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Enemy activity during the month of March remained at the same low level that characterized the latter part of February. The enemy was again trying to make his presence felt without resorting to large offensive operations. His principal tactics were mining and sapper activities, especially in the I and II Corps, and abduction and assassination efforts used as part of his anti-pacification program to demoralize the populace.

In I Corps, Allied operations have pinpointed VC infiltration routes into populated areas and have thus hampered VC rice and medical collection activities. Toward the middle of the month, there was a movement into I Corps of one battalion of the 4th NVA Regiment from the northern DMZ. There was also another unidentified NVA battalion in the area. This activity may be the build up for a possible coordinated Spring-Summer offensive. This is in line with an increase in activity in the Sea Tiger AC in the enemy's attempt to maintain pressure. There was also a concentration of NVA units in the DMZ north of the Cua Viet River.

II Corps also saw the enemy avoiding large unit contacts and continued reliance on terrorist and harassment activities. During the second week of the month, however, the enemy changed his offensive position by staging three ARVN against the Cam Ranh Bay NAF/AB. Again, the nature of these attacks reflects his capability of harassment without committing his units.

Saigon and the III Corps area also saw gradually increasing terrorist activity. This activity reached a high point from 14-20 March when ten acts were recorded. Although the enemy seemed to be in a standoff...
period, there was concentrated activity in the Rung Sat Special Zone, and recent events in Cambodia kept enemy forces along the border busy.

Enemy activity in the Delta and barrier areas of IV Corps was also light with no significant contacts reported although there were several attempts to infiltrate troops and supplies from Cambodia. The prime attempt was to move the 88th NVA Regiment across the border in the Barrier Reef AO, but there was no major movement of this unit reported during the month.
During the month of March, combined SEA forces operating in the Giant Cliffs, Border Interdiction, Search Turn, Breezy Cove, and Ready Deck campaigns accounted for a total of 115 enemy killed (by body count) and 77 captured.

Friendly casualties for this period were six killed and 67 wounded. A breakdown of complete UN and 72 SEA statistics for March and statistical totals computed since the start of operations are located at the end of this section following the discussion of the various campaigns.
Giant Slingshot

During March, there was an average of 83 U. S. Navy and Vietnamese Navy boats available for daily operations in the Giant Slingshot Area of Operations (AO). The boats were used in performing escort duty, making troop lifts, setting waterborne guardposts (WBGP), operating as blocking forces in support of land based units, and in a variety of support missions on the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong Rivers. During the month, an average of 34 WBGP's were set daily.

The level of general activity throughout the Giant Slingshot AO seemed to be lower for the month of March than the activity noted in January and February. The number of enemy killed in January was 182, while 55 of the enemy were killed during February. Friendly casualties for the month of March were four killed and 25 wounded.

In late February in an effort to make a larger interdiction force available for night operations in the Giant Slingshot AO, CTG 194.9 readily welcomed the proposal and indicated that river pilots could be made available in order to provide personnel riding on board the transiting crafts who were familiar with the AO and river navigation and who could also act as liaison personnel for requesting reaction force assets. It was also pointed out that in many cases
in the past the fire power of the units being escorted was superior to that of the escort units.

On 10 March 1970, COMNAVNAV granted permission for CIC 19h.9 to discontinue providing escorts for daytime transits of logistics craft except for designated special interest cargoes, such as ammunition, and armed craft. The general concept of the logistic craft transit operation was to be the convoy method. Liaison personnel would be provided by the Navy on request. These liaison personnel would board the convoy in the vicinity of the repair ship located in the Vam Co River and would act as the communicator between the transiting craft and various patrolling units or with the Navy operations Centers along the route. In the event of an attack, reaction forces of artillery, air, boats, and/or troops would be coordinated through the liaison personnel embarked for the transit.

On 11 March, CIC 19h.9 provided additional guidance for the personnel assigned to act as pilots and established a check point system for hourly progress reporting of the convoy. CIC 19h.9 also specified that the pilots would be assigned counterparts as soon as possible for training purposes in view of the early May schedule for turnover of Giant Slingshot operations to the Vietnamese Navy.

As of 18 March, CIC 19h.9 reported that since the implementation of providing liaison personnel for convoys transiting the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong rivers that all convoy units had arrived at their
respective destinations without incident. The effort to increase the number of interdiction forces available for night operations has also been realized. The number of LEP's established each night has shown an increase of at least five LEP's per night and, depending, on the tactical situation, as many as ten LEP's per night over the first half of the month when escort duties were performed for all craft transiting the rivers.

Another piece of hardware in our military inventory which the enemy is beginning to respect is the sensor device. A rallier recently revealed in a debrief with the HIL0 Tran Cu that the NVA consider that sensor devices are one of the most effective weapons being used in the Giant Slingshot AO. The rallier stated that he had been instructed that if a sensor was discovered during an infiltration attempt, the infiltrators were not to tamper with the sensor but were to clearly mark the area and quietly clear the area to a distance of at least 100 meters and move around the sensor always remaining at least 100 meters from the sensor. The rallier also stated that when artillery hits an area and no troops, boats, or aircraft are spotted nearby, the NVA always suspects sensors are located in the area.

Highlights of operational activity within the Giant Slingshot AO during the month of March are included in the following narrative descriptions.
On 9 March, PBR's 865 and 869 were transitting north on the Vam Co Dong River when they were hailed by two local youths and were shown the location of a VC weapons cache at XT 457 048, approximately seven kilometers north of Tra Cu. The cache contained 12 82mm mortar rounds, three 61mm mortars, and one claymore mine. There was no contact with enemy forces.

On 10 March, a helicopter carrying a SEAL team went down at XS 520 790, approximately ten kilometers from Ben Luc. Within five minutes, another helicopter, piloted by LCDR Cleveland, landed and picked up six passengers and crewmen of the downed helo. A second rescue helicopter followed on and picked up the remaining two crewmembers. All personnel were returned to Ben Luc without injury. A SEAL team was returned to the scene and inserted by helicopter to guard the downed aircraft. The downed helicopter was lifted out and returned to Ben Luc within three hours after losing power and going down.

Late in the evening of 9 March, PBR 708, under Boat Captain EN2 Myers, and PBR 774, under Boat Captain EN2 Girouard, were in WBG at XS 335 640, approximately five kilometers from Tuyen Nhon. The units, under Patrol Officer BMC Smock, sighted seven VC crawling toward PBR 708. The VC were in the process of disconnecting a claymore mine which had been placed and was being controlled from the PBR. The boats took the VC under fire and received AK-47 return fire. Artillery and air assistance was requested, but, due to other units being in contact, no assistance was immediately available.
The PBR's then commenced to mortar the area and suppressed the enemy fire. Shortly after midnight, PBR's inserted troops from FSB Gettysburg. The troop sweep located multiple trails and a staging area of a large size enemy force.

On 12 March, a PBR of RIVDIV 511, while in WBGP at KS 945 98L, ten kilometers from Moc Hoa, received a grenade on the boat. The forward gunner threw the grenade overboard. The two PBR's in the WBGP then broke WBGP and received automatic weapons fire. Air assistance was requested, but on arrival, the Seawolves were unable to conduct an air strike due to low visibility and fog. The boats reset the WBGP in the same location with no further incident.

In the morning of 15 March, PBR 666 under Boat Captain EN1 Parker, PBR 663 under Boat Captain EN1 Girard, and 7-5 under Boat Captain CAG1 Bishop were transitting at XT 456 046 when they were hailed by children from Hiep Hoa. The children said that they knew the location of a cache and would point it out. The boats returned to Tra Cu to embark their Commanding Officer, LCDR Brennan, and to get U. S. Army ground support elements. The boats then proceeded to KS 472 996, approximately two kilometers from Tra Cu, utilizing a U. S. Army unit for protection and Seawolves for cover. The cache was found in a 55 gallon oil drum. In the oil drum were seven 105mm projectiles that were rigged with a booby trap device, 21 Chicom grenades in a wooden box. The cache was in poor, but usable condition.

This was the fourth cache turned in by these children. Since their lives may be in danger because they have cooperated with the U. S. /VN Navy, they were brought to the District Chief so steps could be taken to protect them.
On 17 March, PBR's 7h2 and 777 of RIVDIV 551, with Boat Captains TM1 Hinds and TM1 Fallon embarked, were in WBGP at XS 337 843, approximately six kilometers northeast of Tuyen Nhon on the Industrial Canal, sighted approximately 20 VC in single file approaching their position. When the VC were within about 100 meters, PBR 772 opened fire. Air and artillery assistance was immediately requested. The units began receiving AK-47 return fire. At 2205H, the units observed a large secondary explosion. Black Ponies arrived and placed strikes in the contact area from 2209H to 2218H. FSB Gettyburg fired artillery into the area from 2223H to 2315H. At 2325H, troops from FSB Gettyburg were inserted for a sweep, and another sweep was conducted by RIVDIV 551 personnel at first light. The sweeps produced the following items captured in action: one anti-tank grenade, 28 assorted hand grenades, eight B-40 rocket warheads with boosters, two boxes of fuses, seven packages of C-4 totaling 20 pounds, two rolls of time fuses, three AK-47 clips, 315 individual rounds of AK-47 ammunition, seven gas masks, assorted medicines, 52 battle dressings, three pounds of documents, 100 pounds of rice and other food stuffs, 15 pounds of clothing, 55 rounds of 9mm ammunition, 30 non-electrical blasting caps, 40 green plastic bags used for floating supplies across waterways, and two zero-time booby trap grenades.

TM1 Robert D. Hinds suffered a minor shrapnel wound to the right arm in this encounter. Seven VC were known to have been wounded.

On 18 March, Vietnamese units HQ 5144 and HQ 5147, with embarked advisors EN3 Prokup and BM1 Herrea, were in WBGP at XT 247 353, approximately
12 kilometers from Go Dan IV. At 0300, the units had observed debris floating close by the boats. A concussion grenade was dropped with negative results. At 0332, HQ 5144 was struck by a floating mine on the port side amidships. The explosion caused a temporary loss of communications and progressive flooding. HQ 5144 proceeded to assist in the evacuation of the stricken boat and provided fire support. HQ 5144 was flooded up to the main deck at the time of the evacuation.

R-3 Troop suffered a laceration on the back of the head. Five Vietnamese sailors were also injured - none seriously.

Early in the morning of 20 March, one of the mortar pits of Advanced Tactical Support Base (ATSB) Ben Keo reported sighting swimmers in the water. The base went to General Quarters. All the boats available commenced a concussion grenade barrage around the area. The barrage apparently killed one swimmer. A second swimmer was seen under a hootch and was fired upon but escaped. Personnel of the base then conducted a thorough search of the area with grappling equipment. One mine attached to an inflated rubber life ring was retrieved.

Later in the day, a USN EOD Team destroyed the mine which was composed of approximately 50 pounds of Chicon C-4. During the process of destroying the mine, U.S. Army Tug Boat ST-1992 reported discovering a second mine down stream approximately 200 meters and across the river. The discovery was made when a crewman spotted a piece of nylon line floating on the surface. The crewman had
picked up the line and attempted to pull the line on board. The line parted while the crewman was trying to retrieve the line but not before the crewman saw that there was a mine attached to the line. The second mine did not detonate and is on the bottom of the river but is considered to be harmless after the concussion grenades failed to make the mine explode. At 210700H, the body of the second swimmer floated to the surface near the scene of the previous night's incident.

In the afternoon of 10 March, three boys from Hieu Hoa once again hailed VM units and reported that they knew the location of a cache. The troops took the boys to the cache site, recovered the cache, and returned to Tra Cu. The cache consisted of six new baseball CS grenades, six booby trapped 105mm artillery rounds, and six electrical detonators. This was the sixth cache turned in by the same group of boys.

From 10 March through 12 March, SM1 Beam, who bills himself as "Tenkokai," Master Hypnotist and Magician, conducted a four-day tour of the first Flingshot bases. He entertained the personnel with music and hypnotic shows. "Tenkokai's" performances were very well received and most appreciated.

On 13 March, the youths from Hieu Hoa once again hailed passing patrol units. The boys turned over two AK-47 magazines, three 60mm mortar rounds, two 82mm mortar rounds, and eight mackerel can booby
traps. In the following day, the same boys hailed passing boats and informed them that six VC had crossed the river and were proceeding to the west.

On 31 March, trucks were transitting when hailed by the three youths from Khep Hoa. The boys claimed that their lives had been threatened by the VC. The boys had been told they would be killed by the VC within three days. The youths were taken into protective custody and then delivered to the protection of the District Chief. The District Chief assured CTC 194.9 that sufficient Regional Forces and Police were available to insure the protection of the youths.

The youths have thus far led friendly forces to seven caches and have provided friendly forces with information on at least one river crossing by VC forces.
Operation Ready Deck

Operation Tran Hung Dao V/Ready Deck, while strictly under VVN operational control has continued to carry the SEA LORDS designtator TG 194.6. In order to clarify the situation, the present SEA LORDS link with CTG 194.6 was stated to be primarily administrative in nature. The chain of operational control is from CNO, VNN, to Commander III Riverine Area to Commander Tran Hung Dao V/Ready Deck. At the end of the month, the departure of all of the RPG 51 assets from the area signalled the planned arrival and break in operations for all of RPG 52 and the departure of River Division 593 scheduled to be completed by the first part of April.

As of 31 March, the following units were committed to Operation Tran Hung Dao V/Ready Deck.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Type of Unit</th>
<th>Number of Units Assigned</th>
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<tr>
<td>TG 194.6 (Whaler)</td>
<td>Whaler</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU 194.6.1 (RIVDIV 593)</td>
<td>FBR</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPG 52</td>
<td>FBR</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAG 24</td>
<td>RAC</td>
<td>18</td>
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Operating on the Saigon and Thi Tinh Rivers within an area approximately 43 miles in length that extends from four miles south of Phu Cuong (XT 810 780) upstream to Tri Tam (XT 480 460), the Tran Hung Dao V forces conducted WBGP's, river patrols, search and destroy operations, troop support, PSYOPS missions and ACTOV training in conjunction with the ground units, the 1st Infantry Division, USA, the 5th ARVN Division, and local RF's/PF's, that have adjacent AC's.
The night "VBG" which has successfully interdicted numerous enemy movements across the rivers and streams in the past months detected almost a negligible number in March. The few incidents that did occur appeared to reflect the enemy's increased efforts to rid themselves of the tenacious allied river craft by employing ambush techniques on transiting units or by initiating a fire fight with the toss of a grenade at the boats positioned in a VBGP.

The extremely low level of enemy activity that was experienced in the AC throughout the month was concomitant with intelligence reports that indicated that March was to be a period of reorganization and training as part of the enemy's forthcoming spring campaign which was considered to have begun on the evening of 31 March - 1 April when there was a marked increase in the number of enemy engagements throughout the 3rd CTZ. What action that did occur during the month was primarily concentrated in the frequently active area six miles northwest of Phu Cuong (vicinity XT 720 220).

The following narrative includes examples of the more significant incidents that occurred in the Tran Hung Dao V/Ready Deck AO.

While transiting south on the Saigon River 20 miles northwest of Phu Cuong (XT 526 362) on the afternoon of 12 March, RIVDIV 593 PBR's 761, 756, and 842, under the command of LTJG Hunter, were ambushed by four B-40 rockets and heavy automatic weapons fire from approximately 10 to 15 enemy soldiers positioned along the west bank of the river. The PBR's returned the fire, cleared the area, and
called for artillery and helo assistance from the 25th Infantry Division, USA. The Army C and C helos arrived on the scene and evacuated the wounded, LTJG Hunter, BT3 Thompson, and BMC Rhea and the fatally wounded GMGSM Jacaruso to Cu Chi. Artillery was placed in the area, and an Army LHPT expended all its ordinance before departing the area. Following the air strikes and artillery firing, the FBR's began their long transit to Phu Cuong.

Later in the month, on 28 March, FBR's 842 and 756 of RIVDIV 593, with LT Mc Cumber in charge were guided by a Hoi Chanh on a search and destroy mission along a small stream six miles northwest of Phu Cuong (XT 722 222). Four large bunkers and one firing position were destroyed, and small amounts of food, personal clothing, and equipment were captured. Two of the bunkers displayed extremely fresh food that indicated they had been used within the previous hour.

That evening, LTJG Dougherty with FBR's 756 and 842 was positioned in a WBGP on the Saigon River in close proximity to the destroyed bunkers (XT 718 217). Remaining poised for action, the U.S. sailors took three VC under fire as they approached within five feet of the boats. As the units broke the WBGP, a grenade was thrown at one of the FBR's, but it failed to detonate. Two of the VC had been killed almost instantly at the point blank range, and the third was probably killed. The FBR's reconned the area by fire before a USA FAT placed a strike with unknown results.
In another enemy grenade tossing incident, DNS Luong, VNN, the USN advisor, R.J. Voceri, and two VNN PBR's were silently watching the Saigon River and countryside from their USGP 15 miles northwest of Thu Cuong (XT 610 335). A lone hand grenade bounced off one of the VNN PBR's and detonated. The two boats broke their positions and took the suspected enemy locations under fire. Return enemy fire was received, and the area was completely saturated during four firing runs that effectively silenced the enemy. Final assessment of the enemy casualties was unknown.

During the early morning hours of 31 March, CPC Hoai, VNN, the USN advisor QMCS Land, and two VNN PBR's were enroute to Phu Cuong when they were ambushed by one B-40 and heavy automatic weapons fire only four miles from their destination (XT 747 185). The PBR's returned the fire and called in a USA LHFT which expended all its ordnance with unknown results. The area was covered by USA Hand I artillery fire when the LHFT departed the area. One VNN was seriously wounded in the brief confrontation.
Border Interdiction

For the past few months, the Border Interdiction Campaign has included the operational activity of both the Tran Hung Dao I AC and the Barrier Reef AC under the Operational Task Designator TG 194.4. On 15 March, Tran Hung Dao I became a combined operation with LCDR Giouv, VM, assuming the operational title Commander, Tran Hung Dao I and LCDR J. B. Bishop, USN, assuming the operational title Deputy Commander, Tran Hung Dao I. Commander, Tran Hung Dao I assumed the task designators CTC 212.4(VNM)/CTG 194.4(USN), and the Deputy Commander, Tran Hung Dao I assumed the task designators CTU 212.4.0/CTU 194.6.0. LCDR P. T. Souval, USN, assumed the duties as Senior Advisor to CTG 212.4 along with his other duties as Commander, Border Interdiction Group with the task designator CTG 194.4. Task Group 194.4 will continue operations in the Barrier Reef AC.

During the month, the combined forces continued to maintain the pressure on the enemy in his many attempts to infiltrate troops and supplies into the Republic of Vietnam by way of Cambodia. The water level of the Vinh Te Canal continued to drop and forced suspension of routine PBR operations to the west of H/S grid line VS 270 by 19 March.

During the month, the enemy suffered 33 confirmed killed in attempting to infiltrate the area. The U. S. Navy suffered only two wounded in action during the month in this area of operations.
During the month, CTG 19h.4/19h.8 had a daily average of 95 boats available and set an average of 43 UBGP's daily in the Tran Hung Dao I area of operations. In the Barrier Reef AO, CTG 19h.4 had a daily average of 77 boats available for operations and set a daily average of 58 UBGP's.

On 3 March, PCF 37 of COSDIV 11, with LTJG Scattergood on board, suffered an underwater explosion under the stern of the boat near the canal locks located at VS 636 636 on the Vinh Te Canal. PCF 37 immediately commenced H and I fire on both banks. There was no return fire. PCF 37 then cleared the area to the west, and two more explosions were felt by the crew. PCF 37 suffered only slight damage to the starboard propellor and shaft. Apparently, the enemy had planted booby trapped grenades in the shallow water near the lock.

On 7 March, My Phouc Tay Special Forces Company requested PBR support for CIDG units in heavy contact 12 kilometers south of Ap Bac at XS 170 609. PBR's 773 and 778 of RIVDIV 551 under Patrol Officer LT Smalley scrambled and provided a blocking force along the Tong Doc Loc Canal until 1715H when the boats were released and returned to My Phouc Tay. One hour later, a CIDG unit reported heavy contact, and the PBR's were again scrambled to provide support. On arrival on station, the boats came under B-40 rocket and heavy automatic weapons fire from both banks at XS 168 609. The PBR's immediately returned fire and placed 60mm mortar fire into the area. Black Ponies were requested but on arrival overhead were unable to conduct
strikes due to ground troops moving into the area. IT Smelley received a slight shrapnel wound during this encounter.

On 7 March, during a dufflebag implant mission, two VC from the 90th were captured. They revealed that dufflebag directed artillery has been responsible for several kills in the Barrier Reef AO. They stated that the VC cannot understand how the artillery happens to be fired at them for no apparent reason in the middle of the night.

The using of dufflebag sensors and artillery is believed to be a very important contributing factor in the reported low morale of VC in this area.

Another report by Dufflebag operating personnel states that the combined use of sensors and the Army radar has proven again to be extremely effective. Almost every activation in the Vinh Gia AO has been confirmed by the radar at that location.

Enemy activity has definitely been on the upswing. In the Vinh Gia AO, the VC/NVA mission is to cross the canal while in the Ha Tien AC; more emphasis has been placed on attacking the boats, not only at night but in the late afternoon.

On 17 March, the stern sentry on USS IREDELL COUNTY (1ST 839), anchored at WS 40 85 in Kien Phong Province, sighted an object floating in the water near the ship. The sentry fired a short burst at the object. The object exploded with a bright flash. There was no damage to the ship nor injury to personnel.
In the early part of March, 70 Strike Assault Boats (STAB's) joined TG 19.1 and TG 19.4.2. The STAB's concept is a relatively new one and has evolved, in a ten month period, from the drawing board to production to in-country delivery. The STAB's unit had some minor growing pains getting organized and trained for operation on the Delta waterways. By 8 March, CTG 19.4.4 laconically reported that the "STAB's are out of gas." His comment was quite true but was primarily the result of intensive usage of the boats for training and secondarily that the support functions had not yet become totally operative and had not yet developed usage data in order to properly support the boats.

On 16 March, Stabron 20 units, STAB's 709 and 716, in coordination with 7-27 and A-15, assisted MILO Cao Lanh in recovering an arms cache in reaction to an agent's report. The boats recovered the cache from underwater in the middle of Phuoc Xuyen village, Kien Thong Province at VS 860 777. The cache consisted of one B-40 rocket and launcher, one Chicom light machine gun, type 56, and one Chicom light machine gun, type 58. The agent reported that an unknown size NVA element had cached the weapons after crossing the canal at that location in the night of 10 March.

On 16 March, at the request of the Dong Tien District Chief, Seawolves 93 and 95 placed an airstrike at VS 861 870 approximately six kilometers northeast of An Long. The Seawolves had four secondary explosions and had one B-40 fired at them. CTE 19.4.5.1 coordinated with the Dong Tien District Chief and requested that a
Black Pony strike be made in the same area. Black Ponies 103 and 111 were diverted to the area. Following the Seawolf strike, Dong Tien District 993 RF Company moved from their right position to the area of the Seawolf contact. At 2030H, the troops observed 50 VC approximately 400 meters north of their position. At 2040H, Black Ponies 103 and 111 were briefed on the contact area and informed that there were no U. S. forces on the ground to direct the airstrike. The Black Ponies, flown by LCDR Hardie and LT. CODaily, agreed to attempt to work with the RF Company through Aspirant Tin who spoke fair English.

At 2050H, communications were established between the Black Ponies and the ground troops. At 2045H, Black Ponies rolled in on the strike zone. This may have been the first time that RF troops directed Black Ponies in a close fire support mission without any U. S. advisor assistance. The troops marked the target area with tracers as the Black Ponies put in the strike. At 2055H, the troops reported that the VC were shooting at the aircraft. At 2110H, the Black Ponies completed the strike.

The troops, who had been receiving light machine gun and automatic weapons fire throughout the engagement suppressed the enemy fire at 2111H. The troops then requested illumination for a sweep of the area. At 2115H, the Black Ponies departed for home base due to a low fuel state.
During the early morning hours of 29 March, VC/NVA units launched well coordinated simultaneous attacks against friendly positions at Chi lang, Ba Xoai, Kien Luong cement plant, Tri Ton, and outposts within the Seven Mountains. CTG 194.8 immediately responded with Seawolves from HAL 3 Dets 3 and 5 and Black Ponies from VAL-4.

As night turned into day, U. S. Army helo assets were brought to the scene, and continuous strikes were placed throughout the day. All indications are that the enemy was well routed.

As a result of the effective initial enemy strikes, all the land based helo refueling and rearming facilities in the combat area were rendered useless. Both YRBM-20 and YRBM-16 quickly commenced to support the continuous airborne avalanche.

During the periods 290200 - 0430H and 290730-1700H, both YRBM's were called upon to conduct upwards of 150 individual rearming/refueling evolutions on aircraft ranging from armed UH-6 LOH through UH-1B Seawolves to heavily laden AH-1G Cobras.

Easter Sunday was a day of rest for some, but for the officers and men of the YRBM's, it was a tiring day of silent but critical support.
Search Turn

Raid 75, which was committed to Operation Search Turn on 23 February making it a combined USN/VNN operation named Operation Search Turn/Tran Hung Dao VI, conducted interdiction operations on the Rach Gia - Ha Tien Canal utilizing daylight patrols and night WBGPs. In view of the imminent movement of NVA units through the Search Turn AO, C:U 194.3 considered RAID 75 a particularly desireable asset. In addition to operations on the Rach Gia - Ha Tien Canal, RAID 75 also set patrols and WBGPs on the Kien Lyinh Quynh Canal. In addition to their primary mission of interdiction, the RAID assisted local Province troops in coordinating and providing transportation for them across the Kien Lyinh Quynh in a sweep type operation.

Activity in the Search Turn AO rose during the month of March with 26 hostile fire incidents being recorded as compared to February's 17. Search Turn units accounted for enemy losses of 40 kills and 27 probable kills, a rise from the previous month's 16 and 13 respectively. Enemy craft loss totals were down, however, from February's seven destroyed and 12 damaged to one destroyed and one damaged in March. There were, however, four enemy craft captured this month, a rise of three over last month. While
enemy losses rose in March, friendly losses remained at February's level. There were two USN and one friendly killed in February; there were three friendlies killed in March's operations. February also saw three USN and two VNN wounded while March's total rose to six USN and 16 friendlies wounded.

At the end of the month, Search Turn assets included two UH-IB's and 64 water craft which included 37 PBR's, 14 ATC's, four ASPB's, three Boston Whalers, one Monitor, one Zippo, one LSSC, one BWH, and one MSSC.

Toward the end of March, the Gulf of Thailand weather and sea conditions deteriorated to the point where there was an average of less than three hours daily when LST support could be accomplished. Thus on 27 March, the USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) was given order to depart the vicinity of Rach Gia and proceed to the vicinity of Long Xuyen on the Bassac River where it arrived on 30 March ready to resume support for CTG 194.3.

The following incident narrative is typical of March's activity in the Search Turn AO.
During a day patrol (vic WS 005 345) on 6 March, PER's of RIVDIV 573, under Patrol Officer EMC Walker and Boat Captains RD1 Waters and RD1 Thompson, were checking water traffic when they were stopped by a sampan occupied by two men and one woman who said that VC tax collectors upstream had taken their money and raped their woman. Proceeding upstream, the unit encountered a group of 20 people dressed in a mixture of khaki, camouflaged, and black pajamas. The people were armed and indicated that they were RD cadre protecting the populace. The units checked with an outpost two kilometers downstream and determined that a bandit group had been robbing and raping local populace along the "ri" on Canal on both sides of the Kien Giang Province boundary. The units returned and observed men escaping with M-16 rifles. The remainder were taken aboard. The apparent leader of the group was dressed in a very old, ragged RD uniform. He stated that the group's purpose was to protect fishermen and that their home was an undetermined outpost at the base of Seven Mountains. The people were taken to the Sector NILO for interrogation. In all, there were 25 people detained and seven rifles, two grenades, and six bandoliers of ammunition captured.

On the previous day, a patrol in the same area had captured a VC flag and banner which warned that black pajama clad local
forces were an enemy of the VC and would be killed. This banner might have been in reference to this group or could have been a ruse to discredit RD cadre or PSDF. Intelligence received on 6 March was that 200 VC had been in the same general area for the previous three nights.

At 0015H on 18 March, PER's of RIVDIV 553 observed 11 VC/NVA approaching their position on the Tri Ton Canal 20 miles northwest of Rach Gia (WS 010 380) from the east. Both craft opened fire when the enemy was 250 meters out and caught them in a withering .50 caliber cross fire. They received A/W, R/F, and rifle grenades in return. Seawolves were requested on Scramble Two, and at 0019H Black Ponies were also requested. The Seawolves were on station and putting in a strike at 0035H, and the Black Ponies put in their strike at 0046H and left the area at 0110H. Two hours later, one VC/NVA was sighted in the contact area and taken under fire. At 0400H, two PBR's were dispatched to the contact area to assist in the sweep and to provide cover. At 0630, a sweep revealed three bodies and two distinct heavy blood trails. There were no friendly casualties while the enemy suffered three killed, three captured, and two probably killed. The units were also responsible for capturing one AK-47, five AK-47 magazines, one kilo of documents, ten kilos of rice, and two Chicom grenades.
The next day, units of RIVDIV 553 were again engaged in action
in approximately the same area while establishing a WEGP on the
Tri Ton Canal 20 miles northwest of Rach Gia (WS 008 380) when
PBR's 8131 and 8132 uncovered 21, 60 pound sacks of rice which were
camouflaged and cached 20 feet from the Tri Ton Canal bank. The
WGBP was set, but there was no action throughout the night. At
0700H on the 20th, SEAL elements were inserted in the cache area
and cleared the PBR's about 3,000 meters to the south. At 0857H,
the units observed 19 VC in a spread out line coming from the di-
rection of Seven Mountains. They were observed to be in blue or
black uniforms, and six of them were seen to be carrying or pushing
a large object. At 0900H, a Shotgun aircraft was requested for
visual reconnaissance. At 0909H, Sector clearance to fire was ob-
tained. Sixteen minutes later, the enemy turned parallel to the
canal and reached apparent CPA at about 2,500 meters. Fifteen
minutes later, the VC were observed evading into cover upon hear-
ing the aircraft. At 0946H, the PBR's opened fire, and at 1025H,
Seawolves arrived on station and coordinated a strike with the Shot-
gun aircraft. One detainee was picked up north of the original con-
tact area and delivered to Kien Son. The man was determined to
be a PF from the Tri Ton District who had wandered one kilometer
south of the Province border while fishing. At 1410H, a report was
received from the 21st ARVN Division that one company of VC was
in the contact area. At approximately 1430H, the 21st ARVN inserted an Air Cavalry package to sweep the area. There were negative results. Enemy casualties in this action included five VC killed and 1,260 pounds of rice captured.

In the early evening of 19 March, CTU 194.3.3 Seawolves 86 and 81, piloted by LCDR Thomas and LT JG McNaull respectively, were on a Scramble Three for 90 VC observed by Shotgun 38 in Kien Giang Province 12 miles northwest of Rach Gia (VS 970 200). With clearance from CTG 194.3 and the Kien Giang PSA, the aircraft placed rocket and machine gun fire into the area. The result of this action was six VC killed (BC) and nine VC wounded with no friendly casualties suffered.

In reaction to intelligence gained from MI 525 that a VC medical station was located along the Rach Thong Lua Canal, SEAL Team One, Det GOLF, DELTA Platoon, BRAVO Squad, under LT Hetzer, one LDNN, one KCS, and one interpreter were inserted by sampan on 21 March northeast of Rach Gia (WS 145 065). They proceeded approximately 75 meters up the canal when they observed four men carrying weapons 25 meters in front of their position on the north bank. The sampan was pulled into the tree line, and the LDNN jumped from the craft to the tree line. There was immediate movement from the target area which was taken under A/W fire.
LDNN was wounded and was extracted by MS&BC for return to Rach Gia airstrip for dustoff where he was pronounced dead on arrival by a naval doctor.
Riverine Strike Group

During March, all RAC formerly assigned to CTC 194.7 (Riverine Strike Group) remained cut-chopped to other operational commanders with the exception of those craft undergoing overhaul or alteration.

During the month, USS SPHINX (ARL-24) completed installing two 3.5 inch bazookas on each of eight ASPB's. Current plans are to install bazookas on fourteen more boats.

The bazooka installation is expected to increase the effective firepower on each boat. As of this writing, no report has been received describing the effectiveness of the new 3.5 inch bazooka installation in a combat situation.
Breezy Cove

The level of enemy activity in the Breezy Cove AO decreased during the month of March. There is nothing concrete on which to base any reason for this reduction of activity. Events occurring in Cambodia may have been a contributing factor.

Enemy kills dropped to the lowest level in the past four months with only 16 kills being reported during the month of March. All the kills reported were attributed directly to U. S. Navy units. Eight U. S. Navy personnel were wounded during the month's action. The majority of those wounded were not serious in nature and were returned to duty without further complications.

The total number of boats assigned to the Breezy Cove operation during the month averaged 21 on a daily basis. However, there were several casualties to the boats with the total number of boats available for use dropping to a low of only ten boats on 17 March. The number of WDGP's set on a daily basis fluctuated widely due to the wide variety of casualties. On 19 March, only ten boats were available due to all FBR's assisting in Gulf of Thailand patrols, and no WDGP's were set. The daily average of WDGP's was, however, six per day.

Significant actions occurring during the month of March are described in the following paragraphs.
On 3 March, PT's 119 and 138 of RIVDIV 572 under Patrol Officer C.W. Moore were in MAGP on the north bank of the Song Ong Doc at VQ 059 999. At 2024h, the boats detected movement near their position.

A minute later, three VC jumped in front of PBR 138 and took the boat under fire with small arms. The forward gunner of PBR 138 immediately opened fire killing all three of the enemy. The boats broke WBGP and made a firing run and received moderate automatic weapons return fire. The boats broke WBGP and made a firing run and received moderate automatic weapons return fire. The boats made a second firing run and received no return fire. Friendly casualties totaled three USN wounded.

All wounds were slight. Enemy casualties were three VC killed (BC).

In 21 March, Black Ponies, operating in the vicinity of the Breezy Cove AC, placed strikes in a wooded area at W2 179 389 to W2 188 384 where 150 VC had been reported along a canal bank. Enemy casualties reported from this strike were: 25 VC killed (BC), 30 VC wounded, two structures destroyed, one sampan destroyed, and six fires started. (Note: Kills from this operation are not included in the statistical summary).

On 23 March, Seawolf 66, piloted by LCDR Beck, was on routine patrol along the Song Ong Doc when at 1734h, an explosion was heard in the engine compartment. LCDR Beck experienced a power failure and immediately put the helicopter into auto rotation. The Seawolf landed at LR 080 105 without injury to the crew or further damage to the helicopter. The accompanying helicopter, Seawolf 63, piloted by LTJG Wolfe, remained overhead and requested Black Pony assistance.
for security. Two A-1's and one AH-1 and one Monitor were scrambled from
Lt. Col. Eng Doc to assist. An USSC with SEAI's embarked departed the
HSC at 1800L to provide additional ground security. Dustoff 66, on a
routine mission, diverted to the area and extracted the crew of Seawolf
66 at 1800L. All units were standing by providing security and support
when, at 1850L, a Chinook helicopter arrived and lifted the downed airc-
craft out safely at 1900L. All units then resumed their normal patrols.
The entire operation, from the time of the accident to the successful
completion of the rescue mission, was only one hour and 24 minutes.

On 31 March, FTR's 145 and 136 of RIVD IV 572 were in night VBGP
at VC 860 999. At 2040H, the boats sighted a man on the beach and
heard heavy movement in the area. The boats took the area under fire
and broke VBGP receiving small arms fire from an estimated five firing
positions. As the lead boat broke VBGP, a satchel charge exploded close
aboard the port bow of the boat knocking the bow gunner unconscious.
The patrol cleared the area to the west. Seawolves were requested
and placed a strike in the ambush area at 2015L. Friendly casualties
were evacuated by Dustoff helicopter. There were two USN wounded, both
with possible skull fractures. Enemy casualties were one VC killed.
MARKET TIME RAIDER CAMPAIGN

Market Time Raiders continued to conduct SEA LORDS missions along the rivers and canals of the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones during March. There were 69 missions conducted which resulted in 41 hostile fire incidents, 25 friendly initiated, seven enemy initiated, and nine unilateral. Enemy losses for the month were 25 craft and 72 structures destroyed, two craft and 62 structures heavily damaged. There were 21 enemy killed, one wounded, and nine captured during the SEA LORDS missions.

There were no U. S. personnel or material casualties during the month, although there were five friendly wounded and one killed during the operations.

The following craft and personnel participated in SEA LORD missions during March: USN - PCF's, WPB's, River Assault Craft, SEAL Team Detachment Golf, CHARLIE Platoon, OV-10's; VN: PCF's, LSL's, RF/PF's, LDNN's, Coastal Group 36 junks and personnel, and Kit Carson Scouts.

The PT CAUTION (USCG WPB), LTJG Andrews commanding, conducted a SEA LORDS mission on the morning of 4 March about 23 miles east of Ben Tre (XR 828 123). The targets were
VC supply routes and structures, with many well-used trails surrounding the area. The WPB destroyed six bunkers, two structures and one sampan, and damaged six bunkers and one structure. Enemy casualties were unknown.

On the afternoon of 8 March, the USCG WPB's PT MARONE and PT PARTRIDGE entered a canal off the Co Chien River about 20 miles southeast of Tra Vinh (XR 730 719) taking targets of opportunity under fire. During the transit of the canal both units played Psyops tapes to people along the canal banks. The WPB's destroyed four bunkers, two structures, and five sampans and damaged two structures, two sampans, and four bunkers. They also ignited two large fires. There was one VC wounded and no friendly casualties.

The PT CAUTION, PT PARTRIDGE, and PT WELCOME conducted a SEA LORDS mission on the afternoon of 10 March about 15 miles southeast of Tra Vinh (XR 733 874). The WPB's entered a canal and took targets along both banks under destructive fire. Several VC were sighted during the canal transit and taken under fire. There were several secondary fires and explosions which indicated enemy storage areas. An evaluation of the area indicated heavy enemy activity. Upon exiting the canal, bunker complexes were taken under M-79 fire and then OV-10's from VAL-4 placed
strikes in the area. There were no friendly casualties and four VC were killed and one VC wounded. The WPB's destroyed 21 structures and one sampan and heavily damaged 30 structures and several bunkers.

On the night of 10 March, SEAL Team, Detachment GOLF, CHARLIE Platoon attempted to establish a waterborne guard post in the vicinity of a known VC crossing point about 14 miles east of Soc Trang (XR 340 545). The SEAL's, while proceeding north up the Bassac River, encountered a sampan moving toward their skimmer. The sampan was illuminated and hailed; however, two male occupants attempted to swim ashore and were killed and their sampan destroyed. The mission was then aborted due to being compromised.

The USCG WPB's PT PARTRIDGE and PT CAUTION and a Coastal Group 35 skimmer conducted a SEA LORDS mission on the afternoon of 17 March about 22 miles southeast of Tra Vinh (XR 698 640). As the units entered a canal, two VC were sighted and taken under fire. Proceeding on, 15 VC were sighted, who appeared to be setting up an ambush, and were taken under fire. Small arms fire was received and OV-10's were called in, placed strikes in the area, and suppressed the fire. All units then exited the canal without further incident. Two sampans and one bunker

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were destroyed, and three bunkers and one structure were damaged.

There were no friendly casualties, and enemy casualties were nine
VC probably killed.

SEAL Team ONE, Detachments DELTA and GOLF, and LDNN's,
operating on SEAL intelligence, were inserted at 2330H, 17 March,
by LSSC about 20 miles southwest of Tra Vinh (XR 276 668) to con­
duct a night reconnaissance patrol. The SEAL's patrolled to the
targeted hootch and established a perimeter. The structure was
entered and small arms fire was received, wounding one LDNN
who died en route to the Third Surgical Hospital, Binh Thuy. Small
arms fire was received and suppressed from the south bank of the
stream and light automatic weapon cross fire was received from
three positions. The SEAL's withdrew by sampan southwest down
the canal and were extracted by LSSC. There were seven VC
killed and one VC detained. Three of the VC killed were ident­
ified as a deputy secretary at Long Phu, a security section chief
at Tan Thanh village, and an area chief at Koko hamlet. One
LDNN was slightly wounded and returned to duty.

In a SEA LORDS mission on the afternoon of 19 March, the
PT CYPRESS and PCF 21 inserted 140 Regional Force/Popular
Force (RF/PF) troops at two locations about 30 miles southwest
of Tra Vinh (XR 291 416). The troops then swept toward each
other while the naval units established a blocking force and stood by for support. The troops made contact with the enemy and called for 81mm support. Helicopter gunships were called in and placed strikes in the area. The area swept by the troops contained numerous bunkers, mines, and several rice caches. The troops were extracted at 1800 without further incident. There were two VC killed and two Popular Force men killed. There were four sampans, ten bunkers, and two mines destroyed and an undetermined number of bunkers damaged during the operation.

SEAL Team ONE, Detachment GOLF was inserted by LSSC about 20 miles southwest of Tra Vinh (XR 271 646) on the morning of 20 March. They commenced patrolling north toward their objective, a VC facility, when eight armed VC were sighted and were taken under fire. Immediately automatic weapons fire was received from four locations. VAL-4, OV-10's were called in and placed several strikes in the area. The SEAL's destroyed one bunker and one structure and killed four VC. There were probably more enemy killed by the air strikes. There were no friendly casualties.

In a SEA LORDS mission on 24 March, the PT WELCOME (USCG WPB), LTJG Wyche commanding, fired a gunfire support
mission on numerous new structures about seven miles northwest of Tra Vinh (XS 405 069). Seven VC were spotted attempting to evade into the treeline and were taken under fire. The WPB destroyed five structures and damaged two structures. There were no friendly casualties and four VC were probably killed.

PCF's 21 and 103 picked up 36 Kit Carson Scouts (KCS) at 1800H on 25 March and inserted them along a canal about 12 miles east of Tra Vinh (XR 770 890). The KCS proceeded to sweep the area where a VC company was suspected to be located. The Swift boats conducted H and I fire during the mission with unknown results. The KCS made contact with the enemy and OV-10's were called in and placed strikes in the area and drew light fire on three occasions. Extraction was made without further incident. There were no friendly casualties, and two VC were killed and three VC were captured. GDA by the Swift boats and OV-10's was unknown.

The PT BANKS (USCG WPB), LT Lashley commanding, and PCF 48 inserted 80 Regional Force troops about 20 kilometers east of Tra Vinh (XS 696 047) on 31 March, after prep fire of the beach. The area was the scene of recent enemy activity and contained many booby traps, bunkers, and VC sympathizers. The troops made contact with the enemy during their sweep. The