATC(H) with helicopter platforms prevented the disruption of operations due to mass casualties.

The 1/47th Infantry Battalion rotated aboard the ships of the MRF, and the 3/47th Infantry Battalion went ashore at Dong Tam on 17 September. With the exception of the MRF defense elements, all units of the MRF conducted preventive maintenance in preparation for operations commencing 20 September.

**Operations in Kien Hoa Province**

On 20 September, the MRF commenced prosecuting Operation CORONADO V in northwestern Kien Hoa Province to locate and destroy elements of the 516th Viet Cong Battalion and the 550th Company. Minor skirmishes with the enemy occurred in Ham Luong District on 23 September, but major contact never took place during this period.

During a continuation of Operation CORONADO V (27-28 September) the MRF conducted riverine/airmobile assault, search and destroy operations in order to locate elements of the Viet Cong 516th Battalion, 550th Company and enemy installations in the Giong Tram District of Kien Hoa Province. This operation was held in coordination with the 10th Regiment, ARVN SEVENTH Division and the Kien Hoa Sector forces.

At 0145 on 27 September, in the Ben Tre Creek 40 miles southwest of Saigon, history repeated itself, as was the case in the 15
September battle at Ba Rai Creek, the Viet Cong struck at the two lead ATCs of the column, which were performing minesweeping duties. After landing their troops, and en route to their patrol stations, T-91-3 and T-91-10, the lead minesweepers of Task Unit 117.2.1, commenced receiving heavy enemy 57-mm recoilless-rifle, B-40, and automatic-weapons fire from the east bank of Ben Tre Creek. K-111-2, which was one of the five boats in the task unit, moved up to assist and killed two of the enemy just as they were preparing to fire a 57-mm recoilless rifle. The hostile fire was silenced with all naval units returning fire. Once again the enemy was firing from well-entrenched positions. Three sailors were killed in the engagement and six others were wounded. All of the casualties occurred on the two lead ATC minesweepers.

On 28 September, the MRF shifted its anchorage from Dong Tam to a position at the junction of the Cua Tieu and Cua Dai Rivers near the northern end of Loi Quan Island. This move was effected to reduce the lines of communications and logistic distance to the area of operations. In a series of light skirmishes in the Mo Cay and Huong My Districts of Kien Hoa Provinces, five Viet Cong were killed and a quantity of weapons, medical supplies and rice was captured.

This operation was significant in that it marked the first combat employment of the two newly acquired ASPBs, high speed,
heavily armored minesweepers. The use of the ASPBs resulted in a more rapid speed of advance of movement groups, and further enhanced the possibility of successful surprise troop landings. This operation also marked the first time that American forces had ever struck at the birthplace of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong).

This area, 50 miles south-southwest of Saigon near An Binh Village in Kien Hoa Province, was the site of the NLF’s announcement to the world in 1960 of its intention to combat the established government while creating the impression that its cause was one of indigenous rebellion.

RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE UNITS

On 5 September, the duties of the four River Assault Divisions were shifted as follows:

RAD 91 from support of 3/47th Infantry Battalion to general support (resupply, minesweeping, medical clearing station and miscellaneous),

RAD 92 from base defense to support of the 3/47th Infantry Battalion,

RAD 111 from general support to support of the 3/60th Infantry Battalion,

RAD 112 from support of the 3/60th Infantry Battalion to the Mobile Riverine Base Defense,

In order to provide appropriate support and effective coordination of operations, personnel will be relocated as follows:

RAD 91 from APL-26 to USS WHITFIELD COUNTY (LST 1169),
RAD 92 from USS BENEWAH (AFB 35) to APL-26,
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HAD 111 from WHITFIELD COUNTY to USS COLLETON (APB 36),
HAD 112 from COLLETON to BENEWAH,
RAS 9 staff remains in APL-26 and RAS 11 staff in COLLETON.

On 12 September, Light Lift Craft ONE (LLC-1) with Harbor
Clearance Unit Team Detachment embarked, chopped to CTF 117 at Dong
Tam in order to provide emergency salvage capability for river as-
sault craft conducting riverine operations in Dinh Tuong Province.
On 16 September, LLC-1 was relieved by LLC-2, chopped back to
COMNAVFORV and proceeded to Vung Tau for onward sealift to Subic Bay.

During the period 17-18 September, the 3/47th Infantry Battalion
was relieved of afloat duties by the 4/47th Infantry Battalion and
rotated to Dong Tam.

On 20 September, the first shipment of two assault support
patrol boats (ASPB) arrived at Vung Tau and were not off-loaded
until the 22nd. The well-armed and heavily armored ASPB will act
as escort and provide protection for the slower ATCs during the
troop transport phase of the riverine assault. The ASPB, capable
of making a speed of 14.8 knots, will also perform minesweeping
duties in advance of the river assault squadrons and serve as a
blocking and intercepting force in the waterways around the area
of operation. The 50-foot ASPB is armed with a 20-mm cannon, an
81-mm mortar, .50 caliber and M-60 machine guns and two rapid-fire
grenade launchers.

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During September heavy rains and rough seas marked the advent of the current monsoon season in I Corps, with predictably adverse effects upon the coastal resupply of Dong Ha and Hue-Tan My. During the month worsening sea conditions lengthened the north-bound transit from Danang of LCUs and YFUs to periods ranging from 24 to 36 hours, and on occasion swells and a 10-foot surf at the entrance to the Cua Viet prevented craft from entering the channel. At the same time, the strong current caused by heavy river run-offs seriously impeded the upstream movement of waterborne traffic. At Dong Ha, the ramp was at one time three-fourths under water, with the river level up four feet after cresting seven feet above normal.

The elements also conspired in other ways to disrupt resupply operations in the Cua Viet. On 20 September USS PARK COUNTY (LST 1077) grounded in the center of the Cua Viet channel. A survey subsequently conducted by an Underwater Demolition Team indicated that at the channel entrance a bar had been built up by the swift current to within 10 feet of the surface. The dredge DAVIDSON then began operations to remove the obstruction, which effectively precluded the entry of LSTs into the Cua Viet. At month's end, it was anticipated that by 10 October dredging operations would have cleared the channel sufficiently to permit passage of an LST with a medium load.
On 13 September, at the request of the Commanding General of the THIRD Marine Amphibious Force, NAVSUPPACT assumed responsibility for the operation of the Dong Ha ramp and the coordination of its usage by the various military activities in the area. At the same time, action was initiated to provide the increased cargo-processing capability necessary to support certain THIRD MAF high priority projects. The new requirements called for the processing of approximately 1,500 short tons a day by 24 September, and for 1,700 short tons daily by the 15th of the following month.

On the 14th, NAVSUPPACT assigned enough additional equipment and personnel to Dong Ha to permit 24-hour operation of the ramp. The Marine shore party previously assigned to the ramp was redeployed to customer delivery sites to expedite the turn-around of trucks. In addition, action was taken to begin the construction of an additional ramp in order to permanently upgrade the cargo-processing capability at Dong Ha.

Meanwhile, the enemy continued to conduct periodic rocket and artillery attacks against the Naval Support Activity's outlying detachments. At 0500 on 2 September, three LCUs at the Dong Ha bridge ramp were damaged by an underwater explosion. The detonation was attributed to artillery fire rather than a mine; one artillery round was observed to impact in the river prior to the incident, and at the time all of the craft had their screws turning.
and were dropping grenades as a deterrent against swimmers,

After the explosion one craft slowly began taking on water in the starboard generator room, and its power plant was rendered partially inoperative; the other LCUs sustained only minor damage. Two men were slightly injured as a result of the attack. All three craft were repaired and back in operation within a week.

Shortly after the attack on Dong Ha, the Naval Support Activity's LST ramp site at the entrance to the Cua Viet received several rounds each of 140-mm rocket and 100-mm artillery fire. No material damage or personnel casualties resulted.

Artillery fire continued to harass the various activities located in the Dong Ha combat base area throughout September; 27 separate attacks were recorded between the 2nd and 25th. And, during the latter part of the month, dredging operations in the Cua Viet channel by DAVIDSON were restricted to the hours of darkness because of incoming artillery fire, which bracketed the dredge on several occasions.

As a result of the continuing enemy effort to disrupt waterborne shipping in the Cua Viet, NAVSUPPACT instituted additional security measures. On 1 September a second LCPL Mark IV patrol boat was assigned to the NAVSUPPACT detachment at Dong Ha-Cua Viet to provide night patrols of the Cua Viet and Dong Ha ramp areas. On the 26th, a patrol boat at the Dong Ha ramp received small arms
OFFICIAL, Naval Support Activity, Danang's floating dry dock.
Naval Support Activity, Danang's deep-water piers with the containership service facility in the foreground.
fire from the shoreline. There were no casualties and the boat, although hit five times, sustained only minor damage.

On 3 September, a Danang harbor security patrol boat received five rounds of tracer fire from the shore; no injuries resulted.

During the month Danang's patrol craft continued to conduct random searches of Vietnamese junks and sampans in Danang Harbor and the Han River area. As a result, over 583 craft were searched, 72 junks and 188 persons were detained, and one Viet Cong suspect and eight Viet Cong sympathizers were turned over to THIRD MAF intelligence.

Despite the constraints imposed by the weather and enemy activity, NAVSUPPACT Danang and its detachments continued to process large volumes of cargo. At the port of Danang, the 88,674 short tons of cargo back-loaded for transshipment to other ports established a new high. The amounts of cargo back-loaded at Hue and Dong Ha--2,511 and 1,636 short tons, respectively--also surpassed all previous levels. The month's throughput for Danang reached 211,876 short tons. The combined throughput for all I Corps ports was almost 300,000 short tons.

Supply support continued to be generally excellent. The combined net requisition effectiveness for Danang and Chu Lai increased from August's 91 percent to 93 percent in September; the combined gross effectiveness rate rose from 84 to 90 percent.

During the month the number of service craft assigned to
NAVSPAC increased with the arrival of four "pusher" boats (converted LCM-3s) from the Ship Repair Facility at Subic. On the night of 28 September, a two-hour fire fight occurred between U.S. Marines and an unknown number of enemy in the vicinity of the NAVSPAC transmitter site at Marble Mountain. The facility, located eight miles south of Danang, is the Navy's largest transmitter site in the I Corps area and the southernmost outpost for which the Naval Support Activity's Security Force is responsible.

During the engagement the northwest perimeter of the site received several hundred rounds of small-arms fire, and one grenade exploded between the outer perimeter and the transmitter building. Members of the 50-man security force assigned to the site, mostly volunteers, returned an estimated 700 rounds and fired 40 flares during the battle. There were no casualties to NAVSPAC personnel and no damage to the installation resulted.

Lighters assigned to the Naval Support Activity participated in two search and rescue operations during September. On the 26th, LCU-1615 rescued a Marine jet pilot from the South China Sea near the Cua Viet. The injured aviator, assigned to MAG-13 at Chu Lai, was then delivered to USS PAUL REVERE (APA 248) for medical evacuation. Three days later another injured Marine pilot, one of two downed in the South China Sea approximately ten miles south of the Cua Viet, was recovered by LCU-1619 and transferred to USS GOLDSBOROUGH.
(DIG 20) for evacuation.

During September increasing demands were placed on the facilities of NAVSUPPACT's hospital in Danang. The 1,312 patients received at the hospital in September was the highest monthly total to date. Of the total, 545 were admitted for combat injuries, slightly less than the record number of battle casualties admitted in May.

On 30 September the Naval Support Activity, Danang personnel level was 8,741. That same day, the number of United States and other Free World Military Assistance Forces supported by NAVSUPPACT was 131,800.
The pier and race at Van Rensselaer.
On 1 September the U. S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon, Detachment Cam Ranh Bay was redesignated the U. S. Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay with Commander Ronald A. CAMPBELL, USN, commanding. The facility, which is located on the southern tip of the Cam Ranh Peninsula, is physically divided into two areas: the administration sector with berthing, messing, club and office facilities; and the pier area, which has fuel, repair, and drydock facilities. Among the tenants at the new support facility are Commander Coastal Surveillance Force (CTF 115), Coastal Squadron ONE, Coastal Division FOURTEEN, Inshore Undersea Warfare Group ONE Unit TWO, and the Naval Communications Station.

The main body of Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 302 (CBMU 302), which is under the operational control of NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 20 September. The primary mission of CBMU 302 is the performance of routine maintenance and repair of the naval facilities, equipment and vehicles in the II CTZ. Secondary missions are improvements, alterations, and limited minor construction projects. Personnel assigned to CBMU 302 include 164 enlisted men and four officers.

During September, the number of line items carried by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, totaled 33,393. The overall gross and net material support effectiveness increased slightly to 48 percent and 67 percent.
respectively.

Two new programs that were designed to increase the effectiveness of supply support to naval forces in II, III and IV Corps areas were fully instituted during the month by the NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, Supply Department.

The Selected Item Management (SIM) program provides the means to identify and focus management attention on the relatively few items in inventory that account for the majority of demands. Approximately five percent of each detachment's inventory has been designated SIM. Through SIM, meaningful stock levels have been established based on high and low limits determined by usage and requisition lead to insure an adequate stock is on hand at all times. High limits are reviewed and revised monthly, if necessary. From the monthly reports, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, may determine the relative stock positions of the various detachments and direct the redistribution of surplus stock at one activity to alleviate shortages at another.

In September, a program was undertaken by NAVSUPPACT to submit all Navy requisitions for common support items to the Army on a "fill or kill" basis, both at the Saigon and detachment level. This program was brought about by the poor fill rate received from the Army and the subsequent lack of status on back-ordered or passed requisitions. NAVSUPPACT now knows within two days after
submitting the requisition for common use items whether or not these items will be received from the Army. If the Army records indicate the item is "not in stock", the requisition is immediately submitted to Naval Supply Center, Oakland. It was felt that this program would provide better support to units supplied by NAVSUPPACT Saigon.

A critical need for additional warehouse space in Saigon exists for new stocks scheduled to arrive in country beginning in October. At month's end, all efforts to acquire the needed space had been unsuccessful. The U. S. Army was negotiating with the owner for one warehouse and with Raymond, Morrison, and Knudson Inc. for a second.

NAVSUPPACT, Saigon-controlled surface ships and craft hauled 1,317 short tons of cargo to the various detachments during the month of September. During the same period, NAVSUPPACT aircraft transported 4,190 passengers and 169.3 short tons of air cargo.

As of the end of the month, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon had a total of 1,973 personnel on board and was providing support to approximately 15,000 military personnel.

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The 5,500-man amphitheater constructed by MCB-71 at Chu Lai.
Elements of the Naval Construction Forces in Vietnam sustained numerous mortar and artillery attacks during the month. As a result of the attacks, 23 Seabees were wounded. On 1 September, a Seabee from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 (MCB-133) was wounded by a sniper at Danang East. Also on 1 September three men from MCB-121 were wounded when a mortar round exploded inside their Phu Bai camp perimeter. On 3 September, an enemy artillery attack on Dong Ha resulted in five Seabees from MCB-11 being wounded. During a second enemy attack on Dong Ha on 5 September, eight Seabees were wounded when several artillery rounds impacted near the MCB-11 galley. On 6 September, two Seabees from MCB-71 were wounded by shrapnel from a bomb that inadvertently dropped from an aircraft during its takeoff from the Chu Lai airfield. On 28 September, another of the month's numerous attacks on the Dong Ha combat base resulted in four Seabees from MCB-11 being injured.

A task force composed of elements from several MCBs deployed in the Republic of Vietnam was sent to Site "X" on 15 September to begin construction of an alternate airfield for Dong Ha. The airfield, located about six miles south of Dong Ha, is a priority project that is required as an operational facility before the northeast monsoon season. The runway, which has a useable completion date of 1 November, is to be 3,500 feet long and will have a
C-130 capability. It is being constructed of AM-2 matting laid over an eight-inch thick soil cement base. The urgent requirement that the airfield be operational by 1 November necessitated the temporary assignment of approximately 150 men of the alert battalion, MCB-10 from Okinawa to Vietnam. The completed airbase will include a 20,000 square yard parking apron, a 90,000 square yard helicopter facility with bin type revetments, a 500-man cantonment, bulk POL storage, an ammunition supply point, and miscellaneous infantry and aircraft facilities.

In the past eight months the amount of effort expended toward combat support type construction has greatly increased. In January 1967, the percentage of the total direct labor for this type construction was approximately two percent, while at the present time about 16 percent of the direct labor is expended in this program. It is expected that this percentage will increase further as more of the Tactical Support Functional Components are received in country. The increase of effort by the naval construction forces to support the tactical requirements of the Marine units has resulted in the extension of the beneficial occupancy dates of some construction projects.

At the Dong Ha combat base, MCB-11 was constructing facilities for the Force Logistic Support Unit and by month's end had completed five of 11 Butler buildings and a 500-man galley. They also poured
the deck for a maintenance quonset and the base fire station.

Among other projects completed by MCB-11 were a 250-man galley and 10 of 20 Butler buildings for the THIRD Marine Division. The MCB-11 crew which was upgrading Route 1, completed repairing and seal-coating between Quang Tri and Camp Evans and then shifted to the section of road between Dong Ha and Site "X" to repair damage caused by the heavy traffic to the airfield. MCB-11's detail at Lang Vei Special Forces Camp completed two underground supply buildings and poured foundations for two bunkers.

MCB-3, at the Gia Le combat base, completed the 23,000 square yard parking apron for the 131st Army Aviation Company, a 500-man galley for the 3rd Anti-Tank Battalion, and a 120-foot by 150-foot aircraft hangar for Marine Air Group 16 (MAG-16). The Seabees of MCB-3 also completed a 75'-foot timber bridge on Col Co Road and poured the slab for the Hue AFTV station.

MCB-121, working from the Phu Bai combat base, continued general upgrading of Route 1 between Phu Bai and Phu Loc. They completed a 250-man galley and continued work on 61 hooches at the Tan My cantonment. Construction also continued on an 83-hootch and a 138-hootch cantonment plus a 500-man galley for the THIRD Marine Division.

At the Danang Air Base, MCB-133 completed the ARVN/HAF ammunition storage facility which consisted of hauling and placing nearly 500,000 cubic yards of earth. A NAVSUPPACT storage building and the
Marble Mountain POL tank farm office, both of which were 40-foot by 100-foot rigid frame wooden buildings, were also completed. MCB-133 also continued construction of the large complex of berms for the Ammunition Supply Point ONE (ASP-1) area, a parking apron consisting of 25,000 square yards of M8A1 matting and a 500-man galley for the FIRST Logistical Command.

MCB-7 completed work on the women's quarters at the NAVSUPPACT Danang Hospital. Also completed were a technical stores warehouse for the U.S. Army STRATCOM, a BOQ at the NAVSUPPACT hospital, a salvage equipment storage building at the Service Craft Repair Facility, and the exchange at the China Beach Recreation Area. The first increment of the barracks rehabilitation at Camp Tien Sha had been completed and work was continuing on the remainder. At the NAVSUPPACT hospital work was in progress on an 80-man enlisted barracks and head, a pre-operating room, two armory buildings, a new generator shed, a medical ward (11 - 20- by 48-foot buildings), and additions to the sewer system. A double bituminous treatment had been applied to 6,200 feet of the road on Monkey Mountain.

Other projects that were in progress included grading and drainage work in the NAVSUPPACT Public Works complex, a shops stores building at the Service Craft Repair Facility, and 244,000 square feet of soil cement hardstand in the NAVSUPPACT covered storage area.

By month's end, MCB-4 had nearly completed the Hill 327 recreation.
facilities and had finished construction of the Liberty Bridge.

During the month, MCB-1 was relieved by MCB-5 who began a 500-man galley for the Marines at Hill 10 and a fire station for the FIRST Marine Air Wing at Danang.

MCB-1 completed construction of 10 bridges on Route 1 in Hai Van Pass and continued to repair the surface of the road and the ditches. They continued to expand and upgrade the Happy Valley Quarry and also continued work on open and covered storage sites for the Force Logistic Command (FLC) at Red Beach.

MCB-74's detail at Phu Loc completed 10 of 28 culverts, finished the bridge south of Phu Loc and began removing the damaged concrete bridge at Nuc Ngot, while continuing to cold patch and recondition the road. They also continued constructing the remaining four increments of Ammunition Supply Point TWO and 32,000 square feet of covered storage for FLC.

A 5,000-man amphitheater for the FIRST Marine Division was completed by MCB-71 at Chu Lai. They also completed extensive emergency repairs to the west runway at the Chu Lai Air Base. This project involved over 30,000 feet of concrete sawing and regrouting. Centerline lights for the runway were installed at the time the runway repairs were made. Other MCB-71 projects included a Korean Army medical facility south of Chu Lai and troop cantonment construction for both the U.S. Army at Dac Pho and the Vietnamese Army near...
Quang Hai.

Also at Chu Lai, MCB-6 completed the dairy plant which is capable of manufacturing most milk products for NAVSUPPACT Danang. MCB-6 expended a major effort on the upgrading of Route 1 south of Chu Lai. This project consisted of hauling over 15,000 cubic yards of rock, replacing culverts and installing headwalls. A 120-foot timber trestle bridge was also completed on Route 1 north of Binh Son. Work was also in progress to provide additional operational facilities for the FIRST Marine Air Wing. MCB-6 also had a work detail at Tam Ky, north of Chu Lai, working on a hospital addition and construction cantonment facilities for the Vietnamese Army rifle companies.
MILITARY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CIVIC ACTION OPERATIONS

A concerted campaign to step up the rate of defection among the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army was conducted following the Vietnamese national elections on 3 September. The campaign was designed to capitalize on the psychological advantage provided by the first opportunity the Vietnamese people have had to elect their own government. The Field Development Division of JUSPAO (Joint United States Public Affairs Office) produced printed matter and tapes for national distribution and use. The dominant themes used throughout the September phase were: the people of the Republic of Vietnam are now headed for happiness, prosperity and security; and, the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) and Dai Doan Ket (National Reconciliation)* Appeals. Instructions on how to rally were disseminated throughout the country by aerial leaflet drops, hand-delivered leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts.

Printed matter and tapes were made available to units throughout areas of naval interest. Crew members of boats (PBRs, PCFs, WPBs) hand distributed 334,000 leaflets, 111,000 newspapers, 33,000 magazines and 20,000 posters. In addition over 300 hours of broadcasting was made from U. S. Navy boats and 123 hours of aerial broadcasting was accomplished. Over 11 million leaflets were

*Specifically directed to the higher ranking Viet Cong/North Vietnamese officials.
dropped. During September, MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN units boarded or inspected 82,462 Vietnamese junks or sampans. In addition to the military objective, these meetings presented an excellent opportunity to influence favorably the attitudes of the people. Since these actions can be associated by the people with the Government of Vietnam, the government's image is favorably enhanced.

Task Force 117 also provided close support for elements of the 2nd Brigade, NINTH Infantry Division (U.S.) in conducting Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) strike operations against Viet Cong forces in Binh Tuong, Long An and Go Cong provinces and the Rung Sat Special Zone to destroy their capability of disrupting the National elections. The Commanding Officer of the 46th ARVN Regiment indicated that the MRF's presence and the operations conducted in Can Giuoc District contributed greatly to the success of the elections in that area. The Commanding General of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 25th Division also expressed pleasure with the assistance rendered by the MRF.

Task Force 116 elements increased psyops efforts throughout the election period, by broadcasting taped psyops messages and providing security for prospective voters.

Task Force 115 increased the readiness posture of the entire force in order to forestall any infiltration attempts that the Viet