RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

November 1967

A - Pulls - 15 Nov
B - YIT AF - 15 Nov
C - SEALs - 12 Nov
D - Pulls - 17 Nov
E - PRESIDENT BUCHANAN - 18 Nov
Viet Cong training area was close by. At 2215 the squad ambushed a heavily-loaded sampan, with three Viet Cong aboard, heading south. Another sampan, 100 meters astern of the first, evaded and escaped the ambush. The long day of waiting resulted in three dead Viet Cong. The SEALs were withdrawn from the area by an LCM fifteen minutes later with no casualties.

At 0100 on 15 November, a PBR patrol on the Soirap River fired on a sampan that had evaded into a stream, about three and a half miles down river from Nha Be, with unknown results. PBRs on the Long Tau River, to the east, were alerted to a possible Viet Cong crossing attempt at a point adjacent to where the sampan had evaded. At 0120 the Long Tau patrol detected six sampans with ten people exiting from the west bank at the suspected crossing point three miles downstream from Nha Be. The enemy, having been detected, opened fire on the patrol with automatic-weapons from the sampans and from both banks of the river. The PBRs quickly retaliated and suppressed the Viet Cong fire. There were two Viet Cong killed and five others were declared possible kills. The patrol captured four sampans, one CHICOM carbine, two U. S. M-1 carbines, 1 U. S. hand flare and 100 pounds of assorted clothing and documents. There were no friendly casualties. Helicopter air strikes and artillery fire was called in on the possible escape routes with unknown results.

On 15 November at 1125, Viet Cong forces attacked the Nationalist
Chinese merchant ship YIT AY, with Russian-made rockets, in the Long Tau shipping channel 15 miles southeast of Saigon. The ship was hit in an area below the bridge by four RPG-7 rounds. There were no casualties and damage was minor.

A Navy helicopter light fire team and a U. S. Army spotter aircraft coordinated with PBRs and Popular Force troops at the scene of the attack to flush out the enemy forces. At 1200 two young Vietnamese males were apprehended after they appeared to be evading the helicopters. The Popular Forces commenced a sweep of the area. About an hour later a PBR patrol on a blocking station captured an evading sampan and killed the two Viet Cong occupants. The sampan contained a CHICOM carbine, eight clips of ammunition and miscellaneous documents and supplies.

A PBR patrol, while proceeding to investigate Viet Cong harassment of wood cutters on the 17th, received small-arms fire from an enemy position located about 14 miles southeast of Nha Be on the Dinh Ba River. Shortly after the small-arms fire began a mine detonated ten feet from one PBR, spewing water 150 feet into the air. The PBR received minor damage to the hull, radar and radio but remained in action to suppress the enemy fire. The enemy position was later attacked by Navy "Seawolves" and fixed-wing aircraft after the PBRs withdrew. The airstrikes destroyed three bunkers and damaged three others. There were no personnel casualties.
At about 1245, 18 November, the U.S. merchant ship, SS PRESIDENT BUCHANAN, was attacked by recoilless-rifle and automatic-weapons fire about 30 miles south of Saigon, on the Long Tau River, while en route to the South Vietnamese Capital. During the attack, that lasted about ten minutes, the ship was hit 19 times. The enemy fire hit the hull and superstructure, ripping holes ranging from six inches to two and one-half feet in diameter. There were no casualties. When word of the attack was received by CTG 116.2 at Nha Be, four PBRs and Army and Navy helicopters were immediately
CONFIDENTIAL

dispatched to the area. Air strikes were made against the enemy position and shortly thereafter Vietnamese Popular Force troops were airlifted into the area to engage the Viet Cong. The PBRs set up blocking forces to prevent the enemy from escaping via the river. At 1645 the enemy attempted to break contact and began to flee. An Army spotter plane observed 20-30 Viet Cong and shortly thereafter an airstrike was made against them. Sixteen Viet Cong were killed.

Contact with the enemy was broken at 1730. One 57-mm recoilless-rifle, one CHICOM 75-mm recoilless-rifle, two CHICOM carbines, one CHICOM grenade and miscellaneous ammunition were captured during the afternoon engagement. One U. S. Army helicopter was downed by enemy fire and recovered without personnel casualties.

The following day the Popular Forces made another sweep of the area and found 16 freshly-dug graves and seven Viet Cong bodies. Also found were miscellaneous personal equipment and one scope for a 57-mm recoilless-rifle. The total enemy casualty figure was 23 killed and five probably killed in the action. One Vietnamese Popular Force soldier was wounded—the only friendly casualty.

The aggressive reaction and professional competence demonstrated by participating units earned a "well done" from Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.

***

CONFIDENTIAL 26
On 16 November, while operating in an area 17 miles southeast of My Tho, SEALs discovered a heavily booby-trapped bunker complex. While in the process of clearing the booby traps, ICC R.T. GALLAGHER, USN, a highly-qualified explosive ordnance demolition-man, received severe injuries to his left hand when a booby-trapped grenade he was disarming exploded. The grenade, a new innovation in the Viet Cong inventory of booby traps, was designed to detonate when the spoon touched the grenade case, thereby electrically activating the firing device. Discovery of this new enemy booby-trap grenade resulted in the publishing of orders directing that all enemy grenades were to be destroyed after discovery. The grenades were not to be kept as war trophies and no attempts to disarm them were to be made.

On 11 November, PBRs on routine patrol were advised by the Kien Hoa sector advisor that three Viet Cong companies had attacked a Vietnamese outpost located about seven miles southeast of My Tho. The advisor needed PBR assistance. PBRs 123 and 126, the first of eight boats to arrive on the scene, commenced to engage the enemy. Navy armed helicopters soon joined in the attack and in the midst of the action PBR 121 medically evacuated two seriously wounded Popular Force troopers from the outpost. The PBRs received enemy
fire from both banks of the Giao Hoa Canal. PBR 231 had two B-40 rockets explode close astern, as it pressed its attack against the enemy positions. The coordinated attacks of the Navy "Seawolves" and the patrol boats soon forced the Viet Cong to withdraw after sustaining five Viet Cong killed and eleven wounded. There were no U. S. casualties.

Navy "Seawolves", on 17 November, attacked sampans located in a canal on the south side of the river near the mouth of the My Tho. The helicopters made multiple rocket and machine-gun passes into the Viet Cong staging area. As the "Seawolves" were attacking, PBR 142 provided cover support and fired 60-mm mortars into the enemy positions. Six Viet Cong were killed, three sampans and two structures were destroyed and three structures were damaged in the 30-minute engagement. There were no friendly casualties.

On 27 November, two SEAL squads landed at two points on the south bank of the river, about ten miles southwest of My Tho, in a pre-dawn operation. Squad 7B patrolled south 200 meters and while searching a village killed two Viet Cong as they attempted to flee. Squad 7A that had patrolled 500 meters south of their landing position encountered resistance in a village that they had begun searching. In the brief fire fight one Viet Cong was killed and one SEAL was wounded. The SEALs extracted without further incident, with one detainee, about five hours after landing.
Operations in the Ham Luong River

On 1 November, USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) while transiting down the Ham Luong, conducted harassment and interdiction fire in a specified strike zone that extended along the west bank of the river for a distance of ten miles from a point located four miles southwest of Ben Tre. The 50-minute bombardment with 40-mm cannons destroyed ten structures and damaged fifteen. The LST's guns killed six Viet Cong and wounded nine others.

At 0118 on the morning of 24 November, YRBM-16, a PBR support unit anchored at the confluence of the Ham Luong and Ben Tre rivers, was racked by a violent explosion from a Viet Cong-planted water-mine that ripped a gaping eighteen- by seventeen-foot hole below the waterline in the starboard side abreast the mast. A raging fire, fomented by a ruptured fuel tank, ensued.

A call for assistance was received by USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838), on station at the mouth of the Ham Luong River, at 0130. General Quarters was sounded and twenty minutes later the ship was underway and two helicopters loaded with firefighting equipment were en route. The LST anchored at 0356, 1,000 yards from the YRBM-16 that was now burning fiercely. Rescue and assistance parties with fire fighting equipment were dispatched to the YRBM to aid in the valiant efforts of the crew to control the fire.

By 0530 the fire was gradually being contained, but everything...
depended on receipt of additional fire fighting foam. The task of foam resupply was being carried out by relay system involving the "Seawolf" helicopters that shuttled the much needed item from Dong Tam to the LST for further transfer to the fire scene by PBRs from River Patrol Section 521. Additional PBRs mounted P250 portable fire pumps to aid in battling the fire, while others conducted area searches and provided a security cordon around the stricken barge.

Personnel were evacuated to the HUNTERDON COUNTY at first light and as the personnel were being accounted for the casualty toll mounted to fourteen Navymen wounded (three were serious) and five missing. Two of the seriously wounded, who were crewmen of the YREM-16, died later from burns and the five missing, all attached to River Section 522, were later found dead in a flooded compartment.

The fires were finally put out and flooding was under control by 1600 that afternoon. The barge had been saved, however, extensive damage was wrought throughout and PBR 116, on board for repairs, was totally destroyed by the fire. The barge was towed to Dong Tam and beached for temporary repairs. On 26 December it was towed to Sasebo, Japan for overhaul.

The assistance rendered by all units and the skillful performance by all hands were instrumental in reducing the extent of
The remains of PBR 116, destroyed by fire on YRBM-16 on 24 November.

damage and averting a disaster. USS HUNTERDON COUNTY, in her dash up the river to render assistance, made an unprecedented night transit of the Ham Luong River.

Two Navy armed helicopters scrambled from their base at Vinh Long on the 28th of November and attacked a concentration of enemy sampans and structures located in a specified strike zone 24 miles to the east-northeast. The "Seawolves" expended their ordnance load in aggressive attacks and killed eight Viet Cong, destroyed four sampans and three structures, and damaged 10 sampans and six structures.
Operations in the Co Chien River

On the morning of 15 November, while conducting special operations in an area approximately five miles southeast of Vinh Long, a SEAL platoon engaged the enemy. In the ensuing fire fight one Viet Cong was killed. It was later learned that the SEALs had achieved a prize kill as the victim was the Viet Cong district security chief. The Vietnamese Army and local forces had long sought this individual. It was further reported that the local inhabitants were very excited and impressed by the loss of such an important Viet Cong. The success of the operation was somewhat lessened, however, as LTG F. H. MAHKS, USNR, Officer in Charge of the SEAL unit, sustained a serious bullet wound in his left upper chest.

On 17 November "Seawolves", responding to a request for support from the Tra Vinh sector advisor, attacked enemy troops in an open rice paddy about five miles east of Phu Vinh. The enemy tried to thwart the helicopter attack with heavy automatic-weapons fire; however, the "Seawolves" awesome firepower killed 20 of the Viet Cong and wounded another 20. The U. S. Army senior advisor was killed and the province chief was captured by the Viet Cong. There were no casualties sustained by the "Seawolves".

On the 23rd "Seawolves" scrambled from their base at Vinh Long to attack a reported concentration of about 200 Viet Cong located
OPERATIONS IN THE CO CHIEN RIVER

LEGEND:
- PPA INCIDENT
- HELICOPTER INCIDENT
- SEAL INCIDENT

SCALE: 1 MILES
in an area about 15 miles southeast of the base. The armed helicopters put in their strikes and killed seven and wounded two of the enemy forces before the Viet Cong broke contact.

Operations in the Bassac River

On 2 November, a two-boat PBR patrol supported a Popular Force (PF) sweep up the Mai Ciam River, located about eight miles southeast of Can Tho off the southern bank of the Bassac River. Initially, light contact was established with the enemy, netting one Viet Cong killed. As the sweep continued heavy enemy contact was gained and 20 Viet Cong were seen retreating into a bunker located on a canal leading off the river. One PBR entered the canal to provide support to the friendly troops and suppress the fire coming from the enemy bunker. In the meantime, the cover PBR loaded PF troops from within the sweep area and landed them at the bunker site. Five separate, heavily blooded trails were found in the area of the bunker, indicative of numerous enemy casualties. Found on one trail was a hand severed by .50-caliber fire. As the sweep progressed, the PBRs continued their supporting role as they destroyed a 35-foot sampan and a motor. The boats also fired on 10 Viet Cong that had fled into a tree line. The result of the action was unknown. The Popular Forces were extracted by PBR upon completion of five hours of sweeping.

The PBR support of PF troops has proven very successful. The
OPERATIONS IN THE BASSAC RIVER

LEGEND:

X = PBR INCIDENT
O = HELICOPTER INCIDENT
* = SEAL INCIDENT

SCALE

0 MILES

26 Nov
Operation PHACUSMINES I
Operation SUN DEVIL
2 Nov
9 Nov
12 Nov
PBRs can remain in the main river until the PF troops have the Viet Cong committed, at which time the boats enter the minor waterways taking advantage of the element of surprise. It has been noted that PF troops are very aggressive when supported by the PBRs.

On 4 November, four PBRs, operating from the PBR base at Binh Thuy, made a planned incursion into the Bong Bo Canal located approximately ten miles southeast of their base. The patrol received heavy automatic-weapons and small-arms fire after they fired upon 10 Viet Cong detected on the bank of the canal. The patrol made three firing runs against the enemy positions and continued up the canal as Navy armed helicopters were called in and made a strike. The patrol again received heavy enemy fire the entire length of the canal as the boats withdrew. During the action three Viet Cong were killed and two were wounded; however, six U. S. Navymen were wounded, two requiring medical evacuation by USAF medical helicopters. The combined firepower of the PBR and the "Seawolves" destroyed five structures, damaged 31 others, and sunk seven sampans and damaged eight. Employed during the operation were flaming arrows fired from a "Robin Hood"-type long bow. The successful use of the bow and arrow accounted for the destruction of one structure. The use of the flaming arrow was initiated by LCDR Donald R. SHEPPARD, USN, Commander River Division 51, as an effective means of eliminating Viet Cong ambush sites concealed under flammable
bamboo huts. Another innovation used was pop hand flares* modified to accommodate psychological operation leaflets which were distributed along both banks of the canal.

A PBR patrol, on the afternoon of 9 November, observed and pursued two sampans that were evading the patrol. As the boats gave chase behind Tan Dinh Island, approximately 17 miles southeast of Can Tho, light sniper fire was received from the tree line. The PBRs returned the fire and continued down the river a short distance when they were attacked by heavy automatic-weapons, small-arms and recoilless-rifle fire from both banks of the river. PBR 28 was hit by a recoilless-rifle round on the port side at the water line in the forward end of the engine compartment, temporarily disabling the port engine. The engine was restarted and the damaged boat cleared downstream, rapidly taking on water. The craft then began sinking stern first. PBR 37, the cover boat, rushed to the aid of the sinking craft, experiencing two near misses by recoilless-rifle rounds. One crewmember was recovered from the water and five others were taken off the sunken craft. The rescue was made while under intense enemy automatic-weapons and small-arms fire. Two Navymen were wounded and one U. S. Army observer was killed during the initial engagement.

* A hand-held pyrotechnic device used for signaling or illuminating.
"Seawolves" scrambled from the deck of the USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST 846) to support the patrol and a medical helicopter was called in to evacuate the casualties. COMHIVDIV 51, when advised of the ambush, sortied from Binh Thuy with eleven PBRs, a helicopter light fire team and units of River Assault Group 25 to counter the attack and salvage the sunken PBR. Artillery batteries at Tra On provided 105-mm harassing fire in the vicinity of the sunken boat, while the "Seawolves" provided firing runs to ensure the security of the stricken PBR.

Automatic-weapons and small-arms fire intensified once again as the additional PBRs arrived on the scene to commence salvage operations, wounding another Navyman. The PBRs raked the banks with 50-caliber fire, killing at least one of the enemy. As PBR 28 was towed from the engagement area and all salvage units were clear, a fixed-wing airstrike was placed against the enemy positions. The aircraft encountered heavy automatic-weapons fire during their strikes.

PBR 28 was later hoisted aboard USS JENNINGS COUNTY for repairs; however, investigation revealed the boat was beyond repair. Four additional PBRs received minor hull damage from bullet hits and shrapnel and two helicopters also sustained minor damage.

At dawn on the morning of 12 November a platoon of SEALs landed on the southern end of Tan Dinh Island to conduct a search of an
area that had been the scene of PBR harassment the past several days. The patrol moved inland about 150 meters and then swung southeast a short distance where they encountered four Viet Cong while conducting a house search. Three of the four were killed as they attempted to escape. One of the Viet Cong killed was later identified as the Viet Cong district chief. The SEALs extracted without any casualties after finding numerous well-concealed punji pits in the area.

On 14 November, CTU 116.1.1 initiated Operation PLAQUEMINES I against enemy units in the Tan Dinh Island area who had stubbornly resisted all PBR, armed helicopter and SEAL attempts to neutralize their positions. The mission was to conduct a well-coordinated assault utilizing PBRs, helicopters and SEALs against a target area located 16 miles southeast of Can Tho along the east bank of the Tan Dinh Canal. In reserve would be additional "Sea-wolves", the 105-mm battery at Tra On and a fixed-wing airstrike.

The planned tactics were to have a PBR open fire at the northern end of the canal to alert the enemy thereby permitting them to arm and man their positions. Helicopters would then make a low-level pass of the designated strike area dropping a riot control agent (RCA). PBRs would then enter the area and continue saturating the enemy positions with M-79 RCA grenades. Upon completion of this phase the SEALs would be landed to sweep the area while
the enemy was incapacitated, capturing as many as possible for interrogation; in addition to the capture of weapons and documents.

The operation was launched as scheduled and all units began their assigned tasks; however the wind conditions increased following an otherwise highly successful gas-laying attack causing the gas to rapidly disperse negating the desired results. The SEALs failed to gain contact with the enemy, but action along the canal was much the opposite. The river units encountered a methodical and violently opposed egress as the Viet Cong retaliated with a high volume of accurate sniper and light automatic-weapons fire from positions extending along the banks for 2,500 yards. GAME WARDEN units continued to engage the enemy with all available weapons, plus a requested U. S. Air Force fixed-wing airstrike during the four-hour running gun battle. LT R. J. NOVAK, USN, was seriously wounded when he received a bullet wound in the head and shrapnel wounds on both legs. He was evacuated by helicopter during the height of the battle. One U. S. Army man, serving as a PBR gunner, received a slight wound and was the only other personnel casualty. Four PBRs and one LCm received multiple bullet and shrapnel damage. Personnel casualties to the enemy were unknown; however two sampans and two structures were destroyed. (CTU 116.1.1 conceded this round to the Viet Cong).

On 26 November a Navy helicopter light fire team responding
to a request from the Vinh Long subsector advisor, rushed to the aid of Popular Force (PF) troops that were pinned down in an open rice paddy, about two miles east of Tra On, by approximately two well-organized Viet Cong companies. Due to the close proximity of the PF troops to the enemy positions, the "Seawolves" pressed their attacks close-in to the enemy positions achieving maximum effectiveness and accuracy in the ordnance delivery. Heavy automatic-weapons fire was received during the firing passes; however, all enemy fire was suppressed after the fifth firing run, allowing the PFs to withdraw. The "Seawolves'" destructive fire power accounted for 37 Viet Cong killed and 10 wounded. As a result of this action one aircrewman was wounded by shrapnel when a .30-caliber bullet hit his chest protector. Both aircraft received hits. The only casualty to the PFs was one wounded and that occurred when initial contact was made by them with the enemy. It was noted that the enemy units were well disciplined in that the helicopters could not draw their fire on the initial passes. When the enemy did return fire it was "massed fire."

On 27 November Operation SUN DEVIL was conducted by units of River Division 51 (TU 116.1.1) against a Viet Cong supply base in the area bordering the Bong Boat Canal, which enters the lower Bassac River south of Tan Dinh Island. The assault began with a shore bombardment by 40-mm cannon and five-inch rockets from USS JENNINGS.
COUNTY (LST 846) and by five-inch rockets launched from an LCM(R) plus 105-mm howitzers from Cau Ke battery. Upon completion of the bombardment, two PBRs, an armored LCPL, and an armored LCM entered the canal, preceded by a Navy light helicopter fire team to provide covering fire. The armada raked the Viet Cong structures on both sides of the waterway with all weapons at their command, plus three back pack flame throwers operated from the sterns of the PBRs. Forty-one structures and 17 sampans were destroyed and one known Viet Cong was killed in the 13-hour operation. One U. S. navyman was wounded slightly in the action.

Following the capture of one sampan on 28 November near the mouth of the Bassac river, a PBR patrol with BM1 L. D. Yockey, USN, as patrol officer, detected a large inboard motorized sampan close to the north shore. When the occupants spotted the approaching PBRs, they beached the sampan and fled leaving the motor running. BM1 Yockey's PBR closed the sampan, taking the fleeing personnel under fire. As fire was received from the beach BM1 Yockey jumped into the sampan and drove it out into the river. The captured sampan contained three Soviet RKG-3 HEAT grenades, one bolt of 160 rounds of .30-caliber M1 ammunition, one bolt of 150 rounds CHICOM 7.62 cartridges, one gas mask, back packs, uniforms, 12 sealed letters, 150 pounds of antibiotics, injectable medicines and 25 pounds of dressings. The contents were transferred to the PBRs and the
sampan was destroyed. The above action prompted Commander Task Force 116 to send the following message:

AGGRESSIVE INTERDICTION AND QUICK REACTION IN CONFISCATING VIET CONG CACHE COMMENDABLE. HEROIC ACTS SUCH AS THOSE BY BM1 YOCKEY CONTINUE TO UPHOLD AND BUILD THE PBR TRADITION. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. CAPTAIN GRAY SENDS.

***

GAME WARDEN UNITS

On 11 November, River Section 534 relocated from Cat Lo to Nha Be and was assigned the first Mark II PBRs. However, Engineering problems associated with the new exhaust system delayed commencement of GAME WARDEN operations with the modified boats.

On 21 November, Commander River Division 55 was activated at Binh Thuy, LCDR H. R. BRENNEMAN, USN, commanding.

On 25 November, Commander River Division 55 relocated to Nha Be.

On 26 November, River Section 522 relocated from YRBM-16 to My Tho.

On 30 November, Commander River Division 55 relocated to Danang.

***

GAME WARDEN STATISTICAL SUMMARY

1. PBR Statistics:
   a. Total Patrols (two boats): Day 738 1 Night 731 5

CONFIDENTIAL
DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY GAME WARDEN UNITS

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

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

1966 1967
Total Contacts: Day 58,979 Night 4,131
Total Inspected: Day 13,649 Night 1,174
Total Boarded: Day 35,031 Night 2,527
People Detained: 356
Sampans/Junks Detained: 48
Total Patrol Hours: 35,750.5

2. Helicopter Fire Team Statistics

a. Total Flight Hours: 1,045.3
b. Helicopter Missions:
   (1) Pre-planned strikes: 99
   (2) Reaction: 98
   (3) Targets of Opportunity: 155
   (4) Support: 275

3. GAME WARDEN Totals:

a. Fire Fights:
   (1) PBR 46
   (2) Helo 79
   (3) MSB 0
   (4) LCM 1
   (5) LCPL 1
   (6) STA 0

b. Sampans: Destroyed 102 Damaged 95 Captured 11
   c. Junks: Damaged 2
   d. Structures: Destroyed 149 Damaged 155
   e. Bunkers: Destroyed 25 Damaged 2
   f. Enemy: KIA 227 KIA (Poss) 68 WIA 71 Captured 5
   g. Friendly: KIA 7 WIA 45
   h. Friendly Battle Damage:
      (1) PBR 40
      (2) Helo 5
      (3) LST 0
      (4) YRBM 1
   i. PBR MEDEVAC: 64

*****
A task group of Riverine Assault Force craft moves down a canal in convoy during an operation (CORONADO IX) in the Mekong Delta.
Throughout the month of November the Mobile Riverine Force was engaged in Operation CORONADO IX in an area north of the Mekong/My Tho River from the Plain of Reeds area (vicinity of the Cambodian border) east to the Soirap River.

On 9 November, the 5th Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps, joined the MRF to become the first VNMC battalion to be assigned as a permanent unit of the Riverine Assault Force.

On 18 November the Mobile Riverine Base made its deepest penetration into the Mekong Delta, moving 35 miles from its previous anchorage near Dong Tam, westward up the Mekong River to the vicinity of Sa Dec.

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

On 1 November the MRF shifted its base of operations from Vung Tau to the Dong Tam area in preparation for Operation CORONADO IX. Due to heavy seas and high winds in the South China Sea, the transiting units of the MRF made very slow progress because of the requirement to tow their AMMI pontoons with them. When the ships reached the relative calm of the Mekong/My Tho Rivers, towing speeds of ten knots were realized.

During the relocation of the Mobile Riverine Base, an armored troop carrier, T-111-7, conducting minesweeping operations ahead of the main task group, surfaced a 170-pound moored, conical-shaped
mine in the Cua Tieu river eight miles east of My Tho. This incident was the first positive indication that chain-drag minesweeping operations conducted by TF 117 assault craft were effective. The water mine was later disarmed by EOD personnel, and determined to be a command-detonated mine.

On 2 November the units of the MRF commenced Operation CORONADO IX (2 November) in southeastern Giao Duc district (My Luong Peninsula) of Dinh Tuong province. This one-day operation was designed to destroy enemy ambush positions which had been harassing TF 116 FBR patrols in the area. The ground troops destroyed 141 bunkers and eight spider holes, and detained ten Viet Cong suspects.

After a brief respite from combat operations, the MRF continued Operation CORONADO IX (4-6 November) and conducted a three-day search and destroy operation in the southern Cai Lay district of Dinh Tuong province (Cam Son Secret Zone) to entrap and destroy elements of the Viet Cong 263rd Main Force Battalion and the 514th Provincial Mobile Battalion. During this period five Viet Cong were killed and 84 bunkers were destroyed in a series of light skirmishes.

On 9 November, following a two-day preventative maintenance period, Operation CORONADO IX (9-11 November) was recommenced in the Cam Son and Ban Long Secret Zones of Dinh Tuong province. This three-battalion, riverine and airmobile search and destroy operation marked the initial deployment of the 5th Battalion of the
Vietnamese Marine Corps as the third maneuver battalion of the MRF.

The Vietnamese battalion, staging from its base camp on the north side of the My Tho River just south of Dong Tam, was supported by River Assault Division 112 throughout the operation. This integration of the Vietnamese Marines with Task Force 117 riverine units in combat operations, represents a milestone in Vietnamese/U. S. cooperation.

Although heavy contact with the 263rd Main Force Battalion was not established, the combined forces killed 11 Viet Cong, captured eight others, destroyed 113 enemy bunkers and detained 51 suspects. Friendly casualties consisted of one U. S. soldier killed and 11 personnel wounded.

At 0915, an ATC, T-112-10, patrolling on the Rai River five miles west of Dong Tam, in company with M-111-2 and T-112-9, experienced a small water mine explosion beneath it. There were no personnel casualties and the riverine craft was not damaged. M-111-2 took the immediate area under fire with unknown results.

The next day at 1335, a TU 117.2.1 riverine unit, which had established a waterborne block on Rang Creek, 11 miles northwest of My Tho, after landing troops, sighted a water mine on the beach which was later destroyed by EOD personnel.

On 13 November the ships of the MRF shifted anchorages as a precautionary defensive measure. During the anchorage shift each
ship fired all of its weapons into a specified strike zone on the south bank of Tien Giang River in Kien Hoa province. To date, it had not been necessary for the major ships of the MRB to fire their weapons in defense or support; consequently, periodic firing of this type proved itself essential to combat efficiency and operational readiness.

On 14 November the MRB conducted a one-day, two-battalion riverine and airmobile saturation patrolling and search operation in Dinh Tuong province to enhance the security of Highway 4 and the Dong Tam base. TF 117 provided close support to the 4/47th Infantry Battalion and the 5th Battalion of the VNMC. The VNMC battalion integrated very smoothly into the MRF, and rapidly adapted to riverine operations.

Contact with the enemy was very light (one Viet Cong killed and five Vietnamese Marines wounded); however, the ground troops destroyed 83 bunkers and detained 35 Viet Cong suspects. Twenty-eight of the detainees were innocent civilians and were released; six were detained on civil charges and one suspect was a Viet Cong squad leader from the 514th Provincial Mobile Battalion.

During a three-day maintenance period the MRB made preparations to relocate to a new Mekong River anchorage 32 miles west of Dong Tam in order to conduct Operation CORONADO IX (18-20 November) in western Dinh Tuong and eastern Kien Phong provinces. This
operation, part of KIEN GIANG 9-1, was conducted in coordination with the ARVN SEVENTH and NINTH Divisions, in order to encircle and entrap the Viet Cong 261st and 267th Main Force battalions. The initial phase of MRF participation commenced on the 18th and involved the transit of a riverine assault unit, with the VNMC 5th Battalion embarked, from the MRF at Dong Tam to the area of operations, a distance of 32 miles. This marked the MRF's deepest penetration into the Mekong Delta. In an attempt to provide additional security for the MRB, an infantry company was deployed on the land mass surrounding the anchorage site.

During the course of the operation, the riverine craft transited waterways fraught with obstacles not heretofore encountered. Prior operational intelligence revealed that a bridge spanning the Ruong Stream about six miles northeast of Sa Dec was not high enough to allow assault craft to pass under. Rather than destroy the bridge, a team of ARVN engineers was employed to dismantle the center span. On the morning of 18 November, in an operation which required less than two hours, the span was successfully removed and floated clear on pontoons.

Meanwhile, the MRF EOD team removed a number of Viet Cong-erected wire barriers from the Ruong Stream, thereby opening a complex of waterways not used by riverine craft of any type since 1963. This enabled the riverine craft, with their embarked
Vietnamese Marines, to penetrate 15 miles inland from the Mekong river. At the same time that the Marines were landing, the soldiers of the 4/47th Infantry Battalion were lifted to the north of the Marine's position in an attempt to entrap the fleeing Viet Cong.

An Assault Support Patrol Boat (ASPB), searching for Viet Cong ambush positions on the bank, escorts a landing force of Armored Troop Carriers (ATCs) down a Mekong Delta canal.

During the first day of search and destroy operations, there were 34 Viet Cong killed and 36 bunkers destroyed. Cumulative results for this phase of Operation CORONA IX (18-20 November) were 46 of the enemy killed, 32 detainees apprehended and seven Viet Cong guerrillas captured. There were also 13 enemy weapons
and over 1,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition captured. The combined U. S. Navy/Army and VNMC assault forces destroyed 162 bunkers, 16 sampans, six water barriers and four military structures.

On 20 November the CTF 117 Special Operations Team conducted an intelligence collection mission on the Con Qui Island complex four miles east of Sa Dec, resulting in two enemy killed and two confirmed Viet Cong captured. One of the captives, Captain Nguyen Van THOI, was a Viet Cong Intelligence Chief in the IV Corps area, who provided valuable information concerning the Viet Cong intelligence internal organization throughout the Mekong Delta.

The next day the MRF relocated to Dong Tam in preparation for another phase of Operation CORONADO IX (21-24 November) to be conducted in the Ca Son Secret Zone of Dinh Tuong province. Prior to the MRF entering the new area of operations on 23 November, a B-52 strike saturated the area. The presence of Air Force heavy bombers in this operation indicated the strategic importance assigned to Dinh Tuong province by senior military commanders.

Immediately after the airstrike, ground assault troops from the 3/47th and 4/47th Infantry Battalions, which had been pre-positioned by TF 117 riverine craft, made an airmobile assault into the area. At approximately the same time, other RAF units carried the VNMC 5th Battalion to landing zones up the Tra Tan River.
The cumulative destruction inflicted on the enemy during this four-day period consisted of eight Viet Cong killed, and two prisoners captured. The MRF also captured 40,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 16 Chinese communist carbines, 50 grenades and destroyed 111 bunkers and four sampans.

After a three-day maintenance period, the Mobile Riverine Force conducted Operation CORONADO IX (27-30 November) in the Cai Lay and Long Dinh districts of Dinh Tuong province. The primary mission of this operation was to clear the Xang Canal (Canal Commercial) of obstructions from Dong Tam to a point 19 miles up the canal. This waterway had been closed since 1964 by a series of waterblocks constructed by the Viet Cong, and its subsequent opening allowed the MRF to have water access to northern Dinh Tuong Province as far west as My Phouc Tay, 17 miles northwest of Dong Tam.

Early on 27 November, two infantry companies of the 4/47th Infantry Battalion were lifted to Dong Tam for airlift and surface moves to fire support bases in the objective area. At 0800 one infantry battalion was landed at various locations along the Xang Canal to provide security for ARVN engineers who, assisted by EOD Team 26 and Harbor Clearance Team THREE, began clearing water obstacles while river assault craft provided security in the waterway.

Later that evening at 2102, T-92-4 was hit by one RPG-2 (B-40)
rocket round from the west bank of the Xang Canal, eight miles northwest of Dong Tam. The rocket impacted against the stern of the boat and ruptured a fuel tank. Retaliatory fire was not returned because the rocket was launched from a nearby friendly village. There was one sailor slightly wounded and minimal damage caused to the boat.

As a result of Operation CORONADO IX (27-30 November), the MRF killed five Viet Cong, captured one enemy prisoner and destroyed two earthen water barriers and two massive stake-type water obstacles. Friendly casualties consisted of one U. S. soldier killed by enemy action and two more killed by friendly artillery. There were also eight soldiers and one sailor wounded during this phase of Operation CORONADO IX.

***

RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE UNITS

Effective 1 November River Assault Division responsibilities were reassigned as follows:

RAD 91 - MRB Defense,
RAD 92 - Support for the 4/47th Infantry Battalion,
RAD 111 - Support for the 3/47th Infantry Battalion,
RAD 112 - Support for the VNMC 5th Battalion.

In order to provide support and coordination of operations, personnel were relocated as follows:
CONFIDENTIAL

RAD 91 shifted to the USS BENEWAH (APB 35),
RAD 92 shifted to APL 26,
RAD 111 shifted to the USS COLLETON (APB 36),
RAD 112 moved ashore to Dong Tam.
RAS 9 and RAS 11 staffs remained aboard APL 26 and COLLETON respectively.

During the month of November, six assault support patrol boats (ASPBs) arrived in country and were assigned to the Mobile Riverine Force.

*****
U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, DANANG

Despite the occasional adverse weather associated with the northeast monsoon season, Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Danang, continued to offload and clear cargo expeditiously during the month of November. A total of 15 new monthly tonnage records were set during November by NAVSUPPACT, Danang and its various detachments. NAVSUPPACT, Danang's 235,489 short-tons throughput for the month and its daily throughput average of 7,849 short-tons were among the new records set as were the 342,719 short-ton monthly throughput for the combined I CTZ effort and the 38,630 short-ton monthly throughput for Dong Ha. A high level of LST activity, the utilization of fleet cargo ships, and an increased availability of small craft contributed to the month's impressive performance.

The Hue-Tan My port was opened for 542-class LSTs and on 1 November USS CLARKE COUNTY (LST 601) was the first LST to offload at the Col Co ramp causeway at Tan My. An offload rate of 268 short-tons per day was maintained at the Hue-Tan My port during the month of November.

Another first occurred on 18 November when USS PATAPSCO (AOG 1) became the first AOG to enter Tan My harbor to discharge POL (Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants) to bladder boats.

On 11 November, Okinawa to Danang RO/RO (Roll on-Roll off)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>SHORT TONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUL 1966</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG 1966</td>
<td>220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP 1966</td>
<td>240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT 1966</td>
<td>260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV 1966</td>
<td>280,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 1966</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DANANG CARGO HANDLING

- **ESTIMATED THROUGHPUT CAPABILITY**
- **THROUGHPUT**
- **OFFLOADED**
- **BETTLOADED**
service was commenced with the arrival of SS TRANSGLOBE at Danang’s deep-water piers. During this first port call, TRANSGLOBE discharged 44 trailers and 15 miscellaneous vehicles in five hours. TRANSGLOBE returned to Danang on 24 November and discharged 50 trailers in a seven-hour period. This coordinated NAVSUPPACT-USMC Force Logistic Center port clearance effort proved very successful and it was felt that this service could be increased when an expanded hardstand marshalling area near the discharge pier is available.

The overall net effectiveness for the Danang-Chu Lai support complex decreased from October’s 94.5 percent to 89.7 percent in November. Overall gross effectiveness decreased from 91.2 percent to 85.5 percent during the same period, primarily as a result of increased demands. However, it was felt that material in the pipeline should improve availability during the month of December.

On 15 November NAVSUPPACT, Danang’s Boat Support section assumed the responsibility for supply support for all MARKET TIME-GAME WARDEN operations in I CTZ. The net effectiveness for boat support during the first month of operations was 94.0 percent.

Repairs to the Khe Sahn runway were completed during the month and the C-130 capability was restored on the 26th. The scope of repairs to this strategic runway exceeded initial expectations in that a total of 2,300 lineal feet of new rock subgrade was required.
in addition to 500 feet of weather proofing. The repair project as originally envisioned called for a new rock subgrade of only 1,500 lineal feet, but additional repairs became necessary as the runway continued to deteriorate during the period of construction.

There were 19 sniper incidents reported from the various NAVSUPPACT installations during the month. These incidents varied from single sniper rounds to several attacks involving more than a hundred incoming rounds. No casualties or damages were sustained as a result of any of these incidents.

The number of patients admitted to the NAVSUPPACT hospital in Danang during November totalled 1,061. Of this total number received at the 467-bed hospital, 289 were admitted for combat injuries, 574 for various diseases, and 198 for non-combat injuries. A total of 441 persons were treated and returned to duty during the month and 281 were evacuated out of Vietnam.

On 1 November Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey toured the NAVSUPPACT hospital while on a tour of various military facilities in the Danang area. The Vice President, accompanied by: General William C. Westmoreland, Commanding General U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam; Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, Commanding General Third Marine Amphibious Force; and Captain Harry P. Mahin, USN, the hospital's senior medical officer, toured the wards, shaking hands and chatting with some of the
nearly 400 patients and 550 staff members. The visit was highlighted by the presentation of six purple hearts by Mr. HUMPHREY.

While visiting the NAVSUPPACT Danang hospital, Vice President HUMPHREY pins the purple heart on a wounded serviceman.

At month's end, the NAVSUPPACT Danang personnel level was 8,435 and the number of United States and other free-world forces supported by NAVSUPPACT was 131,100.

*****
During November the Viet Cong intensified their activities directed against Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Saigon, and its detachments in an attempt to disrupt the essential MARKET TIME/GAME WARDEN support that is provided by these detachments.

At approximately 0200 on 5 November, NAVSUPPACT's My Tho detachment came under an enemy mortar attack. The attack, which lasted approximately 10 minutes, slightly damaged one personnel billet and two vehicles which were located in the downtown complex. The detachment's waterfront area was not damaged and no personnel casualties resulted from the attack.

On 7 November, YRBM-16, anchored on the Ham Luong River near the city of Ben Tre, engaged the enemy in a fire fight and expended forty-six rounds of 81-mm ammunition. As a result of the action, three Viet Cong were killed and four were wounded. There were no U. S. personnel casualties.

Three large satchel charges were exploded inside the perimeter of NAVSUPPACT's Qui Nhon detachment between 0140 and 0340 on 8 November. Material damages resulting from the explosions included: total loss of one 46,000 gallon water tank and one 20,000 gallon fuel tank, and numerous windows and lamps broken. Two minor injuries to U. S. personnel resulted from the explosions and no personal contact with the enemy forces occurred.
At approximately 0110 on 24 November, a large explosion ripped an 18-by 9-foot hole in the side of YRBM-16, which was located in its usual mooring near the city of Ben Tre. The explosion, which occurred on the starboard side of the craft, outboard of the engineering spaces, ripped through the diesel wing tank and into adjacent living spaces and the engine room. A fire ensued following the explosion and within minutes the entire after section of the craft was enveloped by the flames. The craft immediately lost all power which resulted in the loss of fire main pressure and all illumination, except that provided by emergency battle lanterns.

With the fire raging aft, smoke filling passageways and compartments, and unable to actuate portable fire fighting pumps, the Officer in Charge ordered abandon ship. All crew members and embarked personnel were loaded into two LCMs which were moored port and starboard in the vicinity of the bow. After all personnel who could be located were on board, the two LCMs stood off from YRBM-16. Injured personnel and personnel not needed for emergency duties or lacking clothes and shoes were segregated into one LCM which then proceeded to the MACV compound at Ben Tre. At Ben Tre the personnel were either treated for injuries or "medevaced." The PBRs, which had been alongside at the time of the explosion, got underway as soon as their crews embarked and later contributed to the fire fighting effort. Additional fire fighting assistance was provided by boats from
the USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) and other craft which conge- 
gated in the vicinity of the burning YRBM-16.

At approximately 0230 a fire party, composed of volunteer 
members of YRBM-16's crew and other individuals, led by Chief 
Boatswain's Mate Michael P. QUIGLEY, USN, boarded over the stern 
of the craft and commenced fighting the fire. The fire fighting 
team battled the blaze throughout the day and finally extinguished 
the flames at approximately 1700.

YRBM-16

Five personnel were killed as a result of the explosion and 
thirteen were injured. Two of the injured personnel later died 

67
while undergoing treatment. Fire damage was extensive to the entire after section of the craft and the engineering and shop spaces were completely gutted. YRBM-16 was subsequently towed to Ng Tam and beached stern first on the river bank where temporary hull repairs were to be made prior to towing the craft to SBF Sasebo for permanent repairs.

Reports from the Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer at Ben Tre indicated that the attack was made by a Viet Cong sapper team employing swimmers and command-detonated mines.

The Naval Support Activity detachment at Ben Tre was temporarily disestablished following the YRBM-16 casualty.

During November, the number of line items carried by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, totalled 45,319, an increase of nearly 10,000 over October's total. The overall gross and net material support effectiveness for the month were 67 percent and 82 percent, respectively.

Newly acquired warehouse space was undergoing renovation at month's end, and occupancy during January was anticipated. Acquisition of additional leased warehousing was discontinued in view of indications of planned construction of permanent warehouse space at Newport.

At month's end, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, was viewing with concern the low Common Item Listing effectiveness of the U. S. Army's 5606th Field Depot. Of 86 requisitions submitted under the "fill or
kill" procedure for items on the Common Item Listing in November, none were filled. Positive cancellation status was received on 17 of the requisitions. Of these 17, additional status cards have been received indicating that nine of these cancelled requisitions have been referred to Okinawa. In addition to the above requisitions, 255 routine requisitions have been forwarded to the 506th Field Depot for items appearing on the in-country Army Stock List. The net effectiveness of the Depot on these requisitions was two percent.

NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, November inventory of Operational logistic aircraft consisted of three C-117s, one US-2B, one C-45 and one UH-34. Two additional UH-34s and one additional US-2B were expected in-country in December.

A total of 2,901 passengers and 203,211 pounds of cargo were air transported by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, during November. During the same period, NAVSUPPACT surface craft transported a total of 1,591 short-tons of cargo.

NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, had a total on board count of 2,103 personnel as of the end of November.
A Marine CH-53 helicopter hooks up to a Seabee "dozer" for a rapid transport to a remote construction site in northern Quang Tri province.
THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

Six weeks of intensive effort by Seabees from nine different construction battalions was culminated on 1 November when the new Quang Tri air facilities were formally presented to the Commanding General, FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing, by Commander, THIRD Naval Construction Brigade. To complete this project in the short time allowed, after receiving only a few days prior notice, it was necessary to form a composite crew from the most readily available men and equipment from several different battalions. With the Commanding Officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE (NMCB 3) in overall command of the project, the Executive Officer of NMCB 121 led 50 Seabees onto the site to begin construction on 15 September.

While the Marines set up a perimeter defense and a horde of Vietnamese civilians removed the 11,000 graves that occupied the sandy site, the Seabees pulled heavy construction equipment onto the site and began rough grading for the 3,500-foot airstrip with its two 300-foot overruns, 20,000 square yards of parking apron, and 90,000 square yards of helicopter pad. As the working space developed, the Seabee force increased to 200 men and included 30th Naval Construction Regiment elements from NMCBs 1, 4, 7, 74, and 133; and 32nd Naval Construction Regiment elements from NMCVs 3, 11, and 121. Convoys bearing supplies and construction materials,