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Monthly Historical Summary

US NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM

OCTOBER 1970

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
U.S. NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM
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VIETNAM

MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

October 1970

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FOREWORD

It was a tumultuous month for USN forces and their counterparts and not particularly marked by successes. Combat operations were disrupted in the First and Second Coastal Zones by Typhoons Joan, Kate, and Louise, a devastating triad that claimed the lives of two USN sailors near Coastal Group 16 east of Quang Ngai City, when their skimmer was swept out to sea during a rescue mission. The furious rain-filled gusts also blew away the roofs from a number of dependent shelters on Binh Ba Island (Coastal Group 26) and caused the worst flooding in northern South Vietnam in many years. Fortunately, the enemy was equally impaired by the change in weather and did not manage to detonate a single watermine in the Cua Viet River after a record high last month.

The enemy was not so quiet in Military Region FOUR, however, where on 20 October just before midnight, a mortar attack on the BREEZY COVE ATSB at Song Ong Doc drove all occupants to their boats and virtually demolished the floating base. Friendly casualties were surprisingly low considering the abruptness of the onslaught, but the extensive material damage and psychological victory could not be discounted.

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Activity in the Delta was light during October though there were ominous indications of a major offensive build-up occurring. An indication of this was the movement of enemy personnel, the successful mining of two PBRs at Song Ong Doc, and the sinking by watermine of another VNN LSSL.

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CURRENT OPERATIONS
(As of 31 October 1970)

VNN Designation	USN Designation (Nickname)
TRAN HUNG DAO I (TG 214.2)	No USN nickname; originally part of Border Interdiction
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	SEARCH TURN (TG 116.3)
TRAN HUNG DAO VII (TG 221.1)	SEA TIGER
TRAN HUNG DAO VIII	No USN nickname
TRAN HUNG DAO IX (TG 212.3)	BARRIER REEF
**TRAN HUNG DAO X	BREEZY COVE (TG 116.2)
TRAN HUNG DAO XIV (TG 217.2)	No USN nickname
TRAN HUNG DAO XV (TF 213)	MARKET TIME Inner Barrier
TRAN HUNG DAO XVI (TF 210)	Cambodian Operations

* TRAN HUNG DAO VI will operate as TG 212.5 when activated.

** TRAN HUNG DAO X will operate as TG 212.6 when activated.

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Operation SOLID ANCHOR

The oft-quoted statement that "these are the times that try men's souls" continued to describe operations in the SOLID ANCHOR area during the month of October. Plagued by enemy ambushes and minings, serious logistics problems, inadequacies in base defense, marginal material condition of assigned units, and increasing VC harassment of the Ham Rong II Hamlet, the USN and VNN personnel of SOLID ANCHOR had their hands full.

The lack of adequate resupply of SOLID ANCHOR by the assigned VNN LSM was the subject of a message from COMNAVSUPPACT Saigon to the CNO, VNN on 20 October. In this message COMNAVSUPPACT, Saigon stated that "Nam Can's location and mission do not permit the drastic reduction in operations which would result from failure to resupply."[1]

Another logistics problem has had a serious effect on VNN morale at SOLID ANCHOR. This is the quantity of food rations given to the VNN daily. In this instance, CTG 116.1 made the comment, "The VNLSC [Vietnamese Navy Logistics Support Command] has not visibly responded to the food needs of the VNN at SOLID ANCHOR. This, coupled with the fixed daily rations given by the U. S. has caused an impasse

1. COMNAVSUPPACT SAIGON MSG DTG 200104Z OCT 70.

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and daily affects morale of the VNN and thus the every day working relations with the U. S. at SOLID ANCHOR."[2] The message also appealed for assistance in helping to alleviate this grave situation.

The serious matter of base defense also continues to pose problems for SOLID ANCHOR commanders. The core of this problem was put forward by CTG 116.1 in a message on 1 October when he said, "I consider the security of SOLID ANCHOR marginal due to the absence of a company-sized force to provide perimeter security in depth and to provide indirect defensive fires."[3] At this time he also requested that a reinforced USMC rifle company be assigned to SOLID ANCHOR to fill this gap. This request was still under consideration by higher commands at month's end.

Another matter of great concern at SOLID ANCHOR is the increased boldness of the Viet Cong in their harassment of woodcutters and civilians in Ham Rong I and II. The Viet Cong have destroyed or confiscated great numbers of sampans on which the villagers rely for their fishing and woodcutting. In one instance a 19-year-old woodcutter from Ham Rong II was shot to death by the Viet Cong for cutting wood south of the annex. On two occasions the RF and PF outpost at Ham Rong I came under enemy fire, (small arms on 15 October and 10-15 launch bombs on 17 October).

2. CTG 116.1 MSG DTG 311030Z OCT 70.
3. CTG 116.1 MSG DTG 011000Z OCT 70.

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In perhaps their boldest move to date, 15-30 Viet Cong entered Ham Rong II on the night of 22 October and kidnapped two civilians while wounding four others. Although several steps were taken to avoid further occurrences of this type in the future (59 M-1 Carbines with 177 magazines and associated weapons system components were received by CTG 116.1 for distribution to the Ham Rong PSDF on 27 October) and numerous other steps were contemplated, COMNAVFORV was forced to admit on 31 October that "while Ham Rong I security is acceptable, Ham Rong II security is tenuous to non-existent."[4]

The Viet Cong continued to ambush SOLID ANCHOR's waterborne assets with discouraging regularity in October. There were a total of nine rocket ambushes which caused damage to two PCFs, three ATCs, one CCB, two ASPBs, and one LSIL and wounded three U. S. and 12 Vietnamese sailors and four Vietnamese Marines. One of these ambushes took place on 17 October when A-5168 and A-5169 of the newly arrived RID 41 were attacked on the Cua Lon (vicinity WQ 150 678). The lead boat, A-5169, was hit on the port side by four B-41 rockets which wounded one Vietnamese sailor and damaged the hull and 20 mm mount. A-5168 was struck by three B-41 rockets on the port side and also had one man wounded. One of the rockets struck her at the waterline and the craft beached in order to control flooding after clearing the kill zone.

4. COMNAVFORV MSG DTG 310052Z OCT 70.

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Viet Cong command-detonated mines were also introduced for the first time into the SOLID ANCHOR area of operations in October. On 26 October, two boats from RID 41, ATC 1278 and M-6539, were proceeding north on the Cai Nhap Canal (vicinity WQ 082 754) when the lead boat, ATC 1278, struck a mine. The crew attempted to beach the stricken craft, but after beaching, the boat slid back, settled to port, and sank in less than three minutes. One U. S. and seven Vietnamese Navymen were wounded. All personnel were picked up by the Monitor which then turned about and proceeded south with Seawolves providing cover. In the vicinity of WQ 083 748, the Monitor struck a mine which knocked out one engine. A tragic result of the mine's detonation was the complete destruction of a sampan with four people aboard which had been using the Monitor as an escort to New Nam Can. All of the passengers were believed killed in the explosion. The M-6539 was able to return to SOLID ANCHOR under its own power. A sweep of the area discovered all the signs of command-detonated mines (30 feet of three strand polyethylene cord with one charred end in stream and 100-150 feet of light insulated electrical cord).

On 31 October, three units of RID 45 discovered another command-detonated mine in the same area (vicinity WQ 084 728). Fortunately they were able to avoid it and trace the wires which led to a bunker about 25 meters from the canal's bank. Attempts to recover the mine, which

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appeared to contain 70 to 100 pounds of explosives, were unsuccessful, and as the detonating wire had been cut, the EOD diver could not explode the charge. As it was unlikely that it could be re-rigged for detonation, the mine was left in the canal.

The SEALs assigned to SOLID ANCHOR were also kept busy during the month. On 22 October, twelve SEALs from YANKEE Platoon of SEAL Team ONE, Det GOLF, along with four UDT personnel, three Kit Carson Scouts, and a POW guide were inserted into an area 18 kilometers southwest of SOLID ANCHOR in the vicinity of VQ 828 568. Their mission was to capture a group of VC village officials and to liberate a hamlet consisting of some 40 civilians. With Seawolves and U. S. Army gunships providing cover, the SEALs entered the hamlet and commenced searching hootches and destroying bunkers. The six VC captured and 33 other detainees were taken to SOLID ANCHOR by U. S. Army Slick helicopters. Four kilos of documents were also captured and ten bunkers, ten hootches, and 16 sampans were destroyed.

The SOLID ANCHOR site received distinguished visitors on two occasions during the month. On 2 October, Admiral J. J. Hyland, CINCPACFLT visited SOLID ANCHOR with COMNAVFORV and CNO, VNN. On 24 October, Vice Admiral Johnson, COMPHIBPAC visited the site with COMNAVFORV.

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Operation BREEZY COVE

North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces in the Ca Mau Peninsula scored their greatest victory in many months when they drove the allies from the Advanced Tactical Support Base (ATSB) at Song Ong Doc on 20 October. Earlier this month, enemy sappers blew up two PBRs of River Patrol Division 62. The action throughout the BREEZY COVE AO was rather one-sided, as the combined USN and VNN command reported killing only three of the enemy in sporadic fire fighting.

Two PBRs of River Patrol Division 62 became victims of the first swimmer sapper attack in the Song Ong Doc area on 6 October. PBRs 36 and 37 were beached 25 meters apart in a waterborne guardpost on the north bank of the Song Ong Doc River six kilometers from the river's mouth (VR 861 001). At 0155H an explosion erupted beneath PBR 37, ripping the craft apart and sinking it immediately. The second PBR quickly backed away from the bank to gain a clear field of fire. As the crew began firing at possible enemy positions, a second explosion tore into the hull of PBR 36, overturning it and presumably killing all aboard. It appeared that explosives had been attached to the hulls of the boats while they were moored in WBGP positions. As the enemy troops began firing small arms from hidden positions along the banks, Seawolves and additional Vietnamese patrol boats arrived

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in the area to saturate both banks of the river with fire. Monitor 1 and Zippo 3 scrambled from the Song Ong Doc ATSB to search for survivors and to attempt recovery of the sunken crafts. Seaman Vincent J. Wnoroski, an American advisor on one of the assisting PBRs, dove into the water in the midst of heavy enemy fire to personally rescue three wounded VNN sailors and a wounded USN advisor, EN3 Kenneth G. Mason. Seaman Wnoroski was recommended for the Silver Star for his valorous action, while Petty Officer Mason was recommended for the Bronze Star for his earlier efforts to save PBR 37 and to direct fire against the enemy. The five VNN crew members of PBR 36 and their U. S. advisor, GMG1 Edward W. Withee, were initially reported as missing in action, but one Vietnamese sailor's body was recovered the next afternoon and the remaining five the following day. Petty Officer Withee was recommended for the Bronze Star for previous heroic action with RPD 62.

SEALs of Detachment GOLF, G Platoon, were flown up from SOLID ANCHOR to inspect the contact area but were unable to discover any clues to the sapper activity. On 11 October, however, the crews of PBRs 23 and 27, while checking fishing boats in the river mouth, captured five men in a sampan carrying NVA documents and no identification. Interrogation of the prisoners revealed that they were members of the swimmer sapper team which had mined the two PBRs on 6 October. They had trained in the area for three days prior to their attack,

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meanwhile observing the PBR waterborne guardpost positioning and tactics. On the day of the attack, three sappers hid along the canal at a suspected WBGP site and waited for the PBRs to arrive. After midnight, they floated downstream to the two river boats and attached 105 mm mines, set with tuning devices, to the hulls. It was suspected that these mines were converted 105 mm Howitzer shells which an Army helicopter had recently dropped several kilometers south of Ca Mau. The helo had dropped 200 shells of which only 18 were recovered.

Two USN advisors sustained minor wounds on the evening of 9 October when their PBRs were attacked with B-40 rockets. PBRs 26 and 33, drifting silently down a canal five kilomters east of Song Ong Doc (VQ 850 998) came under rocket and small arms fire from both sides of the stream, but did not receive any direct hits. ADR1 Charles Miller and Seaman David A. Hillibush were slightly wounded by shrapnel.

Units of Operation BREEZY COVE took a brief respite from the war to perform a humanitarian rescue mission in mid-October. On the morning of the 16th, a SEA LORD helicopter reported a Yabuta junk aground in rough seas near the shore one kilometer north of the Song Ong Doc River mouth (VR 79 01). Two PBRs of RPD 62 departed the ATSB to investigate and rescued two men from the junk who were

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trying to reach Song Ong Doc by sampan. The commanding officer of RPD 62 took charge of the rescue operation and dispatched two village fishing junks to the stranded craft. The rough seas prevented their approach and at 1825H, two PBRs with swimmers attempted to float a line to the junk. This failed also, as did an effort by crewmembers of the USCGC BERING STRAIT (WHEC 382) to reach the vessel in a rubber raft. Intelligence reports indicated the presence of a Viet Cong unit three kilometers north of the junk, so twenty Popular Force troops were deployed to the beach to prevent their approaching it. Junks from Song Ong Doc passed food to the stranded crew, but were unable to get them off the junk. The vessel remained grounded for the next three days, defying all salvage efforts, but was finally refloated during an exceptionally high tide with the assistance of local village junks.

Enemy infiltration southward from the U Minh Forest gravely increased pressure on the Song Ong Doc ATSB in October. Deputy COMNAVFORV consequently solicited recommendations concerning base defense and possible relocation of the ATSB. It was agreed that the most serious weakness was the lack of substantial troop support around the Song Ong Doc perimeter. A 30-man Popular Force platoon was assigned to cover the 2,500 meter long outer perimeter. This placed the helicopter pad, Seawolf berthing units, ammunition

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bunker and Duffle Bag complex in an extremely vulnerable position. In addition, the increasing pacification of the river area with the consequent development of civilian housing made it difficult to distinguish the enemy from the general populace. Because of these two weaknesses, the Vietnamese district chief promised to relocate the civilian population and increase ground defenses by adding an additional RF company, an armed propaganda platoon, a mobile Hoi Chanh platoon, and a mortar squad. COMNAVFORV requested mercenary or Mobile Strike Force troops, but MACV was unable to provide them. At mid-month, a complex network of Duffle Bag sensors, supported by Naval gunfire support, was still the best deterrent against enemy troop movement in the area.

CTG 116.2 reiterated his original proposal to move the ATSB 15 kilometers upriver to Old Song Ong Doc, the district capital. He maintained that relocation would permit more effective base defense and would allow RPD 62 to routinely patrol east of Old Song Ong Doc, an area in which the enemy had previously operated with relative freedom. This request was again denied, however, as the mining threat at the river's mouth would be greatly increased if the ATSB were moved inland and because it would create difficulties in resupplying from the BREEZY COVE support ship, USS GARRETT COUNTY (APG 786).

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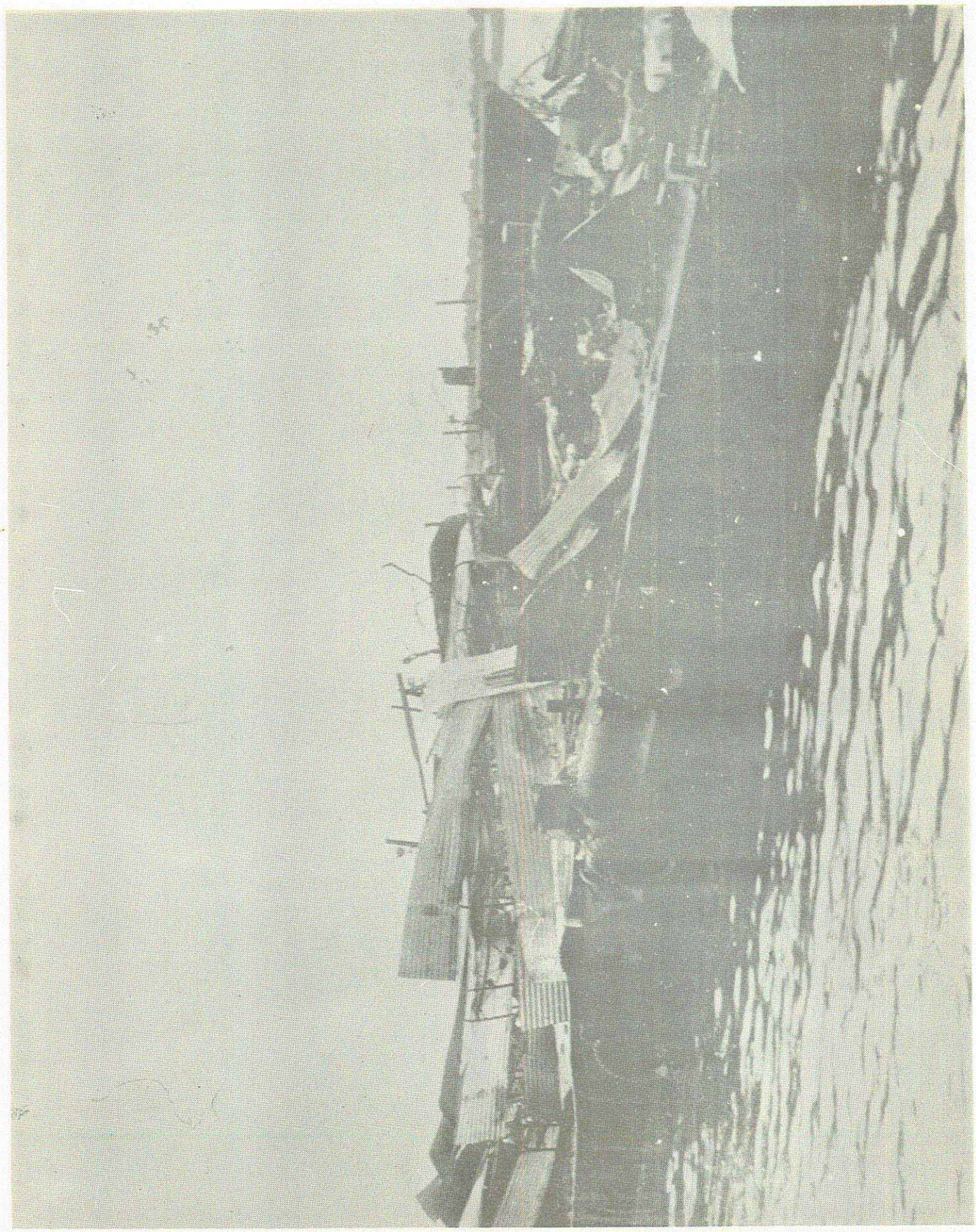

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The worst fears of CTG 116.2 were realized on the evening of 20 October when the ATSB at Song Ong Doc was attacked and largely destroyed by an estimated company-sized enemy force. The allies were forced to flee the area in their river craft in the midst of heavy enemy fire.

At 2330H, the ATSB received 82 mm and 60 mm mortar fire from the north bank of the Song Ong Doc River, and automatic weapons and rocket fire from the south bank. In addition, an element of enemy troops attacked with rockets and small arms from the protection of the village of Song Ong Doc, located 300 meters east of the ATSB on the north bank. As the general quarters alarm was sounded, Navy personnel began to effect the emergency plan of immediate abandonment of the base by river boat. Detachment SIX Seawolves scrambled immediately and began placing strikes on targets of opportunity, while the gunfire support ship USCGC BERING STRAIT (WHEC 382) began lobbing shells into prearranged positions on the south bank of the river. A withering hail of automatic weapons and rocket fire swept the base, however, momentarily pinning down the allies and preventing their escape. Within about ten minutes, the first crewmen reached their PBRs and RACs, manning their heavy machine guns, and began to suppress fire on the river banks. By 2345H over 90% of the base personnel were embarked on river craft, and boats began medevac runs to the USS GARRETT COUNTY (AGP 786), anchored near the mouth of the river. By this time,

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spreading flames on the ATSB and occasional explosions had made the rescue of remaining sailors extremely hazardous, but by 0005H, all wounded men were evacuated, with the exception of one missing in action, and the Naval Operations Center was transferred to a River Assault Craft. The enemy ceased fire at 0010H as Navy OV-10 aircraft arrived overhead and began placing strikes on suspected mortar positions north of the village. The USCGC BERING STRAIT ceased fire with the arrival of low-flying fixed-wing planes. Within six minutes after complete evacuation of the base, it was completely ablaze and was being rocked by huge secondary explosions. The fires on the base raged throughout the night and were finally extinguished by spray from Monitor boats shortly after dawn.

By 0050H, after all wounded USN and VNN sailors had been medevaced, PBRs began picking up wounded civilians from the village which had been caught in the crossfire. Casualties with minor wounds were taken to the GARRETT COUNTY while the more seriously injured were flown to Ca Mau.

The friendly casualties resulting from the Song Ong Doc battle were, considering the intensity of attack, "amazingly low," according to Deputy COMNAVFORV. Two USN were killed and 26 wounded by enemy fire, while the Vietnamese Navy suffered five wounded.

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Approximately 20 more USN suffered minor cuts and abrasions while scrambling to their boats. Short enemy mortar rounds which landed in the village killed seven civilians and wounded an additional 33. GMG3 Thomas S. McGarry, an advisor with RPD 62, was killed when he was struck by a B-40 rocket as he attempted to lead a group of men to their PBRs within moments after the assault began. He was recommended for the Bronze Star Award for his actions. RMSN John D. Drake, initially reported as missing, was later found dead on the ATSB. Among the other casualties, of all wounded by shrapnel from mortar shells and B-40 rockets, only six were injured seriously.

The USS GARRETT COUNTY (AGP 786) received virtually all of the casualties from the Song Ong Doc conflagration. Establishing an emergency battle dressing station in the ship's wardroom, two hospital corpsmen, assisted by members of the crew, treated 16 VNN sailors, 25 Vietnamese civilians, and 35 USN personnel. An additional 60 civilians were temporarily evacuated to the ship when mortar and rocket fire drove them from their homes.

The ATSB was, for all practical purposes, completely destroyed by an estimated 40 mortar rounds and the numerous secondary explosions. The damage was so extensive, in fact, that CTG 116.2 reported that there was no danger of the enemy recovering any vital material from the abandoned base. When SEALs and EOD personnel

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checked it the following morning, they found no booby traps or any other evidence of enemy presence on the ammis. All the buildings were completely destroyed, and five of the ten barges were deemed irreparable. All base structures, machinery, electronics material, and every reefer except one were destroyed by explosions or fire. The shore based Duffle Bag Complex, the Popular Force outpost, and the Detachment SIX helicopter pad and barracks, however, were unharmed by the vicious barrage. Throughout the evacuation process, all the PBR and RAC boats miraculously escaped injury.

Intelligence analysts reported that the attack on the Song Ong Doc ATSB was extremely well planned and coordinated. The attack came from three sides of the base simultaneously, and it appeared that mortar positions (later found by RF and PF forces) and sightings had been prepared in advance. The accuracy of the indirect mortar fire from east of the village indicated the probable use of a spotter with a radio on the south bank of the river. The Song Ong Doc village chief stated that an influx of strange people into the village prior to the attack aroused his suspicion, but he did not inform U. S. personnel of this. During the attack, the enemy used the village area to launch B-40 rockets with no effective resistance from Popular Force troops. The village chief and a local informant later stated that a reinforced North Vietnamese company, the 1105th, had conducted the attack. Reports from civilian

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intelligence sources varied somewhat as to enemy strength and intention. One source claimed that the enemy forces had numbered over 240 soldiers and that they had initially planned a ground assault on the ATSB after the indirect fire attack.

Despite the destruction of their support base, BREEZY COVE units were back on routine patrol the following afternoon. The USS GARRETT COUNTY assumed temporary support functions for all TG 116.2 boats. During daylight hours, all PBRs of River Patrol Division 62 and all craft of River Assault Squadron 15 assigned to CTG 116.2 operated from the ATSB site, but moved back to the support ship at night. RAC boats staged from the USS GARRETT COUNTY at all times.

On 26 October COMNAVFORV sent a brief but decisive message to Deputy COMNAVFORV: "Reconstitute ATSB Song Ong Doc at original location." This directive remained in effect for the remainder of the month as plans for salvage and rebuilding of the razed base were initiated. VNN RID 43 was ordered to relieve RAS 15 at Song Ong Doc.

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Operation SEARCH TURN

Despite apparently heavy enemy infiltration southward through the Three Sisters and Seven Mountains area, Operation SEARCH TURN units did not witness a major increase in hostile activity during October. The Viet Cong suffered seven killed and seven captured in 14 firefights, while three Americans and one Vietnamese were wounded. The communist guerrillas were apparently seeking to strengthen their forces threatening Song Ong Doc, Ca Mau, and Nam Can (SOLID ANCHOR), while avoiding major confrontations to the north.

The Fourth Coastal Zone Intelligence Officer reported that the monsoon flooding throughout Kien Giang Province permitted easy and covert water travel, even through heavily wooded areas. Civilian informants and PBR crews all reported an increase in water traffic during October, and in some cases suspected communist agents traveled in groups as large as 300 men.

As enemy movement through Kien Giang Province increased, CTG 116.3 requested additional river craft to patrol his vast AO. Plans were accordingly made to transfer ten PBRs of River Patrol Division 61 stationed at Ha Tien (Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I) to the Rach Soi area.

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A combined PBR and Seawolf strike on 4 October accounted for the largest single allied victory of the month in the SEARCH TURN AO. Four PBRs of River Patrol Group 58 in a WBGP sighted heavy movement on the east bank of the Rach Gia - Long Xuyen Canal four kilometers northeast of Rach Gia (WS 125 095). Boat captains radioed for helicopter assistance and withheld their attack until the aircraft were overhead. The PBRs and Seawolves apparently encountered a large enemy force as their fire was answered with a heavy barrage of recoilless rifle and automatic weapons fire. One Vietnamese sailor was wounded and medevaced by Seawolf. Navy OV-10s scrambled to the scene to provide additional air support, and artillery was placed throughout the area as friendly units departed. While the boat crews and pilots never saw an enemy soldier, their fire was ostensibly devastating as soldiers at a nearby friendly outpost reported that they had killed an estimated 30 communist troops.

USN advisors of Operation SEARCH TURN made the unpleasant discovery during October that the enemy was apparently monitoring their communications system. On the afternoon of 11 October, an advisor on a PBR enroute to a waterborne guardpost received a call in English on the tactical radio net. The call was repeated, using the advisor's proper call sign, but no message was transmitted.

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Later that evening a much more serious incident occurred. As a brief firefight involving the PBRs and Seawolves subsided, the VNN patrol officer received a transmission from what he thought was a friendly outpost in the immediate area. The caller reported enemy movement in the immediate vicinity of the outpost and requested a helicopter strike. This information was relayed through advisor channels and the TG 116.3 Naval Operations Center requested clearance to fire. When district permission to attack was granted, the Seawolves began their final approach. At this point the PBR advisor intervened as he had contacted the friendly outpost and discovered that they did not request an air strike, and in fact, had an ambush team stationed in the area. The strike was immediately cancelled.

This potentially disastrous episode lucidly revealed the sophistication of the enemy's communications deception techniques. This deception attempt indicated that the communists not only knew the allied radio frequency and were monitoring it, but had an English language capability as well. The enemy, it was felt, probably obtained the boat advisor's call signs during pre-patrol radio checks.

Four of RPD 58's PBRs drove away a small enemy force attempting to assault a sector outpost on the night of 20 October. Boat crews, waiting in a WBGP 18 kilometers southeast of Rach Gia (WR 190 872), saw four Viet Cong approaching the outpost. The outpost defenders

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and PBRs opened fire simultaneously with all weapons, and the VC responded with small arms and recoilless rifles. The enemy fire was suppressed, but shortly thereafter the guerrillas tried to attack two of the PBRs from the opposite side. A heavy barrage of fire thwarted their efforts, and the allies claimed three probable kills.

The Viet Cong occasionally assaulted a non-military target. On 25 October a tug towing a barge laden with cement on the Ha Tien - Rach Gia Canal was stopped by five Viet Cong in two sampans at VS 685 366. The communists ordered the crewmembers off the vessels, and then boarded and searched the vessels. The Viet Cong then took a box of explosives below deck in each vessel and detonated the charges, sinking the tug and its tow. They then departed to the north without taking any prisoners. As this tug and barge did not present a particularly lucrative target, it appeared that the Viet Cong were attempting to block the shallow canal. The Fourth Coastal Zone Intelligence Officer felt this act was in retaliation of GVN harassment of communist strongholds in the Kien Guong mountains. They failed in their efforts, however, as there was a space of twenty feet between the boats through which traffic could pass.

Navy SEALs operating under CTG 116.3 were extremely active during October, and in one case assumed the role of civilian law enforcers. Two civilians who had been causing trouble with the

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local population and had stolen a sampan and motor, were posing as Vietnamese SEALs in Rach Soi. Reacting vehemently to this effort to sully their good name, a squad of Vietnamese and American SEALs tracked them down, and with the help of witnesses and a Kit Carson scout, captured them. The men were turned over to provincial security authorities for punishment.

On the last day of October, the main GVN force in Kien Giang Province, the 21st ARVN Division, began operations to stall enemy infiltration through the U Minh Forest. The ground sweep concentrated on the area west of the Cai Lon River and SEARCH TURN PBRs were deployed to establish a blocking force on the other side of the river at WR 18 78.

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Operation BLUE SHARK

COSDIV 13 PCFs 694 (LTJG Kime) and 48 (LTJG Peters) gave outstanding support to a platoon of RF and PF troops they inserted into an area of the Vung Liem District of Vinh Long Province (vicinity XS 252 185) on the morning of 13 October. The "Swifts" placed H & I fire into the area during the insertion in order to contain any guerrilla forces present. Then, as the friendly troops made their sweep, the PCFs came into contact with the enemy, and a fierce ten minute firefight ensued in which eight VC were killed, six by the PCFs' 50 calibre fire. The RF and PF troops and the supporting swift boats also destroyed six bunkers and three hootches and detained two VC suspects during this BLUE SHARK mission.

The same two swift boats were in action with RF and PF troops on 24 October. Once again, the troops were inserted into the Vung Liem District of Vinh Long Province (vicinity XS 262 184), and contact with the enemy came shortly thereafter. In this encounter, one VC was killed and two others wounded. Of even more importance was the capture of a VC document listing the names of 110 local Viet Cong in Vung Liem District.

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Task Fleet 21

While enemy activity during October was sporadic in most parts of the Third and Fourth Riverine Areas, it greatly intensified in the Ca Mau Peninsula. There was increasing evidence of heavy infiltration southward from Cambodia into the U Minh Forest, and this communist build-up culminated in the destruction of the Song Ong Doc Advanced Tactical Support Base on 20 October.

Deputy COMNAVFORV expanded his efforts to limit blatant Viet Cong trafficking on the rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta by improving search techniques. Plans were initiated for the publication of a quality search manual in both English and Vietnamese.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I

Despite intelligence reports of heavy communist infiltration southward across the Cambodian border, river patrol units of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I seldom encountered guerrilla forces during the month of October. The enemy was apparently seeking to pass through this area quietly in order to augment their forces in the U Minh Forest and Ca Mau areas.

While water craft of CTG 212.4 were unmolested, U. S. Navy Seawolves were quite busy and on several occasions thwarted attempts by enemy troops to cross the Vinh Te Canal along the Cambodian border. The helicopters of HAL-3, Det 5, flying from the ATSB at Vinh Gia and often working with Army air and boat assets, claimed to have probably killed 83 communist insurgents during the month. On 10 October they assaulted an estimated 100 Viet Cong attempting to transit the Vinh Te Canal.

Another indication of excessive enemy movement through the TRAN HUNG DAO I area was the extremely high number of electronic sensor activations during October. CTG 212.4 reported an average of over 270 Duffle Bag activations per week, easily the highest number of all TRAN HUNG DAO and SEA LORDS operations.

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Because of the decline of enemy offensive aggressiveness along the Vinh Te Canal and its increase to the south, the commander of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I ordered 10 PBRs of River Patrol Division 62 to detach from CTG 212.4 and proceed to Rach Soi, headquarters for Operation SEARCH TURN, in late October. The PBRs were to operate from the newly established Kien An Support Base, 16 kilometers south of Rach Gia.

A Vietnamese sailor became the month's only friendly casualty on 10 October when he attempted to dismantle a fragmentation grenade. The grenade exploded in the face of Pham Duc Trung, a crewmember of HQ 1276, who was apparently attempting to extract the grenade's pin ring to use it as a personal decoration.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO II

Activity in the TRAN HUNG DAO II AO was abnormally low during October. There were only a handful of engagements, none involving more than three or four of the enemy at any one time, and none of which produced serious casualties on either side. In fact, the drop in activity provoked a message of admonition on 27 October from CDR S. Van Westendorp, USN, Senior Advisor to the VNN General Reserve Command, in which he stated:

> Review of recent activity in the THD II AO shows cause for concern due to a significant lack of contact with the enemy, (i.e., two contacts in the past two weeks). While this lack of activity may have been attributable in the summer to the successful operations in Cambodia, originator feels that paucity of contact since then may be attributable to other reasons. These may be due either to laxity in conducting operations or to stereotyped operational procedures. I feel that it is highly unlikely that Charlie has been at a standstill or has disappeared from the scene.[1]

He further urged modifying any aspects of the daily routine which might diminish patrol effectiveness.

CTF 214.1 forces received newly formed RID 46, which departed Dong Tam for Ben Luc on 14 October to operate in the THD II AO. The new division relocated from Ben Luc to Tan An the afternoon of 26 October.

1. SENIOR ADVISOR GENRESCOM MSG CTG 270852Z OCT 70.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO V

Operation TRAN HUNG DAO V/READY DECK followed its familiar pattern in October of being the least active of all Naval riverine operations. Members of River Patrol Division 52 and River Assault Group 24 reported only three incidents of contact with the Viet Cong, and the allies did not sustain any personnel or material casualties. The enemy made his presence felt, however, by jamming radio communications emanating from the Phu Cuong base in the latter part of the month, and by harrassing Army units in the area. CTG 216.1 did not claim to have inflicted any casualties on the enemy during the month.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VIII

Activity throughout the TRAN HUNG DAO VIII AO was light to moderate. No major actions took place although light skirmishes continued.

At 1430H on 7 October, nine SEALs from Detachment ALPHA, Eighth Platoon, one LDNN, one interpreter, and two guides along with My Tho Police Intelligence personnel departed Dong Tam in search of a VC sapper squad in the vicinity of XS 435 405. On arrival at the suspected area, the occupants fled. An investigation of the area revealed a bunker and sampan which were later destroyed. Enroute to their base camp, a U.S. Army helicopter was sighted crash landing in the vicinity of XS 412 405. The SEAL team immediately diverted to the area assisting the crew and providing security and at 1700H the helicopter was repaired and departed.

In a preplanned operation against five known VC strong points, TRAN HUNG DAO VIII units placed numerous rocket and 7.62 mm area saturation strikes against bunkered positions in the vicinity of XS 334 447, approximately nine kilometers west of Dong Tam at 1405H on 15 October. There were 40 VC spotted heading southwest from the area. Seawolves were scrambled and in conjunction with Army artillery completely saturated the area with rocket and mortar

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fire. STABs inserted RF and PSDF troops for a sweep of the area. Results of the operation were one VC killed, three VC probably killed, 15 CHICOM grenades, one AK-47, and assorted explosives captured, four sampans and 150 kilos of rice were destroyed.

At 1100H on 22 October, RAG 21 and 33 FOMs underway received AK-47 fire from the east bank of the Kinh Xang Canal in Dinh Tuong Province, 11 kilometers northwest of Dong Tam from an estimated platoon of VC. Using 50 calibre and 30 calibre machine guns, the RAG units suppressed the enemy activity. Results of the encounter were one USN wounded and unknown VC casualties.

Pacification of Dinh Tuong Province continued as members of UDT 13 and VN EOD Team 10 at Tong Doc Luc - Ba Beo Canal in the vicinity of XS 135 613 destroyed a dam and created a channel six feet deep and 50 feet wide at 1500H on 10 October. It is significant to note that sampan traffic on the Tong Doc Luc - Ba Beo Canal west of My Phuoc Tay was nonexistent prior to the operation. As a result of this action, sampans are now sighted moving from My Phuoc Tay. Further clearance projects on the waterways are continuing.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO IX

Task Force 212 celebrated its first anniversary during October and enjoyed one of its calmest months since its inception. River craft of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO IX (BARRIER REEF), like those of TRAN HUNG DAO I to the west, rarely made contact with enemy troops. During the lull, a new River Patrol Division, 63, was created when RIVDIVs 532 and 571 were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy at Phuoc Xuyen on 15 October. Offensive activity declined sufficiently during the month to allow CTG 212.3 to send three of his Armored Troop Carriers to Song Ong Doc to augment strike capabilities in the threatened BREEZY COVE area.

The only significant incident reported by CTG 212.3 was of a non-hostile nature. A Vietnamese PBR with a USN advisor aboard caused a minor furor when it inadvertently strayed into Cambodia on 20 October. While transiting from the USS SPHINX (ARL 24) to Chau Doc, the crew of PBR 7754 of RPD 63 was informed by a VNN support ship which they encountered near the Neak Luong Ferry Landing, that they were 13 miles into Cambodia. Vietnamese newsmen took photographs of the boat at close range before the boat returned to the SPHINX at 1630H. There was no contact made with the enemy while across the border. The crew claimed that they had been given wrong directions to YRBM 20 by the SPHINX quarterdeck watch, who in turn stated that they had given no directions whatsoever. Both the VNN boat captain and the USN advisor had made the trip previously and were thought to be familiar with the waterways.

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Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XIV

Activity throughout the TRAN HUNG DAO XIV AO was extremely light. The major action was the sinking of the VNN LSSL 226 at 0520H on 3 October while anchored on the Co Chien River in the vicinity of XS 410 116. The ship experienced an explosion on the port side, capsized and sank within five minutes. Cause of the explosion was thought to be a water mine. Two VNN were wounded, with no deaths and no one missing.

Investigation of the sinking by HCU ONE Team FIVE aboard YDB-2 revealed that the LSSL 226 was on the bottom in eight meters of water. One large hole caused by an explosion was found in the area of the engineering spaces.

The probably direction of attack was by swimmer from Con Giai Island. Using the period of low visibility and the current of the water, the swimmer attached the mine to the anchor chain by means of a long line which would allow the mine to drift back to the ship. A timing device was probably used to allow the swimmer time to exit the area by continuing down stream with the current.

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Vietnamese Naval Operations in Cambodia

Vietnamese Navy craft of Amphibious Task Force 211 (CTF 210) continued to operate in Cambodia during October, mainly on the Mekong and Bassac Rivers south of Phnom Penh. The VNN craft in Cambodia at the beginning of the month were as follows:

	ASPB	ATC	MON	CCB
RAID 70	4	4		
RAID 71	3	5	1	
RAID 72	3	6	1	
RAID 73	4	4		1

At 0400H on 28 October a mine detonated between an ATC of RAID 70 and a Monitor of RID 42 which were beached in a nest three miles south of Neak Luong (WT 260 400). It was not known how the mine had been placed. The ATC was sunk and the Monitor received minor damage. One VNN sailor was killed and one was wounded.

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Rung Sat Special Zone

Activity throughout the Rung Sat Special Zone was light to moderate during October. At 0005H on 4 October, the USS TUTUILA (ARG 4) was at anchor 500 yards northeast of the Nha Be Navy Base when the crew detected bubbles on the surface of the water on the starboard bow, 75 yards out. Six concussion grenades were dropped in the area and a swimmer was sighted with head and shoulders above water. The swimmer was fired upon with a shotgun and believed to have been hit and disappeared. A second swimmer was sighted drifting downstream in the same area. The anchor chains and underwater hull of the TUTUILA were checked with negative results. Results of the action indicated that two VC swimmer sappers were probably killed.

Seven air and water mobile operations, Chuong Duong 44-70 through 50-70, were conducted in the vicinity of the Nha Be Navy Base.

On 7 October, Chuong Duong 44-70 was initiated in the vicinity of YS 070 515. Results of the operation were no friendly or enemy casualties. One M-16 rifle and one fishing net were captured; six bunkers, two structures, one sampan, and one base camp were destroyed.

On 13 October, Chuong Duong 45-70 was initiated in the vicinity of XS 938 580, 22 kilometers south of the Nha Be Navy Base. Results of the operation were no friendly casualties, 32 VC killed, and 12

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assorted small arms were captured along with two kilos of documents.

Chuong Duong 46-70 and 47-70 were concluded without contact with the enemy.

On 20 October, RSSZ PRUs made contact with an estimated 30 VC in the vicinity of XS 943 847, 2.5 miles north of the Nha Be Navy Base. Seawolves and Black Ponies were called in to place strikes and received heavy ground fire. One Seawolf sustained damage but was able to return to its base. Results of the encounter were one USN wounded, four VC killed and one VC captured. In addition, PRUs captured three rifles, assorted documents, and destroyed 500 kilos of rice.

On 21 October, Chuong Duong 48-70 was initiated in the vicinity of YS 078 545. RF Company 875 was inserted by sampan 21 miles southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base for a sweep of the area. Contact was made with an estimated VC squad which evaded. A VC base camp was discovered and destroyed. RSSZ PRUs were inserted by U. S. Army Slicks four miles southwest of Nha Be for an area sweep. Contact was made with a VC squad which also evaded after a brief firefight. An ASPB of RAD 153 six miles southeast of Nha Be received two grenades and small arms fire from the west bank in the vicinity of XS 039 773. The craft returned the fire and Seawolves placed strikes in the

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area. Results of the operation were one USN wounded, one VC suspect detained, three structures damaged and four destroyed. One kilo of documents was captured.

Chuong Duong 49-70 was concluded without contact with the enemy.

Chuong Duong 50-70 was initiated on 29 October in the vicinity of XS 938 580. As of the first day of operation, contact with the enemy was not established.

Casualties for the month were one USN killed and five wounded. One VNN was killed and five were wounded. Enemy casualties were 45 killed. In addition, eight VC and 20 individual weapons were captured.

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Long Tau Shipping Channel

At 0845H on 10 October, the merchant ship KOREA, proceeding north on the Long Tau Shipping Channel reported that it was aground 50 meters from the east bank in the vicinity of YS 040 710. Two U. S. Army tugs attempted to pull the stricken ship from the mudbank without success due to the ebbing tide and returned to Newport to await the flooding tide. At 2200H, three U. S. Army tugs arrived at the grounding site and in the span of 43 minutes pulled the ship from the mudbank. The merchant ship KOREA immediately continued to transit north under her own power.

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Only RAID 74 was assigned to CTF 211 during October, continuing its patrol, in conjunction with the 32nd Regiment, 21st ARVN Division, of the Bay Hap Canal just northeast of Cai Nuoc Village (WQ 02 79) in the Ca Mau Peninsula. RAIDs 70 and 73 continued operating in Cambodia, and RAID 75 in the THD XIV AO.

October was a relatively placid month for RAID 74, marked only by one major firefight and by the sinking of ATC HQ 1232. The sinking took place at 0700H on 5 October and was the result of a leak in the port exhaust pipe where it joined the hull. The boat went down by the stern while she was tied up at the pier in Ca Mau in about 15 feet of water. A three-man salvage team was requested from Harbor Clearance Unit ONE, which arrived at the sink site on the morning of 14 October, from Vung Tau. Progress was hampered the first three days for want of an operable P-250 pump, which finally arrived from Dong Tam on 17 October. The boat was refloated and patched by the evening of that day, towed to the USS ASKARI and later to Dong Tam for more durable repair.

A firefight occurred at 0815H on 4 October as seven boats with ARVN troops embarked, proceeding north on the Trem Trem River to WR 050 460, took numerous B-40 rounds and small arms fire from the east bank of the river at WR 055 455. Four of the boats were hit

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by rocket rounds but the fire was eventually suppressed and the troops inserted at the pre-ordained spot. Later in the day, after the ARVN troops had been extracted and the boats were returning to the base, they were again hit at 1415H at approximately the same position, again from the east bank of the river (WR 052 458). This time five boats took hits, two of which had been hit in the morning skirmish. The total casualties from the two enemy ambushes were 13 ARVN WIA, four ARVN KIA, nine VNN WIA, and two USN advisors wounded. GMG2 Robert Snitgen and EM2 Albert Thawley received minor shrapnel wounds to the face and neck and were taken to Third Surgical Hospital, Binh Thuy, for treatment.

The Senior Advisor to RAID 74, LT Judd Potter, USN, in a subsequent report, expressed distress at the results of the two engagements, noting that no attempt was made by ARVN to land and pursue the enemy, that in both cases some of those wounded had been riding on the bow of HQ 5122 despite his recommendations to remain inside the tank deck, and that the poor material condition of several of the boats had hampered their combat effectiveness.

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River Assault Groups

The river assault groups of the Vietnamese Navy continued normal river patrol and troop lift operations during the month of October. There were a number of small encounters with the enemy.

At 0815H on 9 October while transiting the Song Tac Canal to the north, two FOMs of RAG 30 came under automatic weapons fire from the east bank of the canal about 3.5 miles east of Cat Lai (YS 009 923). The boats returned the fire and suppressed it. When the RAG Commandement arrived on the scene about five minutes later, the enemy began firing again. The boats once again suppressed the fire. An RF sweep of the bank at 1000 produced no results.

On 14 October a Commandement, a Monitor, two LCM-6s and two FOMs of RAG 25/29 were working in support of RF operations in An Xuyen Province. At 1045H they inserted a platoon of RF Company 500 for a sweep about 17 miles north of Ca Mau (WR 175 403). At 1515H the boats took small arms fire from both banks at that location. A RAG crewmember spotted about 15 VC on the banks. The fire was returned and suppressed.

At 1520H on 17 October, an LCM, RPC, and Monitor of RAG 28 were in transit north on the Rach Can Giouc about 2.7 miles south-southwest of Cholon (XS 779 823) when they took two rounds of B-40 rocket

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fire from the east bank of the canal. One round hit the LCM at the waterline, passed through the well deck and went out the port side. The boats returned the fire and beached on the east bank of the canal. Boat personnel landed and searched the immediate area and detained four suspects. No weapons were found. There were no friendly casualties as a result of this incident.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCES

The onset of the northeast monsoon resulted in a month of misfortune as the men, vessels, and bases of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XV and MARKET TIME were battered by the winds and seas of three typhoons during October. Not only were craft damaged and lost, but operations to salvage these craft were hampered and in some cases completely disrupted by the storms. Normal patrolling was impossible in many cases and ships were unable to venture out of port to their patrol stations for days at a time, a situation the CTF 115 attempted to ameliorate with an increased number of reconnaissance flights by MARKET TIME patrol aircraft.

As would be expected in any force which had increased in size so rapidly, the Vietnamese Navy was plagued by a number of problems which were mainly due to inexperienced personnel and a lack of standard operating procedures. One of the most serious problems, the ramifications of which had particular relevance to coastal surveillance and defense operations, was mutual interference of friendly units caused by improper recognition and improper use of challenge and reply codes.

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At 1305H on 2 October, USS RICHARD B. ANDERSON (DD 786) was anchored about 15 miles northwest of An Thoi (US 800 300) conducting a naval gunfire support mission on the west coast of Phu Quoc Island when a patrol-type craft was spotted approaching with a bow aspect. The ship locked on her director and proceeded to track the craft which was finally visually identified as VNN PCF 3812. The PCF passed only 400 yards away across the bow of the destroyer but at no time did it reply to continuous challenges by the U.S. vessel. The potential for a serious and costly mistake in this situation was obvious.

COMNAVFORV ordered the senior advisor to CTF 213 to direct all USN patrol craft advisors to personally ascertain that current challenge codes were aboard prior to departure on patrol and to encourage and assist a vigorous training program.

COMNAVFORV also sent the following message to COMSEVENTHFLT:

> MARKET TIME Inner Barrier is under VNN command and almost entirely made up of VNN craft. Many of these commanders, captains, and crews are inexperienced and with still limited understanding of procedures. Your forbearance is necessary until we can improve procedures and performance.[1]

Trawlers

At 0830H on 9 October MARKET TIME patrol aircraft detected an SL-3 trawler at 18-30N, 112-32E about 310 miles northeast of Danang on a course of 360 degrees at 10 knots. Surveillance was

1. COMNAVFORV MSG DTG 100028Z OCT 70.

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terminated at 1805H on the same day when the trawler entered CHICOM waters at 20-19N, 111-43E, remaining on a northerly course.

Infiltration Trawler 285-01

At 2130H on 27 October, MARKET TIME VP aircraft sighted an SL-4 infiltration trawler at a position of 12-00N, 113-41E about 28 miles east of Nha Trang. This trawler, designated 285-01, was shadowed by MARKET TIME aircraft until the morning of 29 October when the USS BAUSELL (DD 845) arrived on the scene to continue the overt surveillance of the trawler.

On the night of 30 October, the SL-4 intruder changed course for the Paracel Islands. The BAUSELL continued her surveillance as the trawler anchored in the lee of Lincoln Island on 1 November. The BAUSELL temporarily handed off surveillance to VP aircraft while she was being replenished underway by USS ASHTABULA (AO 51) on the afternoon of 2 November. The following day, the trawler got underway in the general direction of Hainan Island and the destroyer once again turned surveillance responsibilities over to VP aircraft who shadowed the trawler to CHICOM waters.

First Coastal Zone

The First Coastal Zone was the area hit the hardest by heavy weather during October. Fortunately enemy action was at a fairly low level.

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There were no mining incidents on the Cua Viet River during the month, the longest such break since a 45-day hiatus in the late spring of 1969. The only enemy-initiated incident in the area occurred at 0050H on 29 October when the CG 11 base took nine rounds of 60 mm mortar fire. Muzzle flashes of mortar and small arms fire were seen by base personnel during the attack. There were no friendly casualties or damage.

SEAL Team TWO, Det ALPHA, Seventh Platoon under LT Hawkins arrived at Cua Viet on 16 October in order to conduct operations against enemy sapper elements. Their operations were hampered by a lack of hard intelligence on suitable targets, however, and at month's end an attempt was underway to improve this unproductive situation.

From 5 October to 14 October USS PERSISTENT (MSO 419) and USS IMPLICIT (MSO 455) conducted mine hunting operations off the mouth of the Cua Viet River without result. These operations were somewhat hindered when the Cua Viet Sea Buoy, which the MSOs had been using as the mine hunting master reference buoy, was sunk by a U.S. Army helicopter using it for target practice. This incident prompted a series of rather hot messages between COMNAVFORV and the Commanding General XXIV Corps on the subject of Army

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aviators' marksmanship, especially in view of a serious incident which occurred a few hours later, perhaps as a result of the buoy's disappearance.

At 0200H on 10 October, VNN MSC 116 ran aground just south of the CG 11 base at Cua Viet (YD 349 697) for reasons undetermined at month's end. Salvage forces were immediately organized by COMNAVSUPFAC Danang and USS DELIVER (ARS 23) was dispatched by CTF 73 to assist the effort.

The salvage operation did not lack for originality. DELIVER, an LCM-8, personnel from NSF Danang, a Chinook-47 helicopter of the 101st Airborne Division, and a tank retriever of the 5th Mechanized Infantry Division joined forces to attach, and reattach, tow cables to the stranded vessel and to salvage a work boat of DELIVER which capsized and sank, without injury to its crew on the evening of 10 October. The helicopter performed invaluable services passing messenger lines back and forth and lifting heavy topside equipment off the ship on to the beach. On numerous occasions the tow bridle parted as DELIVER attempted to pull the ship off, although it had been lightened as much as possible. Difficulties were increased by rough seas caused by the approach of Typhoon Joan. Finally, on 15 October, the units involved were forced to evacuate the area in order to evade the storm.

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The units involved in both the mine hunting and the salvage operations proceeded south on a storm evasion course. This turned out to be fortunate for the crew of one of the Danang Harbor Defense unit's picket boats. PB 43 was on its way from China Beach to Danang Harbor in heavy seas when she ran into trouble and began to sink around 1550H on 15 October. The nearby USS PERSISTENT (MSO 419) immediately came to the rescue and passed lines to the crew as the boat took a final dive under the waves. The entire crew was rescued. At month's end, plans were being made to locate and salvage the craft.

On 15 October at 1620H, a fire started in the vehicle tire and propane bottle storage area at the First Coastal Zone HQ. Fanned by pre-Typhoon Joan winds, the fire rapidly spread and completely destroyed the VNN supply office and advisor's storeroom. A prompt response by the NSF Danang Fire Department prevented a further spread of the fire.

By the time units were able to return to the site of the MSO's grounding on 20 October, the situation had greatly deteriorated. The ship had been moved about 100 feet landward by the wave action of the typhoon and the hull of the vessel had been battered into near unsalvageable condition. While authorities were trying to decide whether or not another attempt would be made to salvage the ship, salvage

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personnel were brought to the scene by USS CONSERVER (ARS 39) and immediately began stripping all moveable equipment. Salvage efforts were suspended once again as all units departed the area to avoid Typhoon Kate. Although no decision had definitely been made by the end of the month, it seemed almost certain that the attempt to salvage MSO 116 would have to be given up.

Other mishaps continued to occur. At 0645H on 16 October, PCE 12 ran aground in Danang Bay (BT 022 812). She was pulled off at 1555H the next day by three LSB Danang LCM-8s, four NSF Danang pusher boats and three U. S. Army tugs. The only damage suffered by the vessel was bent blades on the port and starboard screws.

As October ended, MARKET TIME and THD 15 forces prepared themselves to resist yet another onslaught as Typhoon Louise approached the coast. The heavy seas caused flooding all along the coast and were the cause of a tragic incident at CG 16.

At 1100 on 30 October, CG 16 received a request from Son Tinh District headquarters to rescue five U.S. and 13 Vietnamese personnel of a Military Assistance Team who were stranded by rising flood waters on the bank of the Tra Khuc River 13 kilometers east of Quang Ngai (BS 642 763). The only CG 16 craft small enough to get under a bridge that lay across the route was a skimmer. GMG1 Larry E.

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Hendrick and ENI John E. Winters volunteered for the mission. While attempting to negotiate the Tra Khuc River, at about 1230H, they were swept out to sea by the strong current and the boat was thought to have capsized. USCGC SHERMAN (WHEC 720) arrived on the scene at 1830H on 30 October, assumed duties S & R on-scene commander, and began searching. She was joined by USS ROBISON (DDG 12) at 1845H. A U.S. Army Jolly Green Giant helo was also employed in the search. The search was hampered by bad weather and poor visibility and obtained no results. Finally the two bodies were found by a civilian fisherman at BS 745 749 at 0810 on 1 November.

Although activity in the Sea Tiger/Chi Lang I area of operations was fairly light during the month, the encounters that did occur were sharp ones. CTG 116.9 chopped SEAL Team TWO, Detachment ALPHA, Seventh Platoon to NAVSPECWARGRU for operations in MR I. The SEALs arrived in the area on 5 October and began operating out of Hoi An. The platoon went up to Cua Viet on 15 October. SEAL, CG 14, and Duffle Bag operations on Cam Thanh Island continued to encounter large numbers of VC and even discovered such refinements as concrete-reinforced bunkers.

The month's most serious incident occurred on 16 October. Two RF companies were inserted about 2.5 miles east of Hoi An (BT 176 564) and began a sweep north. One half mile from the insertion point

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(BT 176 570), a 105 mm shell rigged as a booby trap was detonated by a USN Duffle Bag team member, RD2 Frederick Leroy Nutter was killed and LTJG Dwight S. Hughes and SN Calvin Maxton, Jr. were wounded. A medevac helicopter was called but was unable to land for almost an hour due to heavy enemy ground fire from a VC unit estimated to consist of a reinforced squad.

Second Coastal Zone

Enemy activity was at a fairly low level during October, but his interest in mining allied shipping continued to be indicated by incidents in Nha Trang and Qui Nhon. There were rocket attacks on Cam Ranh Bay on 3 and 31 October and on Nha Trang on 4 October, none of which caused any damage to Naval installations. At 1045H on 4 October, one round of 107 mm rocket fire landed in the VNNTC soccer field at Nha Trang. The field, usually occupied on a Sunday morning, was fortunately not in use.

On 1 October a Yabuta junk of CG 25 went aground about 12 miles northeast of Nha Trang (CP 151 737) while in support of a ROK operation. While attempting to salvage the junk on 8 October a 30-man salvage team from CG 25 came under small arms fire from an estimated 30 VC. U.S. gunships were called in to place strikes on the enemy position and a VNN PCF and PGM came to the scene and provided

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covering fire while the team withdrew to a junk. One VNN sailor was killed and another was wounded.

From 0300H to 0500H on 4 October, the CG 23 base received a total of 15 rounds of 82 mm mortar fire, three of which landed in the adjacent village. Two VNN sailors, five ARVN soldiers, and three Vietnamese civilians were wounded in the attack. A VNN water trailer, a truck, and a U.S. Army light tank were damaged by the mortar fire.

The merits of the recently transferred harbor defense units in Qui Nhon and Nha Trang were put to the test by enemy sappers during October. While on a nightly ship and pier check, members of VNN EOD Team 6 spotted a nylon line around the anchor chain of a power ship in the Qui Nhon Inner Harbor at 0030H on 20 October. The line could not be raised and a diver was sent down to investigate. He reported that an object was attached to the line and sitting on the bottom just under the bow of the power ship. The object was approximately two feet square and one half foot thick and made of wood. Three rubber flotation devices were attached. The object was towed by a PBR to the far side of a small rock island and investigated after a reasonable waiting period. It was found to be a U.S. high explosive projectile box filled with about 180 pounds of CHICOM plastic explosives and 20 pounds of CHICOM TNT. The firing device consisted

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of five chemical delay pencils wrapped in prophylactics and taped. All the delays had activated but had flooded out. The strikers had moved but had failed to hit the detonators. Forty non-electric detonators were found mixed in with the explosives. Intelligence analysts concluded that the mine had probably been emplaced by swimmers who had been able to slip into the lighted area around the anchor chain, attach the nylon line, and escape without detection.

At 0005H on 25 October, crewmen aboard a VNN harbor defense patrol boat sighted an object floating in the water about 160 feet from the port side of the RP merchant ship PRESIDENT MARCOS anchored in Nha Trang Harbor. VNN EOD personnel were immediately called and found that the object was a homemade explosive device consisting of 65 lbs. of C-4 encased in a large truck-type inner tube. The charge was held together by parachute shrouding and three bladders provided buoyancy. Two metal fatigue detonators, two chemical delay time pencils and approximately four feet of rubberized detonator cord (interlaced throughout the explosive) were to have been used to detonate the charge. Eighty feet of monofilament line was recovered with a forked stick attached to one end. The stick had probably been intended to be used as a toggle pin for securing the line to an anchor chain. All ships in the harbor were checked with negative results. There were no sightings of swimmers in the area.

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By the end of the month, the coastline of the Second Coastal Zone was battered by the wind and waves of Typhoon Louise. The typhoon left between eight and nine inches of rain in its path and forced PCF patrols off station for the better part of three days (27-30 October). CG 26 at Binh Ba Island received the most severe beating. The roofs were blown from two newly completed six-family dependent shelters and other units were damaged. The storm dissipated into a squall line on the morning of 30 October and business returned to normal.

Third and Fourth Coastal Zones

The vessels of Operations MARKET TIME and TRAN HUNG DAO XV continued to carry out normal coastal surveillance patrols during October in the waters of the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones and off the Cambodian coast as far as the port of Kompong Som largely without incident.

A number of Hoi Chanh reports obtained by intelligence experts increasingly made it seem probable that a North Vietnamese infiltration trawler had succeeded in landing arms and supplies on the coast of An Xuyen Province in the vicinity of the Ganh Hao River mouth in late August or early September 1970. This prompted COMNAVFORV to order intensified surveillance patrols in areas 7E and 8C which are

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just off the Ganh Hao River entrance. In order to insure the fullest coverage possible, six USN PCFs were chopped from Operation BLUE SHARK to TF 213 from 27 October to 4 November to assist in patrolling areas 7E and 8C during the dark of the moon period when the infiltration threat is at its height.

A serious incident of mutual interference occurred on 4 October. At 0050H USN PCF 93, a unit of Operation BLUE SHARK, while on patrol near the mouth of the Song Hau Giang received a burst of automatic weapons fire from VNN WPB 704 about ten miles east of Long Phu (XR 400 615). The PCF cleared the area at best speed, made a report of the incident and an investigation was launched.

It was found that the WPB, assigned to patrol area 7D, had anchored to conserve its one available engine. A broken after strut on the starboard shaft on 2 September had rendered two shaft operations unwise. No advisor was aboard because the Senior Advisor to COMCOSFLOT III had considered single shaft operations unsafe for extended patrols and had so advised his counterpart prior to the WPB's departure on patrol. The WPB's bridge watch had evaluated the PCF as a suspicious junk and had fired in the air in order to stop it. As a result of this incident, the commanding officer of WPB 704 was relieved.

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Operation STABLE DOOR

Unit TWO - Cam Ranh Bay

The one remaining U. S. controlled STABLE DOOR unit conducted routine operations throughout the month with no significant incidents reported. The Cam Ranh Bay unit detected 4482 watercraft during the month of October. Of these, 1310 were inspected and another 582 boarded resulting in the detention of 58 persons and 52 water craft.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND CIVIC ACTION SUMMARY

USN Psyops and Civic Action teams in the Rung Sat Special Zone and in the SOLID ANCHOR AO continued to conduct loudspeaker broadcasts, leaflet drops, and MED/DENTCAPs throughout the month of October.

On 19 October COMNAVFORV stressed the importance of Psyops work in making the five-point peace proposals of President Nixon on 7 October known to the enemy troops in South Vietnam. The psychological objective is: "To inform the enemy forces in South Vietnam about the US and GVN proposals and that their leadership [the enemy's] is now the only element in all of Indochina which continues to prevent the establishment of peace with justice and to stand in the way of ending the war." [1]

The services provided in present psychological operations by the Beach Jumper Unit 1, Team 13, personnel were in great demand during the month by other USN commands desiring loudspeaker broadcasts and leaflet drops in their AOs. In response to COMNAVFORV's report of the availability of BJU-1 for psyops work (in addition to their regular participation in the RSSZ and SOLID ANCHOR AOs), five requests were received from CTG 214.1, the Senior Naval Advisor ATF 211, the Fourth Coastal Zone Advisor, CTG 212.4, and the Senior Advisor to RID 44.

1. ADMINO COMNAVFORV MSG DTG 190657Z OCT 70.

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As of 5 October, the organizational structure of BJU-1, Team 13, and a survey of the Psychological operations in which it is involved, in support of USN and USA Psyops teams, follows:

Element location	Assigned to	Operations conducted during the first week of October 1970
HQ Det Binh Thuy	CTF 116	planning and maintenance
Psyops Det Ca Mau	NILO, Advisory Group 80	2 air broadcast hours, 345,000 leaflets
Psyops Det Moc Hoa	CO D, 5th SFGA Det B41	14 land broadcast hours, 3 boat broadcast hours, 832,000 leaflets, 5 MEDCAPs
Psyops Det Soc Trang	SEAL Team 1 OIC Det G	1 air broadcast hour, (12 Hoi Chanhs indirectly attributable to BJU-1)
Psyops Det Chi Lang	CO D, 5th SFGA Det B43	2 air broadcast hours, 774,500 leaflets, 1 MEDCAP, 2 Hoi Chanhs
Psyops Det Rach Gia	CTG 116.3	5 land broadcast hours, 5,000 leaflets. (Det is working with VN armed propaganda team).
Psyops Det RSSZ	SEAL Team 2 Platoon 7	5.5 air broadcast hours, 140,000 leaflets, 3 MEDCAPs
Psyops Det SOLID ANCHOR	SEAL Team 1 OIC Det G	1.5 air broadcast hours, 4.5 boat broadcast hours

In the RSSZ during October the Psyops team conducted five loudspeaker broadcasts and three leaflet drops with the themes of Chieu Hoi and Attention to VC activity. Three MED/DENTCAPs were conducted by the VN medical staff with USN medical and dental advisors

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at Binh Khanh Village (vicinity XS 945 790) on 8 October, at Tan Thanh Village (YS 115 586) 26 kilometers southeast of the Nha Be Navy Base on 11 October, and at RF Company 117 (vicinity XS 936 649) on 21 October. A total of 314 people received medical and dental care and 28 dental hygiene pamphlets were distributed.

At SOLID ANCHOR, VNN Polwar units conducted "face to face" Psyops in Ham Rong I and II. Psyops and BJU personnel, working with the Yabuta Junk force, conducted broadcasts regularly on the Cua Lon and Bo De Rivers. During the period from 2 October to 16 October, 70 people received medical treatment, 18.5 hours of broadcast time were reported, and 31 people were detained by Psyops personnel. Half of the surface broadcasts urged the woodcutters to keep out of the 5000 meter defensive zone around SOLID ANCHOR. The woodcutters reported that they would rather take chances there than face the VC on the south side of the Cua Lon River, south of Tran Hung Dao Village.

U. S. Civic Action provided wood for the walls of the dispensary being constructed in Ham Rong II in the form of rocket boxes. The Vietnamese Navy had assumed responsibility for the construction of the 25-bed hospital in August and was provided with wood early in October according to CTF 116.1. There were reports of wood being given to friends of the sailors on the project, warping of the structure due to the slowness of construction progress, and loss of wood from the rear side of the building.

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At 2150H on 22 October, 15 to 30 VC entered Ham Rong II, wounded four, 1 seriously, and kidnapped two others. CTF 116.1 reported that Ham Rong II is not equipped with a single defensive weapon while Ham Rong I has weapons and 129 RF, PF, and Popular Self-defense Forces. He said that "enemy forces can move uninhibited throughout the hamlet in the dark, taking kilns, extorting gasoline, rice and other staples from civilians living along the Rach Cai Trang Canal and the north bank of the Cua Lon River. The populace is virtually helpless. The only hope for obtaining armed reaction is voice contact with VNN units on the river or sending a runner approximately two miles east to the RF outpost." [2]

Psychological operations were also conducted at CG 35 on 19 October with a broadcast two miles south of the CG 35 base and by TG 214.1 personnel (Tran Hung Dao II) in Long An (XS 720 660) seven kilometers from Ben Luc on 18 October. On the latter occasion, small arms fire was received from the west bank of the Vam Co River and suppressed. Three mortar rounds were received with one rocket hitting 20 feet astern of the lead boat. After this brief firing, the Psyops loudspeaker broadcast continued.

2. CTF 216.1 MSG DTG 231000 OCT 70.

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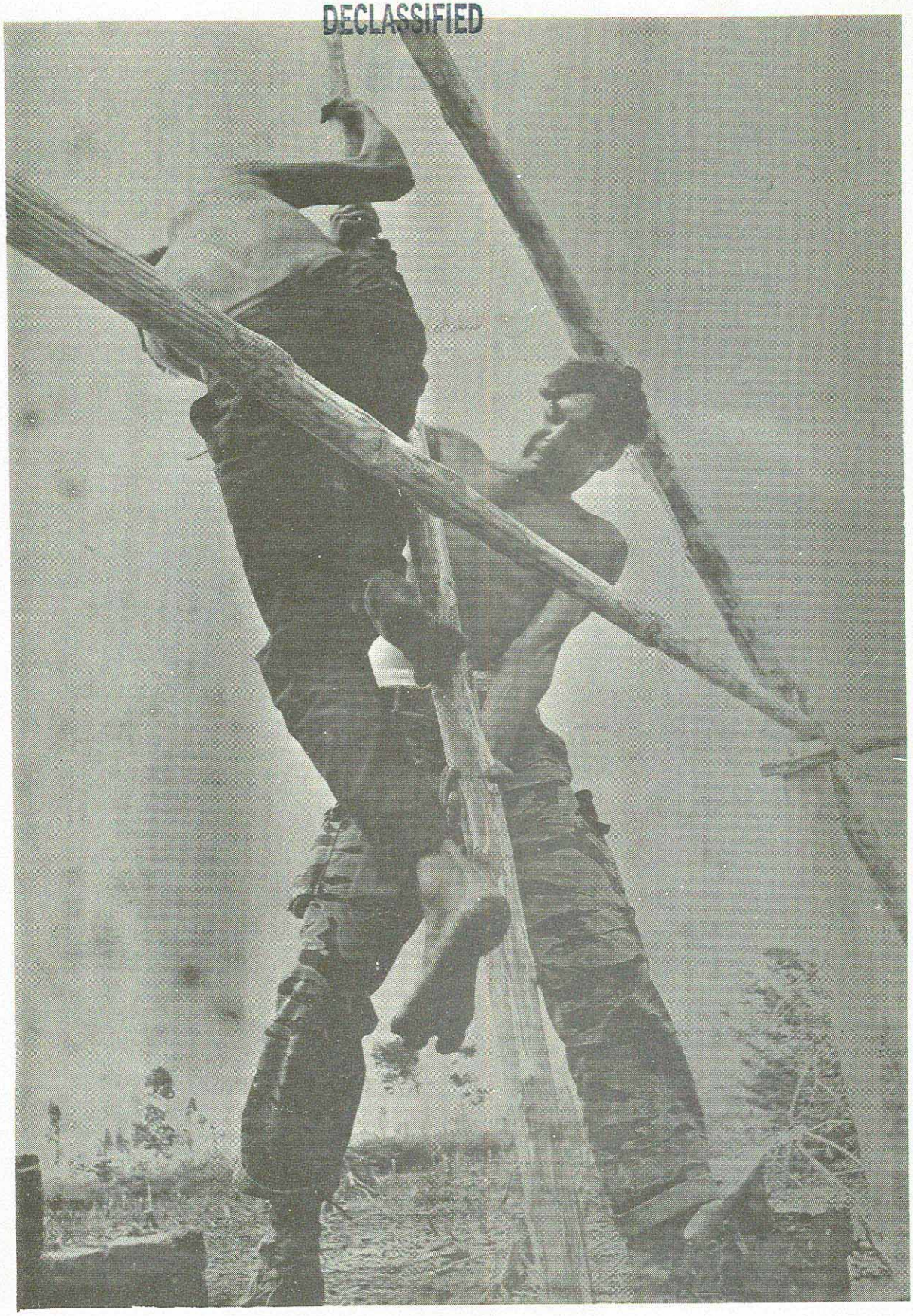

XFV-3301

U.S./Vietnamese teamwork is evident as Sam and a local villager sink a support pole for the first adobe home to be built in the Mekong Delta.

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ACCELERATED TURNOVER PROGRAM AND TRAINING SUMMARY

River Interdiction Division 46 came into being on 1 October as 11 more USN river assault craft (3 ASPBs, 3 ATCs, 3 MONs, a refueler, and a U-boat) were turned over to the VNN at Dong Tam. RID 46 is intended to be homeported at Moc Hoa as soon as the base there is completed; meanwhile, it will operate from Ben Luc in the TRAN HUNG DAO II AO.

Eight more PCFs were also turned over on 1 October at Cat Lo and another eight on 31 October at the same location. The latter turnover marked the dissolution of Coastal Division 11, the first COSDIV to enter the war and the next to the last one to leave. All of the newly-transferred PCFs were assigned to COSFLOT 5 and distributed to various locations in the Fourth Military Region.

The following are the tentative assignments for the PCFs upon completion of turnover:

Danang	COSFLOT 1	12 PCFs
Qui Nhon	COSFLOT 2	14 PCFs
Cam Ranh Bay	COSRON 22	11 PCFs
Cat Lo	COSFLOT 3	11 PCFs
An Thoi	COSFLOT 4	24 PCFs
Sa Dec	COSFLOT 5	22 PCFs
SOLID ANCHOR	COSFLOT 5	12 PCFs

There are only 14 PCFs remaining in the USN inventory, and these will be transferred in December, 1970.

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The Patrol Craft Tender HARNETT COUNTY, which had operated in Vietnam since February 1967, became the Republic of Vietnam Ship MY THO (HQ 800) on 12 October. The turnover ceremony at U.S. Naval Station, Guam, was presided over by Rear Admiral Paul E. Pugh, USN, Commander Naval Forces, Marianas. Commodore Lam Nguoc Tanh, Vice CNO, VNN, attended the ceremony. Captain Robert L. Dise, Chief of Staff, Naval Support Activity, Saigon, represented that command.

The USN PBR force in country also approached its end as RIVDIVs 532 and 571 combined to form RPD 63 on 15 October at ATSB Phuoc Xuyen. The new RPD will continue to work for 212.3 out of Phuoc Xuyen.

Naval Support Facility, Danang, turned over six craft on 21 October at Danang. The craft released included LCM-8s 924 and 926, PBs 30 and 41, and two skimmers. The LCMs went to the VNN Logistics Supply Command, the PBs to the Danang Harbor Defense Unit.

Salvage craft transferred were CSB-1 and YLLCs 1 and 5. They were presented to Task Force 214 on 29 October at Cat Lo. Finally, on 31 October, three LCM-6s configured for minesweeping were given to MID 93 by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, at Nha Be. As of

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31 October the inventory of craft transferred was as follows:

586 small Combatant craft
75 harbor and mine craft
2 large Combatants
39 logistics and support craft

257 USN craft remain to be turned over.

After a number of initial resupply problems, the Operational Base at Kien An was finally commissioned on 15 October. Upon reaching its full manning level, the base will accommodate RAIDs 70 and 71, consisting of 159 VNN and 21 USN advisors each, 81 base personnel and six USN logistics advisors, and 20 VNN attached to the CATG 211.1 Staff. Phu Cuong Operational Base, in the THD V (formerly READY DECK) AO on the Upper Saigon River, was commissioned on 16 October. COMNAVFORV reported at the middle of the month that base construction and occupancy were generally going well, the initial target for construction completion being 1 January. Although it became clear that this goal would not be reached, construction was far enough along to permit occupancy and outfitting at the following bases: An Thoi, Ben Luc, Can Tho, Cat Lo, Cua Viet, Cuu Long, Danang, Ha Tien, Kien An, My Tho, Hoi An, Nha Be, Phu Cuong, Phuoc Xuyen, Qui Nhon, Rach Soi, Thuan An, Chau Doc, Vinh Long, and Long Binh. In some cases the formation of a new base merely entailed the expansion of existing facilities; in others, as at Chau Doc, for example, a substantial amount of ground fill was required before construction could begin.

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Training for the month emphasized, as it will for the remainder of the ACTOV Program, maintenance personnel who will assume the enormous task of keeping the bases and waterborne assets going. By the end of the month 430 of the 838 required had been sent to base maintenance positions; 665 of 754 required, to the VNN supply system; and 235 of 423 required, to the VNN transportation system.

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NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

In one of their boldest attacks since the Tet offensive of 1968, VC/NVA troops mortared and rocketed the Advanced Tactical Support Base (ATSB) at Song Ong Doc on 20 October. The ATSB was completely destroyed, and only the quick reaction of the assigned personnel kept the loss of life low. A complete narrative of this attack can be found in the BREEZY COVE (CTG 116.2) section of this summary.

Action involving other Naval Support Activity, Saigon units was light in October. The Logistics Support Base at Dong Tam was mortared on 6 and 27 October. In the attack on 27 October, LT H. Thomas Hiers, CHC, USN was slightly wounded.

Enemy mining attempts were thwarted by alert sentries at three Naval Support Activity, Saigon units during the month. On 17 October, the tower sentry at the Navy Pier in Sa Dec spotted a suspicious clump of palm fronds floating toward the pier. He alerted the roving patrol and a skimmer. Two concussion grenades were thrown into the fronds, the second of which caused a large secondary explosion. Another floating mine was detonated by rifle fire from the YR-71 which was anchored near Binh Thuy on the

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same day. On 31 October, two members of a waterborne patrol at Nha Be threw a concussion grenade into a pile of debris approximately 200 yards east of the moored APL 21 causing a small secondary explosion.

Weather proved to be a formidable enemy of the Naval Support Facility, Danang as three typhoons, Joan, Kate, and Louise, swept through the area during the month. Two U. S. Navymen, GMG1 Larry Emerson Hendrick and EN1 John Edward Winters, were lost when their skimmer was swept out to sea on 30 October. Also lost was the Luzon Barge LQ 706 which had broken loose from its buoy and had gone aground on a sandbar on 25 October. A fire of suspicious origin was detected on the barge the evening it grounded and a few minutes later the barge, which was loaded with ammunition, exploded strewing crates of ammunition in the bay. On 30 October, the German hospital ship HELGOLAND was forced to get underway due to high rising water and debris piling between the ship and the pier. She subsequently ran aground at the mouth of the Danang River. She was pulled off successfully through the coordinated efforts of the U. S. Army, Naval Support Facility, Danang, USS COHOES (ANL 78), and Vietnamese assets on 1 November.

In turnover during the month, USS HARNETT COUNTY (AGP 821) became the Republic of Vietnam ship MY THO (HQ 300) in ceremonies at Guam on 12 October. The Harbor Security Department at the

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Naval Support Facility Detachment at Chu Lai was turned over to the Vietnamese Navy on 15 October.

Distinguished visitors to Naval Support Activity, Saigon bases during the month included Vice Admiral M. F. Weisner, COMSEVENTHFLT, who visited the Naval Support Facility, Danang on 5 October and Vice Admiral M. C. Johnson, COMPHIBPAC, who visited the Naval Support Facility at Cam Ranh Bay on 23-24 October.

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THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

Mining incidents continued to hamper Seabee construction efforts along Route LTL-4 in the southern portion of the First Military Region during October. These minings caused injuries to three Seabees and damage to two pieces of equipment. EO3 Charles E. Koberlein, seriously wounded by an enemy mine on 29 September, died of his wounds on 9 October.

Construction work completed during the month included the ATSBs at Nam Can and Phuoc Trach, the ACTOV bases at Ha Tien and Kien An, and the dependent housing project at Ha Tien.

NMCB FIVE redeployed to CONUS in October after completing their fifth Vietnam tour. They were relieved by NMCB 74.

The remaining Naval construction forces have a total projected backlog in the First Military Region amounting to 15 weeks of horizontal work and 26 weeks of vertical work. In the Third and Fourth Military Regions, the projected backlog for present Seabee assets is 40 weeks of horizontal and 40 weeks of vertical work. There were a total of 1,699 Seabees (63 officers, 1,636 enlisted) in the Republic of Vietnam at month's end. Five Seabees were awarded Purple Hearts, two Navy Commendation Medals, three Navy Achievement Medals, one Combat Action Ribbon, and two Good Conduct awards during this period.

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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
CONUS	Continental United States

PSA	Province Sector Advisor
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
RAD	River Assault Division
RAG	River Assault Group (VNN)
RAID	River Assault and Interdiction Division (VNN)
RAS	River Assault Squadron

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RF/PF	Regional Forces/ Popular Forces
RPD	River Patrol Division
RPG	Rocket propelled Grenade or River Patrol Groul
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 or Monitor
RAP	Rocket Assisted Projectile