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NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM

MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

MAY 1966

# 204

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## COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

In addition to increasing patrols as new units arrived in-country, May provided the highlight of fifteen months of MARKET TIME operations when a Communist trawler was run aground and destroyed off the Ca Mau Peninsula.[1] During May MARKET TIME units participated in one special operation, TEE SHOT V, and on several occasions rendered support to friendly ground forces and to Coastal Groups on patrol. As usual, assistance was always given to friendly fishermen in need, and on one occasion 157 persons on a sinking junk were saved and transported to safety (see PsyWar and Civic Action Section).

The overall readiness of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard units comprising Task Force 115 was excellent during May. The additional six PCFs received in-country and the establishment of a Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance Unit at Vung Tau further increased the capabilities of the Coastal Surveillance Force.

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## USCGC POINT GREY TRAWLER INCIDENT

For USCGC POINT GREY the evening of 9 May started as many other routine patrols in Area 8 off the Eastern coast of the Ca Mau Peninsula. Dark and overcast with passing rain squalls,

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[1] Appendix II provides a statistical breakdown of MARKET TIME Activities during May.




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the night was typical of the early days of the southwest monsoon season.[1 & 2] At approximately 2200, while patrolling four miles off the coast, POINT GREY observed what appeared to be a large bonfire on the beach. Upon closing the beach she determined it to be two large bonfires at a position just north of the entrance to the Rach Gia River. As this activity was highly unusual, POINT GREY decided to maintain continual surveillance in the same area throughout the night. (see chart for positions)

POINT GREY's reaction to the twin bonfires and her diligent surveillance of the area yielded results when at 0010 on 10 May, she established radar contact with what appeared to be a steel hulled vessel, proceeding on an approximate course of 260° at a speed of ten knots. POINT GREY closed the contact and at 0120 issued a challenge. There was no reply. She continued to close and at a range of 400 yards illuminated the contact by searchlight, identifying it as a trawler. POINT GREY then made her initial report to Coastal Surveillance Center, An Thoi stating that the trawler was maneuvering at various courses and speeds in a northwest direction. POINT GREY continued to shadow the trawler.

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[1] The following narrative is based on CTF 115 161130Z, Enemy Trawler (contact 10E1 - final wrapup).

[2] For listing of message traffic relating to incident see CTF 115 Historical Summary, May 1966.





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At 0200 the trawler appeared to heave to, and remained dead in the water at a position off-shore from the bonfires. By 0315 the trawler was reported drifting. POINT GREY illuminated the area with 81mm illumination, closed to 100 yards and hailed the trawler. There was no reply. Three or four people were seen briefly, but otherwise the crew managed to remain out of sight. At 0500 the trawler was at a position approximately 1000 yards from the shore, and was starting to drift into restricted waters. It was decided to delay boarding operations until daylight principally because of the restricted waters and adverse sea conditions.

By daybreak the trawler appeared to be deserted and aground approximately 400 yards from the shore, and at 0700 POINT GREY approached to make a boarding attempt. The suspicious nature of the trawler received strong confirmation when POINT GREY came under intense fire from the shore. She returned the fire and withdrew to a position 1500 yards from the shore to await assistance.

USS BRISTER (DER 327) and USS VIREO (MSC 205) were already enroute. In addition CTF 115 ordered USCGC POINT CYPRESS to the scene and requested the assistance of the Vietnamese Navy. VNN Headquarters responded by ordering to the scene five junks of Coastal Group 41 and the Fleet Command ships LSIL 328 and PGM 614. BRISTER arrived at 1145, but shallow water precluded a close approach and she remained 7500 yards from the shore.





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Additional support would be necessary prior to again attempting to board.

The tide and sea conditions continued to work against boarding operations, carrying the drifting trawler to within 100 yards of the shore, near an area covered by dense mangrove swamp. However, at 1350 air support became available and the order came from CTF 115 to expedite boarding. With aircraft providing support, POINT GREY worked her way in towards the trawler. All proceeded well until POINT GREY was approximately 200 yards from the shore, when heavy, accurate small arms and automatic weapons fire was received from Viet Cong positions in the mangroves, wounding three men on POINT GREY's bow. She quickly backed to a position 400 yards from the shore where it was possible to turn, and then withdrew to safer waters. The three wounded men were transferred to BRISTER for medical evacuation. Following this incident, surface units provided gunfire throughout the afternoon to prevent the Viet Cong from approaching the trawler. Several hits on the trawler caused small fires and small secondary explosions.

By 1700 the surf and tide had shifted the trawler to within fifty yards of the shore, making salvage impossible prior to darkness. With the trawler resting close to the beach, the possibility of a Viet Cong attempt to remove the cargo during the night was high. The decision was reached to destroy the trawler. The destruction order was passed at 1726 and destruction commenced at 1750. Surface units shelled and aircraft bombed and strafed



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the trawler throughout the early evening hours. Numerous fires and secondary explosions were observed until 2030, when a violent explosion ripped the trawler in two pieces and extinguished the fires. Destruction attempts then ceased, and surface units and MARKET TIME aircraft provided flare illumination for the remainder of the night.

During the early evening of 10 May, the Vietnamese Navy ships LSIL 328, PGM 614 and five junks of Coastal Group 41 arrived on the scene. Daylight on 11 May revealed the trawler broken into two sections and listing heavily to port. All was quiet on the shore and Coastal Group 41 moved in and established a defensive perimeter. With U.S. and Vietnamese surface units providing support, LSIL 328 commenced salvage operations. The Commanding Officer of LSIL 328 was designated on scene commander. In the early afternoon, USN SEALs and VNN LDNN (UDT) arrived and assisted both in salvage operations and in maintaining the defensive perimeter. The tide and surf presented the only opposition as salvage of the trawler's cargo proceeded smoothly throughout the day. The surface units withdrew at nightfall and salvage operations ceased. Surface units, flare ships and MARKET TIME aircraft provided flare illumination throughout the night.

Salvage operations were resumed at first light on 12 May. At 0930 USS TORTUGA (LSD 26) arrived on the scene with Harbor Clearance Team One, LLC-1, and the helicopter fire team embarked.





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The Officer in Charge of HCT-1 reported to the VNN on-scene commander as his technical advisor. At 1500 salvage operations were interrupted by Viet Cong harassing fire, forcing the defensive perimeter to withdraw to sea and causing a temporary cessation of operations. An air strike was called and the opposition ceased. At 1610 the Commander in Chief of the Vietnamese Navy arrived on scene aboard VNN PC-10 and assumed on-scene commander. Salvage operations were resumed by 1800, and continued throughout the night.

Salvage operations concluded at 1015 on 13 May and the defensive perimeter was withdrawn. All salvaged material was placed aboard LSIL 328 which departed for Saigon with CINC VNN embarked. All salvage personnel and the SEAL team were backloaded and by 1600 all units except BRISTER had departed the scene. BRISTER then took the wreck under fire and completed its destruction, resuming normal patrol at 1900.

Material salvaged from the trawler included six crew-served weapons, approximately fifteen tons of ammunition, movie projectors, film and other propaganda material.[1] The violent explosion which destroyed the entire bridge and amidships portion of the trawler precluded recovery of communications and navigation equipment, ship's logs, charts, and other records. Nameplates removed from the ship's machinery by salvage personnel indicated the bulk of

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[1] See Appendix I for a complete breakdown of material recovered from the wreckage.




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the engineering equipment was manufactured in East Germany in 1964. A few nameplates were also in French and Chinese. Printed material recovered included both propaganda and training manuals.

An analysis of the ordnance recovered was provided by the COMUSMACV Technical Intelligence Officer. According to his findings the most significant item recovered was the 120mm mortar ammunition manufactured in Communist China in 1965. This is the second time this type of ammunition has been recovered for technical analysis in South Vietnam, and it is the first time it has been discovered in the Mekong Delta region. Also significant was the recovery of 12.7mm API ammunition manufactured in Communist China in 1965. The appearance of ammunition of such recent vintage could indicate both a shortage of ammunition on the part of Communist troops in the area and the relative efficiency of the Communist supply system.[1]

An analysis of aerial photographs of the trawler and dimensions obtained by the salvage crews indicated that the craft was of steel construction, approximately 110 feet in length and 22 feet in beam. It had two hatches, the forward hatch eight feet by thirteen feet, and the after hatch eleven feet by eleven feet. The hull was a blue-grey color with the bridge superstructure area painted white. There were no flags or identification markings on the hull.

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[1] COMNAVFORV 141003Z May 66 Intelligence Summary "SPHINX" 37-66.




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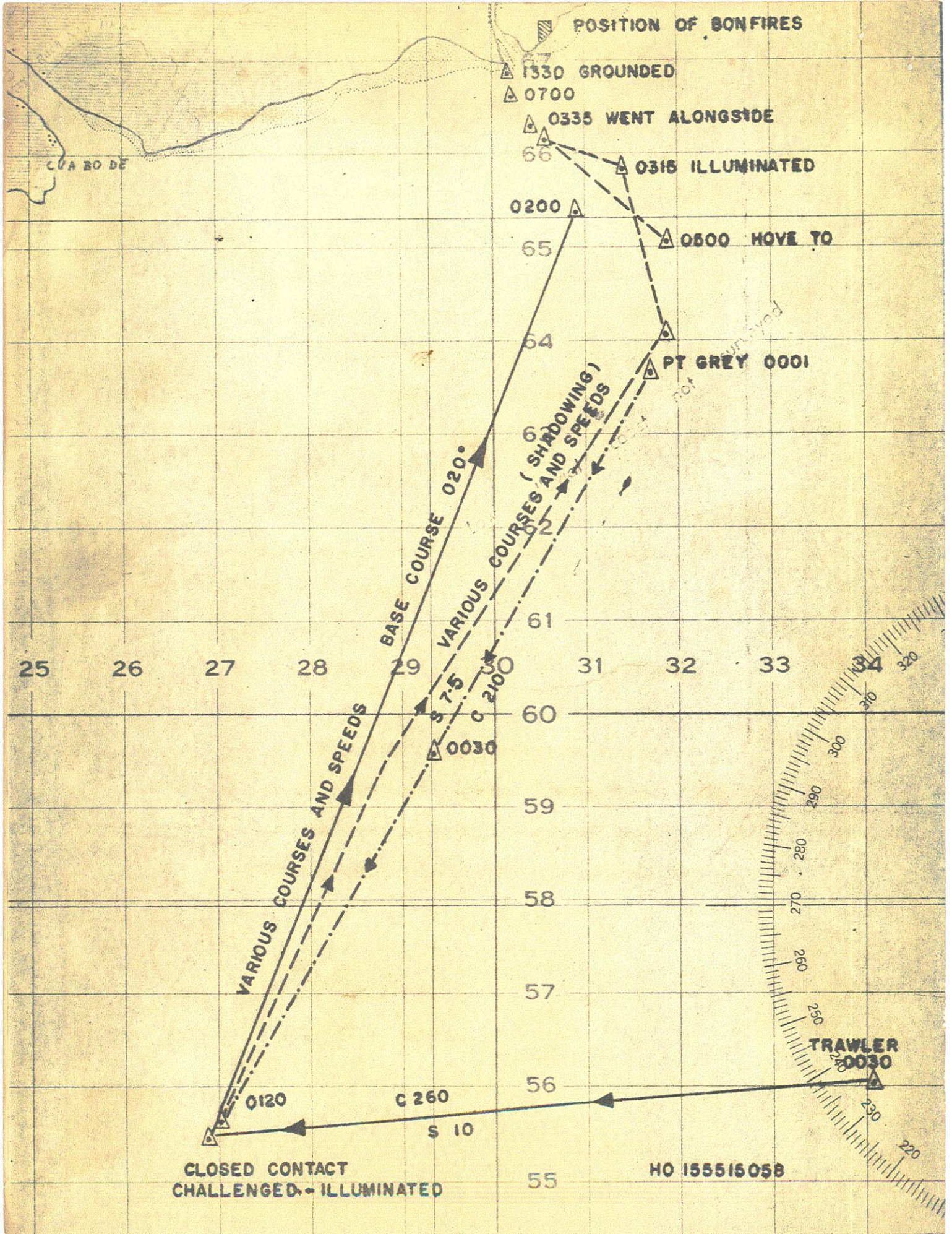
POSITION OF BONFIRES
1330 GROUNDED
0700
0335 WENT ALONGSIDE
0315 ILLUMINATED
0200
0500 MOVE TO
PT GREY 0001
BASE COURSE 020°
VARIOUS COURSES (SHADOWING) AND SPEEDS
VARIOUS COURSES AND SPEEDS
S 7.5
C 210
0030
0120
C 260
S 10
TRAWLER
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CLOSED CONTACT
CHALLENGED - ILLUMINATED
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Photographs of the trawler also revealed a number of features noted on a trawler intercepted by the USS HISSEM (DER-400) while apparently attempting to infiltrate into the southwestern tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula on 31 December 1965. This trawler was subsequently tracked into the territorial waters of Communist China.[1 & 2] Features similar in both ships included construction and configuration of the bow and forecastle, break of the poop and stern, a small ventilator mounted on the port quarter, stack placement, arrangement of stanchions, and color of the hull and superstructure. It was concluded that either the same ship or identical ships were involved in both infiltration attempts. In addition, the gross dimensions of both ships are similar to the communist arms carrier destroyed at Vung Ro Bay in February 1965.[3]

In October 1964, a Viet Cong doctor was infiltrated into the Ca Mau Peninsula. He was subsequently captured.[4] A sketch he prepared of his infiltration ship resembled closely both the HISSEM trawler and the POINT GREY trawler. The doctor stated that his ship had sailed from Haiphong, east through the Hainan Strait, south through the South China Sea, and west to the Ca Mau Peninsula.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] For narrative of HISSEM incident see NAVADVGRP Historical Report, January 1966.

[3] COMNAVFORV 141003Z May 66, op. cit.

[4] Naval Advisory Group Historical Review, June 1965, p. 5.




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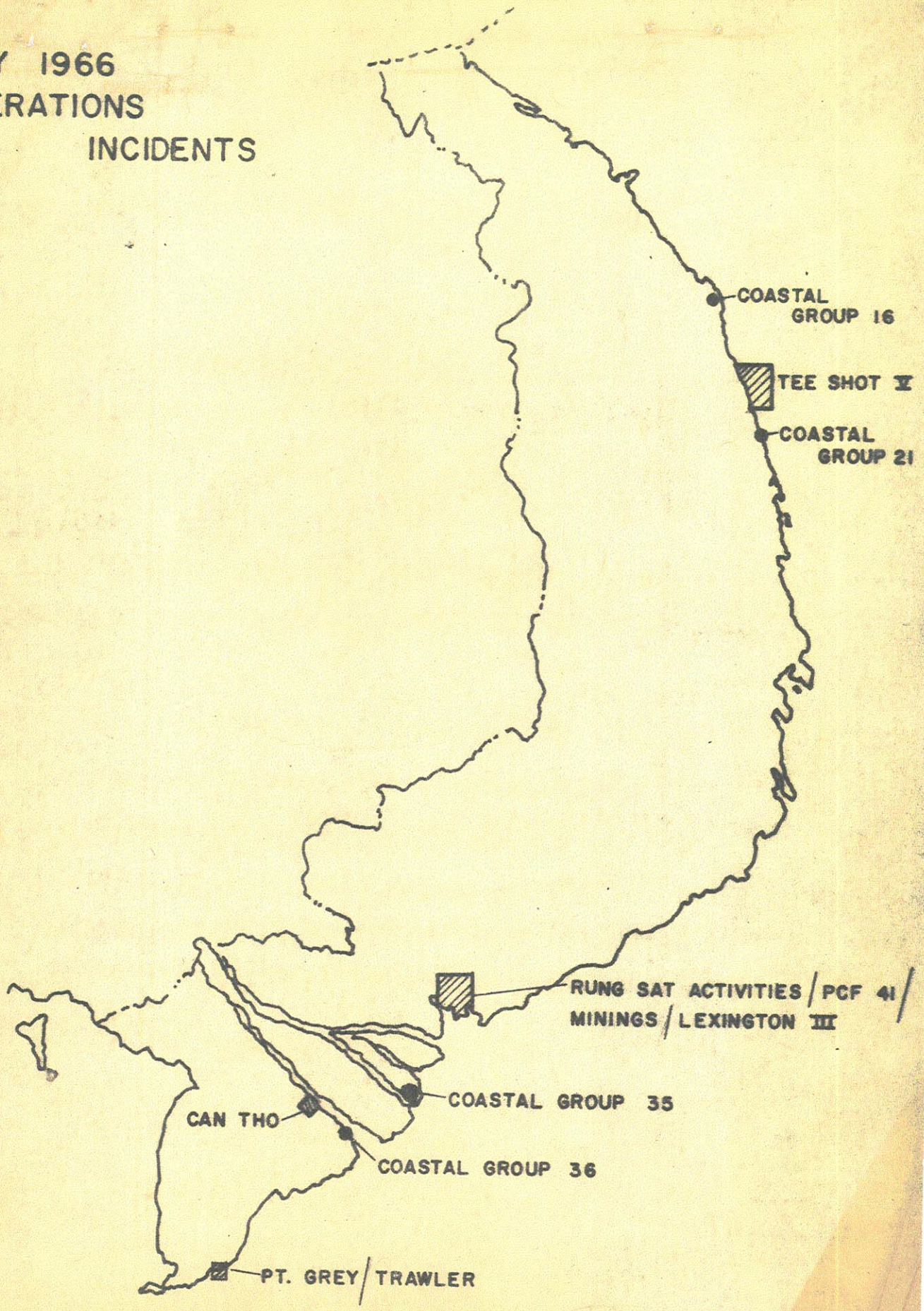

TRAWLER AGROUND SOUTH OF ENTRANCE TO RACH GIA RIVER

SOME AMMUNITION, PROJECTORS AND AMPLIFIERS RECOVERED FROM TRAWLER

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The alert reaction of POINT GREY resulted in detection of a major infiltration attempt and destruction of the trawler and its contraband. Close coordination between Vietnamese and U.S. units involved in the salvage operations resulted in a rapid extraction of all usable material from the wreckage. The capture and destruction of large quantities of arms, ammunition and explosives has denied the Viet Cong use of these during the monsoon season operations, while the capture and destruction of projectors, films and propaganda material has injured the Viet Cong psychological warfare effort in the south of the Republic of Vietnam.

* * * * *

TEE SHOT V

The TEE SHOT concentrated patrol concept was employed once during May in support of Operation DAVY CROCKETT II in the northern section of Binh Dinh Province. TEE SHOT V was established in the coastal area from Dong Phu village south to Chanh Oai village to detect and capture or destroy any hostile craft attempting to exfiltrate the area.

Participating U.S. units included USS FALGOUT (DER-324), and two PCFs from Division 104 at Cam Ranh Bay. FALGOUT provided logistic support for the two PCFs as well as berthing for two spare PCF crews. Participation of Coastal Groups 21 and 22 was requested through Vietnamese Navy Headquarters. In addition, MARKET TIME patrol aircraft were directed to give special emphasis





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to this area, and were to report immediately all contacts to the nearest surface unit.

FALGOUT commenced patrol in the TEE SHOT V area the morning of 5 May. Liaison was established with Coastal Groups 21 and 22 that afternoon. The Coastal Group junks then entered the patrol effort, maintaining two junks on patrol at all times. However, the patrol effort was considered to be only marginally effective until the arrival of PCFs 42 and 48 the following afternoon. Both units were briefed and topped off with fuel and water. With the arrival of the PCFs sufficient forces were available to effectively counter exfiltration.

On 7 May at 1105 PCF 42 came under fire from the beach. The forward turret gunner was hit on the flak jacket by small arms fire, incurring superficial wounds to the face and arms. At the time USS AGERHOLM (DD-826) was in the area on NGFS station approximately 800 yards away from the incident, and the wounded man was transferred to her for treatment. Neither PCF 42 nor AGERHOLM could determine the origin of the attack, and the fire was not returned.

Five instances of thirty foot sailing junks carrying cargos of salt between the villages of Degi and Sa Huynh were reported on 7 May. At the time investigation by VNN personnel on the scene indicated that their cargo manifests were in order, issued by local authorities at Sa Huynh. After four similar junks carrying salt cargos were escorted by PCF 48 to Qui Nhon on 10 May, it was





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revealed by local authorities that the papers were illegal. The Sa Huynh authorities did not have the authority to issue papers for the transport of goods originating in a Viet Cong controlled area (Degi is in a Viet Cong area).

TEE SHOT V was terminated the morning of 13 May. During the operation a total of 2,448 junks were detected, 1,210 inspected and 484 boarded. Twenty-three persons and six junks with a total of seventeen tons of salt were apprehended and delivered to VNN authorities. No exfiltration was detected or was believed attempted.

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MARKET TIME UNITS

Three Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACV) arrived at Vung Tau on 1 May aboard the USS CABILDO (LSD 16) and were offloaded on 2 May. The PACVs, formed as PACV Division 107, then proceeded to the MARKET TIME base at Cat Lo. The period of 3 May through 19 May was utilized in setting up maintenance and logistic support equipment and in preparing the PACVs for operations. Refresher training, initial area familiarization and training in MARKET TIME operations also were conducted during this period.

An evaluation to determine the suitability of the PACV in performing MARKET TIME missions and tasks got underway on 20 May. With the technical assistance of the Naval Research and Development Unit of the Joint Research and Test activity, this evaluation was to continue for a period of approximately ninety days. The



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evaluation includes tests of PACV maneuverability, speed, lift capabilities, suitability for independent and coordinated MARKET TIME patrols, MEDEVAC operations, search and rescue, and logistic transport. Emphasis during the latter part of May was placed on lift performance, navigation and MARKET TIME operations. By the end of May the PACVs had operated a total of over eighty-four hours.

Six additional PCFs arrived in country during May. PCFs 55 through 59 and PCF 61 were offloaded at DaNang on 15 May. Two PCFs remained at DaNang, bringing the total boats in Division 102 to twelve. The remaining four boats transited to Qui Nhon on 16 May, forming the nucleus of PCF Division 105. Division 105 is the fifth PCF division to be formed, and the last under present plans. With the arrival of the new boats and the loss of PCF 41 on 22 May (See section "Loss of PCF 41" under CTF 116 Operations) the total number of "SWIFTS" in country stood at 48 by the end of the month.

In aerial surveillance operations, USS SALISBURY SOUND (AV 13) with CTF 72 embarked, arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 15 May, set up a seadrome and activated Task Group 72.5. On 16 May SP-5B aircraft began flying patrols from the seadrome in support of MARKET TIME operations. Patrol Squadrons 40 and 48 had aircraft detachments at Cam Ranh Bay supported by SALISBURY SOUND for the remainder of the month. Fifty-two MARKET TIME flights were flown by TG 72.5 during this period. The aircraft on patrol investigated contacts




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for MARKET TIME ships and reported all contacts and suspicious activity discovered. A detachment from Patrol Squadron Two relieved Patrol Squadron One as TG 115.6 on 29 May. The detachment has seven SP-2H based at Tan Son Nhut Air Base at Saigon flying in support of MARKET TIME operations.

Twenty-six Coast Guard cutters remained on MARKET TIME patrol during May in addition to five DERs, six MSOs and two MSCs. The following SEVENTH Fleet units were under the operational control of CTF 115 for MARKET TIME operations during May:

USS BRISTER (DER-327)
USS VANCE (DER-387)
USS FALGOUT (DER-324)
USS FORSTER (DER-334)
USS KOINER (DER-331)
USS KRETCHNER (DER-329)
USS FINCH (DER-328)
USS LOWE (DER-325)
USS DYNAMIC (MSO-432)
USS CONFLICT (MSO-426)
USS INFLICT (MSO-456)
USS LOYALTY (MSO-457)
USS FORTIFY (MSO-446)
USS ENGAGE (MSO-443)
USS IMPERVIOUS (MSO-449)
USS ENDURANCE (MSO-435)
USS PERSISTENT (MSO-491)
USS IMPLICIT (MSO-455)
USS GANNET (MSC-290)
USS VIREO (MSC-205)
USS MARK (AKL-12)
USS BRULE (AKL-28)
USS KRISHNA (ARL-38)

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## HARBOR DEFENSE

In January 1966 a harbor defense team composed of representatives from CINCPACFLT, NAVADVGRP, COMINPAC and COMIUWGRUONE



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visited the major coastal ports in the Republic of Vietnam to determine the harbor defense requirements. The ports visited included DaNang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay and Vung Tau/Cat Lo.[1] Based on the findings of the harbor defense team, a harbor defense plan has been prepared for Vung Tau and is being prepared for each of the other ports.

The plans provide for a harbor defense unit at each location. The units will have the mission of detecting and defending assigned land areas, water areas and water approaches against small surface craft attack, intrusion by deception craft, sabotage by sneak attack, underwater swimmers or subversive personnel and enemy mine laying operations. A Harbor Entrance Control Post will serve as the command center for each unit. Radar search, visual search and searchlight sections will provide surveillance, while surface craft are to provide harbor and entrance patrols and investigation and prosecution of suspect contacts.

The establishment of the harbor defense units will be in three phases. In phase I, Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance Units (MIUWS) consisting of five officers and fifty-four enlisted men will be deployed to each of the sites. The MIUWS Units will establish an interim harbor defense capability utilizing equipment and personnel assigned. The initial step

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[1] For the initial work on harbor defense see CHNAVADVGRP Summary Report, February 1966, p. 14.




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will be to establish the Harbor Entrance Control Post and provide basic surveillance, utilizing radar, visual watches and communications. During this phase liaison must be effected with local officials and military authorities to establish and enforce boat restricted areas and traffic regulations.

Phase II is the semi-permanent phase in establishing harbor defense. Advanced Base Functional Components will phase out the MIUWS equipment. Newly arriving personnel will receive on-the-job training, and will gradually replace the MIUWS personnel. Phase III will consist of a completely staffed and equipped harbor defense unit. Permanent structures will be completed and all facilities will be operational. Phase III will remain in effect until the end of hostilities.

The MIUWS Units assigned are Unit 12 at Vung Tau, Unit 11 at Cam Ranh Bay, Unit 23 at Qui Nhon and Unit 22 at Nha Trang. They will be under COMINPAC for administrative purposes. Harbor defense units in the II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones are to be under operational control of CTF 115, while the unit at DaNang in the I CTZ will be under NAVSUPPACT DaNang.

MIUWS Unit 12 arrived in Vung Tau in mid-April and started construction of the interim facilities for Vung Tau harbor defense. A deserted French hillside defensive position, affording excellent visual coverage of the Vung Tau anchorage and channel, was selected as the Harbor Entrance Control Post. The fortifications were found to be in a good state of repair, providing usable rooms and bunkers.





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The access roads were also found to be usable. During May the Vung Tau unit started operations with one radar installed at the HECP and one LCPL for harbor patrol. A second LCPL arrived from Saigon at the end of the month.

The MIUWS at Nah Trang and Qui Nhon received their initial shipments of equipment during May. At present each of these locations have a security force of one officer and six enlisted men.

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## RIVER PATROL FORCE

Operation GAME WARDEN expanded during May as the first river patrol units moved into the Mekong Delta.[1] Activity continued in the Rung Sat Special Zone where patrols continued to interdict Viet Cong movement while U.S. Army Operation LEXINGTON III destroyed numerous enemy facilities. Viet Cong mining activities re-emerged as a very real threat in an incident at the Nha Be anchorage.

On the afternoon of 18 May Captain B. B. Witham, Jr., USN assumed command of the River Patrol Force. Ceremonies were held at the GAME WARDEN base at Nha Be.

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## RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE ACTIVITIES

Heavy Viet Cong harrassment of U.S. patrol units on the Soirap River north of the entrance to the Vam Co River took place during the early days of May, a continuation of similar events during April. Starting the evening of 30 April and continuing for five successive nights, USCGC POINT PARTRIDGE, on patrol four miles north of the entrance to the Vam Co River, received small arms and automatic weapons fire from the west bank of the Soirap River. On each occasion POINT PARTRIDGE returned the fire with her .50 caliber machine guns and 81mm mortar. On 1 and 3 May she also received assistance from the

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[1] APPENDIX III provides a statistical breakdown of GAME WARDEN operations through May.



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"Seawolf" helicopter fire teams. There was no assessment of Viet Cong casualties, but each time the fire was silenced. PBRs on Soirap patrol received similar fire on one occasion.

At 2200 on 5 May POINT PARTRIDGE detected a single sampan crossing the Soirap from east to west at a point just north of the positions where fire had been received. POINT PARTRIDGE closed, using her searchlight and siren, and immediately received automatic weapons and small arms fire from the sampan. This was returned with 700 rounds of .50 caliber machine gun fire. The occupants, estimated at four, abandoned the sampan. POINT PARTRIDGE then took the sampan in tow.

The sampan was eighteen feet long and camouflaged with palm fronds. Two Chinese Communist carbines, each with seven rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, were found in the sampan. The principal cargo was a large quantity of sixteen foot pointed stakes, evaluated as anti-helicopter stakes. Also recovered were two fifty-five gallon water drums and some personal papers.

Contrary to what are believed to be standard Viet Cong movement tactics, this incident took place at low tide under a full moon. Previous studies indicated that the Viet Cong would take advantage of the dark phases of the moon for attempted movement of supplies.[1] Also, particularly in tidal areas, high tide has been regarded as a criteria in Viet Cong movement.

USCGC POINT KENNEDY, on Soirap station south of POINT

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[1] CHNAVADVGRP msg 231913Z Apr 66.




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PARTRIDGE came under fire the same evening from an old French fortification located on the north bank of the junction of the Soirap and Vam Co Rivers. This particular fortification, located in a secure Viet Cong area, has often been a source of harrassment to both U.S. and Vietnamese patrol units. At 1923 POINT KENNEDY received small arms fire which by 1935 had been supplemented with automatic weapons. POINT KENNEDY returned the fire with .50 caliber machine gun and 81mm mortar fire. By 1946 the shore attack had been silenced. There were no friendly casualties.

On 7 May USCGC POINT GRACE detected a sampan crossing the Soirap from east to west, apparently following the identical route as the POINT PARTRIDGE contact of two nights earlier. POINT GRACE sounded her siren, fired warning shots and attempted to overtake the sampan, but the distance was too great and the contact evaded into a small stream on the west bank. However, POINT GRACE was not to be denied. Two night later at 2005 she picked up a contact in the same area, following the same crossing pattern. When POINT GRACE closed, illuminated, and fired warning shots, four persons jumped overboard. Two men and one woman were recovered from the water. The fourth, later identified as a male, managed to escape. The sampan was also recovered and found to contain two carbines of CHICOM manufacture, one Mauser rifle, two cartridge belts, 85 rounds of ammunition and assorted food, clothing and personal effects. The prisoners and material





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were turned over to Vietnamese authorities at Nha Be.

This incident terminated two months of highly successful river patrols for the WPBs as their patrol stations were assumed by PBRs on 11 May and the cutters returned to MARKET TIME duties. During this period the WPBs established a excellent precedent of diligent and aggressive river patrols.

During most of May three PCFs remained under operational control of CTF 116 for patrol in the Rung Sat Special Zone. On the morning of 22 May PCF 32 detected a sampan crossing the Dong Tranh River from east to west. An occupant opened fire with a .30 caliber weapon. PCF 32 returned the fire with 400 rounds of .50 caliber fire, damaging the sampan. However, the sampan managed to beach and the occupants fled. There was no assessment of casualties.

The morning of 27 May PCF 37 sighted a sampan with two persons embarked closing the beach near the location where the attack on PCF 41 had occurred. As PCF 37 closed, the sampan was beached and abandoned after being partially camouflaged. PCF 36, on patrol in the same area, was called to assist, and both units closed the beach to investigate. In the process an explosion, possibly a small mine, occurred thirty yards astern of PCF 36. At the same time the Viet Cong took the PCFs under small arms fire. It was evident that the Viet Cong had used the sampan as a decoy to lure the PCFs into the vicinity. The PCFs returned the fire and cleared the area. There were no casualties.



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During May the "Seawolf" helicopter fire teams, operating from USS TORTUGA, again made a significant contribution to Rung Sat Special Zone activities. In addition to supporting GAME WARDEN patrol units, the fire teams came to the assistance of Vietnamese Regional Force units on three occasions. The fire teams were also utilized to search out and destroy Viet Cong installations and sampans. During May the fire teams accounted for four Viet Cong killed, four sampans destroyed, 19 sampans damaged and five Viet Cong structures destroyed. They flew a total of 31 armed reconnaissance missions, twenty-five rapid reaction missions, sixteen escort missions and seven medical evacuation missions.

* * * * *

LOSS OF PCF 41

On 22 May between 1830 and 1845, while on patrol in the Rung Sat Special Zone in support of U.S. Army Operation LEXINGTON III, PCF 41 came under fire from a heavy caliber weapon on the east bank of the Dinh Ba River.[1] A hit was sustained in the lower half of the starboard bulkhead of the pilot house, killing the coxswain, wounding the radioman and destroying most of the equipment in the pilot house. Within seconds of the initial hit a mine exploded adjacent to the PCF, resulting in possible bottom damage. PCF 41 returned the fire and accelerated at maximum

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[1] COMNAVFORV msg 230700Z May.





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speed. However, steering control had been lost sequential to the hit in the pilot house and the boat ran aground before control could be regained.

The Viet Cong attack terminated soon after the PCF went aground. The radio had been damaged in the attack, and efforts to re-establish communications were unsuccessful. Mortar illumination shells, .50 caliber tracer ammunition and the searchlight were all used in an unsuccessful attempt to bring assistance.

At 1937, due to location of the craft in VC territory, impending darkness, lack of radio communications and an outgoing tide, PCF 41 was abandoned. Prior to abandoning the crew jettisoned the after .50 caliber machine gun, the URC-58 radio and some of the ammunition. The life raft was then launched and the crew, armed with small arms, proceeded southeast until picked up by PCF 37 at 2145. The one wounded man was then transferred to Dong Hoa Village, support base for Operation LEXINGTON, for helicopter medical evacuation. The remainder of the crew was taken to Vung Tau for treatment of shock and minor injuries.[1]

Helicopter fire teams were then ordered into the area to interdict any Viet Cong attempts to strip PCF 41, and a reaction force of one commandament, one monitor, and four FOMs from RAG 22 departed Nha Be at 2300. CTG 116.2 and the USN SEAL team were embarked.

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[1] CTU 115.3.7 msg 230330Z May.



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The reaction force arrived on the scene at 0300 on 24 May and found the PCF down by the bow about 30 degrees, heeled over to port about forty-five degrees, and about eight per-cent submerged. The reaction force removed the one body along with the forward .50 caliber machine guns, the starlight scope and the remaining ammunition. An incendiary grenade was used in an attempt to render the mortar useless. An attempt was then made to tow the PCF from the sand bar where it had grounded, but severe bottom damage apparently suffered from the mine explosion occurring after the initial hit caused it to sink in midstream in about twenty-five feet of water. The reaction force marked the spot and then withdrew from the area. This was the second PCF lost to enemy action.[1]

On 24 May at 0430, a salvage unit composed of seven SEAL team divers, seven units of RAG 22 and VN Regional Force Company 999 departed Nha Be for the area of the PCF 41 sinking.[2] The salvage unit, with CTG 116.2 embarked, arrived on station at 0820 and commenced operations. RF Company 999 landed and set up a defensive perimeter on the north bank of the Dinh Ba River while four RAG FOMs conducted reconnaissance by fire of the south bank. One LCVP with minesweeping gear rigged was utilized in an expanding square search for PCF 41. At 0915 the LCVP exploded a Viet Cong mine, but no casualties were experienced. The search continued, but was unsuccessful in locating PCF 41. Due to the

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[1] See NAVADVGRP Historical Report, Jan 66.

[2] CTG 116.2/SA RSSZ 250920 May msg provides narrative of salvage operations.



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hazardous location and severely damaged condition of the PCF, salvage efforts were abandoned late in the morning.

The same morning, Regional Force Company 999, operating on the north bank of the river, made contact with a Viet Cong unit of unknown size at 0937. In the ensuing action four Viet Cong were killed, one submachine gun, two carbines, and one B-50 anti-tank rocket launcher and two rockets were captured. Whether this weapon or a 57mm recoilless rifle dealt PCF 41 the fatal blow remains a matter of speculation. Later, during operation LEXINGTON III, several expended 57mm recoilless rifle rounds were discovered in the same area.

The B-50 launcher is the first captured in South Vietnam, and was discovered in excellent condition, indicating that it had just recently been brought into the war. National origin of the weapon has yet to be established. It can be fired from either the shoulder or the ground and has a probable effective range of 250 meters. The rocket is spin-stabilized, 105mm in diameter and initially evaluated as being capable of penetrating eight inches of hardened steel.[1]

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LEXINGTON III

Operation LEXINGTON III, a search and destroy operation conducted by the Second Brigade of the U.S. Army First Infantry

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[1] COMNAVFORV msg 261026 May. COMNAVFORV Intsum "Sphinx" 47-66.



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Division in the Rung Sat Special Zone, took place between 21 May and 9 June. The operation consisted primarily of a series of deployments of rapid reaction forces, utilizing both helicopter and amphibious troop lifts. An artillery and general support base was established at Dong Hoa Village for the first phase of the operation and later shifted to Ly Nhon for the second phase. (see chart).

Both U.S. Navy and Vietnamese Navy units played an active part in the operation. On 20 May two LCUs of the VNN Logistic Lift Command transported 105mm howitzers, vehicles, water and ammunition to Dong Hoa. Three LCM-6s from RAG 22 with the U.S. advisor embarked assisted in the troop transport. One VNN LCU was also utilized to assist in the support and artillery base shift to Ly Nhon.

RAG 22 played a vital role in an amphibious operation on 2 May. Three LCMs were utilized to carry troops from Ly Nhon to a landing position on the Dinh Ba River. Two FOMs and a monitor provided an escort, and two LCVPs with minesweeping gear cleared the channel. To provide diversion tactics for the amphibious assault, two PCFs and four PBRs departed Ly Nhon the same morning for a position off the mouth of the Vam Sat River, scene of a highly successful amphibious action during Operation JACK STAY in April.[1] At this position they circled and bombarded the mouth of the river with 81mm mortar and .50

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[1] See COMNAVFORV Historical Summary 1966, p. 3.




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caliber machine gun fire to give the impression of impending assault. In the meantime the main convoy proceeded south down the Soirap River, to the Dong Tranh River and into the Dinh Ba River.

GAME WARDEN units also provided an anti-infiltration/exfiltration patrol throughout the operation. Manning seven stations on a continual basis, the eight PBRs and three PCFs concentrated their patrols in the vicinity of LEXINGTON III activity (See PCF 41 incident). U.S. Navy SEAL teams conducted several ambushes during the operation.

LEXINGTON III accounted for 35 Viet Cong killed in action by body count. There was one friendly killed in action and four wounded. Thirty weapons were captured, fourteen base camps, five fortified positions, twenty-nine sampans and twelve huts were destroyed. One fifteen bed hospital with its own generator and two ammunition/weapons facilities were also destroyed, the principal triumphs of the operation. A moderate quantity of rice and ammunition, some tools and a grenade press were also accounted for.

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MININGS AT NHA BE

The ability of the Viet Cong to infiltrate a secure port and, using a crude but highly effective device, inflict serious damage on shipping was strongly confirmed the morning of 26 May. At 0150 a loud explosion resounded through the Nha Be anchorage



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followed by a series of distress signals from a ship's fog horn. The GAME WARDEN base at Nha Be immediately went to general quarters, and PBRs and units of VNN RAG 22 were sent to investigate.

The PBRs reported that the ship EASTERN MARINER, of Panamanian registry and carrying a cargo of 4000 tons of bagged cement, was settling by the stern with a slight starboard list. Twelve feet of freeboard was remaining and the crew was abandoning ship. The PBRs and RAG 22 units rescued the crew and brought them to Nha Be. There were no casualties.

Shortly after the explosion a tug arrived on the scene, and an investigating party consisting of the tug's master and four U.S. Navy officers boarded the EASTERN MARINER. They reported that the engineroom and fireroom were flooded to the main deck and that two holds were partly flooded. By 0315 two pumps had been rigged by the tug to attempt to keep the ship off the bottom.

At 1230 the EASTERN MARINER, assisted by three tugboats and three LCM pusher boats, beached on the eastern bank of the Nha Be River clear of the main ship channel. Investigation by divers revealed a twelve foot by ten foot hole in the starboard quarter of the vessel. Subsequent diving attempts recovered remanents of nylon cord, indicating that a mine had been attached to the ship.

At about 1000 on 26 May a tugboat reported to the MSTS Office, Nha Be, that a second explosion had occurred near another ship anchored about 350 yards from the EASTERN MARINER. Investigation revealed that the French ship MILOS DEL MAR had experienced an underwater explosion while weighing anchor. There was no damage




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to the ship. Examination of her anchor chain showed an attached nylon cord, evaluated as having been used to affix a mine.

All ships at Nha Be were informed of the danger and instructed by CTG 116.2 not to heave around on their anchor chains or turn their screws until they had received an underwater inspection. U.S. Navy SEAL and EOD personnel and VNN LDNN then conducted underwater inspections. At 1340 EOD personnel discovered a water mine attached to the anchor chain of the ship OUR LADY OF PEACE, anchored in the same general area as the other two ships. OUR LADY OF PEACE was carrying a cargo of 500 pound, general purpose bombs.

The mine recovered contained about 130 pounds of TNT rigged to be electrically detonated by a double timing device attached to the mine. EOD personnel reported that the mine was attached to the anchor chain by metal hooks and nylon parachute cord which allowed the mine to drift back under the ship with the current. The size of the mine and its construction indicated that it was towed through the water to the site by a small boat. When the hooks were secured to the anchor chain the mine was allowed to drift free under the vessel as dictated by the river current.

The one successful mining and two attempted minings of 26 May prompted a quick re-evaluation of the anchorage security requirements for Nha Be. Although the U.S. Army, Vietnam First Logistic Command had been tasked with port security for Nha Be, it was evident that they would require immediate assistance to provide adequate protection for the fuel, ammunition and other




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MINE RECOVERED FROM "OUR LADY OF PEACE" (BATTERIES AND TIME DEVICE ARE REMOVED)

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ships at anchor there. Special security provisions were established by COMNAVFORV, and CTF 116 was assigned operational control of all U.S. Navy units engaged in the special security activities in support of the Army's port security responsibilities.[1] EOD and SEAL personnel were organized to conduct special underwater inspections of all U.S. and foreign ships anchored at Nha Be according to priorities established by the MSTS Office. Eight additional PBRs were transferred from Vung Tau to Nha Be to assist in anti-swimmer security patrols commencing one hour prior to sunset and continuing until sunrise. The assistance of RAG 22 was also elicited. MSBs conducted periodic sweeps of the anchorage. Arriving ships were briefed on the security requirements and were encouraged to employ maximum security measures during darkness, including rigging lights to illuminate anchor chains and sides.

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## MEKONG DELTA ACTIVITIES

The first operational test of the GAME WARDEN concept in the Mekong Delta commenced on 8 May when Commander River Division 51 with River Section 511 embarked in USS TORTUGA (LSD-26) at Vung Tau and departed for the Bassac River. The following day River Section 511 chopped to CTG 116.1 at Can Tho, debarked from TORTUGA and transited the Bassac River to the interim GAME WARDEN base at Can Tho. During the transit fire cover was provided by

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[1] COMNAVFORV msg 261129Z May 66.



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TORTUGA's helicopter fire team. Light small arms harassing fire was received during the transit, but it was quickly suppressed.

Upon arrival at Can Tho, the PBRs underwent a week of area familiarization and training. Two days of daylight patrols were also conducted to permit the local population to become familiar with the new patrol boats. On 15 May two PBRs were distributing leaflets promulgating new curfew hours on the Bassac River when they received automatic weapons fire at a point 15 miles southwest of Can Tho. They cleared the area with no casualties or damage. However, on the return trip to Can Tho they again came under heavy, constant automatic weapons fire. Fish traps across the river at this point had forced them to a position close to shore, greatly increasing their vulnerability to hostile fire. Two crewmen were injured on one PBR and both craft received light material damage. They returned the fire with a heavy .50 caliber barrage while clearing the area.

After completing promulgation of curfew regulations the PBRs started regular night time patrols. Arrangements were made for the National Police liaison officers to accompany the patrols in the Can Tho area.

On 17 May, in their first night action, the PBRs received automatic weapons fire from a shore position having again been forced into range of the Viet Cong weapons by fish traps. The fire was returned. On 29 May while investigating three sampans attempting to cross the Bassac, a two boat patrol received heavy




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automatic weapons and small arms fire. The fire was returned but the PBRs were forced to clear the area. The use of heavy shore fire to cover the transport of supplies across rivers had been witnessed many times previously on the Soirap River. This, however, is the first incident of this tactic involving U.S. patrol boats on the Mekong Delta waterways.

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PBRs

The addition of 16 PBRs during May brought the total of the boats in country to 47. On 23 May eight PBRs were offloaded from S.S. RIDGEFIELD VICTORY and on 28 May eight more boats were offloaded from S.S. U.S. TOURIST. On 4 May River Section 542 was activated, followed by River Section 531 and River Section 543 on 16 May.

The rapid tempo of operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone during May taxed crews and their boats. The PBRs ran twelve hour patrols with an additional two to three hours spent transiting to and from the patrol areas. In addition, most River Patrol Sections were required to perform their own maintenance. Most boats were used on daily patrol, allowing little time for preventive maintenance. However, this condition will improve as more boats and crews become available and as the support bases start developing maintenance facilities and commence providing maintenance support.

Operations from the LST and LSD interim support ships showed



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that a high order of seamanship is required to prevent damage to the PBRs when moderate seas are running. Several times during May, River Patrol Sections were forced to operate out of the base at Cat Lo as the PBRs experienced difficulty operating from the LST. Seas of three to four feet caused hull damage alongside the LST and LSD and made boarding of the PBRs from the support ship difficult.

Three problem areas came to light in the PBRs themselves during the month. Numerous pump drive shaft casualties were experienced. To attempt to rectify this, Naval Ship System Command is procuring a stronger shaft. PBRs also started experiencing extensive surface corrosion of the pump grill inserts and pump suction pieces, and on the seats for the impeller wear rings. NAVSHIPSYSCOM is investigating the problem. The third problem was the inability of the PBRs to make their designed speed of twenty-five knots. This seems to have been caused principally by excessive weight.

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## NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP

The reorganization of the Vietnamese Navy which neared completion during April, came to a virtual standstill during May. The primary reasons for this were political in nature, centered around a possible large scale turnover of the top jobs within the service. Some higher ranking officers in VNN were sent to attache billets or to schools in the United States. The general climate throughout the month remained one of uncertainty, with most officers adopting a "wait and see" attitude. As a result the process of reorganization, along with other improvements, slowed to a near standstill. Fortunately the effect on actual operations was slight.

During the month the number of inspections personally conducted by CNO increased. However, follow-up action on discrepancies encountered during those inspections was minimal. From reports available the senior VNN officers were aware of problems which confronted them, and promulgated orders in an attempt to correct the troublesome areas. Again, follow-up action was weak.

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## FLEET COMMAND

Advisors noted no significant improvement in Fleet Command operations and maintenance during May. Fleet Command ships continued to assist MARKET TIME units in their coastal patrols, and to maintain patrols in the river areas. During the month 34 gunfire support support missions were fired by Fleet Command



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units, primarily in support of Regional Force and Popular Force outposts in the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone. In a typical action on 17 May, a Viet Cong company was reported moving on Dong Hoa Village in the Rung Sat Special Zone. LSIL 331 and PGM 612 arrived on the scene and bombarded the Viet Cong with heavy 40mm and 20mm fire, thwarting the attack. In action in the I Corps Tactical Zone, PCE 11 fired seventy rounds of 3" ammunition at Viet Cong outposts in the vicinity of Coastal Group 16. Three outposts were reported destroyed. In other significant action previously noted, Fleet Command ships played on important role in the capture and destruction of the Viet Cong trawler on the Ca Mau Peninsula.

Continual stress on routine maintenance by the Fleet Command Maintenance Officer resulted in some improvement in shipboard maintenance practices. However, many officers still believe that their sole job is operating the ship and that the shipyard is responsible for maintenance. Advisors reported that engineering practices continued to be lax in spite of their persistent stress on the importance of proper watch standing and preventive maintenance procedures. Personnel distribution practices, lack of experienced technicians, old ships and long lead time for spare parts all continued to add up to the maintenance problems of the Fleet Command.[1]

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[1] Fleet Command Advisor's Report, May 1966.





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The LDNN (UDT) conducted three operations in May, none involving enemy contact. Eighteen men, two officers and their U.S. advisor conducted beach surveys at Hon Cau Island on 5 May and Dam Tray Bay on 6 May. These are both located in the Con Son (Poulo Condore) Islands. From 10 May to 14 May LDNN personnel participated in the salvage of material from the Viet Cong trawler; and on 19 May a reconnaissance of prospective landing areas near the Co Chien River was conducted.

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COASTAL ZONES AND COASTAL GROUPS

Naval operations in the First Coastal Zone (CZ) were hampered by the political unrest in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The primary problem was in the area of logistics. Some of the Coastal Groups were short of food and fuel during the month as their junks were unable to get into DaNang for resupply. This situation was somewhat alleviated by Fleet Command ships delivering supplies from Nha Trang and other ports to the south.

Advisors report that blocking operations for ARVN land operations continue to be fruitful in the First CZ. Three of these were conducted during May. In the most significant of these on 31 May, Coastal Group 16 provided a blocking force for Operation QUYET THANG 14/G in the Quang Nhai sector. Fifty junks were checked, two Viet Cong captured and twenty bags of salt confiscated. In significant ground action on 18 May, Coastal Group 16 landed





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to obtain supplies and encountered and engaged one Viet Cong platoon. In the ensuing firefight ten Viet Cong were killed, and one sub-machine gun, one carbine, twenty-eight grenades and two bars of TNT were captured. One VNN junk sailor was killed.

Two significant actions during May in the Second CZ involved Coastal Groups and their advisors. On 14 May, a patrol from Coastal Group 21 was maintaining a barrier patrol in the vicinity of Operation DAVY CROCKETT (Coastal Group 21 had remained on patrol in the area upon completion of TEE SHOT V, discussed previously). The patrol detected a junk with nineteen people embarked, and as the patrol approached, several items were thrown over the side. Upon boarding, a medical kit and some documents were discovered. The junk and suspects were apprehended and taken for interrogation. Twelve of the nineteen admitted to being Viet Cong, and stated that they had worked for the Viet Cong in various jobs and were fleeing U.S. forces engaged in DAVY CROCKETT. One was a sixteen year old female, serving as a nurse. They stated that when the Coastal Group 16 patrol approached, they had thrown six M-1 rifles and three boxes of ammunition over the side. All were turned over to the Binh Dinh re-education center.

In the Third CZ three significant clandestine operations were conducted; all displaying ingenuity and aggressiveness in carrying the war to the Viet Cong. On 1 May a Coastal Group 35 intelligence team, disguised as civilians, raided a small band of Viet Cong at a position south of the CG 35 base. One Viet



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Cong was killed, one was injured, and several grenades and a flag captured. On 5 May the Commanding Officer of Coastal Group 32 and five sailors, all dressed as fishermen and armed with sub-machine guns and carbines, embarked in three small sampans. Near Long Son Island they were approached by three Viet Cong tax collectors. The Viet Cong were taken under fire and all three were killed. Coastal Group 32 then came under shore fire but suffered no casualties. On 16 May Coastal Group 35, employing similar tactics, encountered nine Viet Cong in a sampan. A firefight erupted and three Viet Cong were killed. After two patrol junks from Coastal Group 35 arrived on the scene the sampan and some documents were captured. The remainder of the Viet Cong fled.

The heaviest action in the Third CZ involved units from Coastal Group 35 and 36 patrolling near the mouths of the Bassac and Co Chien Rivers. On at least eight occasions they came under heavy automatic weapons fire. In a firefight on 16 May, a Coastal Group 35 patrol received automatic weapons, mortar and possible 57mm recoilless rifle fire. Two Vietnamese sailors and one U.S. advisor were wounded. The increase in activity in this area can be directly related to an increase in patrols by the two Coastal Groups.

Operations in the Fourth CZ were somewhat curtailed by a fire which occurred in dependent housing at An Thoi, Phu Quoc Island. The Fourth CZ commander and VNN Headquarters were quick to respond with new housing and necessities for the dependents; however, married junk sailors were excused from duties to assist in construction of new housing, thus curtailing the patrols from Coastal

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Groups 42, 46 and 47.

In the only action of significance in the Fourth CZ during May, a two junk patrol from Coastal Group 41 was attacked by an estimated twenty Viet Cong junks off the southern tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula. In the heavy firefight one Yabuta from Coastal Group 41 was hit by a grenade, killing two sailors and wounding another. The Viet Cong suffered one junk sunk and at least six killed. A similar incident in the same area is discussed in an advisor's report from March of 1964. On 29 March of that year a Command Junk was attacked by twenty small Viet Cong junks. In that action five of the attacking junks were sunk and an estimated twenty-one Viet Cong killed. No friendly casualties were reported.

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RIVERINE AREAS AND RIVER ASSAULT GROUPS

Operations in the Third Riverine Area during May were centered in the Rung Sat Special Zone. Here as previously mentioned, units from RAG 22 participated in Operation LEXINGTON III. In addition, Regional Force operations were supported by RAG 22, often supplemented by boats from RAG 24/30 and RAG 28. In addition, boats from the above RAGs were assigned to five sensitive areas near Saigon for patrols and support.

The River Assault Groups of the Fourth Riverine Area participated in a series of highly successful operations in May. Operation CAN CHI 227/SD was launched on 14 May as a reaction operation in the area of the attempted trawler infiltration on the Ca Mau




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Peninsula. Boats from RAG 25/29 along with helicopters carried two ARVN regiments and two Ranger battalions to the scene. Friendly forces suffered one killed and forty-four wounded against Viet Cong losses of 247 killed and 19 captured. Two mortars, one recoilless rifle, two anti-aircraft machine guns, 12 automatic weapons and 16 rifles were captured. One Viet Cong supply center was destroyed.

In other action involving RAG 25/29, Operation LONG PHI 969 saw 32 Viet Cong killed and twenty-five rifles, ten kilograms of TNT, one boat and miscellaneous supplies captured. One Viet Cong hospital was destroyed. This operation involved three battalions of ARVN troops and took place 25 miles east-southeast of Can Tho.

All told during May, Fourth Riverine Area River Assault Groups participated in eighteen operations, all successful in varying degrees. In most of the operations the transport of troops was effected entirely by the RAGs. Stepped-up riverine operations appear to be effectively carrying the war to the Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta.

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VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS

Task Force Alpha, composed of the second and fifth Vietnamese Marine Battalions and a Headquarters Detachment saw the only significant combat action during May. Operating under the control of the ARVN Second Infantry Division, they conducted a search and clear operation fourteen kilometers west of Quant Ngai from 9-13




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May. The results included twenty-five Viet Cong killed and four captured. Nineteen weapons, 1400 rounds of ammunition, and five mines were captured. There were three friendly troops killed and eleven wounded. On 15 May the Task Force, less the Fifth Battalion, was airlifted to DaNang to assist in controlling dissident elements and rebel forces in that city. They were joined by the First Vietnamese Marine Battalion on the same day. On 16 May one VN Marine was killed in action and three were wounded as a result of rebel small arms fire at DaNang. For the remainder of the month the force continued to assist in returning the rebel force (Struggle/Resistance Movement) to government control and in reestablishing order within DaNang.

The Third Marine Battalion spent the first part of the month in several search and clear operations in the Capital Military Region, and also provided static security and riot control forces at the Saigon Radio Station and at the Capital Military Region Headquarters. In search and clear operations light enemy contact was made on 5 May and 8 May. There were four VN Marines wounded and unknown enemy casualties. One additional Marine drowned crossing a stream. On 15 May the Third Battalion was assigned to various areas in Saigon to provide security and a riot control force for the city. They were periodically deployed to trouble spots throughout the city to control gatherings of demonstrators. The Battalion remained on security for the remainder of the month.


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The Vietnamese Marine Recruit Training Center at Thu Duc was attacked by approximately two platoons of Viet Cong on the morning of 22 May. The Viet Cong, using small arms fire, pole charges, TNT charges, bangalore torpedoes and rifle grenades, were successful in penetrating the compound. Three Vietnamese Marines were killed in action and thirty-five were wounded. There were no Viet Cong casualties reported. Steps were taken immediately to improve the defensive posture of the training facility. Damage from the Viet Cong attack was repaired by the end of the month, and construction and improvement of defensive positions and barriers continued daily.

Despite the political crisis with its religious overtones, unit morale within the VNMC remained high and loyalty to the government was unaffected. Proper leadership and indoctrination, combined with esprit de corps and discipline, successfully countered any dissension which might otherwise have come to the surface, and accounts for the loyalty and effectiveness of VNMC units employed as security and riot control forces.[1]

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[1] Senior Marine Advisor Monthly Historical Summary, May 1966.



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CIVIC ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES

During May the greater part of the naval PsyWar and Civic Action activity was administered by the Vietnamese Navy Psychological Warfare Bureau and its U.S. advisors. However, GAME WARDEN and MARKET TIME units will soon be taking a more active part in these activities. During May PsyWar-trained U.S. Navy officers were assigned to DaNang, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, Can Tho, and An Thoi to serve as PsyWar Advisors. In addition, a PsyWar officer will be assigned to the NAVFORV staff in Saigon to coordinate U. S. Navy and Coast Guard PsyWar and Civic Action activities.

The VNN Hospital Ship LSM 400 provided the highlight of the Naval PsyWar and Civic Action during the month. On 19 May she returned to Saigon, completing a 28 day deployment in the IV Corps Tactical Zone. During May stops were made at Cai Con, O Mon and Tan Hoc on the Bassac River. During an eleven day working period, the ship treated 4,400 people, including 400 dental patients and twenty-seven minor surgery cases. In associated activities the mobile PsyWar team distributed twenty tons of welfare material to 650 families and school supplies to 400 students. The cultural platoon gave six performances. The PsyWar team conducted six broadcasts in support of the Open Arms program. Two Viet Cong rallied the day following one of the broadcasts at O Mon, bringing with them one submachine gun, two carbines, two grenades and ammunition. They attributed their rallying to the VNN PsyWar team broadcasts.



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A second LSM hospital ship is planned for late this year. The initial equipment for this ship started arriving in country during May. LSM 400 deployed again on 29 May for another thirty days in the IV CTZ.

During May over eleven tons of Civic Action material were received from CARE, Catholic Relief Society and USAID for further distribution. The quantity received this month was again lower than normal due to the delays experienced by ships carrying this material in getting into Saigon to offload. About twenty tons of material were delivered to the Coastal Surveillance Force, Sea Force and River Assault Groups for further distribution by VN and U.S. personnel. About 60% of this material was transported by VNN and USN ships. In addition, the following material was distributed:

(1) Two tons to the families of VNN personnel who had their homes destroyed by fire at An Thoi, Phu Quoc Island.

(2) Fifteen tons to Can Tho for use aboard LSM 400 in its continued IV CTZ civic action program.

(3) Fifteen tons to DaNang for further distribution by CTF 115 personnel.

(4) One-half ton to Nha Be for further distribution by CTF 116 personnel.

The quantity of material delivered to several areas was smaller than usual due to the political strife in the areas and the resultant inability to obtain transportation.



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One child from the Rung Sat Special Zone and four children from the Saigon area had successful cleftlip operations during the month. One child, blind in both eyes, was operated on and her eyes replaced with artificial eyes to cosmetically improve her appearance. A VNN seaman, blinded in action, was examined by U.S. Army eye specialists. It was concurred that his sight could not be restored, and arrangements were being made to enroll the man in a trade school for the handicapped in order that he may learn a trade and support his family.

The PsyWar bureau issued 21,000 magazines, 49,500 posters, and 122,000 leaflets to VNN and U.S. units for further distribution. An additional 16,000 leaflets were supplied to the Rung Sat Special Zone. A special leaflet was developed and 10,000 copies printed for use in the Rung Sat Special Zone capitalizing on the wounding and subsequent death of a woman who stepped on a Viet Cong mine placed outside a U.S. Advisor's quarters. In addition, fifty English-Vietnamese language books were distributed to TF 115 and TF 116 units in the field to assist them in their language teaching and learning programs.

In a significant CTF 115 action, PCF 61 while on a routine night patrol sighted a fifty foot junk near Song Cau, 20 miles south of Qui Nhon. When PCF 61 approached for a routine inspection, she found that the junk was overloaded with 157 passengers and that it was swamping due to the overload, heavy seas and high winds. Because of the conditions it was felt that any attempt



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to tow the boat would be futile, and the PCF went alongside to take aboard the passengers. Although a slightly larger load than the normal crew of six, 157 persons left the sinking junk and boarded the PCF. All were taken off safely, and the junk soon went down.

PCF 61 then proceeded to USS VANCE (DER-387), also patrolling in the same area. All the refugees were transferred to VANCE, who proceeded to Qui Nhon to turn them over to Vietnamese authorities for transportation to their destinations. It was later learned that all 157 refugees were enroute to Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang, fleeing their homes in Song Cau, Phu Yen district to escape the Viet Cong in that area.

In addition first aid was administered throughout the month to Vietnamese civilians aboard junks encountered during board and search operations. Assistance included minor first aid ranging from cleaning and dressing cuts and sores to providing aspirin. In addition PsyWar material including dry milk, clothes, candy and food were given to friendly fishermen by patrol units. Staff corpsmen from PCF divisions in DaNang and An Thoi assisted in treating Vietnamese Navy dependents and the local civilian population. Also, a joint effort was made by PCF personnel and USN advisors to provide medical assistance to the inhabitants of some of the island villages in the Gulf of Thailand.

At the Naval Support Activity, DaNang the emphasis was placed on medical civic action (MEDCAP) during May. Sick call was held




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in Da Man Village #1 twice during the month; forty villagers were treated. The Station Hospital, working in conjunction with the DaNang East Civic Action Group conducted sick call each Monday at facilities made available by the Sacred Heart Convent. The Convent provided building space with room for a pharmacy and examination room, and also provided interpreters. Over 100 Vietnamese were seen under this program during May. Also during May, 59 Vietnamese were admitted to the Station Hospital and 51 persons were treated as outpatients. U.S. Navy doctors operated on three Vietnamese at the DaNang Civilian Hospital and delivered two lectures at the Hue Medical School. MEDCAP teams composed of four hospital corpsmen treated 1345 Vietnamese during the month in villages south of DaNang. Dental department personnel with the teams performed 48 extractions and treated fifty-eight villagers for toothache.

In other activities, trucks and personnel assisted the city government in cleaning up debris after the recent political struggle in DaNang. Weekly distribution of commodities, including soap, rice and other assorted foods, was made to orphanages in the city.



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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

At formal ceremonies at the Cofat Compound, Saigon, on 17 May, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon was established under Captain Herbert T. King, USN. Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon was simultaneously disestablished with its functions being assumed by the U.S. Army, Vietnam First Logistic Command. The mission of NAVSUPPACT Saigon is to provide, arrange for, maintain and operate facilities and provide services and material to support U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam; fleet units of the operating forces of the Navy; and such other activities as may be designated in the II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones.

The command consists of the Headquarters located in Saigon, five operational NAVSUPPACT detachments and six planned detachments. The operational detachments are located at Cam Ranh Bay, Can Tho, Cat Lo, Nha Be and Qui Nhon. The planned detachments are at Chau Doc, Tan Chau, My Tho, Sa Dec, Long Xuyen and Vinh Long. The detachment at Long Xuyen is to be an interim base pending completion of Chau Doc and Tan Chau bases. Additionally, an afloat base is located on board USS KRISHNA located at An Thoi. However, this base is not presently under the operational control of NAVSUPPACT Saigon.

NAVSUPPACT Saigon is presently established with five departments: The Administrative Department, Supply Department, Operations Department, Repair Department and the Public Works Department.

In order to provide field support for Navy units in the II,




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III, and IV CTZ, the Supply Department has been organized to provide central supply support to all GAME WARDEN, MARKET TIME, Harbor Defense and Mine Countermeasures sites. These functions include: Inventory Control - procurement, issue, stock control and receipt control; Planning and Field Service - coordinating departmental planning functions, activating field assistance teams, administering allotments of miscellaneous naval detachments and departmental administration; Material Control - coordinating and scheduling cargo lifts, material distribution and storage operations; and Fiscal and Disbursing.

The Operations Department is tasked with providing, manifesting and scheduling logistic airlift requirements for COMNAVFORV in the II, III, and IV CTZ. To carry out this function, two C-47s, one HU-16C and one UC-45 are available. The Operations Department is also tasked with providing port services for all U.S. Navy ships entering the port of Saigon, and maintaining an armory to provide weapons for NAVSUPPACT and base personnel. NAVSUPPACT will also establish an RPMIO and a TTY/Crypto/Radio repair facility when personnel become available.

On 25 May the logistics airlift schedule was temporarily cancelled due to non-availability of aircraft. The C-47H was involved in an accident on the Phan Thiet airstrip, suffering damage to its port wing. Two other aircraft were down for maintenance, and only the UC-45J was available to meet requirements. Also during May, four LCMs were received and commissioning details assigned.



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The concept of operations originally planned for the Public Works Department was for individual bases to accomplish their own minor repairs utilizing base personnel rather than Public Works personnel. Accomplishment of work over and above base capabilities was to be requested from the Army under inter-support agreements, or requested from the Public Works Department. To accomplish this the Public Works Department was to have two or more mobile teams. Maintenance of facilities in Saigon and provision of engineering services would be by the U.S. Army Headquarters area command. In addition, the Public Works Department was also tasked with the construction of temporary bases at My Tho, Vinh Long, Long Xuyen, and Sa Dec. Work at the first of these, My Tho, was started during May.

However, it became apparent during May that the requirements levied on the Public Works Department required development of an engineering capability, and establishment of administrative and transportation divisions. As a result the reorganization of the Public Works Department was started to include the following divisions: administrative, planning and design, maintenance, contracts and real estate, and transportation.

The Repair Department has the mission of providing repair and maintenance support for all craft assigned, coordinating repair and maintenance support of bases in the II, III, and IV CTZs; maintaining selected record plans and ships' plans index for all craft assigned; coordinating repair and upkeep of all drydock and marine railway facilities assigned; coordinating




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and assigning repair of U.S. Navy ships and craft under operational control of COMNAVFORV less Seventh Fleet ships; and coordinating the efforts of the Harbor Clearance Units when assigned to COMNAVFORV and further assigned to NAVSUPPACT Saigon.



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# APPENDIX I

Equipment salvaged from Trawler

## Weapons

One 12.7mm Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun
Three 7.62mm Machine Guns (Soviet SG-43)
One 57mm Recoilless Rifle (ChiCom Type 36)
One 7.92mm Machine Gun (MG-34, Mfg 1943)

## Ammunition

Approximately 15 tons of ammunition including the following types:

120mm Mortar (1965 ChiCom Mfg)
12.7mm API (1965 ChiCom Mfg)
82mm Mortar
81mm Mortar (Apparently Mfg USA WWII)
75mm Recoilless Rifle
60mm Mortar
57mm Recoilless Rifle
12.7mm Small Arms
TNT Blocks
Blasting Caps
Pull Friction Igniters

## Miscellaneous

Movie Projectors
Amplifiers
Speakers
Audio Transformers
Movie Films
Propaganda Material



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# APPENDIX II

MARKET TIME Statistical Summary, May 1966

1. Average number U.S. ships/craft on patrol during month:

| | DER | MSO | MSC | WPB | PCF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 115 | 186 | 62 | 516 | 675 |
| DAILY AVG | 5 | 6 | 2 | 17 | 21 |

2. Average number VNN ships/junks on patrol during month:

| | SEA FORCE | COASTAL FORCE |
|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 789 | 5355 |
| DAILY AVG | 25 | 173 |

3. U.S. Activity:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL DETECTED | WOOD | - DAY | 39,939 | NIGHT | 29,626 |
| | STEEL | - DAY | 425 | NIGHT | 369 |
| TOTAL INSPECTED | WOOD | - DAY | 9,230 | NIGHT | 7,129 |
| | STEEL | - DAY | 164 | NIGHT | 159 |
| TOTAL BOARDED | WOOD | - DAY | 11,318 | NIGHT | 5,528 |
| | STEEL | - DAY | 11 | NIGHT | 2 |

4. VNN Activity:

SEARCHED 21,699

DETAINED 629 people and 17 junks

5. Remarks:

U.S. detained 87 junks and 542 people.



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APPENDIX III

GAME WARDEN Statistical Summary, through May 1966

TOTAL FOR FIRST SEVEN WEEKS SINCE ACTIVATION OF PBRS

| DATE | INSPECTED | BOARDED & SEARCHED | TOTAL | JUNKS DETAINED | PERSONS DETAINED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4/17 | 0 | 40 | 40 | 13 | 19 |
| 4/24 | 0 | 1,445 | 1,445 | 4 | 13 |
| 5/1 | 0 | 1,135 | 1,135 | 6 | 31 |
| 5/8 | 0 | 1,595 | 1,595 | 5 | 39 |
| 5/15 | 0 | 1,222 | 1,222 | 3 | 55 |
| 5/22* | 11 | 616 | 627 | 3 | 12 |
| 5/29 | 290 | 799 | 1,089 | 7 | 15 |
| TOTAL | 301 | 6,852 | 7,153 | 41 | 184 |
| 5/30 | 65 | 134 | 199 | 0 | 0 |
| 5/31 | 0 | 221 | 221 | 2 | 7 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 366 | 7,207 | 7,573 | 43 | 191 |

Approx begin 4/10

* Reporting System Changed



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# APPENDIX IV

## COMPILATION OF CONTRABAND MATERIAL CAPTURED BY U.S. AND VNN MARKET TIME UNITS

## 1 AUGUST 1965 - 31 MAY 1966

### U.S. MARKET TIME FORCES

#### Weapons

23 Rifles
15 Carbines
1 12.7mm Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun
3 7.62mm Machine Gun
1 7.92mm Machine Gun
1 57mm Recoilless Rifle

#### Ammunition

Estimated 16 tons of ammunition and explosives including the following types:

120mm Mortar
82mm Mortar
81mm Mortar
60mm Mortar
75mm Recoilless Rifle
57mm Recoilless Rifle
7.9mm
7.62mm
12.7mm API
12.7mm
9mm
TNT Blocks
Pull Friction Igniters
Demolition Charges
Explosives Caps
34 Grenades

#### Supplies

34,100$ NVN
30,945$ VN
1.5 tons salt
1,650 kilos rice
20 5-gallon cans Calking Compound
1 portable radio
2 movie projectors
2 amplifiers



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Supplies (Cont'd)

Miscellaneous speakers and audio transformers, movie films and propaganda material.
Miscellaneous tools, supplies, weapons parts, medicine and uniforms.

Junks

11 Junks Sunk
6 Junks Captured

VNN MARKET TIME FORCES - COASTAL GROUPS AND SEA PATROLS

Weapons

1 Sub-Machine Gun
1 Bayonet
168 Rifles
1 Automatic Rifle

Ammunition

13 Grenades
2 Potato Masher Grenades
3 Mines
186 Rounds 57mm Recoilless Rifle

368 Boxes of 12.7mm, 7.9mm, .30 Cal., & 9mm pistol ammunition

Supplies

1,598 Bottles Anti-Biotics
211 Packages miscellaneous medicine
1,000 kilos rice
1 junk-load of watermelons
10,900 kilos of salt

Junks

22 Junks Captured
20 Junks Sunk (Estimate)

VNN MARKET TIME FORCES - COASTAL GROUP LAND OPERATIONS

Weapons

15 Rifles
3 9mm Pistols
2 Sub-Machine Guns
1 Carbine



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Ammunition

46 Grenades
2 Mines
2 Bars TNT
3 Rounds 81mm Mortar
2 Rounds 75mm Recoilless Rifle
8 Rounds 57mm Recoilless Rifle
1,000 Rounds Small Arms Ammunition

Supplies

220 Gallons Diesel Fuel
2 Battery Powered Megaphones
2,000 Kilos of Rice
1 Gas Mask
Miscellaneous uniforms, rucksacks, weapon magazines & tripods, and surgical tools.

Junks

3 Junks Captured



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APPENDIX V

Extract from the report of Medical and Dental Department Activities, III Marine Amphibious Force, May 1966

1. Civic Action:

(a) 58,651 Vietnamese civilians received 67,913 Medical and Dental treatments rendered by sixty-nine (69) reporting MEDCAP teams.

(b) U.S. Marine MEDCAP teams rendered treatments in 137 villages and hamlets, 3 orphanages, 10 refugee camps, 6 schools, 1 sampan fleet, 7 hospitals, 1 children's home and 8 Battalion Aid Stations.

(c) 48 health workers including nurses received informal training during the month.

(d) Formal training to Hue University Medical Students was suspended during the civil conflict.

2. Events: During the recent civil unrest in DaNang the medical facilities of III MAF assisted in the care of Vietnamese civilian and military personnel, particularly with major surgical cases that were overloading Vietnamese facilities. At the conclusion of the period of unrest, III MAF medical teams assisted in the care of minor injuries in the city of DaNang.



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