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COMMANDER
U. S. NAVAL FORCES
VIETNAM
MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY
May 1970

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FOREWORD

Enemy activity within the Republic of Vietnam was characterized during the month of May by a relatively moderate to low level in all Corps Tactical Areas. There were periods of increased enemy activity, but these occurred during the early portion of the month and may have been carry-overs from previous enemy planning.

Operations in Cambodia were of primary interest during the month. Allied Forces commenced operations in the border area of Cambodia adjacent to the III Corps Tactical Area in early May. The NVA/VC, at this same time, were pushing the Cambodian forces back all along the border. During the first week of May, the NVA/VC forces captured the strategic town of Neak Luong, where Route #1 crosses the Mekong River, and continued to mount pressure on border and coastal towns in an apparent attempt to isolate Cambodia. During this first week of May, Communist China broke relations with the government of Cambodia and recognized the exiled government under Sihanouk.

On 9 May, U.S. and Vietnamese Navy forces crossed the border into Cambodia. By mid-month, units of the VNMC had secured the area of the Neak Luong ferry crossing, and the VNN had successfully completed the first of several refugee lifts from Phnom Penh. The Mekong River from the RVN border to Neak Luong was secured by VNN and USN units. VNN units patrolled the Mekong to Phnom Penh in order to keep this vital commerce link open.
By the end of May, the enemy's apparent plan was still to attempt to isolate Cambodia, topple the government, and secure a base area in Cambodia to replace that which had been overrun by the Allies across-the-border operations. Intelligence analysis of the enemy's activities indicates that he is concentrating on interdicting Cambodian lines of communication by destroying bridges, rail lines, ferries, roads, in an attempt to isolate Cambodia. This interdiction effort, the securing of the Mekong LOC/base area, and the movement of major enemy units into Cambodia indicates that the enemy plans a long range and dedicated offensive effort in Central Indochina.
CHANGE OF COMMAND

On May 15th, ADMIRAL Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. was relieved as Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam by VADM Jerome H. King, Jr. The change of command ceremony was held aboard USS PAGE COUNTY (LST-1076) moored in the Saigon River near the Vietnamese Navy Headquarters in Saigon.


At the close of the ceremony, Admiral Zumwalt delivered the following address:

"Ambassador Berger, General Abrams, Commodore Chon, Admiral King, distinguished guests, officers and men of the Free World. I want first to thank the officers and men of this wonderful ship who came in here a few days ago, with the appearance of battle and salt sea spray -- and who have turned this ship into a magnificent platform for this formality. And second to thank you distinguished guests for taking your time to participate."
"During these past 20 months I have had five sources of inspiration. My family, understanding the demands of my job, pride in a son who was willing to volunteer to come over here and join in our effort. Second, the teamsmanship of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps officers and men. Third, the tremendous association with the Vietnamese Navy, embodied personally in Commodore Chon and his wonderful family who have taken my family and me into their hearts and have helped us to understand and come to love the Vietnamese people. Next, to General Abrams — tough, demanding, compassionate, and understanding. A great military captain in war. And last, to the Brown Water Navy itself, for their sacrifices and heroism. Symbolic of this, just 11 hours ago, the President of the United States awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor to LCDR Thomas G. Kelly, who lost an eye and stood out for an ensuing five hour period in battle in his boat.

"As I look back over these 20 months, I see a map of South Vietnam with the Navy operating along the edges. In the Cua Viet River just south of the DMZ, in the Naval Support Activity Danang — providing the sustenance to our Marine associates — in Market Time along the coast, in pacification operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone, and in the Nam Can area and in the latter part, completely along the Cambodian border in Operation SEALORDS. And I see that map changing from blue, representing the U. S. Navy, to green, representing the Vietnamese Navy, all along and throughout that area. The Marine Corps, expanding by 50% and the Navy by 120%. 

2
"I welcome Admiral King, in whom I had the good fortune to participate in his selection, and I have to tell him that the job is only about 35 or 40 percent done. There remains in this year 29 bases to be completed to replace U. S. Navy ships, there remains 7,500 repair technicians to be trained in these bases, there remains the job of upgrading the training of these beginners to the point where they relieve our senior petty officers and junior officers and take over their own middle management.

"But, I leave in the most exciting week of all. A week in which the Vietnamese Navy dramatically demonstrated its progress, in which, participating with the U. S. Navy, they opened up the Mekong River for the first 30 miles and participating without the U. S. Navy made a dramatic movement to Phnom Penh and then overnight to Kompong Cham with a three inch gunship and armored boats. This was a tremendous feat of professionalism and navigation and during which they removed some nine thousand refugees and escorted merchant ships back down the river who had previously been denied passage.

"As I go to my next job I am following a man who was singularly well qualified and I go in with many handicaps. You in the Navy know that I have never had a numbered fleet command or never commanded an ocean. But, I do think I have some advantages. First, again, I take with me my family. Second, I take with me a tremendous insight into the workings of the Army, the Air Force and the Marine Corps. Third, I think I have a keen insight into the need for my Navy to continue to provide priority to this Vietnamization process. Next, I, as one
member of the Joint Chiefs, will always understand the tremendous study, the tremendous efforts and analysis that goes in to any recommendation General Abrams sends forward. And finally, despite my handicaps, in these last 20 months, I have become re-qualified in youth. I have learned from these wonderful young officers and men - their aspirations, the pressures under which they operate, the inducements to be discontented, the courage with which they participate nevertheless to the fullest in the support of their country -- and I pledge myself to represent them in my leadership of the U. S. Navy.
OPERATION TRAN HUNG DAO XI

At 0730H on 9 May, a joint American and Vietnamese task force swept up the Mekong River into Cambodia. The mission of this task force was to establish and ensure the security of the Mekong River from the Cambodian border to the capital of Phnom Penh and to assist in the evacuation of refugees as required. The task force’s immediate objective was the Neak Luong Ferry, a strategic point where Highway One crosses the Mekong. This town was held by the VC and thus interdicted important lines of communications between Phnom Penh and the Parrot’s Beak area of Cambodia where U. S. and South Vietnamese forces were conducting operations.

RADM H. S. Matthews, First SEALORDS and Deputy COMNAVFORV, was given command of the American portion of the operation. The task organization was set up as follows:

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<td>Fast Raider/Fire Support/River Security Unit</td>
<td>COMCOSRON ONE</td>
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Opposition to the task force was very light. The Neak Luong Ferry, defended by only one VC company, was captured after a short fight. The larger forces which had been there had withdrawn before the assault. Some 2,000 refugees were found waiting at the ferry landing and were evacuated south of the border.

On 11 May, the refugee lift unit, with the approval of the Cambodian government, proceeded up the Mekong from the vicinity of the BENEWAH to Phnom Penh. This unit was composed of VNN LSTs 500 and 503, LSMs L02 and L05, LSM(H) L00, 15 VNN PCFs (which were transferred from TE 194.0.2.3), and ten LCM-8s. All USN advisors on these vessels were debarked before the unit went north of the Neak Luong Ferry on the way to the Cambodian capital. Thus, the lift of refugees from Phnom
Penh and Kampong Cham was an entirely Vietnamese operation. It might be noted that no Americans were allowed to go north of the ferry landing during the entire operation.

The number of refugees far exceeded expectations. By 18 May, 19,750 refugees had been evacuated and thousands more were awaiting evacuation in Phnom Penh. On 22 May, a convoy consisting of LSM(H) 100, LSSL 226, PC 06, ten VNN PCFs and nine VNN PBRs sailed back up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh. Due to the unexpectedly large number of refugees, the GVN decided to delay further evacuation until more complete planning for refugee settlement could be made. Thus, at month's end, the convoy was still waiting at Phnom Penh, pending a GVN decision providing security in the meantime for the refugees.

Activity on the portion of the Mekong River in Cambodia where USN assets were operating remained at a low level. However, a number of people were kept busy first finding and then raising the two ferry boats which had operated at Neak Luong. It was known that there had been two ferry boats operating at Neak Luong, and almost immediately after the ferry landing was taken, the search for them was begun. One of the ferries was spotted on the morning of 12 May by CTG 194.0, RADM H. S. Matthews, at WT 235 235 during the course of a visual reconnaissance (VR) of the area of operations (AO). In a message to CORNAVFORV reporting the discovery, RADM Matthews said, "CTG 194.0 contemplating willing his aged eyeballs to some needy young air observer."
Salvage operations, using YLLC-1, HQ-537, CSB-3, and members of HCU-1, team 5, ran into many difficulties. However, by 28 May, both ferry boats (the second one was found near the one seen by RADM Matthews) had been successfully salvaged and, badly in need of repairs, were tied up alongside the ASKARI. YLLC-1 and HQ-537 were released by CTG 194.0 on May 28th for duty elsewhere.

At month's end, the Trân Hưng Đạo XI task organization was as follows:

TC 19h.0 Group Commander
TU 19h.0.1 Amphibious Assault Unit - RAIDs 71, 72, 73, 74, and 75; 10 USN ATCs; 5 VNN PCFs; and LSIL 329
TU 19h.0.2 River Security Unit - 5 USN PCFs
TU 19h.0.3 Air Support Unit One - HAL-3 Det 9
TU 19h.0.4 Air Support Unit Two - VAL-4
TU 19h.0.5 Logistics Support Unit - RAG 21/33
TU 19h.0.6 River Interdiction Unit - 11 PBRs of RIVDIV 593 and three STABs of STABRON 20
TU 19h.0.7 Flag/Staging Unit - BERENAH, ASKARI, SATYR, YREM 16, and YREM 21.
TU 19h.0.8 Refugee Lift Unit - LSM(H) 400, LSMs 403 and 405, LSSLS 225 and 226, PC 06, 10 VNN PCFs, and nine VNN PBRs
OPERATION SEA LORDS SUMMARY

With American penetration into the Cambodian Parrot's Beak area on 30 April 1970, enemy infiltration into the Republic of Vietnam seems to have at least temporarily abated. As North Vietnamese and Viet Cong pulled back to the north and west as the Allies advanced, both in the Parrot's Beak area and along the Mekong River, enemy pressure was relieved in most SEA LORDS AOs. Units in Operations Ready Deck, Barrier Reef, and Search Turn saw very little hostile action during the month and Giant Slingshot assets were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy by 5 May. In the southernmost regions of South Vietnam, however, the Cambodian involvement was apparently of little consequence as units of Operation Breezy Cove reported a number of actions along the Song Ong Doc River and its tributaries. The Viet Cong have for some time enjoyed a relative sanctuary in the U-Minh Forest and have been able to operate from there.

Throughout the month, SEA LORDS flagship, USS BENEWAH (APB-35), remained on the Cambodian border providing support for small craft in Cambodia. The USS SATYR (ARL-23) was located at Tan Chau near the border to repair RAS boats to be turned over to the VNN in early June.
CTU 194.4 has the largest flotilla of all SEALORDS units as he must patrol the entire territory between Gianh Slingshot in the east and Search Turn in the west. During May, Barrier Reef averaged 59 boats assigned, only 33 of which were normally available for use. These boats operated constantly, however, and on any given night, an average of 83 of them might be found at a WDP. Barrier Reef units were involved in a total of six fire fights in May and reported killing one Viet Cong while sustaining two wounded themselves.

The controversial nature of our military operations in Cambodia caused CTU 194.4 and COMNAVFORV some concern over the safety and legitimacy of American civilians wishing to cross the border. The American Embassy in Saigon advised them that U.S. civilians not associated with the news media are free to enter Cambodia if they possess a valid passport and visa. Patrol craft were advised to check all civilians they encountered for these documents and to restrain all personnel, including newsmen, from crossing the border if their presence endangered the security of operations.

There was only limited action in the border interdiction operations during May. While on a Mekong River patrol on 4 May, the crew of PCF 103 spotted a Viet Cong flag and requested and received permission to fire upon it. They fired 30 rounds with the 40 mm grenade launcher and reported the target destroyed.
One Seawolf helicopter was lost in the Barrier Reef AO on 8 May. Reacting to a report of an outpost being overrun near Ap Binh Long (WS 823 472), Seawolf 300, a HAI-3 Detachment HINE ship piloted by LT Campbell, launched from YRBM-21 at 0342H. Immediately after launching the aircraft crashed into the water approximately 100 meters from the ship. All personnel were recovered without injury and EOD divers began searching for the helicopter at first light. The frogmen were unsuccessful, and it remained for a Vietnamese fisherman to point out the location of the aircraft eight days later. Divers recovered most of the helicopter's small arms and the secure voice unit.

Effective 30 May, CTG 194.4 was given responsibility for an additional 30 kilometers of the Vam Co Tay, that portion of Giant Slingshot operations previously patrolled by CTU 214.1.2. The paucity of Vietnamese assets in that area necessitated this switch.
Search Turn

CTU 194.3, conducting Operation Search Turn, experienced a moderate amount of action during May, but considerably less than units of Breezy Cove. A rather large number of craft, 52, was assigned to CTU 194.3, but, on the average, only 30 of these were available for operation throughout the month. These units set an average of 18 WBGP's per night primarily with PBRs. They initiated nine firefights and were involved in five initiated by the enemy. Naval personnel killed nine Viet Cong during May and suffered one killed and two wounded.

On the morning of 1 May, a 15 year-old Viet Cong squad leader gave himself up to a Search Turn outpost in Kien Giang Province under the RVN government's Chieu Hoi Program. He reported that his 20 man unit had been heading north, presumably towards Cambodia, when Navy patrol boats attacked them. The youthful defector reported that ten of his comrades were slain, increasing by six the number of kills originally indicated in an earlier spot report.

Units of RIVDIV 553 experienced the most damming attack in the Search Turn AO during May. PBRs 8126 and 8129 were ambushed by a company size enemy post while enroute to a WBGP during a heavy rainstorm. The communists struck the leading boat, PBR 8126, with a 57 mm recoilless rifle round, a B-50 rocket, and heavy small arms fire. The intensity of the storm prevented Black Ponies or Seawolves from providing immediate air cover. On a return sweep through the ambush area, two B-40 rockets exploded close aboard the forward boat. About 30
minutes after the initial attack, an OV 10 placed a brief air strike in
the area before the weather forced it to return home. PBRs 8131, 8130,
8134, and 8135 set an ambush three kilometers south of the contact area
in an effort to cut off the enemy's escape route. The elusive enemy
escaped with no further action. One American was killed and two wounded
on PBR 8126, and the boat itself sustained engine casualties.

On 6 May, CTU 194.3 ordered Seawolves 88 and 89 to investigate a
sighting of approximately 100 sampans and 300 personnel in black and blue
uniforms two kilometers east of Vinh Hao (WR 185 672). The Navy helos
coordinated with an Army Hunter Killer team in the destruction of 18
of the vessels, which were loaded with clothing, utensils, food, and
weapons. They received automatic weapons fire from the ground but
completed the mission unscathed.

The narrow breadth of many channels and streams makes the Navy's
small craft susceptible to the most rudimentary form of attack. On
the evening of 6 May, a Viet Cong or VC sympathizer, standing by the
edge of a channel, threw three grenades at PBR 6737 which was escorting
a dredge to Long Xuyen. Two landed in the water, and the third struck
boat captain RD1 Waters in the stomach and fell between his legs.
Waters tossed the grenade overboard, and it exploded as it hit the water.
The boat crew saw the man running back into a nearby village but could
not fire because of heavy population in the vicinity.

Members of an Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team worked closely
with SEALs assigned to the Search Turn AO. On 10 May, an EOD group
discovered and disarmed a VC watermine 22 kilometers south of Rach Gia.
Lines led from the mine to two 105 mm howitzer rounds buried in the mud five meters away. The watermine itself was of a type never encountered before and was sent to an EOD unit in Hawaii for further analysis.

SEAL Team members experienced some difficulty with their own support craft and relied heavily on TU 194.3 craft to continue their surreptitious operations to weaken the Viet Cong infrastructure. Before daylight on 13 May, members of GOLF Detachment, DELTA Platoon, acting on intelligence provided by their guide and a local police chief, entered a hamlet near Kien Son and captured two VC and one suspect. The same group, led by LT Short, inserted one week later in a village on the Ba The Canal near Soc Son. Upon entering a suspected VC hootch, the startled man fled through a tunnel into another hootch, only to be apprehended after a brief chase. On 22 May, LT Short's men detained 15 persons along the Kinh Tri Ton. Detainees of this sort are often questioned by the area NICE and then turned over to ARVN interrogators.

As has been proven by recent events in Cambodia, the war of logistics is a vital phase of the struggle against guerrillas. PBRs 8133 and 8127, proceeding to Binh Thuy for maintenance, contributed to this effort on 20 May when they noticed a suspicious pile of freshly cut grass along a canal bank. Investigation revealed a camouflaged food cache about three days old containing 2400 pounds of rice and 150 pounds of salt. Crew members destroyed the food with 46 white phosphorous grenades.
Riverine Strike Group

During May, all RAC formerly assigned to CTG 194.7 (Riverine Strike Group) remained out-chopped to other operational commanders with the exception of those craft undergoing overhaul or alteration.
Breezy Cove

Operation Breezy Cove units experienced the most hostile action of all SEA LORDS components during May. CTG 194.2 unfortunately met pressing operational commitments with rather limited resources as he had at his disposal an average of only 26 boats, by far the smallest flotilla of all SEA LORDS' operating units. Of these, only 13 were normally available for use. Breezy Cove units initiated 19 fire fights during the month and reported killing two Viet Cong. One American was wounded.

A suspected major VC offensive failed to materialize in mid-May. The Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer operating in the Song Ong Doc area reported that an "unevaluated agent" had informed him of a VC/NVA plan to overrun the city of New Song Ong Doc between 8 and 20 May. In addition, the enemy hoped to sink ten U. S. river patrol craft and to shell Ca Mau City. These attacks never occurred and naval combat continued along the same sporadic and unpredictable lines as before.

A major antagonist of warfare in equatorial regions, the monsoons, began to make an impact in early May. Heavy rains and rising seas occasionally hampered the normal operations of the Navy's sturdy, shallow water craft. In one instance, routine Breezy Cove operations were threatened as the USS GARRETT COUNTY (IST-821) could not replenish the unit's refueling barge because of heavy seas. The USS ASKARI (ARL-38) serving Breezy Cove reported that bad weather often prevented it from repairing boats. PBR 762 experienced the adverse weather more acutely.
On 15 May, while it and three other boats of RIVDIV 572 were patrolling eight kilometers east of New Song Ong Doc during a heavy rainstorm, it received two B-50 rockets and heavy small arms fire. The four craft returned heavy fire during four runs through the area. Troops inserted and found several blood trails, three bunkers, and a rocket launcher. Because of the inclement weather, however, the air support normally flown by Seawolves could not be provided. The Viet Cong may be expected to attack under these circumstances throughout the monsoon season.

The misery and fear of civilians living in a war-torn area were poignantly revealed in May by 100 refugee families who fled to Song Ong Doc from coastal hamlets along the edge of the U-Minh Forest. These homeless and destitute people had escaped, not an ideology, but a combination of American air strikes and VC extortion which had made life intolerable in their villages. Most of the families left hastily, leaving behind their possessions, and now had no money, shelter, or source of livelihood. Officials of Song Ong Doc were able to provide very little assistance as the town was already overpopulated with refugees. CTU 194,2 felt that most of these displaced families would return home despite the hazards as the paucity of funds, food, clothing, and shelter precluded their relocation elsewhere.

**Significant Action During May**

Even the small craft of the Brown Water Navy experience navigational difficulties on Vietnam's serpentine and often crowded waterways. On 4 May, an ATC bound along the Song Ganh Hao for the ATSB
at Song Ong Doc ran over and sank a civilian sampan which apparently cut in front of the Navy unit. The sailors involved recovered the people from the sampan.

Seawolf 63, flying in support of Breezy Cove units, did not survive the month's operations. On the evening of 22 May, Seawolf 63 and Seawolf 66 placed an air strike on three heavily loaded sampans 15 kilometers northwest of Song Ong Doc. They received heavy automatic weapons fire, and Seawolf 63, piloted by LTJG Wolfe, experienced engine failure and crash landed. The helicopter crew established a perimeter and immediately received heavy small arms fire. Seawolf 66, aided by an Army Forward Air Controller, attempted to pick up the downed crew but was driven away by small arms fire. Within 30 minutes, Seawolf 11, Seawolf 16, Cobra gunships, and an Army Slick arrived on the scene and placed strikes around the perimeter. Amid heavy covering fire, the Slick picked up the crew members, all of which were uninjured. Recovery of the aircraft itself appeared to be dangerous, so the USCGC DALLAS (WHEC-716) was called upon to destroy it with her 5 inch guns. The DALLAS fired 60 rounds engulfing the helicopter in flames. The Seawolves and Black Ponies in the area made several more air strikes in the area and continued to receive automatic weapons fire.

Seawolf 65, flown by LT Smith, experienced a less dramatic crash on 24 May. Flying a routine patrol, the helicopter malfunctioned and landed two kilometers north of Song Ong Doc. Troops from the city quickly arrived to provide security by establishing a perimeter around the craft. Seawolf 61 rescued the crew and salvaged all small arms.
An Army Cobra fire team provided added security from the air, and the aircraft itself was lifted at first light the following morning.

Three units of RIVDIV 551 were transiting Song Ong Doc River seven miles east of Old Song Ong Doc on 27 May when the third boat, PBR 8141, was hit on the starboard side with two rockets, and all boats received automatic weapons fire. PBR 8141 sustained extensive hull and interior damage and was immediately beached. One crew member was evacuated to Binh Thuy. The other two units made firing runs on the area, and Sea-wolf 63 and units of RIVDIV 572 and 131 scrambled to assist. Regional Forces from Old Song Ong Doc, in the immediate area, made a sweep with negative results.

The war in Vietnam is fought at such close quarters and with such ill defined battle lines that a slight miscalculation can easily end in tragedy. On 17 May, the USCGC SHERMAN (WHEC 720) fired in response to Duffle Bag sensor activation near Song Ong Doc. Seven rounds of point detonating fuze and three rounds of air bursts impacted in the immediate vicinity of the ATSB near Song Ong Doc, 1200 yards south of the proposed target, wounding eight persons. The seriously wounded personnel were quickly medevaced to the SHERMAN, but one man, SM1 Edward Habblett, died shortly thereafter. Habblett, a PBR skipper in RIVDIV 572, was recommended for the Bronze Star for valor in earlier operations.
Market Time Raider Campaign / Operation Blue Shark

The highly successful Market Time Raider Campaign came to an end on 8 May. This was not, however, the end of TF 115 assets' participation in missions along the rivers and canals of the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones. Because of the success of the Market Time Raider Campaign, an expanded operation, entitled Operation Blue Shark, was started the same day as the Market Time Raider Campaign ended.

Blue Shark is a combined USN/VNN interdiction and incursion operation in the lower Mekong Delta. The AO for Blue Shark includes the Song Vam Co, Binh Dai, Thanh Phu, and Long Tuan Secret Zones, the Dung Island area, the Football Island complex, the Sa Dec maritime area, the coastal and river boundaries in Bac Lieu Province, the major river and coastal boundaries of Ba Xuyen, Phong Dinh, An Giang, Chau Doc, Kien Phan, Sa Dec, Dinh Duong, Vinh Long, Vinh Binh, and Kien Hoa Provinces, plus certain Cambodian border patrol stations on the Hau Giang, Chau Doc, and Mekong Rivers.

The task designation for this operation is TG 194.5 with CDR Mullane (CTF 115) serving as CTG 194.5 (Commander Delta Major River Incursion Group) and the VNN CTF 213, CDR Chi, serving as his Deputy Commander.

By month's end, Operation Blue Shark had numerous successes to its credit, and its creation had more than been justified. The following narrative gives some of the highlights of Operation Blue Shark for the month of May:
On the night of 7-8 May, CHARLIE Platoon of SEAL Team ONE, Detachment GOLF, under the command of LT Boyhan, conducted a VC infra-structure target operation in an area five kilometers east southeast of CO 36 (VIC XR 307 623). After finding 20-30 deserted sleeping stations with bunkers, fighting holes, and structures, the SEALs observed six armed VC evading and took them under fire. The platoon began receiving fire from an estimated 10-15 man force on both sides of their position. A VA1-4 OV-10 aircraft and Army Cobra Gunships were scrambled and placed strikes in the area, suppressing the enemy fire and allowing the SEALs to extract successfully without casualties. The enemy lost six killed (5 BC, 1 prob) and two wounded (prob) to the SEAL and aircraft fire power. One of the enemy dead was identified as a District Level Party Chapter Secretary.

The USCG WPBs POINT GREY and POINT BANKS, under the command of LTJG Lashley, were in action during the late afternoon and early evening hours of 22 May in an area 13 miles southeast of Tra Vinh (VIC XR 810 938). After picking up the Assistant District Chief, the WPBs, with a skimmer ranging ahead, proceeded down a canal. Four VC in a sampan were sighted and hailed. They attempted to evade but were cut down by fire from the POINT BANKS and killed. The POINT GREY observed a male evading into a structure and took the structure under fire, destroying it and the evading VC. The WPBs then assisted a group of KCS (Kit Carson Scouts) in destroying structures in the area. While this was in progress, one 40-year old male and seven females, approximately 15-17 years old, were detained by the Assistant District Chief. The
females were thought to be sapper trainees. Four of the female detainees were taken with the Assistant District Chief as he departed the WPBs. The male and the other females were taken to CG 34 for further transfer to NILO Ben Tre.

POINT BANKS and POINT GREY, along with 40 KCS, also took part in the most successful Blue Shark mission of the month on 23 and 24 May. On the morning of 23 May, the WPBs inserted the KCS into an area 25 miles southeast of Ben Tre (VIC XS 95 20). The KCS soon made contact with VC elements and killed three while taking eight prisoners. The captured VC were taken aboard the WPBs with the KCS. All units were receiving heavy sniper fire at this time, and POINT GREY killed one evading VC. Acting on intelligence reports, the WPBs reinserted the KCS at XS 964 232 to search for a VC hospital. The KCS were unable to find the hospital but did capture four VC who were recent patients and were recovering. One of the captured VC said he would lead the KCS to the hospital and also revealed that seven U. S. POWs were in the area for VC propaganda purposes. Low tide forced a postponement of the mission until the following morning, so the KCS were extracted by skimmers and the WPBs patrolled the area for the remainder of the night with no contact.

At 0600H on 24 May, the KCS and the VC informant were transferred by skimmer to the alleged site of the hospital. However, no hospital was there, and the VC suddenly could not remember where it was. The KCS were extracted and inserted at XS 965 187 where POINT BANKS had observed 12 VC. A KCS sweep of the area netted eight more
VC prisoners. The two day operation resulted in the killing of four VC and the capture of 20 others as well as the destruction of six sampans, 11 structures, and eight bunkers. Two kilos of documents and three grenades were also captured.

In the early morning hours of 29 May, 16 SEALs from HOTEL Platoon of SEAL Team ONE, Detachment GOLF, with LTJG Stinson in command, inserted into an area eight kilometers northeast of Sa Dec (VIC WS 907 397). After searching one hootch with no success, the SEALs found an occupied hootch and interrogated the occupants. They confirmed intelligence reports that a VC commo-liaison station was located in another nearby hootch. The SEAL Platoon patrolled to the VC hootch and found a large bunker inside. Three VC fled the bunker and were killed by the SEALs (2 BC, 1 prob) who then destroyed the half ton of rice found in the hootch and the hootch itself. There were no SEAL casualties during the encounter.
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE SUMMARY

Operation Market Time

Market Time and Stable Door forces continued their normal operations during the month of May. There were a total of 29,005 watercraft detected by Market Time and Stable Door units in their patrols along the coasts, rivers, and harbors of the Republic of Vietnam. Of these craft, 10,418 underwent inspection while another 3,679 were boarded. These inspections and boardings resulted in the detention of 292 craft and 370 persons. As in past months, the detentions were for lack of or faulty identification papers, incorrect or faulty manifests, violations of restricted zones, and other suspicious activities.

Task Force 115 units conducted a total of 434 naval gunfire, SEALORDS, Sea Float, and Sea Tiger missions during the month of May. The percentage of missions with gun damage assessment (GDA) was 39 percent. The overall results of these missions were:

- 84 enemy killed (53 body count, 31 probable)
- 12 enemy wounded
- 40 enemy captured
- 49 junks/sampans destroyed
- 16 junks/sampans damaged
- 399 structures/bunkers destroyed
- 45 structures/bunkers damaged
Two U.S. sailors were killed and another 25 wounded in Market Time operations during the month. There were also 6 friendlies wounded in action.

The Market Time Air Evaluation Exercise, PENTREX II, which began in the latter days of April, was completed on 11 May. Eleven ships (TF 115 and SEVENTHFLT units) transited through the patrol zone from east to west and eight were detected. Of 11 ships transiting through the barrier from west to east, five were detected.

An SL-4 type trawler was sighted attempting to make a "real life" penetration on 19 May. VP aircraft shadowed the trawler, which altered course northward, until relieved by the USS BRINKLEY BASS (DD 867) on the following day (VIC 13-47N 112-50E). The BRINKLEY BASS terminated the SL-4 surveillance when the trawler entered CHICOM waters at 19-39N 111-25E at 0545H on 22 May.

On 29 May, a Market Time aircraft on routine patrol sighted a modified SL-3 type trawler at 19-02N 112-14E. When sighted, the trawler went DIV and then changed course and headed for Lincoln Island where she anchored one half mile north of the island. Another trawler, believed to be a resupply vessel, was also sighted near the SL-3 trawler the following day. USS DELIVER (ARS 23) was dispatched from Danang to conduct surveillance operations. DELIVER relieved the shadowing aircraft at Lincoln Island on 2 June. The supply vessel got underway and departed the area on the morning of 4 June. The SL-3 trawler did not get underway until 6 June. When underway, the trawler flew a
CHICOM flag and headed for Hainan Island. DELIVER maintained surveillance of the trawler until the early morning hours of 7 June when the trawler approached CHICOM territory. This was the fifth probable infiltration attempt by trawlers detected so far this year.
First Coastal Zone

The number of watercraft detected by Market Time units in the First Coastal Zone escalated sharply during the month of May. A total of 5,901 craft were detected and, of these, 4,125 were inspected and another 103 boarded. There were only 18 naval gunfire support and Sea Tiger missions conducted in May. This low figure was due mainly to the stand down of 20 River Division PBRs commencing 26 May in preparation for their turnover to the VNN on 31 May. These PBRs became part of RPG 60 in ceremonies at SCRFF (Small Craft Repair Facility) Danang on that date. Operations in the Sea Tiger AO were also transferred to VNN control at this time.

Typical activity in Operation Sea Tiger during May included a patrol conducted by RIVDIV 543 PBRs 95 and 131 under the command of Patrol Officer TMC Turner on the night of 3 May. The PBRs were in a WGPG with a sniper set in the vicinity of BT 107 577, five kilometers east of Hoi An when a patrol of seven to ten VC/NVA were sighted. The sniper took the patrol under fire felling two of the enemy. The PBRs then swept the area with fire, receiving S/A fire in return.

The USS GUIDE (MSO 447) served as a Market Time Patrol Ship in the First Coastal Zone for most of the month of May. The following is an example of her activities:

On the afternoon of 23 May, GUIDE detected two 30 foot dual engine sampans in restricted waters. On spotting the MSO, the sampans immediately headed south at best speed. The GUIDE quickly took up the chase, firing
warning shots in an attempt to halt the evading sampans. After 20
minutes, one of the sampans suddenly stopped, and its occupants non-
chalantly began fishing. The GUIDE pulled alongside, searched the
sampan, and found it had no boat book. The junkmaster reported it was
at Cua Viet but gave no reason. The six occupants of the sampan were
detained and the sampan taken in tow. They were later turned over to
CG 11.

Second Coastal Zone

Activity in the Second Coastal Zone remained at a very low level
during May. A total of 1,101 watercraft were detected in Second Coas­
tal Zone waters. Of these, 672 were inspected and another 22 boarded.
There were only seven naval gunfire support missions fired during the
month and gun damage assessment (GDA) was unknown.

Third Coastal Zone

Water traffic in the Third Coastal Zone dropped off somewhat
in May as 3,760 craft were detected, 1,242 of which were inspected and
another 1,843 boarded. Market Time "Swift" boats also continued their
patrols in the Game Warden area of operations. The lower Bassac River
was patrolled continuously during the month while the lower Ham Luong
was patrolled from 1-3 May and the lower Cua Tieu on 4 May. There
were a total of 1,703 craft detected on these rivers by Market Time
Forces with 400 of them inspected and 1,116 others boarded. There were
no incidents of evading craft, and two craft and 21 persons were
detained by the PCFs.
A total of 84 naval gunfire support missions were fired by Market Time units in the Third Coastal Zone in May. As in past months these missions consisted of H&I, targets of opportunity, pre-planned river and canal incursions, and requests for urgent gunfire support. Gun damage assessment for these missions continued to be high.

On 1 May, PCFs 21, 27, 31, 32, 55, 61, 65, 78, and 95 were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy during a colorful ceremony at the PCF piers of the U. S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Cat Lo. Two USCG WPBs, the POINT BANKS and the POINT LOMAS, also joined the ranks of the growing Vietnamese Navy during the month of May. They were turned over in ceremonies at Cat Lo on 26 May.

The following incidents are representative of action encountered by Market Time forces in the Third Coastal Zone:

Six SEALs from CHARLIE Platoon of SEAL Team ONE, Detachment GOLF, led by LT Boyan, conducted a recon patrol in an area five kilometers east of CG 36 (VIC XR 290 656) on the afternoon of 2 May. They sighted two males in sampans who evaded successfully. A search of the sampans showed them to be VC. The SEALs then began to receive S/A fire which they quickly suppressed. They then destroyed the two sampans, two bunkers, and 600 pounds of rice they had found, and were extracted by LSSC.

In the waning hours of 5 May, PCFs 73 and 48 were called in to help support a SEAL unit in an area three miles northeast of Sa Dec (VIC WS 908 386). Numerous warning lights and shots were observed on
both sides of the canal. The "Swifts" entered, and the SEALs and PCF 73 took the sites of the lights under fire. At approximately 0045H on 6 May, a sampan approached PCF 73 with one wounded VN male, one woman, and three children. The man and woman were interrogated but gave conflicting stories and finally refused to answer further questions. The wounded male was medevaced to the Army hospital at Sa Dec for treatment and further interrogation.

The USCG WPB POINT MAST conducted H&I fire missions on VC positions 26 miles southeast of Tra Vinh (VIC XR 710 774) on the afternoon of 24 May. The WPB started many fires and received hostile fire from S/A and A/W and returned fire probably killing one VC. Four structures were destroyed, and two secondary explosions and many fires were observed.

Fourth Coastal Zone

Market Time units detected 2,232 watercraft in the Fourth Coastal Zone in May. They inspected 761 and boarded another 332. Ten naval gunfire support missions were fired by CTG 115.4 units during the month. The gun damage assessment (GDA) for these missions was relatively low.

A typical mission in the Fourth Coastal Zone in May was that of PCF 37 on 7 May. The "Swift" observed a camouflaged sampan on the beach at VR 82 42. After receiving sector clearance, the sampan was taken under fire and destroyed.
The month of May was filled with numerous trials and tribulations for the U.S. Navy forces assigned to Operation Sea Float. Faced with increased enemy pressure, serious logistics resupply problems, and the lack of adequate troop and tactical air support, the Navymen of Sea Float gamely continued their efforts to keep the enemy off balance by destroying his base camps, extortion stations, and secret areas while interdicting his known and suspected routes of travel. These efforts met with some success but at the heavy cost of two U.S. Navy personnel killed and 25 wounded. Six friendlies were also wounded during the month. The enemy lost 71 killed (49 BC, 22 prob), nine wounded, and 17 captured in May.

There was mounting evidence throughout the month that the enemy was steadily increasing his forces in the Sea Float AO. Increased enemy pressure was detected in all facets of Sea Float operations. U.S. and VNN ships and boats were ambushed a total of 15 times by enemy launch bombs and rockets during May. These attacks resulted in damage to three PCFs, one ATC, one FG, one LSSC, and the sinking of a VNN Yabuta junk. One U.S. Army Slick helicopter was also damaged when ambushed by enemy fire during the month.

The VNN LSM HQ-404 continued to make resupply runs between Nha Be and Sea Float throughout the month in order to keep the Ammi complex and Solid Anchor site supplied with fresh water and a sufficient amount of diesel fuel. These resupply runs continued into the month of June.
While helping to alleviate the immediate needs of the Sea Float complex, these runs still do not provide a long term answer to the problem.

Another major problem facing the men of Sea Float in May was the lack of troop support for over two weeks. The MSF troops, who had performed so well in past months, were withdrawn from Sea Float on 15 May. Although repeatedly assured that an infantry company would be sent to replace the MSF troops, Sea Float had to wait until 30 May before a 96 man CIDG unit arrived on the scene. The Sea Float command also ran into extreme difficulties in trying to obtain the services of tactical air support units for the Sea Float AO in order to better confront the mounting enemy pressure in the area. These difficulties continued at month's end.

One bright spot on the somewhat dismal outlook for Sea Float in May was the continuing progress being made at the Solid Anchor site. By the end of the month, the 93 Seabees assigned to the project had completed four perimeter bunkers, placed concrete for the deck of a 500 man galley, and continued work on the prefab shell of a 920 man galley, the Solid Anchor drainage system, the exterior sheathing of one BEQ, and the interior wiring of the ATSB Sea Huts and general warehouse.

An interesting situation has arisen out of the naming of the two villages contained within the Sea Float Annex. These two villages had been named Tran Hung Dao I and II by U. S. and VN Naval commands when established. However, in recent months it has been noted that the inhabitants of the villages and their district and province officials
have elected to call the villages Ham Rong Hamlet vice Tran Hung Dao I and II. This could very well lead to some confusion in the future as a test of will power appears to be in the offing.

On 12 May, COMNAVFORV, then VADM E. R. Zumwalt, Jr., his relief, VADM J. H. King, Jr., and CAPT Emerson, NAVFORV ACOS for Operations, visited the Sea Float complex. The distinguished guests were briefed on Sea Float/Solid Anchor operations and toured the Solid Anchor site before departing for Ca Mau.

Sea Float Missions

It has already been noted that waterborne units operating from Sea Float were the unhappy recipients of 15 enemy ambushes during the month. It is also significant to note that of all the hostile fire missions that inflicted either personnel or material casualties on the U. S. Navy forces of Operation Market Time, only one occurred outside of the Sea Float AO. The overwhelming majority of those missions in the Sea Float AO which resulted in U. S. casualties were enemy initiated ambushes. A short description of some of these encounters is listed below:

On 1 May, RAC units T-4, T-9, and M-3 were proceeding south from New Nam Can on the Rach Cai Nhap (VIC WQ 078 765). One ambush site had already been spotted and the four launch tubes and two B-50 rockets found there captured. Suddenly two rockets (one B-50, one larger rocket unidentified) struck the starboard side of T-9 which had to be beached to avoid sinking. T-9 was later dewatered and, lashed to M-3, returned
to Sea Float. Results of return fire by the RAC units and scrambled Seawolves was unknown.

The USS ANTELOPE (PG 86) was ambushed twice within seven days. In the early hours of 4 May, she was struck by a 3-40 rocket while anchored near the Sea Float complex. On 11 May, she was ambushed while proceeding out Song Bo De (VIC WQ 210 690). At least eight B-50 rockets were fired at the PG, but fortunately, none struck the vessel.

On the afternoon of 5 May, an HSSC with two SEAL squads enroute to insertion points was hit by a B-40 rocket and heavy S/A fire (VIC WQ Old 655) which wounded several navymen. Aborting the mission, the HSSC called in Seawolves and Black Ponies and turned around to proceed north. Shortly after reversing course, the HSSC was struck by three more B-40 rockets, two of which penetrated the hull, wounding several more sailors. Seawolves and Black Ponies pounded the ambush site with unknown results. Eleven SEALs and six MST sailors were wounded in the engagement.

PCF 50 proved the old adage that bad things come in threes as she was ambushed three times during the month. The first ambush, on 4 May, caused no damage. The second, by a Claymore mine on 6 May, ripped open a seam 18 inches long by 3 inches wide on her port bow. The third ambush, on 16 May, proved to be the unlucky charm. Steaming east on the Song Dam Doi (VIC WQ 270 740) in company with PCFs 64 and 692, and an HSSC, PCF 50 was hit amidships on her port side by a launch bomb. She beached immediately to avoid sinking and commenced returning suppression
fire. PCF 64, the second boat of the convoy, was then struck by a second
launch bomb and S/A fire. Seawolves and Black Ponies were scrambled,
and, with PCF 692, saturated the ambush area with fire. RD3 Frederick Don
Snyder of PCF 50 was fatally wounded in the exchange, while PT2 Douglas
E. Hobbs of SEAL Team One, Detachment GOLF, who was on PCF 64, was
killed instantly. Three other U. S. sailors were wounded as were four
Kit Carson Scouts (KCS).

Attempts to refloat PCF 50 that day were unsuccessful and she remained
beached until the following day when she was refloated and taken to the
Solid Anchor site where she was once again beached. She was later towed
to the Naval Support Activity Detachment at Cat Lo for repairs.

PCFs 35 and 692, escorting the tug SKIPJACK with two barges
(VIC WQ 203 720), were ambushed on 15 May by three B-50 rockets. PCF 35
was struck by one rocket on her port side amidships at the waterline
which opened a hole 20 inches wide by six inches high. The other two
rockets missed the "Swifts." Fortunately, only one U. S. sailor was
wounded, and his wound was minor. Although heavy suppression fire by
both PCFs and Seawolves was directed into the area of the ambush enemy
casualties, if any, were unknown.

VNN units were not immune to the rash of rocket ambushes perpet­-
rated by the enemy in the Sea Float AO during the month of May. On 26
May, Yabuta junks 133 and 125 were ambushed on the Rach Cai Nhap (VIC
WQ 068 780) by five B-50 rockets. Two of the rockets hit the Y-133
which sank. Two VNN were wounded by the rocket fire. PCFs 98 and 37
inserted a Biet Hai reaction force into the ambush site and four B-50 launch tubes, with two B-50 rockets ready to fire, were captured.

As is obvious by the accounts of these ambushes, the most frustrating thing for the Sea Float forces is the ability of the enemy to inflict a great deal of damage to U. S. and VNN craft and personnel while melting into the surrounding terrain himself. The enemy's ambush tactics must be considered to have been highly successful in May. However, the men of Sea Float had numerous successes of their own during the month as the following incidents attest.

On 10 May, four SEALs with five KCS, an interpreter, and a guide embarked on PCFs 693 and 82 with a large motorized sampan in tow. Once in the patrol area the SEALs and KCSs transferred to the sampan and transited down the Rach Cai Chon to WQ 137 646 with all personnel in the sampan hidden under panchos. They pulled up to the canal bank and approximately one half hour later heard voices and an approaching sampan. The sampan, with two males aboard, came alongside and inquired as to the contents of the SEALs' sampan. As the spot report states, "Contents of sampan replied with volley of fire as both attempted to evade." The two, who were both killed, were identified as a provincial level finance cadre and his body guard.

Seven SEALs with 20 KCSs surprised a sampan with seven armed males while on patrol in the vicinity of WQ 152 684 on 13 May. Both groups opened fire, and two enemy were killed and another wounded, while two KCSs suffered minor wounds. The KCSs chased the evading VC north on