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Monthly Historical Summary

US NAVAL FORCES
VIETNAM

DECEMBER 1970

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
U.S. NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM
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- List II. A. (SNA)
- List II. B. (SMA)
- List III (Coastal Group Commands and Activities)
- List IV. B. (MINEDIVs)
- List IV. F. (Aircraft Squadrons)
- List V. A1. (NSF Danang)
- List V. A2. (NSAD Nha Be)

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VIETNAM

MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

December 1970

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Field Historians.....LTJG Stephen W. Frantz

LTJG George G. Lynn

LTJG Michael W. Taylor

Historical Journalists.....JO2 Don H. Stephenson

JO3 Robert S. Drew

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Table of Contents

Page

FOREWORD i

CURRENT OPERATIONS 1

USN OPERATIONS
Operation SOLID ANCHOR 3
Operation BREEZY COVE 11

VNN OPERATIONS
Task Fleet 21 16
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I 19
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO II 21
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO V 26
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VI 28
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VIII 33
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO IX 36
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XIV 37
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVII 41
Rung Sat Special Zone 48
Long Tau Shipping Channel 54

COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCES 56

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND CIVIC ACTION 71

ACCELERATED TURNOVER PROGRAM AND TRAINING 73

NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON 81

NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION UNITS 85

Appendix I - Glossary of Abbreviations I-1

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FORWARD

As 1970 unceremoniously drew to a close for the 16,757 U.S. Navymen in South Vietnam, and desultory toasts were downed in myriad hootches and barracks throughout the country, another landmark in Naval history was reached as the last assets of the "Brown Water Navy" and coastal patrol forces were officially transferred to the VNN. In relinquishing operational control of its small combatants, the USN is gradually reverting to the strictly advisory role it played prior to the large build-up of U.S. Armed Forces in South Vietnam in 1965.

The Vietnamese Navy launched another major campaign on 1 December with the inception of TRAN HUNG DAO XVII, the first combined all-out assault on the VC-controlled U Minh Forest in the history of the war. The operation includes assets from RAIDs 70 and 71, RID 40, RAG 25/29, and RPD 61, all engaged in providing logistics support, troop lifts, and blocking forces for components of the ARVN 21st Division.

The Saigon headquarters of U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, was exposed to the first threat of violence in many months as activity in the capital city increased during December, partly as the result of student activity and partly from VC terrorism. On 15 December at 2050 two Vietnamese civilians placed a plastic bottle filled with gasoline into the gas tank filler neck of a USN vehicle parked outside the NAVFORV Compound, but no explosion was caused and only minor damage done to the vehicle.

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At 2255 the same night about ten students gathered on Doan Thi Diem Street adjacent to NAVFORV Headquarters with the expressed intention of burning a USN Jeep. Members of the Vietnamese Security Force arrived and dispersed them before any damage could be done. In their wake, the students left a leaflet stating that their activity was to revenge the death of a fellow student killed in Qui Nhon by U.S. Forces.

The Military Sealift Command, Vietnam, reported a possible Saigon Harbor attack the morning of 19 December, when at 0210 two 122mm rockets impacted in the city at XS 863 919 and XS 876 916, killing six Vietnamese civilians and wounding eight. Nine MSC vessels were moored in the harbor at that time, four of them USNS ships.

On a more cheerful note, VADM Jerome H. King, Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam, relayed to U.S. Navymen in the First Coastal Zone a letter of gratitude from President Thieu to General Creighton Abrams, COMUSMACV, thanking and praising U.S. Forces who were instrumental in providing flood relief for the people in the area during the disastrous storms of October. General Abrams added his own commendation to that of the President, stating "this act of humanitarianism contributed significantly to the overall Vietnamization program."[1]

1 COMNAVFORV AND CHNAVADVGRP MSG 260023Z December 70.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

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VNN Designation	USN Designation
TRAN HUNG DAO I (TG 212.4)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO II (TG 214.1)	GIANT SLINGSHOT
TRAN HUNG DAO IV	SOLID ANCHOR (TG 116.1)
TRAN HUNG DAO V (TG 216.1)	READY DECK
TRAN HUNG DAO VI (TG 212.5)	SEARCH TURN
TRAN HUNG DAO VII (TG 221.1)	SEA TIGER
TRAN HUNG DAO VIII (TG 217.1)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO IX (TG 212.3)	BARRIER REEF
TRAN HUNG DAO X (TG 212.6)	BREEZY COVE
TRAN HUNG DAO XIV (TG 217.2)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO XV (TF 213)	MARKET TIME Inner Barrier
TRAN HUNG DAO XVII (TF 210)	NONE

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SOLID ANCHOR

During the month of December, Operation SOLID ANCHOR was plagued with a series of logistics, personnel, and material problems which would have tried the patience of any responsible commander. In addition to the types of problems cited above, the enemy scored several successes during the course of five ambushes of boats, two mining incidents and one mortar attack on the northern edge of the perimeter of the SOLID ANCHOR base itself. In operations during the month, one VNN sailor and one Philippine civilian were killed; three USN and 12 VNN sailors plus four Philippine civilians were wounded. Friendly forces killed a total of 29 of the enemy and captured 61. The enemy sank one ATC and damaged one monitor, one ASPB, one PCF, and two civilian tugs. There were 11 friendly initiated firefights, while the enemy initiated 12.

Colonel F. W. Tief, USMC, the Senior Marine Advisor, was sent to SOLID ANCHOR as a relief for CAPT E. I. Finke, as commander of TG 116.1 on 9 December.

Among the problems to which the commander of SOLID ANCHOR was forced to address himself were contamination of the fuel in the JP-5 ammi, resupply of JP-5, a lack of emergency electrical power backup for the base, the need of a significant portion of the assigned river assault craft for repairs which strained or were beyond the SOLID

ANCHOR repair capability and the arrival of relief PCFs in a material status which precluded operations.

On 12 December, CTG 116.1 in a message to COMNAVSUPPACT Saigon noted that 18 out of a total of 25, or 72%, of his assigned assault craft were in need of repairs which required outside assistance, such as engine overhauls, bar armour repair, hull welding, and strut and rudder repair. In that day's situation summary, he reported that only nine of his assigned 25 RAC were available for patrol. The command faced the same staggering casualty problems in regard to its PCFs. On 20 December, CTG 116.1 reported that out of ten assigned PCFs, only one was fully operational, five were only partially able to carry out their mission, and four were in a completely non-operational status. This problem had been exacerbated about a week earlier by the arrival at SOLID ANCHOR of two relief PCFs with one operational engine apiece. CTG 116.1 brought to Senior Advisor COMCOSFLOT Five's attention the fact that PCFs with one engine were ineffective on combat patrols in the SOLID ANCHOR area of operations. COMNAVFORV ordered SA CTF 213 to take immediate remedial steps to correct the asset situation.

On the personnel front, acute problems developed also. In order to reduce the theft of personal items, a big morale factor, and the pilferage of military goods, CTG 116.1 requested the assignment of six men to form an internal security force. COMNAVFORV turned the request

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down, reminding CTF 116 that although SOLID ANCHOR had an allowance of 59 NSAS personnel, over 160 were actually assigned and stating that he felt the assignment of additional personnel would only aggravate a problem which was going to have to be solved in any case as a result of the forthcoming reduced space ceiling which would become effective 1 May 1971.

On 9 December the VNN EOD Team refused to do any more work and stated their intentions to the VNN operational commander. They then packed their bags and departed SOLID ANCHOR for Saigon, leaving the two-man US advisory team to handle all EOD work. On 22 December, EOD personnel reported there was a three-man VNN EOD team at SOLID ANCHOR again, but reported that one assigned member who, when informed that VNN EOD personnel were tasked with accompanying 7th Battalion VNMC on an operation, departed the area and missed the operation.

The month concluded with a cholera epidemic, which broke out in Ham Rong Village on 30 December. Ten cases appeared, three of which resulted in death. The hamlets were immediately declared out-of-bounds to all base personnel. The SOLID ANCHOR medical team and MAT 67 immediately went to work, and by 1 January the spread of the disease was reported under control. Four people were reported dead, and 13 were medevaced, with a total of 31 people still sick.

Meanwhile there was a high level of activity as operations against

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the enemy continued. The month's most serious incident occurred on 2 December. Boats of RID 41, proceeding south down the Rach Ong Dinh with 200 VNMC embarked, were ambushed 11 miles southeast of SOLID ANCHOR(WQ 015 635) at 0807H. Two B-40 rockets hit the port side of an ASPB causing moderate damage and wounding the VNN forward gunner. The force then came under automatic weapons fire. The boats suppressed the fire, and VNN personnel went ashore to investigate the ambush site. They found it heavily booby-trapped and collected eight claymore mines, three B-40/41 rockets and four B-50 launch bombs. The captured ordnance was placed topside on the bow of a monitor, and the boats continued south to the point where the VNMC were to be inserted, some 300 meters south of the ambush site. While attempting to beach during the insertion, the monitor carrying the ordnance struck a mine, and its bow from the waterline upward was blown off. LT S. V. Ethridge, BM 1 H. E. Sampsell, and one other USN advisor were wounded and eight VNN personnel were wounded. Recognizing the imminent danger posed by the more than 100 rounds of 105mm ammunition in the monitor's magazine adjacent to the bow section, WO-1 Benjamin W. Rand, EOD team leader, led a group of advisors and VNN EOD personnel aboard the sinking craft and removed the most dangerous portion of the ammunition. Warrant Officer Rand was recommended for the Silver Star, three men were recommended for the Bronze Star, and seven men, including two

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VNN EOD personnel, were recommended for the Navy Commendation medal for their actions during the incident. The sinking monitor was towed back to SOLID ANCHOR by two ATCs. A VNN crew member of the monitor was found to be missing upon arrival at the base, and his body was later found in the canal.

At 0830H on 3 December while en route north patrolling on the Kinh Cai Nhap, two ATCs of RID 45 were mined about seven miles northwest of SOLID ANCHOR. One boat was undamaged, but the other suffered major shock damage and sank immediately. Two VNN sailors were wounded, one seriously. An ASPB was sent to provide assistance and Seawolves provided air cover for the helicopter which medevaced the wounded. En route to the boats, the medevac helicopter came under automatic weapons fire which was suppressed by the Seawolves. The ASPB, proceeding to the mined craft's assistance, observed a water mine explosion close aboard to port but suffered no damage or casualties.

At 1745H on 11 December two PCFs, escorting the civilian tugs STANFORD and SKIPJACK west on the Song Bo De, came under automatic weapons and B-40 rocket fire ten miles west of Nam Can (WQ 243 681). Two rockets hit SKIPJACK, one in the pilot house and one in the stack, causing moderate damage. The PCFs suppressed the fire and Seawolves placed strikes in the area. There were no friendly casualties. Again at 0940H on 19 December the civilian tug STANFORD and escorting PCFs were ambushed on the Song Cua Lon while proceeding toward SOLID

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ANCHOR about 8.5 miles east of the base (WQ 111 692). Three rockets struck the tug, killing one civilian and wounding four, and one struck an escorting PCF wounding one VNN sailor. Advisor RM 3 M.J. Murphy suffered minor cuts caused by flying glass. All units proceeded to SOLID ANCHOR under their own power.

At 1405H on 20 December, boats of RID 44 transiting the Rach Cai Nhap toward SOLID ANCHOR came under B-40 rocket attack eight miles northeast of the base. There were no direct hits and Seawolves arriving only a minute later placed strikes in the area (WQ 082 740).

At 0840H on 27 December an ATC on routine patrol discovered and broke a wire which they believed led to a command detonated mine in the Rach Cai Nhap about 6.5 miles northeast of SOLID ANCHOR (WQ 078 765). EOD personnel were called to the scene, found a mine, recovered and disarmed it. The mine consisted of 60 pounds of plastic explosives in a wooden box with five electric and two non-electric blasting caps.

Beginning at 0405H on 27 December, 20 to 30 rounds of 82mm mortar fire landed on the northern edge of the perimeter of the SOLID ANCHOR base causing no casualties or damage . The fire was immediately returned with mortars, automatic weapons and small arms. Crater analysis indicated that the enemy mortar position had been to the northeast at extreme range. A thorough sweep of the area was conducted with no results.

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At 1835H on 28 December, Seawolves on routine patrol about eight miles southeast of Nam Can received a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire (WQ 073 566). One helicopter flying at about 1000 feet took two hits, but fortunately continued to operate. After placing a strike, the Seawolves returned to their base. Examination of the holes in the aircraft indicated that they were made by rounds from a 51 caliber machine gun.

Seals of Whiskey and Zulu Platoons of Detachment Golf, Seal Team One carried out a vigorous schedule of operations during the month. On 20 December, seven Seals from Zulu Platoon paddled in sampans to the mouth of the Trai Cheo Canal (VQ 978 766), six miles northwest of SOLID ANCHOR, and spied a VC proceeding upstream. They followed him, and 11 more VC in six sampans appeared. The Seals challenged the group of VC, and all initially obeyed the instructions. When two of the captives suddenly attempted to seize hidden weapons and evade, the Seals took them under fire. Eight of the VC were killed in the ensuing melee, and two more were probably killed as they fled. The Seals took no casualties.

Vietnamese Marines of the 7th Battalion and Battery B VNMC continued to carry out reconnaissance in force operations in the SOLID ANCHOR area of operations during December. They killed ten and captured two of the enemy while suffering four killed and seven wounded themselves. They captured four rifles, one pistol, 65 grenades, and miscellaneous

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medical supplies. In addition 16 craft and 45 bunkers were destroyed.

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BREEZY COVE

Allied units of Operation BREEZY COVE (CTG 116.2), seeking to stabilize operations following base relocations to Ca Mau and Old Song Ong Doc, experienced a hectic month during December. The still uncompleted base at Ca Mau was attacked, and river units engaged in eleven fire fights. While there were several intelligence reports of large troop concentrations in the Song Ong Doc and Cai Nuoc Districts, the allies did not engage in any large confrontations. Yet when the operation was finally turned over to the Vietnamese Navy at month's end, the new VNN Commander inherited responsibility for one of the most hostile areas in Military Region IV.

Two boats of RID 43, returning up the Song Ong Doc River after re-supplying from the USS GARRETT COUNTY (APG 786) on 10 December, were ambushed by B-40 rockets, recoilless rifles and automatic weapons fire at VR 869 002. An Armored Troop Carrier received rocket rounds through the pilot house and canopy while an ASPB sustained two hits at the waterline. Two American advisors, EN 3 N.H. Demski and BMC J.D. Howe, and five Vietnamese sailors were wounded. Seawolves from Ca Mau placed air strikes on suspected guerrilla positions but reported no enemy casualties.

VNN PBRs of River Patrol Division 62 moving east along the Song Ong Doc River were attacked by B-40 rockets and automatic weapons fire during the early evening of 17 December. The boats, aided by Seawolves,

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suppressed enemy fire and withdrew without casualties. The attack was potentially effective, however, as it came from both banks of the river rather than from one isolated position. This new tactic, according to NFV analysts, suggests either new and more effective leadership or the presence of well-trained North Vietnamese reinforcements.

Throughout December, salvage operations were conducted to recover the Seawolf helicopter, HSSC 5634, and the PBR lost in late November near the USS GARRETT COUNTY (APG 786) off the coast of Song Ong Doc. The salvage ship USS RECLAIMER (ARS 42) finally located the HSSC on 15 December after five days of searching, and following a week of on-station patching, delivered the refloated craft to the repair ship USS KRISHNA (ARL 38). The following day the RECLAIMER raised the sunken helicopter, and after stripping off the weapons and classified equipment, jettisoned the wreckage in deep water. By the end of the month, the missing PBR still had not been recovered.

CTG 116.2 suffered his greatest loss since the razing of the Song Ong Doc ATSB when his new headquarters at Ca Mau was bombarded with mortar fire on the night of 26 December. One US sailor, EN 2 E.V. Rochez, and an Army advisor were killed while 13 American and eight Vietnamese sailors were wounded. A generator and guard tower were destroyed, and a PBR and two LCM craft sustained minor damage. Two Ca Mau Seawolves scrambled to place air strikes on the suspected enemy

positions. A ground sweep the following morning recovered several communist small arms and two sampans with blood in them.

Following the attack, the Song Ong Doc NILO reported that a local sympathizer had reported that Viet Cong would attempt to destroy patrol craft at the Ca Mau base by dropping mines from sampans near the piers. Because of the increased threat to the base, two Regional Force companies and two Popular Force platoons began deploying nightly south of the river near the PRU camp. In addition, PRUs began setting regular night ambushes to the north while PSDF troops operated in hamlets east and west of the compound.

Lieutenant Moran's Seals of Detachment Alpha, 9th Platoon, enjoyed another successful month in their efforts to eradicate the Viet Cong infastructure in An Xuyen Province. In the early morning hours of 4 December, a four man squad ambushed and killed four Viet Cong 12 kilometers southwest of Hai Yen (VQ 797 722). After the initial contact, the group relocated fifty meters away. They ambushed a sampan at dawn, killing one of the VC and two hours later, killed still another guerrilla and captured his comrade. One of the dead Viet Cong was identified as a deputy province level finance section chief.

Two days later, the Seals attempted to aid one of their Kit Carson Scouts whose mother and brother had been abducted by the Viet Cong. A

squad led by three scouts inserted near the man's hootch 11 kilometers south of Ca Mau (WR 205 040 and rescued the scout's son who had successfully hidden himself when the VC came. The party was unable to locate the two kidnap victims but captured one guerrilla cadre member during the search.

The Seals were more fortunate on the evening of 7 December when they captured a communist hamlet assistant military chief and a supply section chief in a village 15 kilometers southeast of Ca Mau (WR 233 038). After entering the targeted hootch, pointed out by a local informer, and capturing the two men, the five man squad remained secluded in the structure throughout the night. Shortly after daybreak, a fifteen-man unit of Viet Cong, apparently aware of allied presence in the area, began sweeping through the nearby area, firing their AK-47 rifles. The out-numbered Seals called in a Seawolf strike on the enemy, and escaped during the air attack.

Seals of the 9th Platoon attempted to rescue Vietnamese prisoners of war being held in a camp 12 kilometers southeast of Hai Yen (VQ 932 768) on 27 December. Reacting to ARVN intelligence and led by local guides and a Kit Carson Scout, the five man squad attacked the small camp defended by a dozen guards. All the prisoners had recently been removed, but the Seals killed four of the guards with assistance from Seawolves and captured communist weapons, documents, and medical supplies.

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Operation BREEZY COVE officially became TRAN HUNG DAO X (CTG 212.6) on 29 December when Lieutenant Commander Nhan, VNN, relieved Commander Christensen, USN, as operational commander. The Ca Mau ceremony was attended by Vice Admiral King and Rear Admiral Chon, the Vietnamese CNO. The US Navy will continue to provide air and logistical support, and the new CTG 116.2, Lieutenant Commander W. D. Dannheim, will act as both senior advisor and officer in charge of the operation's two support bases.

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Task Fleet 21

The Christmas Season failed to provide a respite for the combined allied forces of Task Fleet 21. The operations and units still controlled by the U.S. Navy, including BREEZY COVE, SOLID ANCHOR, and the Seawolf helicopters and OV-10 aircraft, continued to encounter the most extensive enemy resistance in the vast Mekong Delta and Ca Mau Peninsula. Combined ARVN and VNN forces of TRAN HUNG DAO XVII, an operation launched at the heart of the Viet Cong stronghold of the U Minh Forest in early December, sustained the greatest casualties among Vietnamese forces.

December also witnessed the further Vietnamization of riverine warfare in the Delta as command of Operation BREEZY COVE and of the Tan Chau, Kien An, Chau Doc, and Ha Tien operating bases was transferred to the Vietnamese Navy. Symbolic of the waning role of the American naval forces was the disestablishment of River Patrol Flotilla V after the official turnover of the last PBR of the Brown Water Navy at the end of December.

CTF 116, who had exercised administrative control over all river patrol boats for the past two years, assumed the title of Commander, Delta Naval Forces. Captain R.E. Spruit, the Senior Advisor to CTF 212, was assigned this position as additional duty.

COMNAVFORV expressed concern over two vital aspects of naval

operations in the Delta during December: base and boat security against sampans, and helicopter control. The former problem developed from the accidental deaths of several non-hostile Vietnamese civilians who had unintentionally entered defensive water areas. COMNAVFORV ordered extensive notification of the location of defensive areas and the posting of warning signs to keep civilians and sampans clear of these secured zones. Warning shots, fired in the air, were to be used only as a last resort in clearing a prohibited area.

The mysterious crash of a Seawolf helicopter in the jungle north of Ca Mau led to a revamping of the Navy's aerial control procedures. On the morning of 19 December, a helicopter of Detachment 3 departed the repair facility at Binh Thuy and headed for its home base at Ca Mau. The last contact with a control center was at 1025H. At approximately 1100H, the air craft crashed in an unsecured area, 26 kilometers short of its destination (WR 321 437), and all four crewmen perished. For the next two days, the helicopter lay undiscovered, and no aviation commands, including HAL-3, reported that any aircraft were missing. Finally, on the afternoon of 21 December, a seven year old Vietnamese girl inadvertantly stumbled upon the wreckage and reported it to the local authorties. The next morning an Army Reconnaissance Team located the helicopter. The bodies of the crewmen, LTJG R. H. Buzzell, LTJG A. O. Ortiz, AEC J. Ratliff, and ADJ 2 R. E. Worth, were found in shallow graves

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near the wreckage. Evidence of enemy presence in the area was extensive as the helicopter, which had crashed upside down, had been riddled with bullets and stripped of all vital parts and weapons.

COMNAVFORV ordered a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding this bizarre and unreported crash. In addition, an extensive revision of aircraft control procedures was instituted to ensure that all Navy planes would be accounted for at all times.

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TRAN HUNG DAO I

COMNAVFORV took advantage of light enemy activity along the Vinh Te Canal in December to further Vietnamize the TRAN HUNG DAO I Operation. The Vietnamese Navy assumed command of the Chau Doc Operating Base on the 9th of the month, and the floating American ATSB at Vinh Gia, threatened by falling water levels, was completely disestablished by the end of December. As in previous months, the quick reacting Seawolf helicopters were the best deterrent against enemy infiltration from Cambodia. VNN river units, however, were involved in 12 firefights. Three Americans were wounded during the month, and the allies reported killing eight Viet Cong.

Three American sailors were wounded during the early morning hours of 15 December when they failed to properly identify themselves. RM 3 R.A. Compton, BM 3 J.S. Oddone, and BM 3 G.O. Sitton, advisors to RID 43 craft, left their boats positioned in a WBGP, supposedly to reconnoiter the beach. For some unknown reason, they approached a nearby Popular Force outpost without notifying it and were taken under fire by their allies as they penetrated the concertina wire perimeter. The wounded men were not found by a ground sweep until two hours later.

The declining water level in the Central TRAN HUNG DAO I AO began to hinder riverine operations in late December, and it was predicted

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that by mid-January, no waterborne units, including the shallow draft PBR, would be able to penetrate the area. The allied interdiction effort in the western section, however, was strengthened in December with the arrival of five Swift boats (PCF) from COSFLOT V.

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TRAN HUNG DAO II

The enemy's presence in the TRAN HUNG DAO II AO was subdued in December, with only one enemy-initiated and four friendly-initiated fire-fights. There were numerous reports near the end of the month that supplies were being moved into Long An Province along the southern border of Military Region Three and that the Ben Luc Bridge and Logistics Support Base were possible targets in the near future, but nothing had happened by the end of the month.

There seemed to be a continued attempt to disrupt LOCs in the western regions as the Rach Re Bridge on QL 22, ten miles northwest of Go Dau Ha, was mined the night of 2 December; 30% of the east span was damaged, reducing traffic, often headed for Cambodia, to one slowly moving lane. There was another unsuccessful attempt on the Go Dau Ha Bridge on 3 December, and intelligence sources reported at the end of the month that a 20 man local VC platoon had begun attempts to bribe GVN non-commissioned officers to mine the bridge. A B-40 rocket was fired at the Moc Hoa ATSB at 0028H, 29 December, but fell 20 feet short of the ammi.

In general, the enemy appeared to be avoiding contact with VNN river patrols, concentrating instead on revitalizing their village and hamlet infrastructures and discrediting the GVN pacification program. Elements suspected of being in the area were remnants of the former 128th Artillery Battalion in Long An and Ham Nghia Provinces; the K6 Battalion, 1st NVA

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Regiment, lingering just south of the Military Region Three border and within striking distance of Binh Phuoc District; and elements of the 267th VC Main Force Infantry Battalion, sighted back in Ben Luc District after long absence. Most of the main force units have dissolved and merged with local units due to the weakened status of the latter over the past two years; these units have incurred heavy losses and been unable to recruit replacements from the surrounding area.

The units of 214.1 thus had a fairly serene month. The largest single contact occurred at 1930H, 5 December, when two RPD 54 PBRs in WBGP on the Vam Co Tay 26 kilometers downriver from Tan An (XS 714 569 sighted a sampan moving along the south bank. They took it under fire; the sampan beached and returned fire but was no match for the PBRs. Five VC were killed and an AK-47 captured, with no friendly casualties.

Other engagements for the month were not so conclusive. On 2 December at 2030H, three boats of RPD 64 lying in wait four kilometers from Tuyen Nhon received reports of a radar sighting of five persons on the west bank, 1200 meters south of the boats' position (XS 320 819). The PBRs motored down and commenced a firing run when they were 300 meters from the suspected VC location. They received return fire and then dropped mortar rounds into the area. Results of the incident were unknown, but it is probable that three of the VC were killed.

On 15 December at 0200H an ASPB, ATC, and Zippo from RID 46 were in a WBGP two miles south of Tra Cu (XS 502 960) when they spotted four VC on the beach 50 meters ahead. They took the four under fire and received light return fire. Enemy casualties were unknown. Another case of probable kills occurred on 29 December at 2100H when two RPD 54 PBRs in WBGP 12 miles from Tan An (XS 673 575) observed a sampan emerge from a canal and head north 50 meters ahead. The sampan opened fire first, and the PBRs returned a volley which probably killed the sampan's four occupants. Two AK-47's and four magazines were captured, along with various documents and medical supplies. Another sampan was demolished at 2330H on 22 December seven miles southeast of Tan An (XS 660 592) when it was sighted by a lone PBR from RPD 54 and taken under fire. Two more AK-47's with five clips and an M-79 grenade launcher were claimed. Finally, two Tango boats from RID 48 saw the old year out by blasting two sampans at 2300H, 31 December, three kilometers northwest of Ben Luc (XS 590 788). They took a B-40 round and small arms fire in return; enemy casualties were unknown.

A VC suspect was picked up in Long An Province at 0050H, 8 December, by two RPD 54 PBRs in a WBGP nine miles southeast of Tan An. He was turned over to the Sector and his sampan impounded. Three more persons, one from a water taxi and two from a village, were detained the morning of 30 December as the result of a day search by two RPD 53 PBRs, 12

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miles from Tan An (XS 672 573).

Sappers found their mark at 0200H, 28 December, when they successfully sank a 70,000 gallon fuel ammi moored one quarter of a mile from Ben Keo (XT 220 434). The damage was extensive with all seams ruptured and the fuel contaminated, causing a severe fuel shortage for RPD 53, based at Ben Keo. As a stopgap measure, RID 46 assets were ordered to tow a small ammi from Tra Cu, thus extending the fuel supply at Ben Keo for about seven days. COMNAVFORV tasked HCU-1 on 30 December to commence salvage operations as soon as possible. Salvage had not begun by the end of the month, and the senior advisor, LSB Ben Luc, reported that salvage did not appear economically feasible.

The USN advisors attached to 214.1 received only mild harassment from the enemy; however, they had their share of troubles with their counterparts. The base defense posture at Ben Keo, for example, remained unsatisfactory, allegedly due to lax watchstanders. The senior advisor, RID 46, reported patrolling the base at 0400H, 29 December, and finding, not entirely to his surprise, that the only people awake were himself and two NOC radiomen. Thievery remained a problem at both Ben Luc, where the assistant senior advisor to RID 40 had a seabag containing mail for his men stolen the night of 11 December, and at Tuyen Nhon. The senior advisor at the latter base stated that major incidents were a daily occurrence and that both the base commanding officer and the OIC of the LSC

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detachment, both VNN lieutenants, were rarely aboard and that the highest ranking VNN officer available was a warrant.

The locations of 214.1 assets as of 1800H, 27 December, are as follows:

214.1.1	RID 48	Ben Luc
214.1.2	RID 46	Tra Cu
214.1.3	RID 47	Go Dau Ha
214.1.4	RPD 53	Ben Keo
214.1.5	RPD 54	Tan An
214.1.6	RPD 64	Tuyen Nhon
214.1.7	RPD 64	Moc Hoa

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TRAN HUNG DAO V

Enemy activity in the TRAN HUNG DAO V AO during December seemed heavy only in comparison with the lull of recent months. The allied river crews of River Patrol Division 52 and River Assault Group 24 were involved in seven firefights, all initiated by the Viet Cong, and suffered nine wounded (two USN, seven VNN) while killing six of the enemy. Most of the skirmishes followed the familiar pattern of the guerrillas launching B-40 rockets at boats in transit and the boats making imprecise firing runs on suspected enemy positions.

The most successful enemy attack occurred in the early evening of 11 December when Viet Cong fired on four PBRs of RPD 52 with rockets and machine guns, 30 kilometers northwest of Phu Cuong (XT 581 310). Two B-40 rockets hit the lead boat in the engine cover and coxswain area, wounding the entire Vietnamese crew and the U.S. advisor, EN 1 R.D. Flores. The PBR sank as the crew tried to beach it, and the wounded were quickly medevaced to Long Binh. River Assault Craft were summoned to tow the damaged boat to Phu Cuong, and the remaining three PBRs proceeded to their WBGP site.

Two other PBRs were ambushed only one kilometer away from this point (XT 573 317) four days later. A B-40 rocket exploded in the forward portion of the lead boat, slightly wounding one Vietnamese sailor. The allies retaliated with machine gun fire and reported killing two of their

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Communist assailants.

A Viet Cong unit staged a daylight attack on four PBRs 29 kilometers northwest of Phu Cuong (XT 580 330) during the morning of 27 December. A B-41 rocket exploded on the splinter shield of the last boat of the columm, killing one Vietnamese and wounding another and the American advisor, Seaman O. L. Boze. The PBRs, assisted by Navy OV-10 air craft, made several firing runs on the area but could not confirm inflicting any casualties.

The forces of TRANHUNGDAO V were temporarily augmented at mid-month with the arrival of 14 craft of River Assault Group 22 in the upper Saigon River area. These additional boats were to establish WBGPs at night and act as a blocking force during daylight operations. After the new unit's familiarization with the operation, eight PBRs of RPD 52 were sent to Nha Be to assist in patrols of the Rung Sat Special Zone and security of the Nha Be petroleum depot.

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TRAN HUNG DAO VI

Enemy activity in the TRAN HUNG DAO VI (CTG 212.5) area of operation continued at a rapid pace in early December, culminating in a sapper attack on the Kien An Advanced Tactical Support Base. By the end of the month, however, the aggressive allied invasion of the U Minh Forest sanctuaries in Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVII had relieved pressure on the Rach Gia area to the north. Commander, TRAN HUNG DAO VI reported that his boats participated in 22 firefights, a number exceeded only by the river craft of Operation SOLID ANCHOR. The allies reported killing 39 of the enemy in hostile action, while suffering three killed and six wounded themselves.

The recently established Kien An ATSB, jumping off point for Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVII, was recovering from two heavy mortar bombardments in November when it was again attacked on 4 December. This third attack was not without warning. A local informer had told the allies that the Viet Cong planned to raze the base, and after the second mortar attack, the local civilian population began packing their belongings and furniture and abandoning the area. On the morning of 3 December, guerrillas lobbed 23 mortar rounds into the base but did not inflict any casualties.

During the pre-dawn hours of 4 December, a Vietnamese Popular Force sentry fired at what he thought was enemy movement along the

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southeast perimeter. A U. S. Army advisor came out to investigate and casually noticed two men hiding under a bunker nearby. As he walked over to examine them, one tossed out a C-4 grenade which the soldier quickly avoided. As he shot down both of the sappers, an estimated 20 Viet Cong began to wade through the moat outside the southern wire perimeter, carring rifles and B-40 rocket launchers over their heads. The allies set off claymore mines and raked the area with 50 calibre machine gun fire, immediately thwarting the ground attack. Navy OV 10 aircraft, flying a patrol to the south for a TRAN HUNG DAO XVII operation, were quickly diverted to Kien An to provide close air support.

A series of ground sweeps during the next two days revealed nine enemy bodies and numerous blood trails. Three of the guerrillas had died inside the perimeter. The allies did not sustain any personnel casualties and material damage resulting from B-40 rocket fire was light.

The senior advisor at Kien An reported that harrassment of the ATSB did not stop with this futile attack. Local informers warned that Viet Cong strategy involved overrunning the base and burning the village. On the following day, an estimated 300 Viet Cong passed within 200 yards of the base, warning all civilians to leave. There were several sensor activations during the next week, suggesting enemy reconnaissance patrols, and on 13 December a man with binoculars and a shovel was seen 75 meters from the perimeter. The man was suspected to be a

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forward observer from an enemy mortar squad. While the base was not directly threatened during the remainder of the month, the Vietnamese CNO ordered three junks of Coastal Group 43 and 30 assault personnel from Ha Tien to Kien An to assist in base defense.

During the late morning of 8 December, an LCM towing a fuel ammi from the Rach Soi Support Base to Kien An was apparently mined as it entered the mouth of the Cai Lon River (WR 108 970), eight kilometers south of Rach Gia. The small explosion tore several small holes in the hull below the waterline, but the ship, escorted by two PBRs, completed her journey without further incident. The suspected mining, the first noted near the Cai Lon's mouth, occurred at a point where river traffic is funnelled into a 40 foot channel by fish net stakes extending from the banks.

Two Seals of Detachment Golf, Kilo Platoon engaged in a brief but vicious firefight off the Kien Thanh coast on the night of 10 December. The two Americans, assisted by one Vietnamese LDNN and two Kit Carson Scouts, departed the Rach Soi support base at dusk and proceeded to a point 14 kilometers northwest of Rach Gia (VS 999 145) in an attempt to interdict Viet Cong supply traffic along the coast. They searched eight sampans but found only women and children fishing. The unit then approached a motorized sampan which appeared to be stationary. When within 25 meters, the Vietnamese LDNN called to the man but

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could elicit no response. When they closed to within five meters, the sampan began moving north and one of the passengers reached for a weapon. The Seal patrol leader, LTJG John C. Marsh, began to fire, but his weapon jammed after two or three rounds. Two more men then emerged from the floor of the enemy sampan, and all four Viet Cong opened fire on the allies. In the first burst, the patrol leader was wounded three times, a Kit Carson Scout and the LDNN were killed, and the other scout was wounded. The only unharmed man, ETSN Paul K. Barnes, unleashed a barrage of automatic weapons fire which killed all four Viet Cong and sank their sampan. His own craft sinking, Seaman Barnes recovered his wounded comrades and called in the Light Seal Support Craft with emergency signals as his radio had been lost. The wounded were quickly medevaced by Seawolf helicopters. Seaman Barnes was recommended for the Navy Cross for his heroic actions.

Carelessness and poor communications caused the deaths of several allied troops and civilians in the TRAN HUNG DAO VI AO during December. On the 18th of the month, two Vietnamese sailors were wounded when a M-79 grenade round, fired by an American watch stander on the Kien An perimeter, detonated on an overhead power line. On 21 December the crews of PBRs 7652 and 7653, positioned in a waterborne guardpost eight kilometers southeast of Rach Gia (WS 150 020) heard noises and saw sampan movement north of their ambush site. The PBRs broke

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position, drifted toward the movement and illuminated with spotlights three men in the water, crossing the canal. The Navy patrol attacked with machine guns and grenades, but were immediately advised by radio that they were in contact with friendly forces. The ARVN unit's failure to notify the river forces that it would be operating in the area resulted in one killed and six wounded.

Five civilians were killed and another eight wounded in four seperate incidents during December by friendly mortar fire near the Kien An base. The senior naval advisor at the base, however, suspected that many of the incidents involved Viet Cong deception of friendly firing to impede pacification in the area. Additionally, a USN sentry killed a VNN petty officer as he emerged from the water at the Rach Soi ATSB during the early morning of 27 December.

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TRAN HUNG DAO VIII

Activity for the month was limited to a small number of harassing maneuvers. Various intelligence reports indicated that the main force units in Dinh Tuong Province have been instructed to avoid contact with friendly ground and air forces. Other reports indicated increased sapper activities and city fighting training of company size units in Chau Thanh and Sam Giong Districts. Army reports indicated that sappers in My Tho City were to terrorize public meetings and eating places with emphasis on bars and restaurant frequented by friendly forces. Further reports have indicated that high sapper activity will accompany mortar attacks in a coordinated effort against populated areas as well as outposts conducting successful GVN pacification operations.

On 6 December at 0650H, eight Seals from Seal Detachment Alpha, 8th Platoon, and one LDNN departed My Tho in a Seawolf for Cai Lay (XS 205 457), 22 kilometers west of Dong Tam. Acting on intelligence provided by the province chief , the two squads of Seals supported by Seawolves were inserted and promptly observed persons evading for the high brush. The Seals and Seawolves took the evaders under fire, killing three VC. The Seals then made a through search of the area, capturing four more VC and various enemy weapons and supplies.

On 6 December at 0200H, the Cai Hua Bridge (XS 111 489) was sabotaged by an enemy force of unknown size using an unidentified explosive. The

bridge, essential to a 7th ARVN Division LOC, was 60% damaged. This bridge also provided access to the only overland route to the My Tho area in northwest Dinh Tuong.

On 15 December at 1230H, Twelve Seals from Seal Detachment Alpha, 8th Platoon, departed Dong Tam for Sam Giang District (XS 351 471), seven kilometers northwest of Dong Tam. In search of nine VC, targeted by intelligence sources, the Seals searched the hootches in the area, capturing one VC and detaining four VC suspects. At 1340H, The Seals were extracted from the area and returned to Dong Tam.

On 24 December at 0030H, the city of My Tho (XS 499 446) came under attack when three 82 millimeter mortar rounds impacted in the area, wounding one RF soldier. The three rounds came from the northwest area, the site of past enemy mortar firing operations. The last mortar attack on My Tho City was on 26 November 1970 at which time the My Tho Navy Base was fired on with two 82mm mortar rounds.

On 30 December at 1050H, the Dong Tam Navy Base (XS 413 438) came under fire when three 82mm mortar rounds impacted within four hundred meters to the southeast of the Seawolf helopad. No casualties resulted from this attack, and structural damage was of no consequence. The last mortar attack on Dong Tam Navy Base was on 8 November 1970 when one round was received. The base again was struck at 1849H in the vicinity of XS 412 434 when five rounds of 75 millimeter impacted the area. For-

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tunately, no casualties or damage resulted from this latest attack.

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TRAN HUNG DAO IX

The Commander of TRAN HUNG DAO IX, responsible for thwarting enemy infiltration across an area extending from Tuyen Nhon to Tan Chau, enjoyed another exceptionally inactive month in December. There were only four fire fights involving river units, and the allies neither sustained nor reported inflicting any casualties in hostile action. The recently completed naval support base at Tan Chau was turned over to the Vietnamese Navy on 17 December.

The boats of TRAN HUNG DAO IX remained quite taxed to patrol their assigned areas as ten PBRs of River Patrol Division 56 were sent to the U Minh Forest to participate in TRAN HUNG DAO XVII. The burden was partially relieved by the arrival of five "Swift" boats (PCF) at YRBM 21 at An Long in mid-December. The new boats, the first "Swifts" to be used in this operation, were to patrol the Cau Long River and escort supply ships into Cambodia. Additionally, a mine sweeping team of Mining Interdiction Division 93 began patrolling the waterways in both TRAN HUNG DAO I and IX in December. Each team consisted of one MSM and two LCMs.

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TRAN HUNG DAO XIV

For the month of December, a light to moderate level of enemy activity existed in the TRAN HUNG DAO XIVAO. The level of activity has indicated that larger enemy units within Kien Hoa Province have broken up into smaller squad size units and have been directed into interdictory efforts, primarily LOCs and operational harrassments at a low level.

On 7 December at 2200H, ten seals from Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, Xray Platoon, one LDNN, a scout, and one guide embarked aboard an MSSC (BM2 Hunt, advisor) for an area in Mo Cay District (XS 472 252), seven kilometers southeast of Kien Hoa. Acting on intelligence acquired by PO2 Thang (scout), the group attempted a raid on a sleeping area of approximately 13 assorted VC and VCI of the village and supporting guerrillas. On arrival at the suspected area (XS 480 273) at 2250H, the enemy had departed. After searching the entire area for enemy personnel and weapons, the mission was aborted and all returned back to the MSSC at 0445H for transport to Ben Tre.

On 9 December at 2200H, six Seals from Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, one scout and one guide were inserted in Binh Dai District (XS 832 189), Kien Hoa Province, 42 kilometers southeast of Ben Tre in a capture raid against one district cadre, and two hamlet cadre. At 2205H, a sampan was noted crossing Ba Lai River (XS 630 320) and proceeded to evade. The sampan was fired upon, with both occupants abandoning the

craft. The number of enemy casualties was not ascertained, but the sampan contained one half kilo of documents. After a search of the area was conducted, the Seals were extracted at 0405H in the vicinity of XS 832 189 and returned to Ben Tre.

On 9 December in Kien Hoa Province (XS 492 270), four kilometers south of Ben Tre, a serious accident resulting from improper operation of an M-79 occurred. EN3 David A. Marshall, USN, of Raid 72, serving TAD to Raid 74, received a minor shrapnel wound in the left arm as a result of a VNN crewman firing his M-79 too close to his boat. HQ 1233 with HQ 1234 were on a patrol on Ham Luong River when the incident occurred. EN3 Marshall was medevaced to MACV compound at Ben Tre, treated by USN corpsmen and released.

On 13 December at 1230H, 12 Seals, one scout, and two guides embarked in two Slicks and conducted a heliborne operation against a suspected VC bivouac area and a number of village and hamlet VCI of Thoi Thuan Village in Binh Thuan District (XS 890 170). After moving through the area, recent tracks indicated the VC had left just prior to arrival of the Seals. A VC was seen evading through the trees and was fired upon but escaped. At 1430H, Slicks had taken another VC under fire resulting in a probable VC casualty. At 1450H, Seals moved to a hootch 50 meters from the initial contact in the vicinity of XS 897 123 and found two women and six cups of hot tea. The men were located in adjacent bunkers and were called to

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surrender. In an exchange of grenades and a suicide accomplishment, four Seals were wounded. The suicide involved one VC, who holding a grenade to his body with the pin out, approached the Seals and was killed, but not before he could inflict casualties upon three Seals in the resulting explosion. The wounded Seals were medevaced to Ben Tre for additional treatment. At 1610H, Seals patrolled approximately 500 meters to the southwest (XS 897 123), searching 13 hootches and taking six prisoners. At 1825H, the operation was secured, and the Seals returned to Ben Tre. Results of the operation were four USN wounded, one VC killed, and one VC probably killed.

On 20 December at 2145H, five Seals from Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, Xray Platoon in Giong Trom District, Kien Hoa Province, 16 kilometers east of Ben Tre, embarked with one scout aboard an MSSC and attempted a mission to interdict a commo-liaison route. As soon as they had been inserted, the patrol was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire in the vicinity of XS 673 314 at 2300H, resulting immediately in two USN killed, one USN wounded, and one VN guide wounded. The VC force consisted of approximately 10 to 15 men. RM2 Baker, the only member not wounded, assisted the wounded USN, RM3 Hetzell, and swam out into the canal. The MSSC scrambled Black Ponies and Seawolves who promptly took the area under fire while rescue efforts for both the dead, EM3 Riter and BMC Bomar, and the wounded were continuing. After the MSSC picked up the wounded personnel, they were immediately medevaced. At 2330H, LT Collins and five Seals along with four LDNN were scrambled to the area to

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recover the USN killed and all weapons. In the ensuing search, no further contact was encountered.

The month of December ended with the strategy and tactics indicating a continuation of small unit terrorist and harassment incidents. Friendly forces have moved into the portions of the Thanh Phu Secret Zone areas, and PBR assets have joined TRAN HUNG DAO XIV units operating in Kien Hoa Province. The trend of enemy activity has been centered more actively against the pacification program, namely attacks by M-79 and B-40 against GVN outposts.

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TRAN HUNG DAO XVII

Effective 1 December 1970, Task Force 210, designated TRAN HUNG DAO XVII, was officially established for operational purposes. The initial participants for this operation were as follows:

Designator	USN Advisor	Unit
CTF 210	CAPT Spencer	ATF 211
CTG 210.1	LT Marleley	RAID 71
CTG 210.2	LT Kirtley	RID 40
CTG 210.3	LT Oversier	RAG 25/29
CTG 210.4	LT Zemansky	RPD 61

The concern for this operation was amply stressed by Deputy COMNAVFORV on 2 December when he declared the need for personnel to relieve RAID 70 and 71 advisors of their Kien An duties so that they could participate in the TRAN HUNG DAO XVII Operation. He further stated that SOLID ANCHOR requirements must take second place to Kien An (1st) and Ca Mau (2nd).

The specific area of operation and number of assets for each task group as of December was as follows:

CTG 210.1: RAIDs 70 and 71 supported units of the 33rd Regiment, 21st ARVN Division, with troop lifts and supply runs. RAID units patrolled the Kinh Can Gao from VR 945 623 to WR 128 899 with one Monitor, eight Tango boats, and five Alpha boats.

CTG 210.2: RID 40 units assisted the 32nd Regiment, 21st ARVN Division.

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One CCB, ten Tangos, two Alphas, and two LCM-8s patrolled the Rach Tau from WR 060 210 to VR 997 542.

CTG 210.3: RAG 25/29 units supported elements of the 4th Rangers and patrolled the Song Trem Trem from WR 10 33 to WR 32 54. The task group consisted of two CDTs, two MONs, four LCMs, one LCVP, three FOMs, and two RPCs.

CTG 210.4: RPD 61 patrolled the Song Cai Lon from WR 105 970 to WR 305 745 providing security for units of the 9th Cavalry, 21st ARVN Division. The task group included 20 PBRs, seven LCM-8s, and one LCU.

With the formation of the operational elements, the long-awaited offense against the VC stronghold in the U Minh Forest began when on 1 December at 1015H, elements of the 21st ARVN Division were inserted at VR 97 39, WR 21 68, WR 16 48, and WR 74 78. It was not long before the enemy retaliated. At 1055H, an ATC of RID 40 received three 120mm launch bombs, 23 miles south of Kien An at WR 03 55. While two bombs missed, one of the bombs landed in the well deck but did not explode. One VNN was wounded as a result of the attack.

On 3 December at 0830H, an Alpha boat of RID 40 was struck by one of three B-40 rocket rounds fired in the vicinity of WR 100 275. No casualties resulted from this attack, and structural damage was not critical, as the boat continued on its own power.

On 4 December at 0900H, 23 miles southeast of Rach Song

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(WR 041 132), units of RAID 70 and 71 received B-40 rockets and small arms fire, killing two VNN and wounding seven. At 1000H, one monitor and two FOMs of RAG 25/29, 16 miles northeast of Cai Mau (WR 218 440), received B-40 and small arms fire resulting in moderate damage to the boats. One VNN was killed, and seven VNN were wounded. While the naval units received intense fire on the waterways, elements of the 32nd Regiment of the 21st ARVN Division were sweeping an area 17 miles northwest of Ca Mau and uncovering a VC cache of arms which included: 300 kilos of medical supplies, 800 kilos of small arms ammunition, one ton of mixed mortar rounds, 66 cases of mixed small arms ammunition, and four cases of K50 ammunition.

On 5 December at 1915H in Kien Giang Province (WR 182 779), 12.5 kilometers southeast of Kien An, PBRs of RPD 61 enroute to a night WBGP encountered enemy fire from both sides of the Cai Lon, PBR 7703 was hit on the starboard side by a B-40 rocket, disabling the starboard engine. The PBRs returned the fire, suppressing the enemy action, and continued with H&I for an additional ten minutes. No personnel casualties resulted from the engagement, but the damaged boat had to be towed to Tan Chau.

Units of RAG 25 received B-40 rocket rounds on three seperate occasions seven miles southwest of Kien An (WR 043 476) from 8 December at 2100H to 9 December at 1620H. One B-40 rocket struck one of

the boats causing major damage and killing one VNN and wounding two.

On 12 December at 0001H, ATC HQ 1262, a Tango boat of RAID 70, was sunk by a mine positioned by a suspected swimmer sapper in the vicinity of VR 941 619. The mine blew an estimated four foot diameter hole on the port side aft, and the boat sank in an inverted position. Two VNN were missing and presumed trapped in the wreckage; three VNN were wounded, while the two USN advisors escaped with minor abrasions.

In one of the most brutal and cunning attacks by the VC against the 33rd Regiment during the month, an estimated two battalion force of VC (about 500 men) struck on 14 December at 0400H in a ground attack preceded by about 200 rounds of B-40, 75mm recoiless rifles, and 82mm mortar. One battalion attacked from the northeast and the other from the southwest in the vicinity of VR 975 601. Contact was broken at 0600H, although helos continued to place air strikes in the area. Results of the encounter were: 14 ARVN killed, 63 ARVN wounded, two USMC NGF wounded, and two USA wounded. Four boats of RAID 70 and 71 were struck, resulting in one Alpha boat (HQ 5129) being sunk and two LCM-8s and an ATC being damaged. Naval casualties were one USN wounded and 17 VNN wounded. There were 48 VC killed in the encounter, 32 of them by air assets.

At 1100H on the same day, the Ranger Battalion attached to RAG 25/29 was attacked by B-40 and B-41 rocket fire along with heavy small arms

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fire from both banks of the Song Trem Trem (WR 030 494). The friendly elements reacted with a heavy barrage of their own and called in the helo assault team for added firepower. But the fierce engagement resulted in one FOM being completely destroyed; one monitor and an LCM were partially destroyed. One USA was killed, and one USN was wounded. One VNN was killed, nine VNN were wounded, and seven ARVN were wounded.

On 17 December at 1020H on the Can Gio Canal (VR 958 710), five units of CTG 210.1 escorting two LCM-8s were attacked by B-40 rocket and small arms fire. In the ensuing encounter, one of the LCM-8s was sunk by a command detonated mine. The boat rested on the west side of the canal out of the traffic lane initially, but by the 19th of December, it had shifted and was blocking the waterway for other craft. Deputy COMNAV-FORV requested immediate assistance for salvage operations of the LCM-8. HCU-1 from Vung Tau was ordered to report to the salvage site for survey and possible salvage of the stricken craft and also other sunken craft (HQ 1262 at VR 941 619, an ATC at VR 945 415, and a ASPB at VR 945 415) in the area. By the 20th of the month, the LCM-8 was surveyed for possible salvage and was deemed to have extensive structural damage and was recommended be blown up in place.

On 22 December, HCU-1 salvage team decided to push LCM-8, sunk on 17 December, to the bank of the canal, permitting passage of other

craft and then proceeded to VR 941 619 in a six boat convoy to conduct surveys of the other sunken craft. By 25 December a survey of ATC 1262 and HQ 5129 was accomplished. ATC 1262, containing some VNN bodies, was embedded in the river bottom and considered unsalvageable, but HQ 5129 was considered to be salvageable. On 27 December, HQ 5129 was finally refloated and towed to Kien An but not before it was attacked with rocket and small arms fire from both banks of the canal. All seven members of the salvage team were fortunate and returned intact to Rach Soi. But before they could rest up, an urgent request was made for their services at Sa Dec, where the LCM-8, HQ 5014, was sunk at WS 856 388.

On 18 December at 1453H, in another well-planned ambush operation, boats of RID 40 were attacked with B-40 rocket, mortar, and small arms fire in the vicinity of VR 943 417 . HQ 1249 was sunk as a result of a mine detonating beneath it. HQ 5159 was struck by rocket fire, destroying both engines and causing the boat to be beached. EN 3 Hoover was the only American casualty while four VNN were killed and 12 were wounded.

As a result of the operation in the U Minh Forest which had been a traditional stronghold of VC activity, the GVN was finally able to contest the enemy's authority over a large area. Many problems resulted in this first month of operations besides the many casualties and sinkings. Communication equipment was not available for all

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operating units, communication transmissions were continuously interrupted by an enemy commo-liaison team operating in the area, operational personnel were shifted, and the many refugees had to be transported from the contested zones to secure areas. The most important factor of this operation has been the liberation of personnel and area which had been held by the Viet Cong since 1968.

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE

For the month of December, it was again a determined effort by RSSZ units to oust the enemy from the myriad positions they occupy in the Rung Sat Special Zone. On 1 December, COMNAVFORV noted that the aggressiveness and high state of combat effectiveness by the RSSZ units during operation CHUONG DOUNG 54-70 were most gratifying. He further went on to praise all existing units for their accomplishments.

On 3 December at 0208H, approximately six VC entered the village of Ly Nhon, 13 miles south of Nha Be, and fired two B-40 rockets at the PSDF headquarters building. A US Navy LHFT airborne at the time was vectored to the stricken outpost and provided illumination and overhead cover. The VC evaded to the east without inflicting any casualties but with three captured weapons. It is believed that this probe was executed by the Ly Nhon guerrilla unit whose normal operating area is along Rach Goc Tre Lan (XS 96 58).

On 2 December at 0730H, CHOUNG DOUNG55-70 was initiated in Phuoc Tuy Province, Long Le District (YS 23 70), 30 kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. At 0930H, an estimated squad of VC was encountered and taken under fire resulting in one VC killed, one weapon captured, and assorted documents captured. In addition, six base camps, nine bunkers and six sampans were destroyed. On 3 December at 0920H, RF Company 782 inserted by Slicks at YS 245 682, swept northeast, and at 1100H came in contact with an unknown

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number of VC. RSSZ units killed 15 VC in the encounter and captured one weapon and two kilos of documents. Various other sweeps were conducted for the rest of the day with negative results.

Air-water mobile operation, CHUONG DUONG 55-70 was concluded on 4 December with the following results: 16 VC killed, three weapons captured; six base camps, one convalescent camp with 80 beds, and six sampans were destroyed. In addition two kilos of documents and assorted medical supplies were also captured. The documents indicated that the VC units encountered were the H-5 medical section and convalescent units C212 and C214 of Convalescence Battalion K 3.

On 4 December at 1030H, 36 PRUs were inserted by US Army Slicks in Bien Hoa Province (YS 085 953), 24 kilometers northeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. At 1047H US Navy LHFT placed an airstrike in the vicinity of YS 087 957 which was the scene of VC movement. As a result, 14 VC were killed, and in the ensuing sweep by the PRUs, an additional four VC were also killed. At 1305H, PRUs again came in contact with an unknown number of VC in the vicinity of YS 085 957. Seawolves provided continuous fire support in the fierce engagement which resulted in two VC killed and three wounded. In addition, five AK-47 magazines, 800 AK-47 rounds, two kilos of documents, and a large assortment of medical instruments and supplies were captured.

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Five base camps, three sampans, and 200 kilos of rice were destroyed.

CHUONG DUONG 56-70 was initiated on 9 December at 0730H in Quang Xuyen Province (YS 010 530) ten kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. On 10 December at 1600H, the operation was concluded. The results of the first day were: neither friendly nor enemy casualties; one bag of clothing and one can of water captured; two bunkers, two sleeping platforms, and one cooking hootch destroyed.

CHUONG DUONG 56-70 continued on 11 December at 0731H in Bien Hoa Province (YS 17 78), 24 kilometers east of the Nha Be Navy Base. At 0850H, RSSZ units swept north and came into contact with an unknown number of VC in the vicinity of YS 164 738. The results of the engagement left six friendly troops wounded (three wounded by enemy fire and three possibly wounded by fragments from close air support aircraft). Five of the six seriously wounded were evacuated to Nha Be for emergency medical treatment and then to Long Binh for further treatment. At 1100H, the remaining troops swept south destroying 20 kilos of rice and uncovering an enemy weapons cache at YS 165 777.

Results of CHUONG DUONG 56-70 were: six friendly casualties; ten B-40 rounds, 3,000 AK-47 rounds, seven B-40 boosters, eight anti-tank grenades and one mortar round were captured; one sampan, 20 kilos of rice, 64 mortar rounds, two bunkers, two sleeping platforms, and one cooking hootch were

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destroyed.

CHUONG DUONG 57-70 was initiated on 16 December at 0745H in Can Gio District (YS 06 58, YS 07 56, YS 05 58, YS 10 50), 20-24 kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. On the first day of operation, no casualties were reported but six bunkers were destroyed as RF troops swept the area in the vicinity of YS 071 543. On 17 December at 0700H, RF troops swept the area in the vicinity of YS 00 53, 33 kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. At 1400H, RF troops came into contact with three VC who evaded across the river. At 1424H, one VC was sighted in the vicinity of YS 055 528, wounded, and captured. The prisoner was taken to Can Gio District Headquarters for medical treatment and interrogation and later medevaced to Nha Be by Slick.

Results for the entire day were: one VC captured; assorted documents, ten D cell batteries, 700 meters of wire, four sets of black pajamas, 400 kilos of rice, and two cooking pots captured; one sampan, three bunkers and 13 platforms were destroyed.

On 18 December at 1430H, RF Platoons 009 and 016 combined on a sweep of an area in the vicinity of YS 136 502. They concluded the sweep with the capture of one M-26 grenade and the destruction of one bunker and two containers of drinking water in the vicinity of YS 139 516.

On 19 December at 1954H, elements of RF Company 647 came into contact with an estimated squad of VC in the vicinity of YS 145 516, 35 kilometers

southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. Results of the encounter were two VC killed and two AK-47 weapons captured. RF troops combined with a PRU unit to sweep the entire area.

On 20 December CHUONG DUONG 57-70 was conducted at 1545H after RF Company 647 in the vicinity of YS 202 695 swept the area to the northwest. One bunker was discovered along with a badly decomposed body in the vicinity of YS 203 693. An additional two other bunkers were destroyed at the end of the sweep.

On 23 December at 0000H, PF Platoon 017 and PSDF were inserted by PBRs of RPD 57 into an area nine miles southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. An unknown number of VC were encountered in the vicinity of XS 960 710. A firefight ensued with the enemy firing two B-40 rounds and approximately 40 rounds of small arms fire. Seawolves scrambled and placed airstrikes on the suspected enemy position (XS 96 71). At 0100H, a VNN PBR from RPD 57 joined in the firefight and also placed fire on the enemy position while at the same time acting as a blocking force at the mouth of the Rach La River (XS 953 731). At 0215H, PF Platoon 017 and PSDF proceeded to sweep the area without further contact.

Results of the VC probe on Quang Xuyen Province were one PSDF killed and one HD-10 mine captured.

CHUONG DUONG 58-70 was initiated on 26 December at 0845H when RF Company 121 was inserted by Slicks in Quang Xuyen Province (XS 98 73),

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nine kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base. Although there was indication of enemy presence by the end of the first day of operation, no enemy was encountered. On 27 December at 0900H, RF Company 117 was inserted by Slicks at XS 599 667, with the troops sweeping northwest without sighting the enemy. At 1520H, an unknown number of VC were sighted in the vicinity of XS 980 670 and taken under fire. One friendly soldier and two Viet Cong were wounded. One VC notebook, one AK-47 weapon and one claymore mine were captured while 60 kilos of rice were destroyed.

On 28 December at 1445H, CHUONG DUONG 58-70 was conducted without further encounter with the enemy. One sampan and two bunkers were destroyed in a base camp at XS 964 555.

Results of the three day operation were: one RF was wounded, two VC were killed; six structures, 60 kilos of rice, and one sampan were destroyed; one VC notebook, one AK-47, one claymore mine, and one grenade were captured.

For the month of December, 56 VC were killed, three were captured, and 11 individual weapons seized. No US Navy casualties were sustained, although three friendly were killed and 11 wounded.

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LONG TAU SHIPPING CHANNEL

For the merchant ships plying the Long Tau Shipping Channel, the month of December was an uneventful period, as no attacks either by rocket or mine were directed at them. But this pause could only have been accomplished through the untiring efforts of the RSSZ units and the relentless minesweeping by Mine Division 91. The Senior Advisor, LT R.S. Garrett, USNR, of Mine Division 91 was relieved by LT(JG) H.G. Law, Jr., USNR on 30 November. For LT(JG) Law a brief period of respite existed but this pause did not hold very long.

On 8 December at 0905H, the VNN HQ 155, MLMS, while on routine minesweeping patrol of the Dong Noi River (YS 038 988) in company with HQ 152 (EMC R.A. Waddell embarked as patrol advisor), struck a submerged object and sank by the bow in approximately five minutes. One VNN suffered a minor injury to his foot while abandoning the craft. All other crewmembers were accounted for and safe. Except for an M-79 grenade launcher, all weapons have been recovered. The craft was at the bottom of the river in 24 feet of water.

On 31 December at 0620H, while on a routine minesweeping patrol on the Long Tau River in the vicinity of YS 034 648, VNN HQ 1804 (BM2 L.L. Fitzgerald embarked as patrol advisor) ran hard aground. VNN HQ 1805, which was in company with HQ 1804 on patrol, attempted to free the grounded craft but also ran aground. It is anticipated both craft will re-float on the

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next high tide.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

An important milestone in the Vietnamization of coastal surveillance operations was reached on 1 December when the last 14 USN PCFs were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy. This closed a memorable chapter in the history of United States Naval operations which was opened more than five years ago when the first "Swifts" arrived in Vietnam in October, 1965. Coastal Flotilla One, Coastal Squadron One, and Coastal Division Thirteen were disestablished as a result of the turnover.

Salvage operations continued throughout the month on the SL-3 trawler which was sunk off the coast of Kien Hoa Province (XR 860 800) on 22 November 1970. All salvageable material had been removed from the craft's holds by month's end, and the resulting haul of some 61 tons of war material showed how heavy a blow had been dealt the enemy supply system. The salvage operation was carried out by USN and VNN divers working from USS CONSERVER (ARS 39). The following items were recovered:

2 cans of 12.7 ammunition
1 sight for a 12.7mm machinegun
1 package of mechanical delay pencils with tabs and detonators
1 two cylinder outboard motor
2 drum magazines for a type 56 light machinegun
1 canvas cover
20 birdcage underwater pressure actuating devices
1 accessory kit for a 75mm rifle
3 portable radios
1 rubber flotation bag with power unit and back pack for radio plus documents and miscellaneous items

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1 damaged portable radio
2 tire inner tubes and 1 repair kit
2 pair Soviet binoculars
1 bag coaxial cables, antenna wire and generator cranks for partable cable
3 cans of pull friction fuze lighters
2 electronic repair kits
1 bag of outboard motor repair parts
4 large bags of medical supplies and food and clothing for several men
1 radio chassis shipboard
5 type 56 75 mm recoilless rifles
1 7.62 automatic pistol type 54
3 Chicom stick grenades
2 fishnets
7 bags of clothing, toilet kit, and burlap bag
1 rubber tire
19 camouflage nets
1 bag of medical supplies
1 can of 1000 feet time fuze
3 oars
1 megaphone
10 cases of non-electric blasting caps
1 deck mounted 82 mm recoilless rifle
1,110,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition
194 AK-47 rifles
420 B-40 rockets
458 B-41 rockets
242 75 mm projectiles
95 107 mm rockets
56 82 mm rockets
52 B-40 rocket launchers
46 B-41 rocket launchers
88 batteries
49 cases of C-3
6,870 pounds of TNT

A Market Time ship carried out a mission of mercy on 29 December. USCGC MORGENTHAU responded to the distress call of the Malay vessel MV JOY TAYLOR (underway from Singapore to Saigon with a cargo of lube oil in drums) which was reported sinking 150 miles

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southeast of Poulo Obi and arrived on the scene at 1200H. The 23 man crew abandoned ship at 1400H and were taken aboard MORGENTHAU. The ship capsized and sank in twenty fathoms at 1729H, and the rescued crew members were transported to An Thoi.

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FIRST COASTAL ZONE

Activity in the First Coastal Zone during December was at a generally low level, except for an attempted enemy thrust at the beginning of the month, which did not achieve any significant results. The quiet, however, was punctuated on 27 December when a signal defeat was dealt the 126th NVA Naval Sapper Regiment. An entire platoon of that unit, which has long plagued naval forces operating on the Cua Viet River, was destroyed by PF forces and helicopter gunships.

Harbor security forces in DaNang discovered that their job involved hazards other than enemy action. At 0530H on 3 December, the crew of PB 30, one USN and four VNN sailors, sighted a sampan alongside a customs boat which in turn was moored to a merchant ship. They noted that suspicious cargo was being transferred from the customs boat to the sampan. PB 30 pulled up alongside and was in the process of detaining the sampan, its occupants, and cargo for being in restricted waters when the PB crew was confronted by two Vietnamese customs personnel with locked and loaded weapons who attempted to prevent the sampan's apprehension. The USN advisor's insistence, along with the subsequent arrival of another picket boat, resulted in the successful apprehension of the sampan. Three Vietnamese personnel aboard the sampan and a cargo of three cases of china were taken into custody and turned over to the First Coastal Zone security officer.

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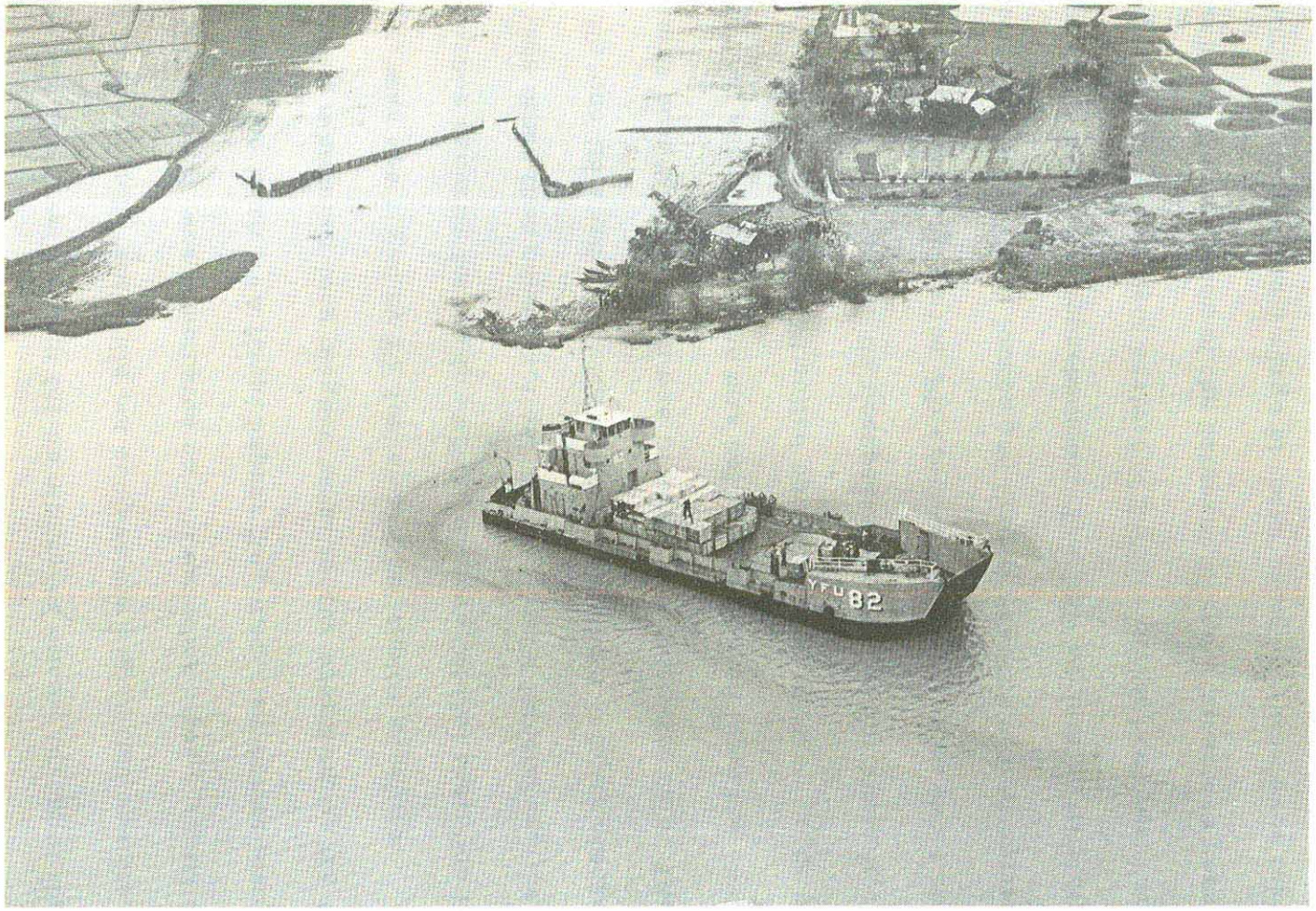

YFU-82 in grounded position two miles northeast of Dong Ha on Cua River on December 28, 1970, prior to rescue by salvage personnel.

Salvage operations continued in an attempt to retrieve some of the craft which were lost during the storms of October and November. On 7 December, USS PERSISTENT (MSO 491) and USS GRAPPLE (ARS 491) relocated the wreck of Picket Boat 43, which sank in the open sea off China Beach, DaNang, on 15 October. Surveys by divers revealed that the craft had been twisted in half and was probably beyond economic repair. As a result, salvage efforts were abandoned.

On 16 December the US Army began shipping supplies to Quang Tri Province in YFUs sailing from DaNang to Dong Ha. Coastal Group 11 provided a Yabuta to pilot the YFUs into the Cua Viet River and commenced dawn to dusk river patrols. MID-92 craft swept immediately ahead of the YFUs while they were both inbound and outbound. On 27 December, YFU 82 ran aground about two kilometers northeast of Dong Ha (YD 263 624). COMNAVSUPPFAC DaNang served as on-scene commander for the salvage operations, and the YFU was pulled off the sandbar by three ARVN LCM-8s on 31 December.

At 0930H on 25 December, a fisherman reported finding a mine entangled in his nets 6 kilometers northeast of Dong Ha (YD 305 677). EODTEUPAC Team 82-04 was dispatched, and the mine was recovered intact. It consisted of 80 pounds of C-4 explosives and an innertube for buoyancy to allow for swimmer emplacement. EOD personnel estimated that the mine had been in the water for a week.

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From 0930H to 1230H, on 27 December, five Popular Forces platoons and helicopter gunships engaged an estimated platoon of the 126th NVA Naval Sapper Regiment near Jones Creek (YD 29 67) about four miles northwest of the CG 11 base. The unit was attempting to avoid contact by hiding in a scrub area and was only discovered when a member of the unit inadvertently led the PFs to their position. The unit was completely wiped out, with 19 killed and one, badly wounded, captured. Three PF soldiers were wounded when they had a grenade tossed at them as they approached a man who said he wanted to surrender. The dead had empty packs and flotation bladders, indicating that the unit was returning from mine emplacement. This was verified by interrogation of the prisoner who, although severly wounded in the abdomen, was able to talk. He revealed that his unit had moved from the vicinity of Vinh Linh City, North Vietnam, to the Cua Viet River where they placed two 50 kilogram pressure mines on the night of 26 December. This apparently was confirmed when MID-92 units returning from night patrol detonated two water mines of unknown size, without damage , at 0645H on 29 December. This took place in the Cua Viet River about five kilometers southwest of the CG-11 base (YD 296 665), the stretch of the waterway nearest to the scene of the 27 December engagement.

The POW, a 19 year old NVA PFC from Thanh Hoa Province in

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North Vietnam, and a member of the 1A Platoon of the C-2 Company of the 126th NVA Naval Sapper Regiment (interrogation revealed that the 126th consisted of four companies of 50 to 60 men, each of which had four platoons), provided some details of his training which was conducted in Haiphong. It included two months of swimming instruction, two to three months of demolition training, and two to three months of political indoctrination.

Activity in the SEA TIGER/CHI LANG I area of operation remained at a low level during the month, but there were continuing indications of the presence of enemy forces on Cam Thanh Island, just to the east of Hoi An (BT 192 570 to BT 187 577). Intelligence analysts identified one of the most important units in that area as the Second Company of the VC Q-80 Local Force Battalion which had an estimated strength of 50 to 60 men.

On 11 December, a Hoi Chanh led CHI LANG I units into an area seven kilometers south of Hoi An (BT 148 515) to point out bunkers for destruction. Prior to insertion at 0930H, two PBRs of RPD 60 made contact with an enemy force of unknown size, just to the northwest of the point to which they were proceeding. The enemy was taken under fire and evaded to the southeast. Two VC were killed and the fleeing enemy forces left behind two hand grenades, rice, documents, clothing, and medical supplies. The mission continued without

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incident, and three bunkers were destroyed while VNN Dufflebag personnel made a sensor implant.

VNN personnel assumed control of all CHI LANG/SEA TIGER Dufflebag sensor operations on 1 December, making up Task Unit 221.1.4.

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SECOND COASTAL ZONE

In the Second Coastal Zone, December began with an enemy thrust on the night of 1 December, which achieved only limited success, and immediately thereafter, activity subsided to a low level, a state of affairs which continued until month's end.

The biggest success attained by the enemy during his attack occurred at 1933H on 1 December when five 107mm rockets landed in the Naval Air Facility at Cam Ranh Bay. The officers' club kitchen took a direct hit and barracks #7 received minor shrapnel damage. ADRAN Eric Lawrence Griffith, who had been at work in the officers' club, was killed and RM 2 Dale D. Brown was seriously wounded. In addition, three other USN personnel, one Korean civilian, and three US Army personnel were wounded, and one US Air Force personnel and one VNN sailor were killed.

Two other incidents were possibly associated with the attack. At 0430H on 2 December, the bow sentry aboard the SS AMERICAN CHALLENGER, tied up at Pier Five at Cam Ranh Bay, spotted two swimmers in the water about 30 yards from the ship. Subsequent investigation and hull checks by EOD personnel produced no results. Also, at 0135H on 2 December, the enemy launched a coordinated attack against three locations in Song Cau District of Phu Yen Province near the CG 23 base (CQ 081 880, CQ 065 015, and CQ 069 835).

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Fourteen rounds of 82mm mortar fire impacted in the hamlet adjoining the CG 23 base (CQ 081 880), and six Vietnamese civilians were wounded. There were no USN casualties. The fire was returned with undetermined results . A new AK-50 was captured during the attacks, indicating that the enemy had received new supplies, some of which were Soviet in origin.

At 0535H on 6 December four rockets landed near NAF Cam Ranh Bay, but there were no casualties or damage. At 1745H on 9 December an unknown enemy unit fired six rounds of mortar toward the Satcom area near Camp McDermott at Nha Trang. All rounds were short, landing in the river which separates the Dong Bo Secret Zone from Nha Trang.

At 0020H on 17 December an Army sentry spotted a swimmer along the south side of Pier Five at Cam Ranh Bay. LCPL 43 and Skimmer 28 began dropping grenades immediately but saw nothing. EOD personnel arrived at 0110H and checked the US merchant ship OVERSEAS ROSE, which was moored to the other side of the pier, but they found nothing.

At 1943H on 20 December, VNN LCPL 37 of the Cam Ranh Bay Harbor Defense Unit reported a possible swimmer near anchorage 36 in the outer harbor of Cam Ranh Bay. The swimmer was detected by an experimental doppler sonar unit of NRDU-V. The LCPL made a concussion grenade run of the area with no observable results. EOD personnel arrived at 2010H and made diving checks of a merchant

ship and barges which were anchored in the area, but no evidence of swimmer activity was found.

On 20 December the enemy revealed a capability for yet another type of operation. At 2400H, an unknown number of VC made an amphibious landing about 15 miles south of Qui Nhon (CQ 187 897) using 15 motorized sampans. They made contact with a local RF and PSDF unit and killed all personnel with a B-40 rocket attack. The VC then entered Tu Nham Hamlet (CQ 942 162) and killed the hamlet chief. The VC departed the area in the sampans in which they had come sometime between 0500H and 0800H on 21 December. A CG 23 junk entered the area at about 0530H and spotted small arms fire but could not contact any friendly units. This incident resulted in seven PF, and seven PSDF soldiers, and three Vietnamese civilians killed, and six PF soldiers and three Vietnamese civilians wounded.

At 1844H on 23 December a squad of VC fired about nine 82mm mortar rounds into Long Hai Hamlet near the CG 23 base (CQ 081 877). One civilian and one National Police Field Force man were wounded. The fire was immediately returned with unknown results.

At 0125H of 27 December the VC fired four 82mm mortar rounds into the Song Cau District compound, just to the east of the CG 23 base (CQ 081 879). Two rounds landed on the National Police building wounding three National Policemen. The fire was not returned

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because the firing position was located near a ROK ambush site.

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THIRD AND FOURTH COASTAL ZONES

There was a low level of activity in the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones during December as the vessels of Operations MARKET TIME and TRAN HUNG DAO XV continued to carry out normal coastal surveillance patrols.

On 3 December, personnel from CG 33, along with the Cat Lo EOD Team and the 637 RF Company, conducted a sweep in an area about eight miles north of Vung Tau. After discovering two bunkers which contained recently used cooking utensils, they received small arms fire from a tree line (XS 280 555). They returned the fire, swept the area and returned to base. There were no casualties as a result of this operation. From 2130H to 2230H on 2 December, LDNN personnel with a Kit Carson Scout and two Seal advisors conducted a river traffic interdiction mission in Ba Xuyen Province, about five kilometers north of the CG 36 base. Proceeding to a point on a waterway within the Dung Island complex (XR 223 708) by MSSC, they were taken under fire with small arms and automatic weapons. The fire was returned and the enemy action suppressed. This ambush took place near where the Seals had planned to insert, so they aborted the mission and returned to the CG 36 base, conducting psyops en route. There were no friendly casualties, but local intelligence later confirmed that some VC had been killed or wounded as a result of the return fire. This had been indicated by blood trails which were found

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leading from the VC ambush site.

A joint VNN-Cambodian sweep of the Cambodian island Kaoh Thmei, six miles northwest of Phu Quoc Island (US 650 570), was carried out at the beginning of the month, but the supply caches, rumored to be on the island, were not found. There were many problems encountered in the operation such as an operation order in French which the Vietnamese participants could not read, and raw and untrained Cambodian troops. The Fourth Coastal Zone Commander agreed to meet with the Cambodian Coastal Zone commander, CDR Ang Ly, for an operational critique so that both parties could learn from their mistakes.

On 29 December at Cat Lo (YS 31 42), an incident occurred which indicated the enemy's continued emphasis on sapper techniques. At 1015H, personnel aboard VNN LCU 537 discovered a mine tied by a white line to a hinge on the bow ramp and floating freely with the current along the starboard side of the craft adjacent to the engineering spaces. VNN EOD personnel from Cat Lo removed the mine and disarmed it. It consisted of three blocks of TNT side by side with five fishing floats at each end to provide negative buoyancy. The contents were bound into one firm package with twine and strips of inner tube. Its total weight was about 60 pounds. The mine was ineffectively fused, suggesting emplacement by poorly trained sappers.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND CIVIC ACTION SUMMARY

Psychological operations continued throughout the Republic of Vietnam during December as various Navy units celebrated Christmas with Vietnamese civilians in their areas.

In the SOLID ANCHOR area during the month of December, 131 people received medical aid from the USN and VNN MEDCAP team, while the Psyops team staged four leaflet drops promoting the Chieu Hoi program and put in 15 hours of loudspeaker broadcasts. The results of their efforts were nine refugees, 44 detainees, and one Hoi Chanh.

The census of the refugee hamlets Ham Rong and Thi Tran on 29 November showed a total population of 7,056 and 1,070 dwellings. The Military Assistance Team (MAT) assigned to SOLID ANCHOR continued to train the PSDF of Ham Rong in the handling of M-1 and M-2 carbine rifles with practice night ambushes. The restricted zone was tightened from 5000 meters to 3000 meters to increase the security of the village. Completion of the hospital was further delayed this month due to the occupation of it by the PF platoon while their outpost in Thi Tran was completed. The only hostile incident reported was the launch bombing of the PF outpost on 19 December with no casualties.

In the SOLID ANCHOR psychological operations, a close liaison between VNN and USN personnel is effected with a daily meeting in the Joint Polwar Office where plans for the day are discussed. The VNN team

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and three VNN corpsmen spend most of each day in the village distributing clothing, helping in the school, and helping build walkways and bridges. Whenever possible, two USN advisors accompany the VNN team. The VNN team also assists in producing broadcast tapes.

Elsewhere in RVN, Psyops for December were as follows:

location	broadcast hours			Medcaps	Hoi Chanhs	Leaflets
	land	boat	air			
RSSZ		10	5.5	2		100,000
Soc Trang		1.5				130,000
Chau Doc	34	3			19	98,000 and 800 posters
Rach Gia	2		27		19	520,000
Moc Hoa	6			2	2	510,000
Ben Tre		15			1	
Ben Luc		8				
Dong Tam		22			6	

Two psychological programs received attention by the Navy command in Saigon as worthy of promotion. They are the VNN Youth Program, a one year old program which includes 3,500 scouts, 75 adult leaders, camporees, and features a national jamboree; and the Volunteer Informant Program which provides a feasible plan for getting information about VC activities from local nationals and paying them for it.

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ACCELERATED TURNOVER PROGRAM AND TRAINING SUMMARY (ACTOV)

The U.S. Navy's "Brown Water Navy" was consigned to the annals of history this month as the last of the small riverine and coastal combatants were transferred to the VNN. In the coming months most of the remaining USN sailors will devote their entire attention to the task of advising, much more demanding in many ways, and ensuring that the ACTOV Program, which was conceived in the fall of 1968 and has concluded this first phase in the space of only 24 months, succeeds in the task for which it was intended: the creation of a self-supporting riverine and coastal navy. Only two short years ago, it was an arm of the ARVN, employing mostly boats inherited from the French and possessing little supply or repair capability.

On 30 December at 1000H, aboard a lone PBR tied up at VNN Headquarters, VADM J. H. King, Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam, and RADM Tran Van Chon, CNO, VNN, signed documents transferring the last 125 small combat craft to the Vietnamese Navy. This ceremony brought to 650 the number of small combatants (PBRs, PCFs, and RAC) which have been transferred under the ACTOV Program: 293 PBRs, 224 river assault craft, 107 fast patrol craft (PCFs), and 26 Coast Guard patrol boats (WPBs). There remained 166 support craft yet to be transferred at year's end. The Republic of Vietnam fleet now consists of about 1500 coastal, river, and ocean craft, which will be manned and supported by

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VADM J.H. King, Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam, and RADM Tran Van Chon, CNO, VNN sign documents transferring the last 125 small combat craft to the Vietnamese Navy.

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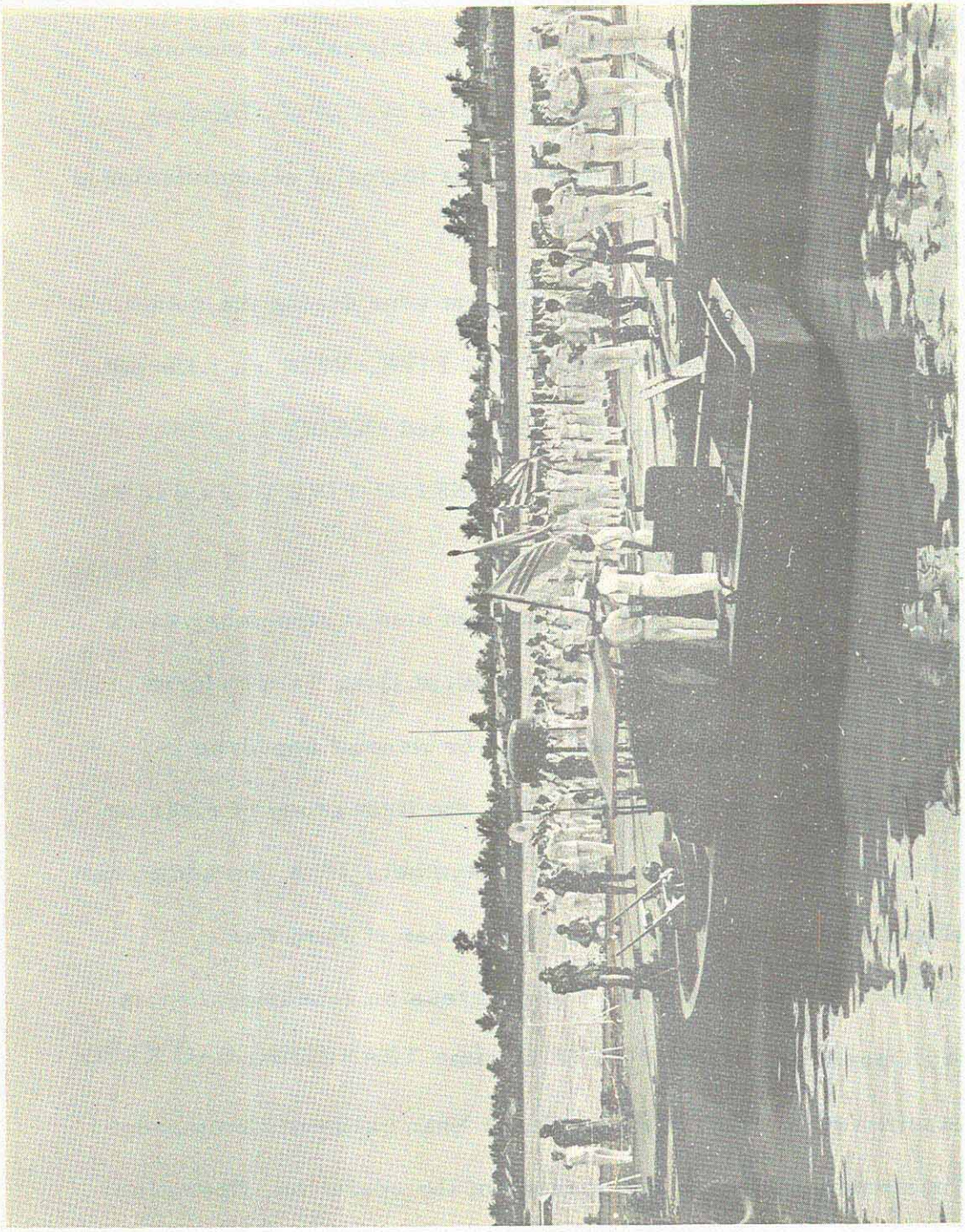

The last PBR turned over to the Vietnamese Navy.

almost 40,000 men.

The turnover also marked the end of River Patrol Flotilla Five, established on 1 September 1968 to take over administrative command of all PBRs in Vietnam; the Flotilla, commanded by CDR J. Bentley Rivers, USN, at the time of its dissolution, was formally decommissioned at Binh Thuy of 31 December.

As for boats which changed flags for the first time during the month, the last 14 USN PCFs were added to COSFLOT FIVE, VNN, on 1 December at Cat Lo. COSFLOT ONE, COSRON ONE, and COSDIV 13, USN, were disestablished at the same time. The COSFLOT FIVE PCFs will be mostly employed in river patrols.

The last VNN group of "heavies" was created also in December as 15 river assault craft were turned over on the 10th at Dong Tam to form RID 48. The turnovers marked the end of River Assault Squadron 15 commanded by LCDR Kennedy J. Rhea, USN, the first group of riverine assets to be introduced into the country in September, 1966. An additional ATC was belatedly added to RID 47 on 19 December at Nam Can.

The ACTOVOPS Program continued to progress on schedule when on 29 December, Operation BREEZY COVE became TRAN HUNG DAO X (TG 212.6). Vietnamese Navy LCDR Pham Thanh Nhan relieved Commander Cyrus R. Christensen, USN, as commander of the operation. Operation BREEZY COVE formerly extended along the Song Ong Doc and into its

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tributaries below the U Minh Forest. The operation began in September, 1969, and Vietnamese Navy PBRs have been patrolling the operational area since the end of June 1970. LCDR W. D. Dannheim, USN, will act as LCDR Nhan's senior advisor and will coordinate continuing USN air, communications, and special warfare support in his capacity as CTG 116.2 from ATSB Ca Mau-Song Ong Doc (the TRAN HUNG DAO X staff will be headquartered at the COC in Ca Mau). Some logistics support will also be provided by USN forces under the OPCON of COMNAVSUPPACT, Saigon. Only two operations, the MARKET TIME Outer Barrier and SOLID ANCHOR, now remain under USN control.

Four bases were turned over to the VNN in December: Kien An (3 December), Chau Doc (11 December), Tan Chau (17 December), and Ha Tien (18 December). Of the 34 programmed ACTOVLOG bases and nine ATSBs, construction has been completed on 31, is in progress at nine, and is not required at three. There is also some work needed at two of the ATSBs.

The Harbor Defense responsibility for Danang was handed to the Vietnamese the morning of 31 December in a ceremony at NAVSUPPFAC, Danang. It was the last USN Harbor Defense Group to dissolve. CAPT Ho Van Ky Thoai, First Coastal Zone Commander, accepted the operation, along with two LCPLs and a 45' picket boat, for the VNN. The Danang unit, which is now called Harbor Security Operations Center, employs nine picket boats, two LCPLs, and six skimmers.

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Other miscellaneous craft turnovers for the month included three LCM-8s and one LCM-3 to the VNN Logistics Command at DaNang on 3 December; one YTL to the Military Port Facility at Nha Be on 15 December; YRBM 17 to the Logistics Command on 22 December at Cat Lo; and two LCM-3s and an LCM-6 to MID 93 at Nha Be on 31 December, bringing that unit to its final strength of six MSRs, three MSMs, and nine LCMs. The 73' LCM-8s and 50' LCM-3 transferred at DaNang earlier in the month will continue to be used for troop and cargo transport in DaNang Harbor and the waterways of Military Region One.

By the end of 1970, the U.S. Navy had thus given to the Vietnamese allies 650 small combatants, 96 harbor and mine craft, two large combatants (PCEs), and 45 logistics and support craft. There remain 166 USN vessels to be transferred, most of them logistics craft.

As the USN gradually divests itself of its in-country floating assets, a greater share of its Vietnamization effort will be devoted to the less spectacular aspects of the program, the bottom nine-tenths of the iceberg: ensuring that the level of training is high, developing efficient repair and supply program, and constructing a viable logistics system.

A statistical summary of the present composition of the VNN released by Chief, Naval Advisory Group, on 10 December, 1970, cast some light on where, at year's end, the future problems for the ACTOV Program lay. Of the 39,611 personnel ceiling, 39,520 men had been

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assigned at that time. The operating forces, those who would man the combative assets, including staffs, were nearly up to complement, with 20,889 men assigned out of 21,370 allowed, the deficit falling to the Fleet Command and Coastal Security Forces. By comparison, the Logistics Support Forces, including everything from Saigon headquarters down to individual repair shops, had on hand, by December, only 7845 of its programmed complement of 11,068, and 3901 of these men were still classified as recruits--i.e., they had little or no training in their specialties. It was obvious that support would be the critical factor in the coming months. A major milestone in this effort was reached on 18 November 1970, with the graduation of 500 base maintenance personnel from the Philco-Ford training program in DaNang. This event concluded the seven month program which has provided the majority of the base maintenance personnel for the VNN. The final 880 craft maintenance personnel were in training at month's end. All base maintenance people were expected to reach their duty stations by the end of January, 1971.

The U.S. Navy has pledged its full support to the VNN within "budgetary, manpower, and materiel constraints" until 1 July 1972, the disestablishment date of NAVSUPPACT, Saigon. Logistics Support Command, VNN, must be capable of complete support by that time. To hasten the process, NSA Saigon has insisted since the third quarter of CY 1970 that requisitions from VNN operating units and bases follow prescribed

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VNN channels and that USN advisors give more attention to VNN logistics problems. In addition, joint Field Assistance Teams (FAST) were established in mid-November to provide advice at ACTOVLOG bases in the course of regularly scheduled visits. Although NSA Saigon is still capable of shoring up the weak points in the VNN LSC, the rapid turnover of remaining LCUs, YFUs, and YOGs, which will not be under VNN control, will make self-support an increasingly sink-or-swim proposition for the ninth largest navy in the world.

Efforts to correct the lopsided enlisted to officer ratio were continued in December as 156 officers were received from various officer candidate schools, bringing the total to 3739, 63% of the allowance. Likewise, 219 more enlisted men were promoted to NCO grade bringing the total to 5541, or 40% of allowance.

A more domestic aspect of the ACTOV Program proceeded in December as the Tan Chau dependent shelter project was wrapped up with 40 units. The number of NAVCATS working on the projects remains at about 550, with the Vietnamese participation rate fluctuating between 80 and 150.

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NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

The month of December was one of preparation for the turnover of three naval bases to the Vietnamese Navy and visits by distinguished people. The only serious incidents reported were of a non-hostile nature.

The major event of the month came on 15 December when Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus, USN, relieved Rear Admiral Robert E. Adamson, Jr., USN, as Commander, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon, in ceremonies at the command's Logistic Support Base (LSB) at Nha Be. Various highranking commanders of military installations in the Saigon area attended. RADM Adamson assumed duties as Commander, NSA, DaNang, in 1969, and upon disestablishment of the activity in July, 1970, he shifted his flag to Saigon, assuming the duties of Commander, NSA Saigon, and Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese Navy Logistics Support Command. He has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal for his Vietnam service.

Upon completion of base defenses, communications, and lighting systems, the bases at Ha Tien, Tan Chau, and Chau Doc were turned over respectively on 18, 17, and 10 December. Also in December the LSB at Vinh Long was co-manned and commissioned.

The only report of enemy contact for the month came from the USS ASKARI (ARL-30) which sighted and killed a swimmer sapper while anchored on the Bassac River (XR 297 695 on Christmas Eve

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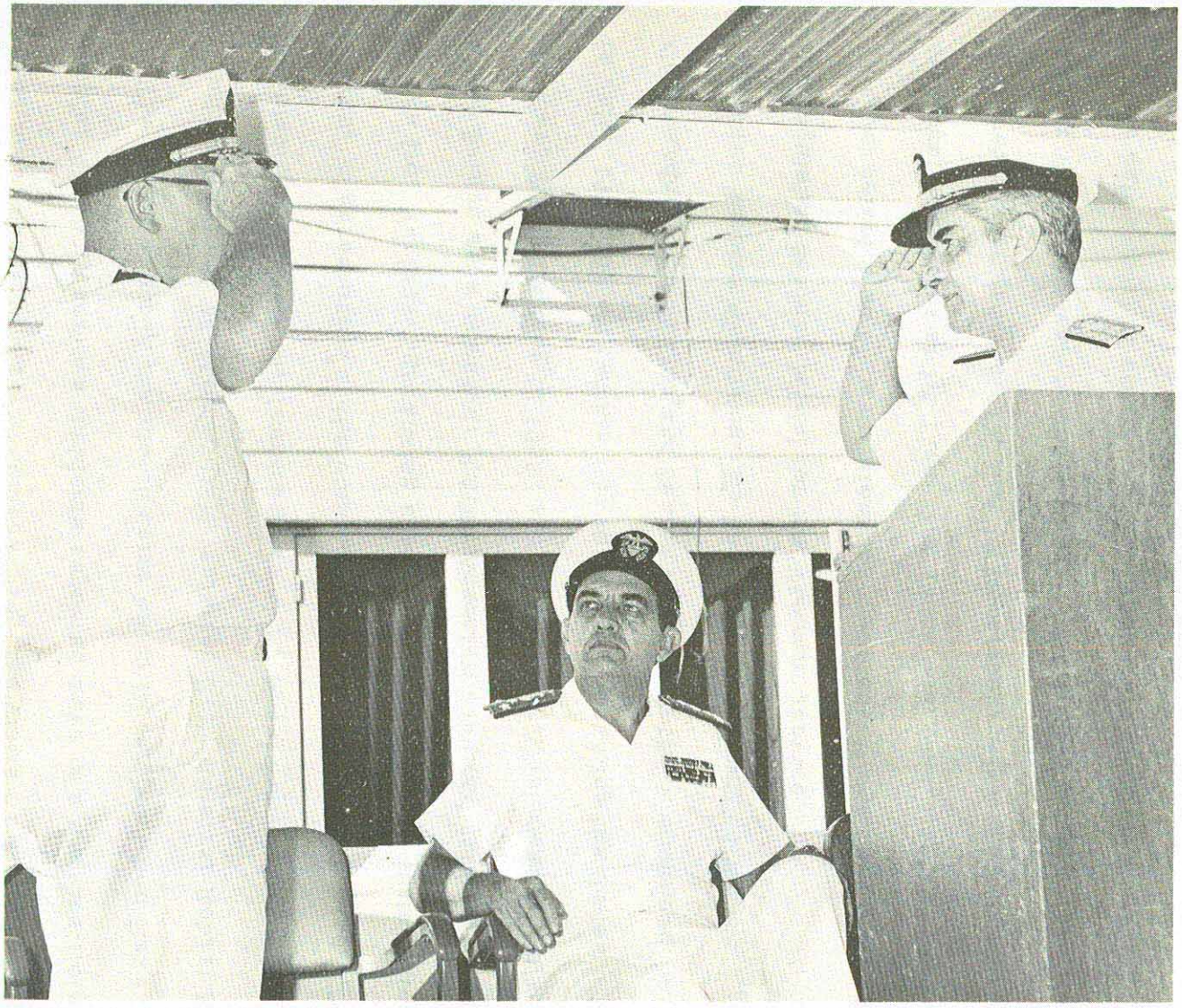

Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus, USN, (right) relieves Rear Admiral Robert E. Adamson, Jr., USN (left) as Commander, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon

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at 1220H.

Another support ship, the USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (AGP 838) fared rather badly with a grenade accident on 19 December which tore the arm off a USN sentry. A USN sailor of the same ship jumped overboard after returning from liberty on 1 December, and his body was not recovered after an extensive search. The HUNTERDON COUNTY was outchopped on the 21st for Subic Bay.

At the Naval Support Facility, DaNang, divers from USS GRAPPLE assisted in refloating the Army dredge DAVISON which went aground on a sandbar in the DaNang River on 1 December. The NSF Repair Department completed permanent repairs to the hull of the dredge on 5 December.

On 3 December four craft were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy by the NSF DaNang Operations Department. They were the LCM-8s 586, 850, and 651 (a mini-drydock) and the LCM-3 15. At NSAD Dong Tam on 22 December the YRBM-17 officially became the Vietnamese Navy Ship HQ-9610.

Distinguished visitors to NSA detachments during December included the Honorable Carlos G. Camancho, Governor of Guam; Rear Admiral F. L. Garrett, USN, Chief of Chaplains, Martha Raye, Colonel, USAR (Cam Ranh Bay), CINCPAC Admiral J. S. McCain, USN, and the Honorable G. V. Montgomery, Representative from Mississippi.

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Over the Christmas holidays Mr. Bob Hope and his troupe gave their annual Vietnam performances at DaNang (Freedom Hill R&R Amphitheater and the USS SANCTUARY) and Long Binh. On Christmas Day several hundred Navymen from NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, as well as 37 members of units in the Cam Ranh Bay area who were airlifted to Long Binh, attended the Bob Hope Show.

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NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION UNITS

In December NMCB units , hampered by rain and flood waters in the northern provinces, continued work on various projects throughout RVN. Three serious vehicle accidents involving Seabee vehicles and personnel were reported. In Quang Nam Province 15 miles southwest of DaNang on 29 December, an NMCB THREE five-ton dump truck detonated a 60-100 pound mine causing major equipment damage and serious injury to EO1 A. W. Roy. The wounded Seabee was medevaced to the 95th Evacuation Hospital, DaNang.

The most serious incident reported by CB units occurred on the last day of the month at 1445H on a waterway near Kien Binh (WS 406 036) where the bodies of five USN Seabees were found. All the bodies contained gunshot and fragmentation wounds. Investigation of witnesses disclosed that five U. S. personnel armed with 3 M-16s and one pistol had been sighted in a Boston Whaler by Vietnamese personnel an hour and a half before, and ARVN units reported seeing U. S. personnel in a firefight in the same area. A Vietnamese eyewitness account indicated two VC sampans engaged the whaler, which was later found abandoned, with grenade and AK-47 fire on the Kinh Thot Not Canal. The five Seabees were attached to NMCB 74 and traveling from Cho Moi to Binh Thuy for minor medical treatment.

The organization of CB units in Vietnam, consisting of 1587 officers and men, as of December is as follows:

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NMCB 74 - HQ Bien Hoa

NMCB 133 - HQ Bien Hoa

NMCB 3 - DaNang

32nd NCR (Naval Construction Regiment) - HQ Tan Son Nhut, Saigon

3rd NCB (Naval Construction Brigade) - HQ Tan Son Nhut

One unit of NMCB FIVE, Seabee Team 0517, returned to CONUS from Ben Tre on 23 December after completion of construction work in support of USAID and RVN projects.

Detachments from NMCB 74 were at work in Nam Can, Long Phu, Cho Moi, and Chau Doc on ACTOV bases and dependent shelters. The ATSB under construction at Tuyen Nhon was reported as 58% completed at month's end. An eight man detachment was dispatched to Vi Thanh (WR 52 81) on December 15 to construct two sea huts for Advisory Group 73. Construction was completed, and the detachment returned to Bien Hoa on 20 December. Construction was also completed on facilities for the relocation of the 32nd NCR headquarters at Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon.

Seabee teams of NMCB 133 at Can Gio City (RSSZ), Rach Gia, and Phu Vinh continued to support USAID projects there. Despite continued problems with wet weather, Detail KANGAROO's construction of the Thu Duc (XR 901 028) VNN dependent shelter program proceeded at a good pace with 177 units now completed and several buildings ready for roofing. On this project, 20 VNMC engineers are assisting.

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NCB Maintenance Unit 302 turned over 74 dependent shelters to the VNN Logistics Support Command at Cuu Long on 5 December. Dependent shelter projects are underway at Ben Luc, Dong Tam, An Thoi, An Khanh, Tien Sha (DaNang), Thuan An, and Rach Soi.

During the month of December, NMCB 3 deployed eight additional details covering RVN from north to south, Phu Bai to Bac Lieu, and from east to west, Chu Lai to Chau Doc. Three details completed their missions and returned to the main camp during this period. QL-1 road shoulders suffered further damage as a result of the December rains. All expedient maintenance is near completion. Headwall construction on QL-1 is progressing slowly due to rain and high water.

Detail GEMINI returned to camp after spending ten days in an extremely isolated area just north of Hai Van Pass (AT 24 31). C-rations, round the clock work, and 150 ARVN providing security was the order of the day for this short-lived detail. As the detail completed the steel truss railroad bridge, an important link in LOC routes from DaNang to points north was restored. Numerous power failures and water shortages at Camp Haskins were experienced this month. No serious incidents were reported.

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APPENDIX I

Glossary of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and terms are commonly used in the combat zone by all agencies and are listed here in amplification of those used in the text:

ABF	Attack by fire
AMMI PONTOON	A multi-purpose barge, standard size 28'X90'
AO	Area of operations
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASPB	Assault Support Patrol Boat
ATC	Armored Troop Carrier
ATSB	Advance Tactical Support Base
A/W	Automatic Weapons
BLACK PONY	OV-10 Twin Engine Turboprop Counterinsurgency aircraft
CCB	Command and Communications Boat
CG	Coastal Group
CHICOM	Chinese Communist
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group - mercenaries of Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian descent who fight primarily around their own villages
CMD	Capital Military District

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CONUS	Continental United States
CRIP	Civilian Reconnaissance Intelligence Platoon
CZ	Coastal Zone
DUSTOFF	Medical evacuation by helo
ENIFF	Enemy-initiated firefight
FSB	Fire Support Base
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance Forces
GDA	Gun Damage Assessment
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HAFT	Helicopter Attack Fire Team
H&I	Harassment and Interdiction Fire Support
JGS	Joint General Staff (Vietnamese)
KIT CARSON SCOUTS	Former Viet Cong who have come over to the side of the Saigon government and serve with allied military units
LAFT	Light Attack Fire Team
LAW	Light Anti-tank Weapon
LCPL	Landing Craft, Personnel, Large
LDNN	Vietnamese equivalent of USN Underwater Demolition Team
LHFT	Light Helo Fire Team
LOH	OH-6 Light Observation Helicopter
LRRP	Long Range Reconnaisance Patrol
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

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MATSB	Mobile Advance Tactical Support Base
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program
MONITOR	Heavily armored LCM-6 (40 mm cannon or 105 mm Howitzer)
MR	Military Region
MRF	Mobile Riverine Force
MSB	Minesweeper, Boat
MSD	Minesweeper, Drone
MSF	Mobile Strike Force - mercenaries who deploy and go anywhere
NGFS	Naval gunfire support
NILO	Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer
NIOTC	Naval Inshore Operations Training Center
NOD	Night Observation Device
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OJT	On the job training
PBR	Patrol Boat, River
PCF	Patrol Craft, Fast (Swift Boat)
PRU	Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
PSA	Province Sector Advisor
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
RAD	River assault Division
RAG	River Assault Group (VNN)

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RAID	River Assault and Interdiction Division (VNN)
RAS	River Assault Squadron
RF/PF	Regional Forces/ Popular Forces
RPD	River Patrol Division
RPG	Rocket propelled Grenade or River Patrol Group
RSSZ	Rung Sat Special Zone
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Air Force (or Armed Forces)
SAR	Search and Rescue
SEAWOLF	UH-1B Helo, heavily armored, USN operated
SHADOW	C-119 aircraft
SKIMMER	20-foot fiberglass motorboat
SLICK	UH-1B Helo, USA operated
SPOOKY	C-47 aircraft
SSB	Swimmer Support Boat (Skimmer)
STAB	Strike Assault Boat
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
USARV	United States Army, Vietnam
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps
VNN	Vietnamese Navy
ZIPPO	Flame thrower - equipped ATC of Monitor
RAP	Rocket Assisted Projectile
FOM	French Patrol Boat
NGF/ART	Naval gunfire / Artillery