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MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

FEBRUARY 1968

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FOREWORD

The NVA/VC launched their Tet (Vietnamese Lunar New Year) Offensive during the early hours of 31 January 1968. Within twenty-four hours it was obvious that they were disastrously unsuccessful. Hence, on 1 February COMNAVFORV sent the following message to all of NAVFORV:

> "THE NVA/VC HAVE TAKEN A DISASTROUS BEATING AND HEAVY LOSSES OVER TET. THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY IN A STATE OF CONFUSION AND DISORGANIZATION. URGE ALL UNITS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO FURTHER DISRUPT AND DESTROY THE ENEMY, AND CARRY OUT A WIDESPREAD PSYWAR CAMPAIGN EMPHASIZING THE ENEMY'S RECENT DEFEATS, LOSSES AND THE HOPELESSNESS OF THEIR EFFORTS."

Later on 3 February, COMNAVFORV sent another message to all of NAVFORV. In this message he directed that, while maintaining an alert offensive and defensive posture, naval forces should exert maximum effort, appropriate to the military situation, in the field of civic action in a way to reflect credit on the Government of Vietnam and its allies in general and the Vietnamese Navy in particular. The message is quoted:

> ALTHOUGH ENEMY HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE AND HAS TAKEN A TERRIFIC BEATING IN THE LAST FEW DAYS HE STILL HAS CAPABILITY TO INITIATE FURTHER ATTACKS. FOR THIS REASON AND ALTHOUGH REF A URGED YOU TO TAKE OFFENSIVE ACTION AGAINST A MULED AND DISORGANIZED ENEMY, SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AGAINST POSSIBLE NEW ATTACKS ESPECIALLY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE ACTION HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET TO DATE.

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AS A RESULT OF RECENT INTENSIFIED ENEMY ACTIVITY FROM WHICH HIS LOSSES IN A FEW DAYS HAVE EXCEEDED THOSE NORMALLY EXPERIENCED IN A SIX TO EIGHT WEEK PERIOD HE HAS ALSO CREATED MUCH BLOODSHED AND DESTRUCTION IN THE POPULATED AREAS OF VIETNAM. IT IS IMPORTANT THESE AREAS BE RETURNED TO NORMAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE PRESENT SITUATION PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE VIETNAMESE POPULACE THE GOOD INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES OF THE GVN AND ALLIES TO ASSIST THEM IN A TIME OF CRISES, AND THUS PRESENT A FAVORABLE CONTRAST TO THE RECENT BARBARIC ACTIONS OF THE VC/NVN. WHEREVER POSSIBLE IT IS URGED THAT INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS TAKE THE INITIATIVE THEMSELVES AND IN COOPERATION WITH THE RVNAF AND GVN OFFICIALS TO RECONSTRUCT FACILITIES AND ASSIST HOMELESS AND SUFFERING VIETNAMESE IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY. THE SITUATION PROVIDES AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO WIN FRIENDS FOR THE GVN AND THEIR ALLIES. WHERE POSSIBLE EFFORTS SHOULD BE ORGANIZED TO RESULT IN CREDIT TO THE GVN IN GENERAL AND TO THE VIETNAMESE NAVY IN PARTICULAR IN COASTAL AND RIVERINE AREAS WHERE WE ARE MAKING A CONTINUOUS EFFORT TO ENHANCE THEIR PRESIGE AND EFFECTIVENESS.

IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT ACTIONS URGED IN REF A AND PARAS 1 AND 2 ABOVE ARE TO SOME EXTENT INCOMPATBLE, HOWEVER ALL ARE IMPORTANT AND IT IS A MATTER FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMANDERS TO DECIDE TO WHAT DEGREE THE VARIOUS ACTIONS SHOULD BE PROSECUTED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS.
RADM VETH SENDS.

At the end of the month, on 28 February, COMNAVFORV sent a message to NAVFORV recommending offensive actions to take advantage of a possible disorganized enemy who had suffered a disastrous defeat and enormous losses during the month. The message is quoted:

ENEMY LOSSES ARE NOW REPORTED AT ABOUT 44,000 KIA PLUS OVER 7,000 CAPTURED OR DETAINED ALL TOGETHER EQUAL TO AT LEAST 100 VC/NVA BATTALIONS.

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ALTHOUGH CAPTURED DOCUMENTS AND PRISONERS INDICATE THE ENEMY PLANS TO CONTINUE ATTACKS AND HARASSMENT HE OBVIOUSLY MUST BE HURTING CONSIDERABLY. NOW IS THE TIME TO STRIKE HIM. NOW IS THE TIME TO RESORT AGAIN TO OUR BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF CONCENTRATED AND CLOBBER. CONSIDER IT PREFERABLE TO ELIMINATE ONE ENEMY UNIT THAN TO TAKE SMALL ATTRITION FROM SEVERAL. RECOMMEND WHERE POSSIBLE BAIT A TRAP AND CLOBBER THE CATCH. THE ENEMY IS MOVING ABOUT. SOMETIMES LOST, AND VERY VULNERABLE TO AMBUSH. RECOMMEND ALL UNITS MOVE TO THE OFFENSIVE WHEREVER PRACTICABLE AND WHERE THE MEANS ARE NOT AVAILABLE SCHEME, URGE AND CAJOLE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. THIS IS A PERIOD WHEN INGENUITY AND INITIATIVE CAN PAY OFF - GOOD LUCK.

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CHRONOLOGY

1 Feb - Viet Cong intensified their attacks within the city of Vinh Long and forced U. S. Navy personnel to evacuate their compound to Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group base thence to USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786). p. 28

- The battle for My Tho raged continuously for 21 hours as ground elements of 3/47th and 3/60th conducted a northward advance through the western part of the city. By the morning of 2 February the remaining communist guerrillas had exfiltrated leaving large areas of the city in smoldering ruin. They also left 115 of their dead behind. Friendly casualties were 3 U. S. soldiers killed and 67 wounded. p. 63

4 - A rocket impacted against the stern of PBR 728 causing her to run out of control, beach and partially sink during an operation on Honh Ngu Canal. PBR 731 returned to the area to recover the crew, who had abandoned the disabled boat and scrambled ashore. FN W. E. HAYENGE, a crewmember of PBR 731, without regard for his safety and unarmed, went ashore under heavy fire to assist the survivors back to PBR 731. Total U. S. casualties were eight U. S. Navymen wounded and one boat totally destroyed. To prevent its exploitation by the enemy, artillery and air strikes were conducted to destroy PBR 728. This was the first combat loss of a Mark II PBR. p. 41-43

5 - MCB 4 was alerted for probable early deployment to Vietnam and within hours the first of the battalion was en route; a few days later the entire battalion was in Vietnam. The versatility, mobility, and "Can Do" spirit synonymous with the Seabees were once again demonstrated. p. 116

6 - A NAVSUPPACT Saigon vehicle, while en route to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, was ambushed resulting in one NAVSUPPACT Saigon officer killed and three additional personnel wounded. p.103

7 - PBRs operating on the Ham Luong River, five miles east of Mo Cay, sank a VC troop-transport sampan loaded with Viet Cong youths. An intelligence agent reported that 50 of the youths were killed or wounded in the engagement. p. 47/48

12 - Operation CORONADO X terminated. p. 71

14 - MRF commenced Operation CORONADO XI in the Cai Rang District southwest of Can Tho. p. 72

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14 Feb - The 3/47th established contact with an estimated two or three enemy companies six miles west-southwest of Can Tho resulting in heavy fighting throughout the day. The enemy withdrew early the next morning. River craft embarked infantry units and then withdrew from the initial area and assaulted new beaches several times during the next two days as the operation enlarged two-fold. Enemy losses were 52 combatants killed and 273 bunkers and 8 sampans destroyed during the four-day operation. U. S. losses amounted to 8 soldiers killed and 38 wounded. p. 74

17 - A light helicopter fire team detected a large concentration of sampans, 12 miles northeast of Go Cong, estimated to be over 300 sampans including about 50 of the large type measuring over 40 feet. "Seawolves" made multiple attacks on the sampans destroying 3 large sampans and severely damaging or destroying 20 small type. In addition to the attack on the sampans the Navy armed helicopters put in an air strike against a tree-line where 300 Viet Cong were reported to be located. After the three and one-half hour mission was finished, "Seawolves" had killed 30 of the enemy, and the number of wounded was probably higher in view of the saturating fire of the armed helicopters. There were no friendly casualties. p. 44

18 - USCGC POINT LEAGUE observed an extremely large explosion south-southeast of Saigon near the mouth of the Co Chien River. Investigation revealed that an ARVN outpost was under attack. POINT LEAGUE fired her 81-mm mortar. The Viet Cong were dispersed and an estimated 100 enemy were killed. p. 13

- A rocket and mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base resulted in damage to all flyable NAVSUPPACT Saigon aircraft. p. 106

21 - CTG 117.4., the operational commander of the three Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACV's) operating in Vietnam, changed to the operational control of CTF 116 for a period of about one week to evaluate the suitability of PACV's for GAME WARDEN operations. The PACV's were determined unsuitable and returned to CTF 117. p. 56

21 - Capt C. H. HERRICK relieved Capt R. DI CORI, as CTF 115/ COMCOSURVFOR. p. 21

24 - Task Force CLEARWATER initiated. p. 88

25 - COMRIVDIV 55 and RIVSEC 521 became elements of TF CLEARWATER. p. 56/57

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26 Feb - YFR 889 while transiting the My Tho River received a B-40 rocket hit in her deck cargo which resulted in the loss of one ton of 40-mm ammunition. p. 107/108

29 - MARKET TIME forces experienced one of the most significant naval victories of the Vietnamese campaign. Four trawlers were detected attempting a simultaneous infiltration of supplies into South Vietnam. Air and surface units kept a surveillance on the infiltrators while additional coastal units were positioned to intercept the trawlers. Of the four trawlers detected, three were destroyed and the fourth turned back. p. 3-7

29 - The total strength of U. S. Navy personnel under the operational control of NAVFORV was 30,681. In addition, U. S. Navy personnel assigned to III Marine Amphibious Force was 3,589, while U. S. Coast Guard strength was 456.

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APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

ANGLICO	Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (U.S.).
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam.
CG	Coastal Group (VNN) - A coastal patrol command consisting of 6 to 10 junks with the responsibility of patrolling from 30 to 60 miles of coastline.
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group (VN) - Para-military troop used in their local area for limited area operations.
CHIEU HOI	"Open Arms" (VN) - The Republic of Vietnam's amnesty program of rehabilitation and re-location of Viet Cong who voluntarily return to government control.
CORDS	Civil Operations for Revolutionary Development Support.
COSURVFOR	Coastal Surveillance Force (USN) TF 115 - The U.S. forces participating in Operations MARKET TIME and STABLE DOOR.
COSVN	Central Office for South Vietnam - The highest Viet Cong headquarters in South Vietnam.
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone - The major divisions of South Vietnam into military regions.
DAI DOAN KET	National Reconciliation Program - Program which is

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aimed at helping qualified returnees find employment commensurate with their previous training and experience

GAME WARDEN — The operation performed by U.S. Navy forces to interdict Viet Cong movement on the major waterways of the Mekong Delta and the RSSZ. The force is composed of river patrol boats, minesweepers, helicopter fire teams and SEAL teams.

HEAT — High Explosive Anti-Tank - A shaped-charge projectile with high armor penetration capability normally used in 57-mm or 75-mm recoilless rifles.

HHFT — Heavy Helicopter Fire Team (U.S.) - A helicopter fire team with three or more gunships used in support of ground and waterborne units. The use of three helicopters allows continuous firing on the target.

HOI CHANH — "Returnee to the Just Cause" (VN) - An individual (Viet Cong) who returns under the Chieu Hoi program.

IUWU — Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit (U.S.) - The U. S. forces conducting Operation STABLE DOOR.

IWCS — Integrated Wideband Communication System.

LDNN — Lien Doc Nguoi Nhia (VNN) - Literally "soldiers who fight under the sea." UDT force of the VNN.

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LHFT	Light Helicopter Fire Team (U. S.) - A helicopter fire team composed of two gunships used in support of ground and waterborne units.
LRRP	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol.
MARKET TIME	The operation conducted by U.S. and Vietnamese naval forces to interdict Viet Cong infiltration of men and supplies from the sea.
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program.
MG	Machine Gun - An automatic, crew-served weapon adaptable to many mountings. The four types of machine guns currently used by USN and VNN forces are the M-60, the .30 caliber light machine gun, the .50 caliber heavy machine gun, and the 7.62-mm mini gun.
MILPHAP	Military Provincial Health Assistance Program - MILPHAP teams, normally staffed by 3 doctors, a Medical Service Corps officer and 12 corpsmen, work with Vietnam's Ministry of Health at the province hospital level to improve health service available to Vietnamese civilians.
MRF	Mobile Riverine Force (U.S.) - A force made up of Navy craft and Army units designed and trained for amphibious assaults in the Mekong Delta and the RSSZ.

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NGFS	Naval Gunfire Support (USN-VNN) - Naval gunfire used to assist operations ashore; often spotted and corrected by spotter aircraft or forward observers.
NILO	Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer.
NLF	National Liberation Front - Actually the "National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam." A Communist political-front used to give the appearance of popular non-Communist support to their insurgency activities in South Vietnam.
NUOC MAM	(VN) - A fermented fish sauce served with almost any dish, a national delicacy.
NVA	North Vietnamese Army.
PRU	Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (VN) - Para-military personnel whose principal mission includes clandestine operations designed to destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure. Each unit consists of one or more teams of 18 to 20 civilians who have had prior military service.
RAF	Riverine Assault Force (USN) - The U.S. Navy contingent of the MRF.
RAG	River Assault Group (VN) - An amphibious warfare command with the capability to transport and support a battalion of infantry. Similar to a boat

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division in the RAF.

RED HAZE — Infrared Detector (U. S.) - Sensitive head detectors used as an airborne locator of personnel, equipment and military sites.

RF — Regional Force (VN) - Forces under ARVN control which operate within their home province.

RIVPATFOR — River Patrol Force (USN) TF 116 - The forces used in conducting Operation GAME WARDEN.

RPG — Rocket Propelled Grenade - A Soviet or Chinese Communist-manufactured, fin-stabilized, anti-tank grenade. RPG-2 (B-40). RPG-7 (B-41).

RSSZ — Rung Sat Special Zone - Literally "forest of assassins." A special military area located about 21 miles southeast of Saigon in Gia Dinh Province, composed of Can Gio and Quang Xuyen districts.

RVNAF — Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces - Consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and RF/PF.

SEAL — Sea, Air, Land. (USN) - Special duty personnel qualified as underwater demolition, paratroop and jungle warfare specialists.

SECRET ZONE — A Viet Cong-dominated area utilized as a base, training camp and logistic resupply area.

SLAR — Side Looking Airborne Radar (U. S.) - An accurate

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	airborne radar for detecting small, moving objects.
STABLE DOOR	The U.S. Navy operation conducted to provide harbor defense.
STAR LIGHT	Ambient light equipment (USN) - A portable system to enhance vision under conditions of starlight or moonlight.
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team (USN) - Specially trained swimmers used for underwater work in the Navy.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development.
USSF	United States Special Forces (USA) - Army personnel specially trained for use as advisors to indigenous personnel.
VIET CONG	Vietnamese citizens under the control and leadership of North Vietnam. These persons may be local sympathizers, guerrillas, or hard-core full-time workers for the Communist domination of South Vietnam.
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force.
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps.
VNN	Vietnamese Navy.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE (TASK FORCE 115)

During February units of Operation MARKET TIME and Operation STABLE DOOR detected 48,982 craft along South Vietnam's coastline and harbors. This figure represents a decrease of over 26,000 from January's total. A total of 11,462 detected craft were inspected and 7,780 were boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 416 persons and 40 craft.

OPERATION MARKET TIME

Although February proved to be a highly productive and successful month for MARKET TIME units, routine activity decreased sharply as the heavy fighting that erupted during the Lunar New Year (Tet) period prevented indigenous junk and sampan traffic from utilizing rivers and other inland waterways as access routes to the ocean. Adverse weather and the necessity for MARKET TIME surface units in the First, Second and Third Coastal Zones to be underway a high percentage of the time because of enemy activity in the vicinity of all support bases contributed to the decrease in the number of routine craft detections. The enforcement of strict curfew restrictions also drastically reduced waterway traffic. MARKET TIME units detected only 24,832 junks and sampans during the month, a decrease of over 24,000 from January's total.

Over 40 percent of the detected craft were inspected and approximately 20 percent were boarded. The boardings resulted in

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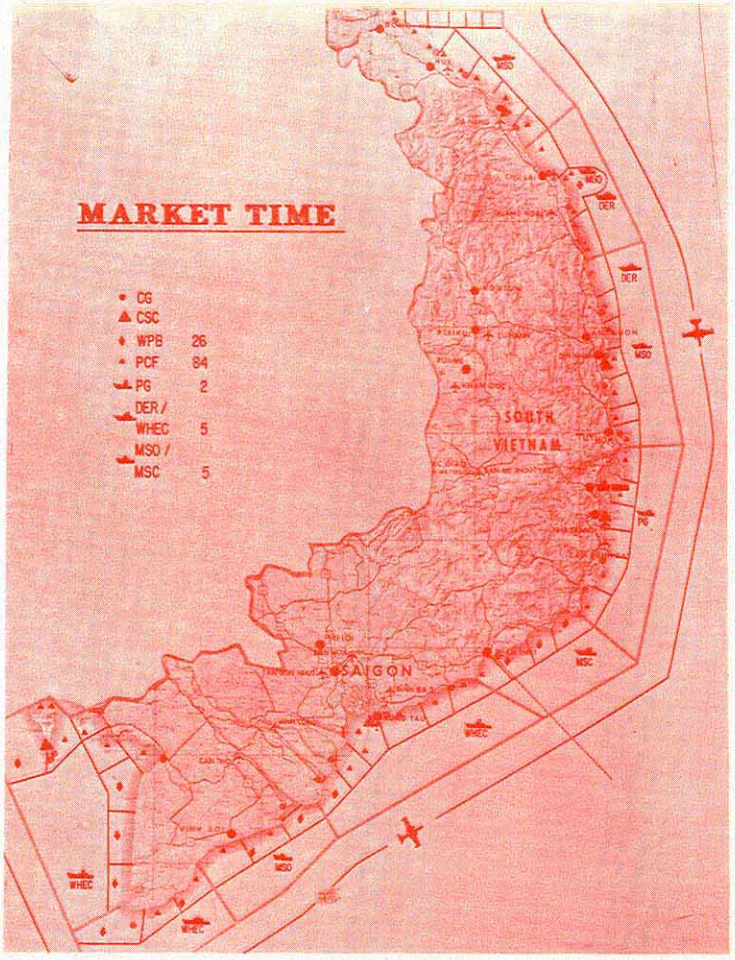

TF 115 areas with corresponding craft assignments

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the detention of 29 craft and 240 suspicious persons. In addition, 1,176 steel-hulled vessels were detected transiting MARKET TIME areas; 16 of the steel-hulled craft were boarded.

Although total routine detections were down from previous months, MARKET TIME units were kept extremely busy during February as they augmented harbor/anti-swimmer patrols, fired 201 naval gunfire support missions, engaged in 20 hostile fire incidents and provided numerous exfiltration/infiltration patrols in support of ground operations.

During the last two days of the month, MARKET TIME forces experienced one of the most significant naval victories of the Vietnamese campaign. In the boldest resupply effort to date, four enemy trawlers were detected attempting a simultaneous infiltration of supplies into South Vietnam. MARKET TIME air and surface units maintained covert surveillance of the infiltrators while additional coastal surveillance units were positioned to intercept the trawlers as they attempted to penetrate the territorial waters of South Vietnam. Of the four trawlers detected, three were ultimately destroyed and the fourth was turned back.

The southernmost trawler attempted to close the beach approximately 40 miles east-northeast of Ca Mau Point near the mouth of the Cau Bo De River. All challenges and warning shots were ignored by the trawler and a fire fight ensued between the infiltrator and

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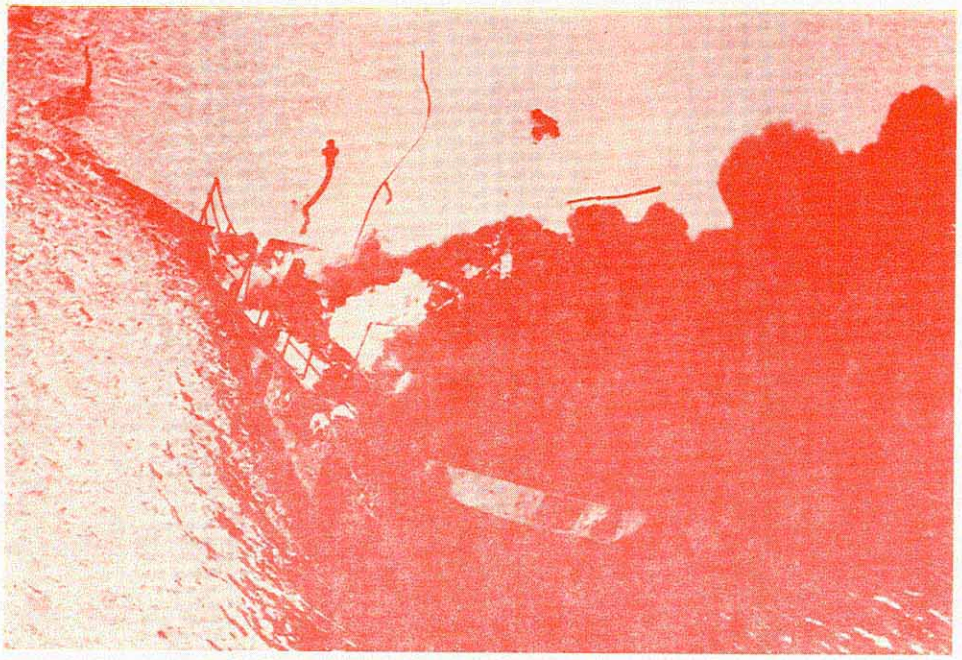
the MARKET TIME units. Shortly after 0200 on 1 March, after repeated direct hits by 5-inch and .50 caliber fire, the trawler burst into flames and sank.



Enemy trawler burns after receiving five direct hits by 81-mm mortars, 10 miles northeast of Nha Trang. The trawler, one of four attempting to infiltrate supplies into South Vietnam on 1 March, was detected by MARKET TIME coastal surveillance units.

A second trawler beached itself in a cove approximately 10 miles northeast of Nha Trang at 0200 on 1 March. The trawler then opened fire on the MARKET TIME units. Continuous fire was returned by the MARKET TIME units and an attempt to capture the trawler was

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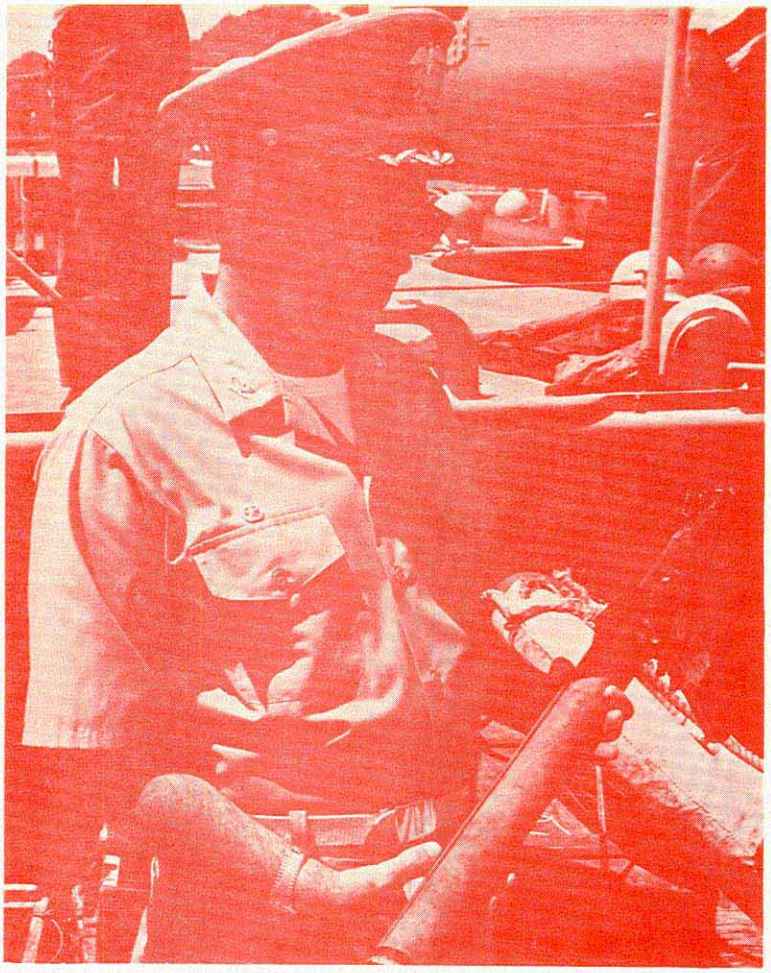
unsuccessful. At 0231 the trawler was completely destroyed after five direct hits by 81-mm mortars.



Captain Carl H. HERRICK, USN, CTF 115, examines rocket launcher which was among contraband salvaged from enemy trawler near Nha Trang on 1 March.

At 0214 on 1 March, a third trawler was driven aground approximately 40 miles southeast of Chu Lai on the north central coast. A fire fight ensued again and, at 0235, when capture appeared imminent,

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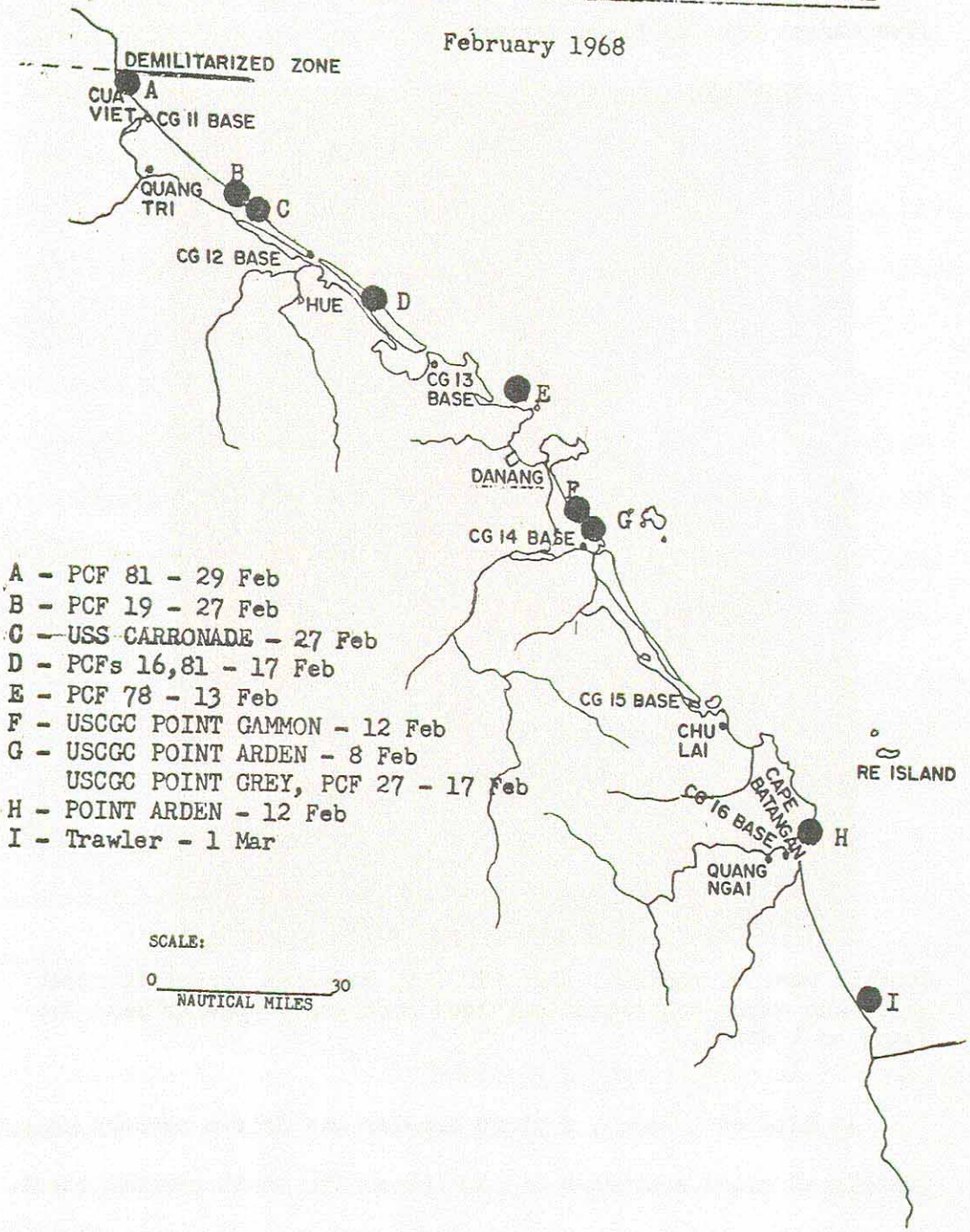
OPERATIONS IN THE FIRST COASTAL ZONE

February 1968



A - PCF 81 - 29 Feb
B - PCF 19 - 27 Feb
C - USS CARRONADE - 27 Feb
D - PCFs 16,81 - 17 Feb
E - PCF 78 - 13 Feb
F - USCGC POINT GAMMON - 12 Feb
G - USCGC POINT ARDEN - 8 Feb
USCGC POINT GREY, PCF 27 - 17 Feb
H - POINT ARDEN - 12 Feb
I - Trawler - 1 Mar

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the trawler was completely destroyed by a pre-set charge.

The fourth trawler being tracked by MARKET TIME units did not enter the territorial waters of South Vietnam and reversed its course and headed for the open sea. Continuous surveillance of the trawler was maintained by coastal surveillance units until the ship approached Communist China's coastline.

First Coastal Zone

During February coastal junk and sampan traffic was very light in the First Coastal Zone. The enforcement of strict curfew restrictions and the heavy fighting throughout the First Coastal Zone held the aggregate junk and sampan detection totals to a very low figure. Only 6,581 detections were made by the zone's patrol units, a decrease of more than 9,000 from January's figure. Over 2,500 of the detected craft were inspected and more than 1,500 were boarded.

On 8 February the U. S. Coast Guard's POINT ARDEN responded to a request from the Vietnamese Navy's Coastal Group 14 and fired on a suspected enemy troop concentration approximately 12 miles southeast of Danang. One secondary explosion was observed and a land patrol confirmed that a land mine had been destroyed, but the extent of enemy personnel casualties was unknown.

On the 12th USCGC POINT GAMMON was requested by a USMC Combined Action Group (CAG) to provide harassment and interdiction fire on an area approximately 10 miles southeast of Danang in order to silence

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Viet Cong loudspeakers. With the CAG spotting, the cutter silenced the loudspeakers, killing one Viet Cong and wounding another.

On the 17th, while conducting a "psyops" mission approximately 700 yards off the beach, eight miles east of Hue, PCFs 16 and 81 received about 30 rounds of automatic-weapons fire from just north of the "psyops" target village. The PCFs suppressed the hostile fire, then returned to the vicinity of the village and continued their "psyops" broadcast. PCF 81 received one bullet hole two feet above the waterline during the exchange; there were no personnel casualties on either craft.

PCF 27 and USCGC POINT GREY were called by the Vietnamese Navy's Coastal Group 14 during the evening of 17 February to provide urgent gunfire support for the coastal group, which had received two grenades within its perimeter. The MARKET TIME units suppressed the enemy activity and were given credit for killing 19 enemy troops.

On the 27th PCFs 19 and 81 assisted USS CARRONADE (IFS 1) in saturating an enemy position approximately 18 miles northwest of Hue. The mission resulted in the destruction of seven junks. Later the same day, PCF 19 provided harassment and interdiction fire on another enemy junk concentration 20 miles northwest of Hue. This second mission resulted in the destruction of five enemy junks.

PCF 81 received automatic-weapons fire on the 29th while conducting a "psyops" mission just below the 17th parallel. The Swift

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boat returned and suppressed the fire and sustained one hit, which caused minor damage, during the exchange. There were no friendly casualties and the extent of enemy casualties was unknown.

POINT ARDEN was requested to provide an exfiltration blockade in support of an ARVN Second Division operation just below Cape Batangan on the 12th of the month. The cutter took 11 Viet Cong, who were observed on the beach, under fire and killed 6 (3 probable) and wounded 2 others.

While underway to station on the 13th, PCF 78 sighted a downed U. S. Army helicopter approximately 12 miles north-northwest of Danang. All seven persons aboard the helicopter were recovered by the Swift boat and were returned to Danang.

Second Coastal Zone

Routine MARKET TIME activity in the Second Coastal Zone also declined during February as only 14,922 detections were made, a decrease of approximately 5,000 from January's total. Over 6,000 of the detected craft were inspected and more than 2,500 were boarded. As in the other coastal zones, the strict enforcement of curfew restrictions was primarily responsible for the paucity of indigenous watercraft traffic.

On 7 February PCF 65 was fired upon by an unknown rifleman while at anchor for a possible illumination mission approximately two miles northeast of Qui Nhon. The craft sustained minor damage

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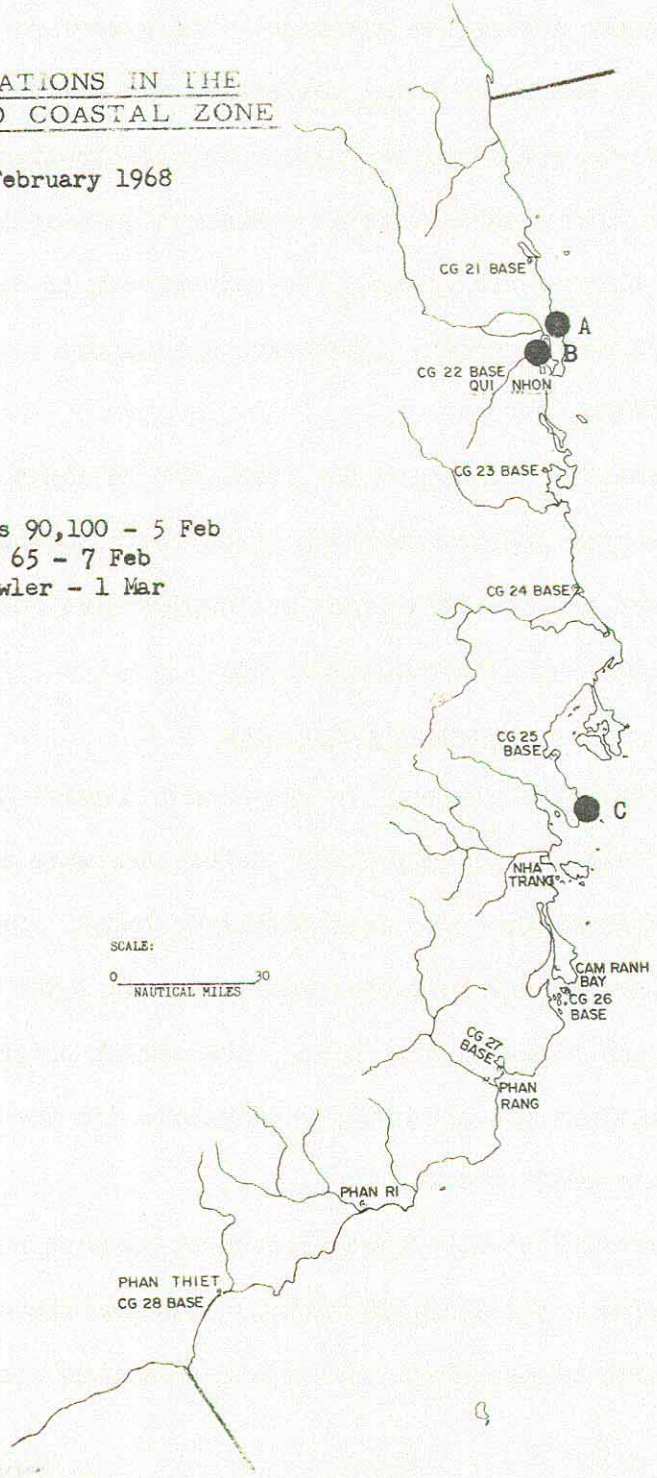
OPERATIONS IN THE
SECOND COASTAL ZONE

February 1968

A - PCFs 90,100 - 5 Feb
B - PCF 65 - 7 Feb
C - Trawler - 1 Mar



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as a result of the three shots received and one crewmember suffered a superficial wound of the left thigh.

On 5 February PCFs 90 and 100 received a report of enemy troops in an area on the South China Sea coast, approximately eight miles northeast of Qui Nhon; the Swift boats closed the area and provided illumination in support of Vietnamese Popular Force troops. Later, the boats commenced harassment and interdiction fire on the Viet Cong who were attempting to evade by climbing over the mountains. As a result of the action, five Viet Cong were killed and one carbine and various documents were captured.

Third Coastal Zone

Routine MARKET TIME activity also experienced a sharp decrease in the Third Coastal Zone during February. Only 1,536 craft were detected by the zone's patrol units during the month, a decrease of over 2,700 from January's figure. Approximately 50 percent of the detected craft were inspected or boarded. Although coastal traffic was extremely light during the month, MARKET TIME units in the Third Coastal Zone were requested to conduct numerous gunfire support missions.

On 2 February USCGC POINT CYPRESS sighted several suspicious persons on the beach in the Long Toan Secret Zone. As the WPB approached the beach for a closer inspection, the personnel fled into nearby structures. After permission was granted, the WPB took

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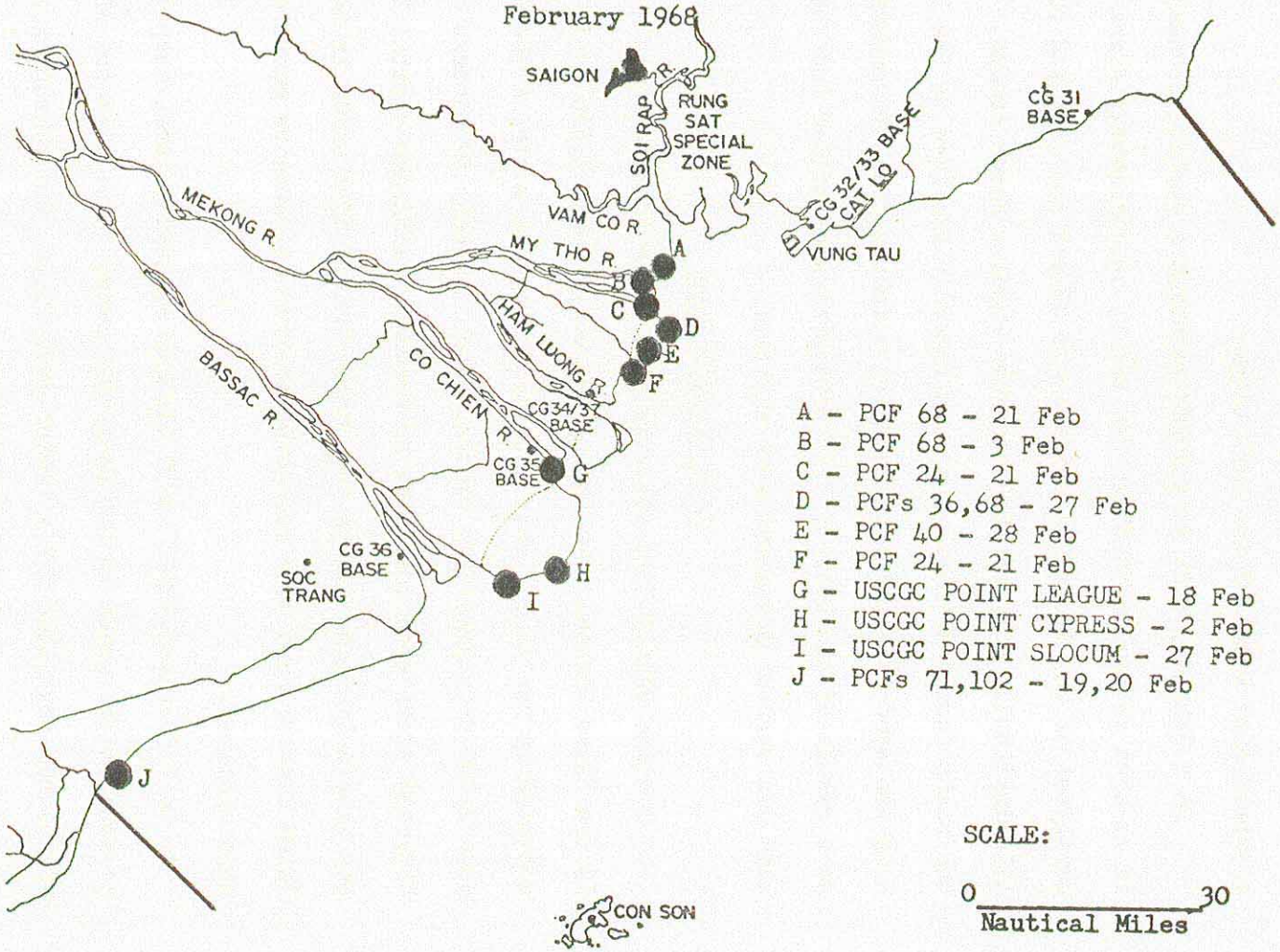
OPERATIONS IN THE THIRD COASTAL ZONE

February 1968



A - PCF 68 - 21 Feb
B - PCF 68 - 3 Feb
C - PCF 24 - 21 Feb
D - PCFs 36,68 - 27 Feb
E - PCF 40 - 28 Feb
F - PCF 24 - 21 Feb
G - USCGC POINT LEAGUE - 18 Feb
H - USCGC POINT CYPRESS - 2 Feb
I - USCGC POINT SLOCUM - 27 Feb
J - PCFs 71,102 - 19,20 Feb

SCALE:

0 ——— 30
Nautical Miles

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the structures under fire with 81-mm mortar and .50 caliber machine gun fire, severely damaging all three structures; however, the extent of enemy personnel casualties was unknown.

On 3 March, PCE 68 took an enemy position 27 miles south of Saigon under fire. The mission, which utilized an airborne spotter, resulted in the destruction of two structures and extensive damage to two bunkers.

On the 18th USCGC POINT LEAGUE observed an extremely large explosion approximately 54 miles south-southeast of Saigon near the mouth of the Co Chien River. The cutter reported the sighting to Cau Ngang subsector authorities who, in turn, discovered that an ARVN outpost in that position was under attack. Urgent naval gunfire support was requested and POINT LEAGUE commenced firing with her 81-mm mortar. The Viet Cong were dispersed and an estimated 100 enemy were killed as a result of the combined operation.

PCF 71 suffered two personnel casualties on the 19th as she closed the beach approximately 49 miles northeast of Ca Mau Point in company with PCF 102 to provide direct gunfire against a hostile area. The Swift boats returned and suppressed the hostile fire with their .50 caliber machine guns while withdrawing to seaward. The injuries to the U. S. Navymen were minor and the extent of enemy personnel casualties was unknown.

During another direct gunfire mission in the same general area

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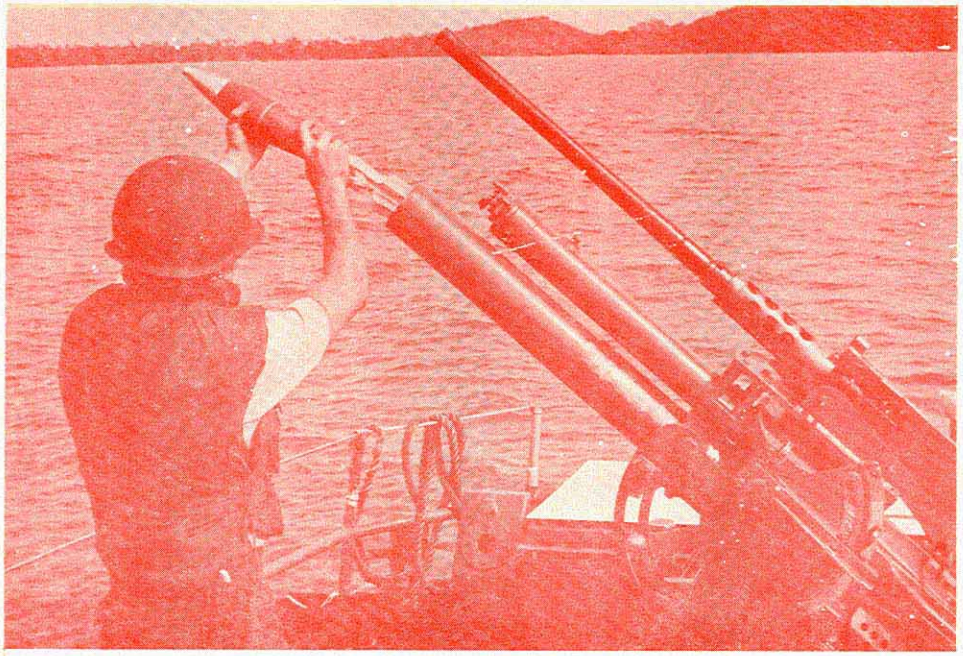
on the 20th, PCFs 71 and 102 destroyed three huts and one sampan.

In response to a request from Go Cong sector authorities on the 21st, PCF 68 provided naval gunfire against a suspected Viet Cong platoon staging area approximately 24 miles south of Saigon. As a result of the Swift boat's firing, one structure and two sampans were destroyed and six structures and four sampans were damaged.



Swift boat crewmember prepares to load 81-mm mortar.

Also on the 21st, PCF 24 responded to a request from sector authorities and conducted a naval gunfire mission against enemy huts and sampans on the south bank of the mouth of the My Tho River,

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approximately 30 miles south of Saigon. Six huts were extensively damaged by the Swift boat's fire.

In her second gunfire mission of the day, PCF 24 fired on a Viet Cong village and concentration of enemy sampans approximately 42 miles south of Saigon. This mission resulted in the destruction of six huts and six sampans. In addition, eight huts and six bunkers were heavily damaged.

On the 27th, at the request of Kien Hoa sector authorities, PCFs 36 and 68 took an enemy position on the south bank of the My Tho River, approximately 32 miles south of Saigon, under fire. The Swift boats damaged six structures during the mission.

Also on the 27th, USCGC POINT SLOCUM took two beached junks in the Long Toan Secret Zone under fire and destroyed both of the craft.

On the 28th, while conducting a naval gunfire mission that had been requested by sector authorities, PCF 40 received heavy automatic-weapons fire from the beach approximately 38 miles south of Saigon. The Swift boat sustained one hit which caused slight damage to the boat and no personnel casualties. The extent of enemy material and personnel casualties was unknown.

Fourth Coastal Zone

Routine MARKET TIME detections were also extremely low in the Fourth Coastal Zone during February as only 2,971 craft were detected, less than one-third of the total recorded in January. More

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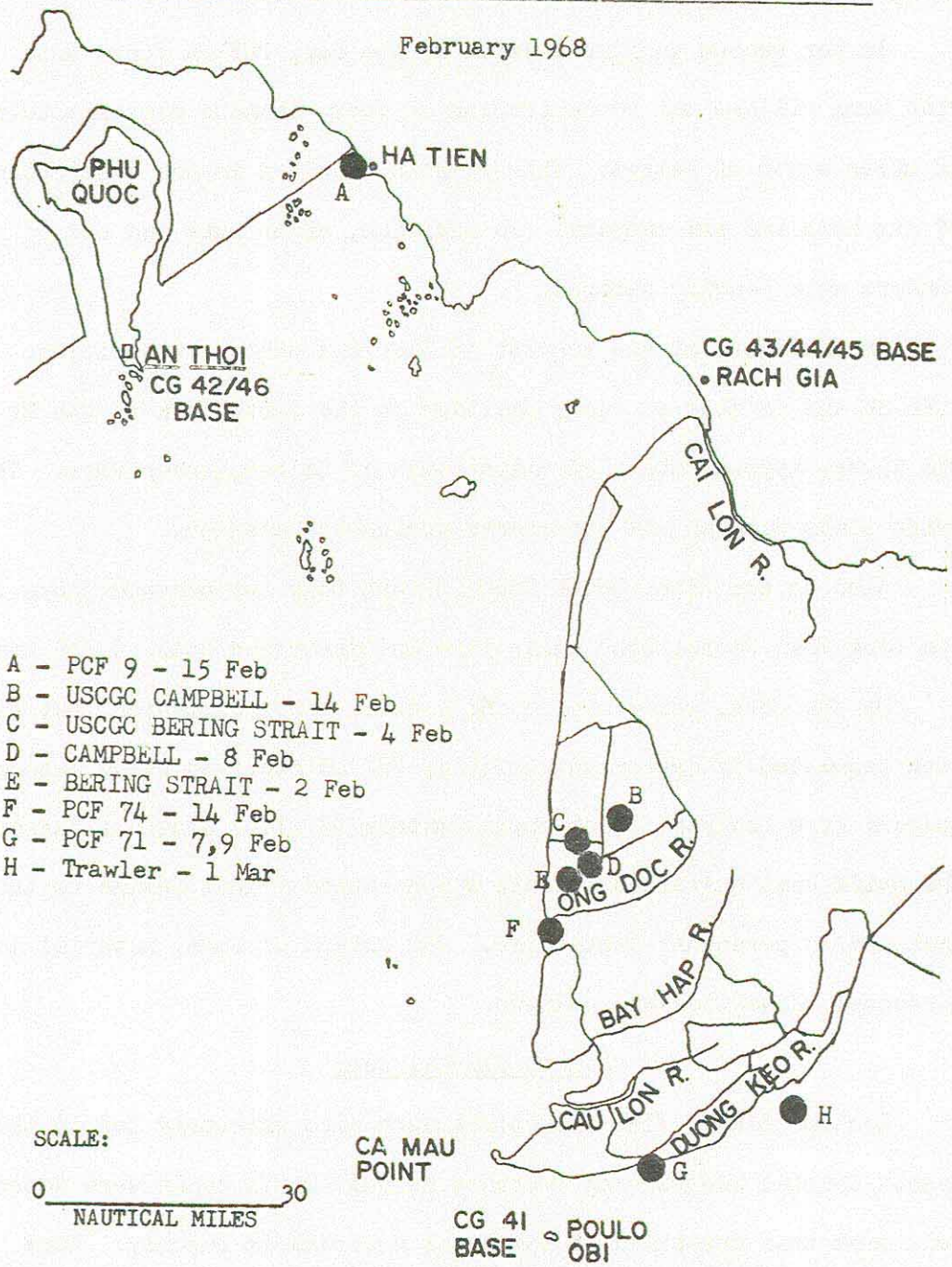
OPERATIONS IN THE FOURTH COASTAL ZONE

February 1968



A - PCF 9 - 15 Feb
B - USCGC CAMPBELL - 14 Feb
C - USCGC BERING STRAIT - 4 Feb
D - CAMPBELL - 8 Feb
E - BERING STRAIT - 2 Feb
F - PCF 74 - 14 Feb
G - PCF 71 - 7,9 Feb
H - Trawler - 1 Mar

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than 800 of the detected craft were inspected and over 1,000 were boarded. Occasional heavy weather in the Gulf of Thailand, plus rigid restrictions imposed on coastal junk and sampan traffic, was primarily responsible for the low number of detections in the Fourth Coastal Zone during the month. As in the Third Coastal Zone, Fourth Coastal Zone patrol units were called upon to provide numerous naval gunfire support missions and engaged in several hostile fire incidents.

On 2 February, in response to a request from U. S. Army authorities at Song Ong Doc, USCGC BERING STRAIT (WHEC 382) provided naval gunfire against an enemy position approximately 30 miles north of Ca Mau Point. Responding to corrections transmitted by an airborne spotter, the cutter destroyed two structures and damaged two structures and two sampans.

On the 4th BERING STRAIT conducted another naval gunfire mission in response to a request from the same authorities. This mission, which was accomplished approximately 36 miles north of Ca Mau Point, also utilized an airborne spotter and resulted in the destruction of 6 structures, 2 sampans, 40 meters of trench and 3 rice storage piles. A later report from U. S. Army authorities at Song Ong Doc also credited BERING STRAIT with killing two Viet Cong and wounding eight during the mission.

PCF 71 received heavy hostile fire on 7 February from an area

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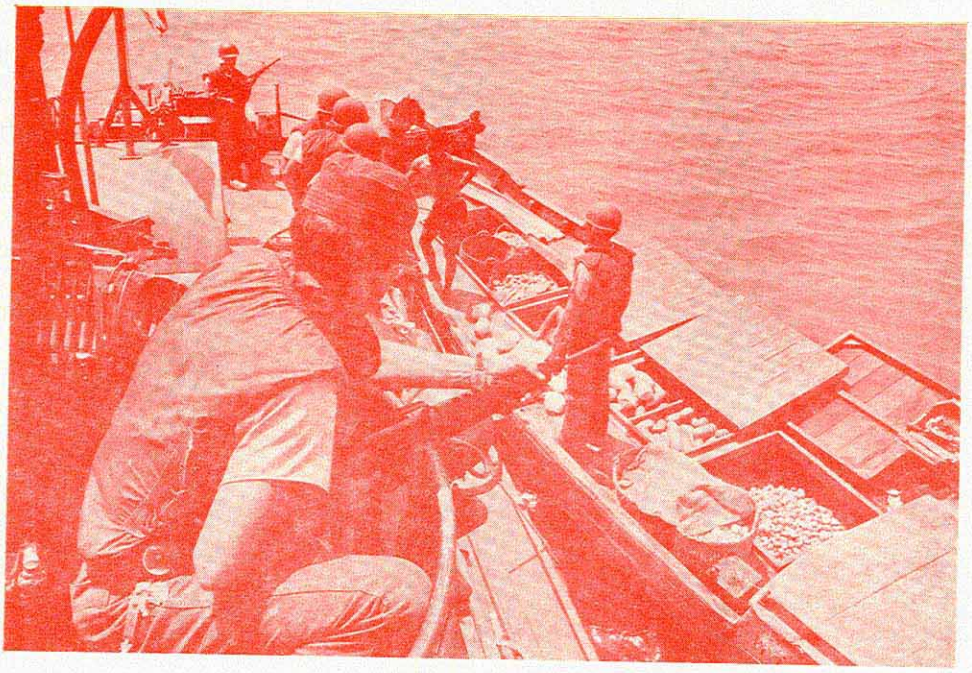
17 miles east of Ca Mau Point while probing the area for a possible evading sampan. While withdrawing to seaward the Swift boat suppressed the enemy fire, destroying two bunkers and damaging three. In a follow-up mission in the same general vicinity on the 9th of February, PCF 71 destroyed two additional bunkers.



Swift boat crewmembers board and search suspicious craft in Gulf of Thailand.

On the 8th, Song Ong Doc authorities requested that a naval gunfire mission be fired on a suspected enemy battalion that was operating in an area approximately 33 miles north of Ca Mau Point

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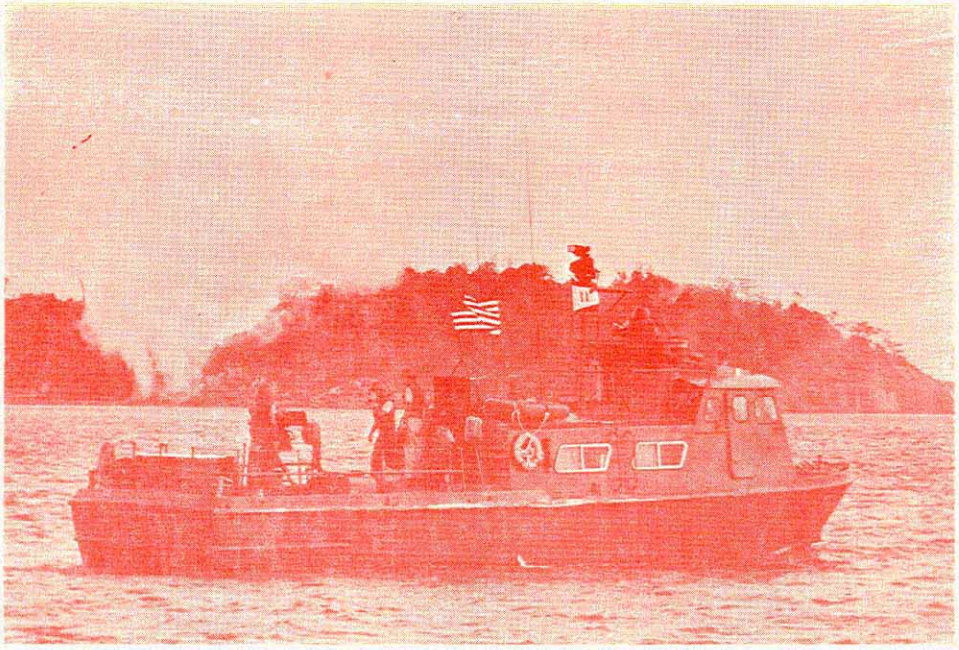
along the coast of the Gulf of Thailand. USCGC CAMPBELL (WHEC 32) responded to the request and destroyed four structures, three rice piles and one large sampan.



Swift boat conducting gunfire mission against enemy position along coast of Thailand Gulf.

A Viet Cong company operating 27 miles north of Ca Mau Point was the target for a naval gunfire mission fired by PCF 74 on 14 February. The mission, which was requested by U. S. Army authorities at Song Ong Doc, resulted in an estimated 10 Viet Cong killed and 20 wounded.

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Also on the 14th, CAMPBELL provided naval gunfire against a Viet Cong battalion approximately 37 miles north of Ca Mau Point. Utilizing an airborne spotter, the cutter killed an estimated four Viet Cong and wounded two others.

On the 15th PCF 9 fired a naval gunfire mission against three targets located near the city of Ha Tien on the coast of the Gulf of Thailand near the Cambodian border. Responding to corrections transmitted by an airborne spotter, the Swift boat destroyed 10 structures and killed an estimated 3 Viet Cong.

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MARKET TIME UNITS

During the month of February the Vietnamese Navy had an average of five PGMs, four PCEs and one MSC assigned daily to MARKET TIME forces. In addition, the Royal Thai Navy had one PGM assigned to MARKET TIME forces in the Fourth Coastal Zone during the last half of the month.

At month's end, aircraft from three patrol squadrons were providing air surveillance for Operation MARKET TIME. A detachment of Patrol Squadron TWO (VP 2) and a detachment of VP 17 were flying SP-2H Neptunes from Cam Ranh Bay. Meanwhile, a detachment of VP 26 flew P-3B Orions from U Tapao, Thailand.

On 5 February MARKET TIME air surveillance forces suffered

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the loss of an aircraft and its 12-man crew when a P-3B assigned to VP 26 crashed at sea from an as yet undetermined cause. The aircraft, which was operating from U Tapao, Thailand, was on a routine MARKET TIME patrol when it crashed approximately 25 miles south of Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Thailand.

Captain Carl H. HERRICK, USN, relieved Captain Ralph DI CORI, USN, as CTF 115/COMCOSURVFOR on 21 February.

Throughout the month the following U. S. SEVENTH Fleet ships operated as MARKET TIME units during the indicated inclusive dates:

		Dates
DER 327	USS BRISTER	8-24
DER 251	USS CAMP	1-3
DER 324	USS FALGOUT	1-8
DER 331	USS KOINER	15-29
DER 334	USS FORSTER	15-29
DER 325	USS LOWE	3-15
LST 1146	USS SUMMIT COUNTY	1-29
MSC 207	USS WHIPPOORWILL	1-21
MSO 426	USS CONFLICT	6-29
MSO 432	USS DYNAMIC	1-6
MSO 435	USS ENDURANCE	6-29
MSO 433	USS ENGAGE	1-6
MSO 446	USS FORTIFY	1-6
MSC 449	USS IMPERVIOUS	1-6
MSC 455	USS IMPLICIT	6-29
MSO 456	USS INFLICT	1-6
MSO 491	USS PERSISTENT	6-29
PG 84	USS ASHEVILLE	1-29
PG 88	USS CROCKETT	13-29
PG 85	USS GALLUP	1-29
WHEC 68	USCGC ANDROSCOGGIN	14-29
WHEC 32	USCGC CAMPBELL	4-15
WHEC 33	USCGC DUANE	1-14
WHEC 65	USCGC WINONA	15-29
WHEC 382	USCGC BERING STRAIT	1-4

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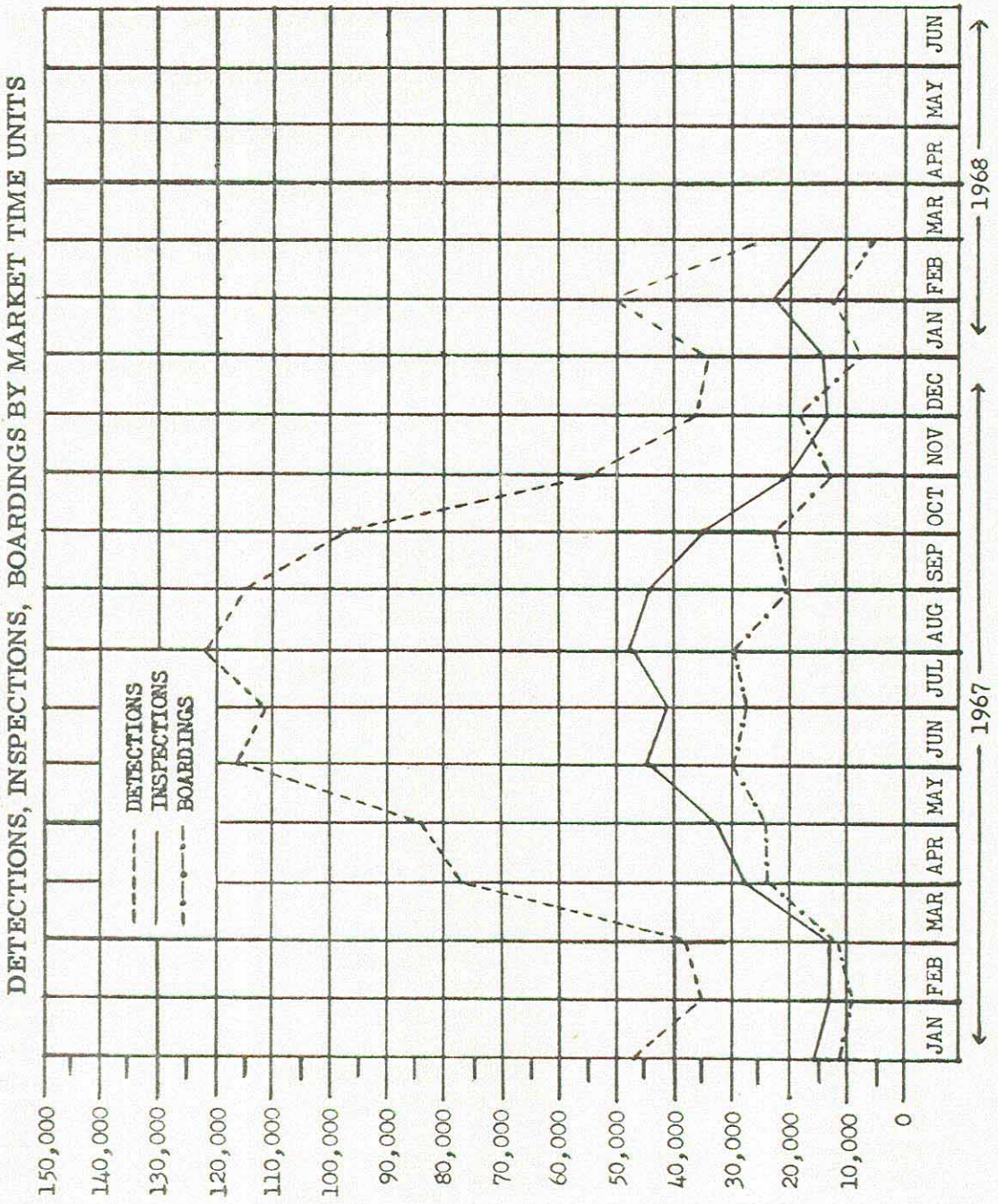

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MARKET TIME STATISTICAL SUMMARY
February 1968

1. U. S. Ships/Craft:

	DER	MSO	MSC	WPB	PCF	LST	PG	WHEC
Daily average number of craft on patrol	2	4	1	14	34	1	1	3

2. U. S. Activity:

TOTAL DETECTED	WOOD	- DAY	15,890	NIGHT	8,942	26,008
	STEEL	- DAY	596	NIGHT	580	
TOTAL INSPECTED	WOOD	- DAY	6,276	NIGHT	3,496	10,584
	STEEL	- DAY	408	NIGHT	404	
TOTAL BOARDED	WOOD	- DAY	4,204	NIGHT	1,204	5,424
	STEEL	- DAY	13	NIGHT	3	
TOTAL DETAINED	JUNKS	29	PEOPLE	240		

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OPERATION STABLE DOOR

During February Operation STABLE DOOR patrols detected 24,150 junks and sampans; 1,689 of these were inspected and 2,372 were boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 11 junks and 177 suspicious persons.

All STABLE DOOR units maintained maximum patrols and surface surveillance postures during the first seven days of February. On the 8th all units returned to normal operations. During the month strict curfew restrictions were imposed in the harbors for which

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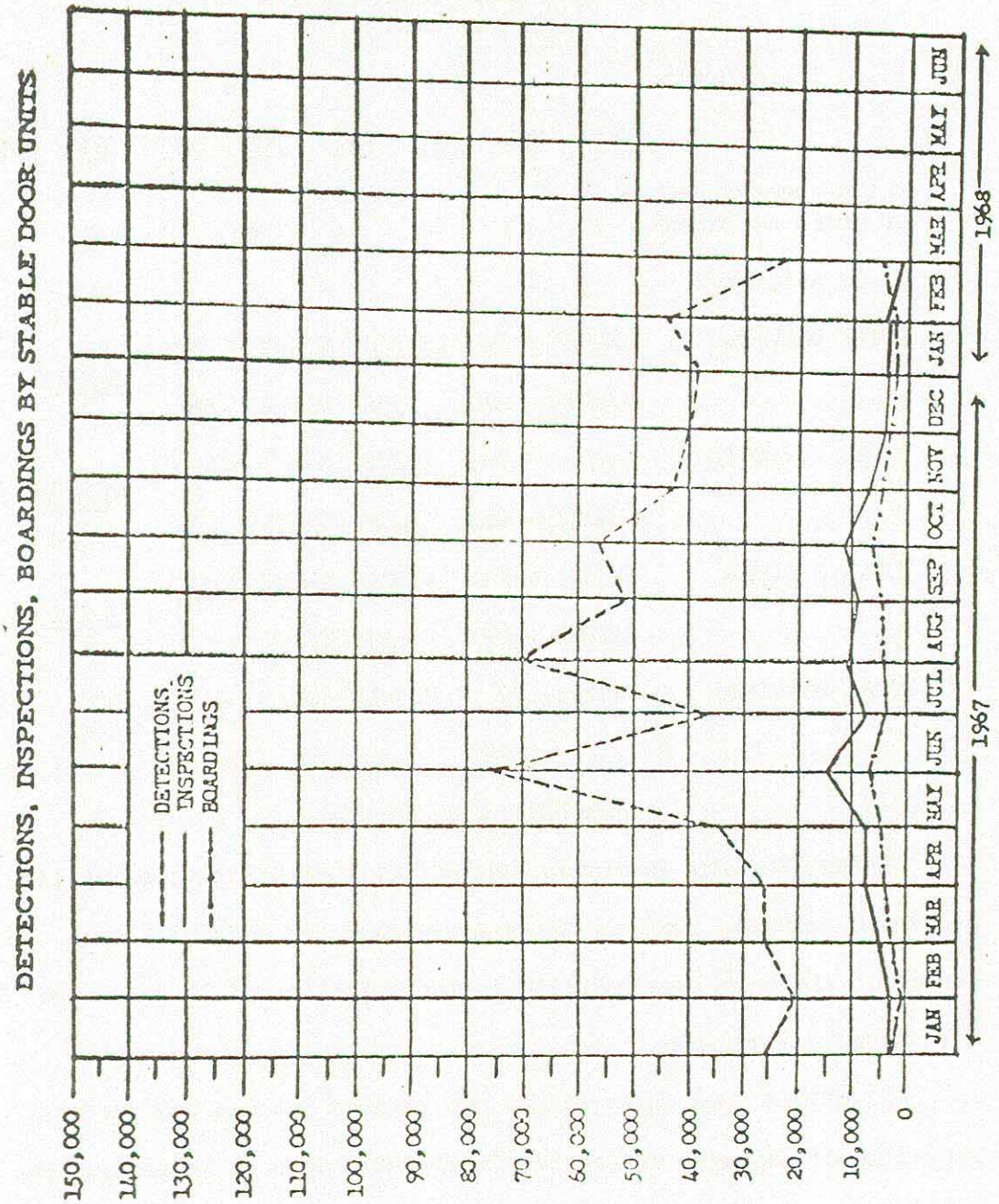

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STABLE DOOR units were responsible. Accordingly, the total number of detainees was drastically reduced.

On 15 February a STABLE DOOR unit commenced limited operations in Vung Ro Bay. The unit, designated CTU 115.9.5, became fully operational on 21 February 1968.

Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit ONE (IUWU 1) continued operations in Vung Tau during the month and a total of one junk and five persons were detained for improper identification, curfew violations and suspicious actions.

During February, IUWU 2 at Cam Ranh Bay detained 6 junks and 31 persons.

On two occasions during the early morning hours of 3 February, the sighting of possible enemy swimmers in Cam Ranh Bay Harbor was reported to IUWU 2. Random grenade drops and a search by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel produced negative results. On the 5th of the month another possible swimmer sighting was reported and again, a search of the immediate area by harbor patrol craft and EOD personnel produced negative results.

Traffic was extremely light in the Qui Nhon Harbor during the month as IUWU 3 detained only one person for improper identification.

IUWU 4 continued operations at Nha Trang during the month and detained a total of 140 persons and 4 junks.

On 1 February, and again on 2 February, IUWU 4 patrol craft

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received hostile small-arms fire from the vicinity of Hon Mieu Island. The fire was not returned because of the proximity of the Mui Chut Lighthouse and a nearby village.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE (TASK FORCE 116)

The opening days of February saw GAME WARDEN units continuing their aggressive counter attacks against the Communist insurgents who had launched an all-out offensive against the cities and government and military installations throughout the Republic. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army troops struck in a country-wide, coordinated attack on the morning of 31 January during Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year holiday, with devastating fury in an attempt to gain a major victory. GAME WARDEN units were embroiled in some of the bitterest fighting ever seen in the Delta since GAME WARDEN operations were begun. The Homeric performance of the PBRs, helicopters, SEALs and LSTs in supporting friendly ground action substantially contributed to the failure of the enemy who suffered extremely high casualties.

In recognition of the role played by GAME WARDEN units, Major General G. S. ECKHARDT, USA, IV Corps Senior Advisor, sent the following message to CTF 116 on 12 February:

> SINCE THE VC OFFENSIVE STARTED 31 JAN, I HAVE RECEIVED MANY REPORTS FROM ADVISORS THROUGHOUT IV CORPS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR COMMAND IN COMING TO THEIR ASSISTANCE DURING THESE CRUCIAL TIMES. I KNOW YOU HAVE SUFFERED SOME GRIEVOUS LOSSES BUT YOUR MEN HAVE COVERED THEMSELVES WITH GLORY BECAUSE OF THEIR COURAGE AND DEDICATION. YOU HAVE DEALT THE AGGRESSORS A HEAVY BLOW WHICH SPEAKS WELL FOR THE PROFESSIONALISM AND CAPABILITY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION. PLEASE PASS MY DEEP APPRECIATION TO ALL CONCERNED AND BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS.

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In I Corps Tactical Zone, PBRs shifted their role of river interdiction to that of escort of logistical transport along the Perfume River, to counter the numerous hostile incidents aimed at stopping the flow of much-needed supplies into the battle-torn city of Hue.

In the Delta, the continuation of the initial phase of the Viet Cong offensive found Task Force 116 units engaged with the enemy on many fronts. Navy armed helicopters and PBRs played a major role in preventing the cities of Ben Tre and Mo Cay, in Kien Hoa province, from being completely overrun by the Viet Cong forces. During the first 48 hours the "Seawolves" of Helicopter Attack (light) Squadron THREE, Detachments 5 and 6, were practically the only air support the province had. They continued to provide around-the-clock air strikes for four days against intense ground fire. PBR units from River Sections 531, 532 and 534 provided fire support, blocking forces and medical evacuation transportation for the city of Ben Tre. USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821), on 5 February, provided fire fighting equipment and a damage controlman to assist in extinguishing the fires which still burned in the city.

At Vinh Long the Viet Cong intensified their attacks within the city and, on 1 February, U. S. Navy personnel were forced to evacuate their compound and move to the Vietnamese Navy River Assualt Group base and thence to USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 786) which had

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steamed upriver from her normal station on the Co Chien to a position off Vinh Long to support the friendly troops engaging the enemy. The ship also took aboard over 150 American, Korean and Vietnamese civilians. Included in the evacuees were eight Irish nuns from a girls' school that was overrun by the Viet Cong. The evacuees were fed and made as comfortable as possible and subsequently transferred to USS MARK (AKL 22) and transported to Dong Tam.

At Chau Doc, SEAL and PBR units, operating on the upper Bassac river near the Cambodian border, rallied their firepower in support of friendly forces and aided in driving the enemy from the city. (See JANUARY 1968 Supplement).

At Sa Dec on 2 February, four PBRs routed 150 Viet Cong who had seized the Cao Lanh ferry landing. The next day PBRs conducted repeated firing runs along the Sa Dec Canal, in the vicinity of the city, against an estimated 200 Viet Cong positioned to attack the city. On 5 February, PBRs and a Navy light helicopter fire team supported Duc Ton District headquarters during a nine-hour ground and mortar attack.

At My Tho SEALs provided security forces to defend U. S. billeting areas, employed their explosive ordnance disposal capability to remove unexploded mortars in the city and captured a Viet Cong cache of weapons, mortars, rockets, grenades and small-arms ammunition.

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GAME WARDEN support LSTs effectively engaged in repeated shore bombardments against enemy troop concentrations as the ships transited the rivers bringing their shipboard-based PBR sections and helicopter detachments to critical areas.

Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam directed the following message on 6 February to CTF 116 citing the performance of GAME WARDEN units during the Tet campaign:

> I HAVE BEEN GREATLY IMPRESSED BY THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF TASK FORCE 116 DURING THE PAST WEEK. ALL GAME WARDEN FORCES HAVE ACQUITTED THEMSELVES IN A MANNER THAT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED AN ALREADY FINE REPUTATION. MANY US AND ALLIED INSTALLATIONS OWE THEIR CONTINUED EXISTENCE TO TIMELY SUPPORT OF GAME WARDEN UNITS. ALTHOUGH IN MANY CASES WE HAVE BEEN ON THE DEFENSIVE THE ENEMY HAS PAID DEARLY FOR HIS ACTIONS.
> THE B-40 ROCKETS CAPTURED BY CTU 116.1.1 ARE PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY. SUCH A LOSS WILL SERIOUSLY REDUCE ENEMY EFFECTIVENESS.
> WELL DONE. RADM VETH.

Action throughout the remainder of the month continued at a rapid pace as the Viet Cong continued their harassing mortar and rocket attacks against military installations and GAME WARDEN units. During the month 288 Viet Cong were killed in action--the highest monthly kill total to date. In the first seven days of the month alone, "Seawolves" killed 86 of the enemy while PBRs accounted for 19 more. Three PBRs were destroyed: one by enemy fire at Chau Doc and two by misdirected friendly fire during the fierce fighting at Vinh Long.

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I CORPS RIVER PATROL GROUP

The increase of logistical requirements for northern I Corps made the uninterrupted transport of cargo on a 24-hour daily basis on the Perfume and Cua Viet rivers mandatory. Due to the increased importance of these rivers as primary lines of communications, river security became paramount in view of the numerous hostile fire and mining incidents in and along these water routes. Recognizing the critical importance of safe, timely movement of cargo along the Perfume River to Hue, PBR support of Commander Naval Support Activity Danang logistic craft became a first priority effort. PBR operations during the month of January, and particularly during the period of increased hostilities since Tet, confirmed that the PBRs were making valuable contributions to the security of waterways in I Corps. As a result the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, requested that additional PBRs be sent to I Corps to augment the assigned 10-boat river section, thereby providing additional river coverage on the Cua Viet.

The determination of the enemy to disrupt the flow of logistics up the Perfume River was evidenced by the repeated attacks on the Navy convoys as they made their daily transits.

Early on the morning of 3 February PBRs were requested to evacuate a U. S. Marine Corps security force from a petroleum tank farm, east of Hue, which was being overrun by Viet Cong. While

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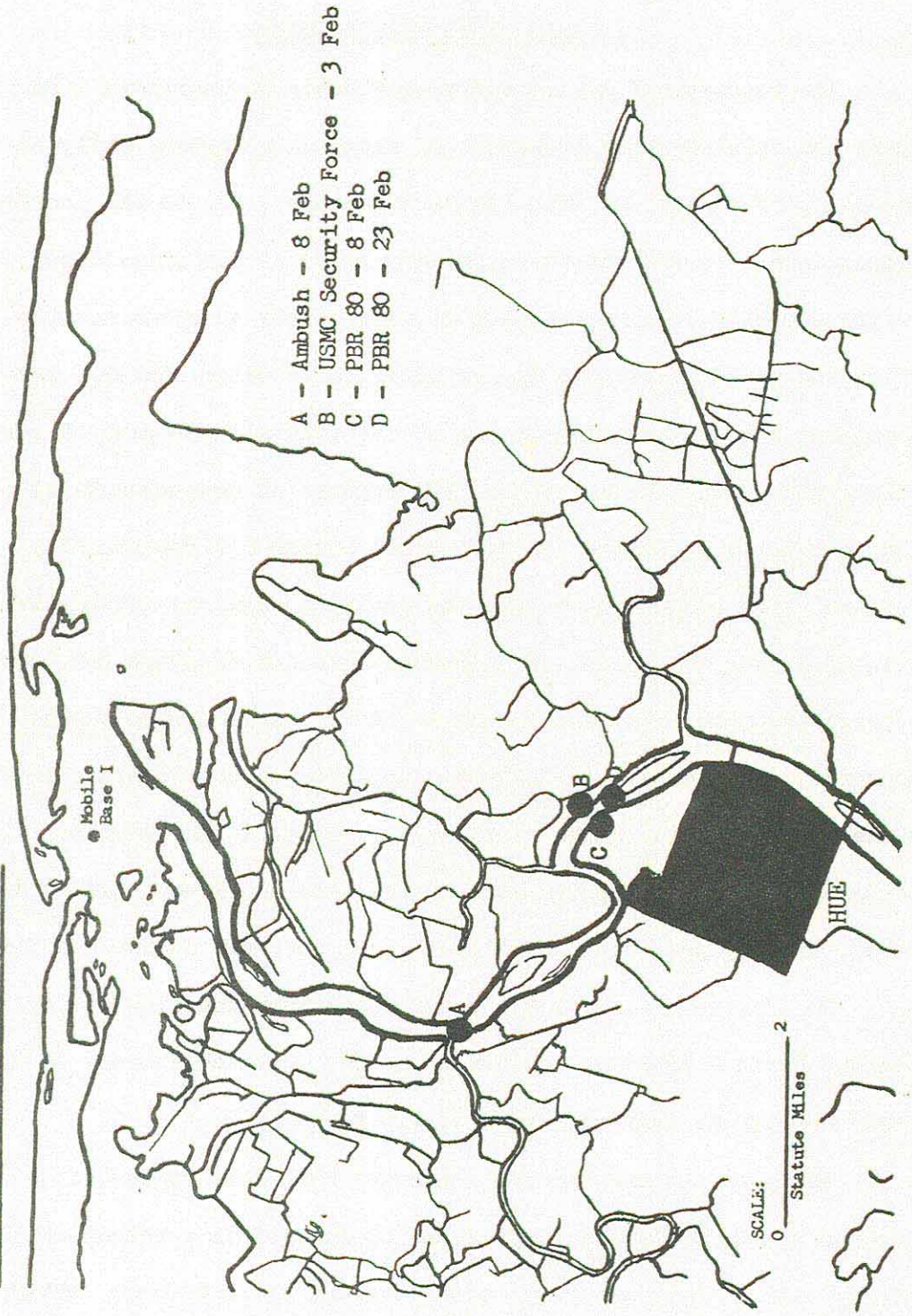
Operations in the Perfume River



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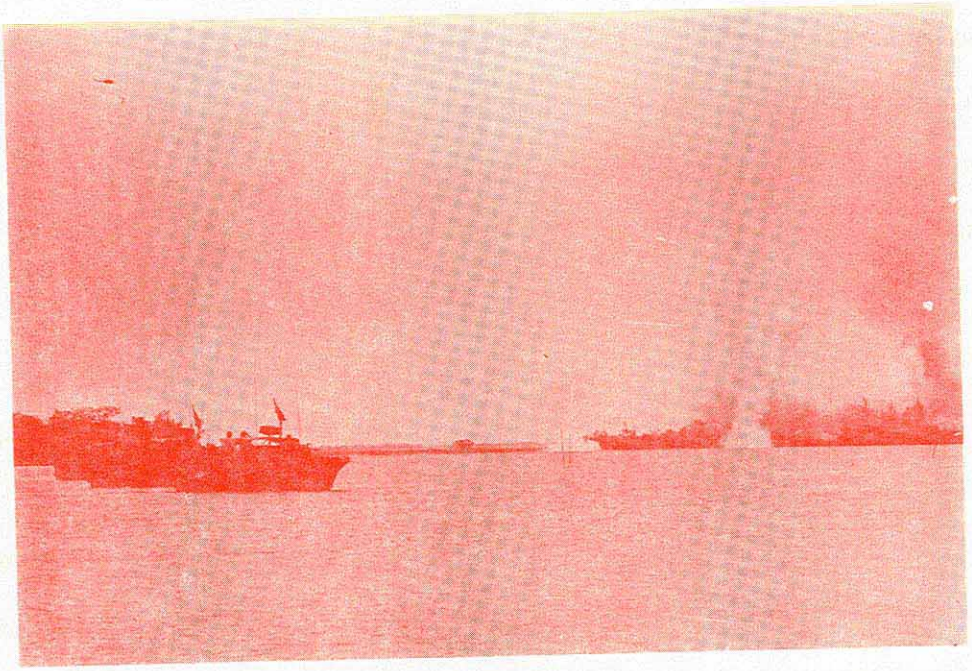
under heavy enemy automatic-weapons fire two PBRs charged in and picked up the entire force of 15 Marines, 1 U. S. Navyman and 1 Vietnamese and returned them to Tan My. Three Marines were wounded, one critically, in action. Enemy casualties were undetermined.



Billow of smoke comes from the shoreline near the Toan Thuan Hoa village in I CTZ where a helicopter unleashes rockets at an enemy gun emplacement. One of the Navy PBRs was lightly damaged by enemy guns during the fight against North Vietnamese troops in the village.

On the afternoon of 8 February, a PBR patrol, escorting an LCU from Hue to Tan My, came under heavy automatic-weapons and recoilless-

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rifle fire about one and one-half miles downriver from the LCU ramp. PBR 80 received a hit from a recoilless rifle in the port engine. With the engine out of commission the boat headed for the Mobile Support base at Tan My. One crewman suffered head wounds when the round impacted. Three PBRs downriver scrambled to assist the patrol and encountered a second ambush at the mouth of the Bo River. The enemy automatic-weapons fire was suppressed and the recoilless-rifle site was taken under heavy fire from the boats. All units returned safely to Tan My without further casualties. Enemy losses were unknown.

Shortly after noon on 23 February, PBR 80, operating with another PBR, was again hit by enemy fire near the spot where the boat was damaged on the 8th. This time the Viet Cong scored a B-40 hit on the starboard bow leaving a five-inch diameter hole above the water line. The enemy position was taken under fire by the PBRs and U. S. Army armed helicopters. There were no friendly casualties and enemy casualties were undetermined. The patrol continued on to Hue to escort a LCM/LCU convoy back down the river. Shortly after the patrol's arrival the enemy mortared the ramp. There were no personnel or material casualties; however, during the return transit the convoy received heavy automatic-weapons and B-40 rocket fire from the initial ambush site. Suppressing fire was delivered by all units and the Army helicopters. One LCU was hit by automatic-

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weapons fire, wounding one U. S. soldier and five Vietnamese troops, and one LCM received a B-40 rocket hit. The PBRs did not sustain any casualties. The remainder of the transit was made without incident.

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

During the month minesweepers from TU 116.4.2 came under repeated attacks from Viet Cong hiding in ambush along the Long Tau shipping channel.

On the morning of 8 February, two minesweeping boats (MSBs), operating on the Long Tau, were fired upon from ambush about 12 miles southeast of their base at Nha Be. The enemy attacked with automatic weapons and fired three rockets which fortunately missed the boats. As the MSBs cleared the ambush area they returned the Viet Cong fire and suppressed it. Shortly thereafter a PBR patrol sped to the assistance of the MSBs and came under enemy fire from both banks of the river. The two-boat patrol engaged the enemy and suppressed the fire. A U. S. Army light helicopter fire team joined in the attack against the enemy positions and received automatic-weapons fire in return. The helicopter attack was followed shortly thereafter by a fixed-wing air strike. The combined strikes destroyed three bunkers and damaged three others. With Navy armed helicopters now providing overhead coverage to prevent the Viet Cong from utilizing withdrawal routes and PBRs providing blocking

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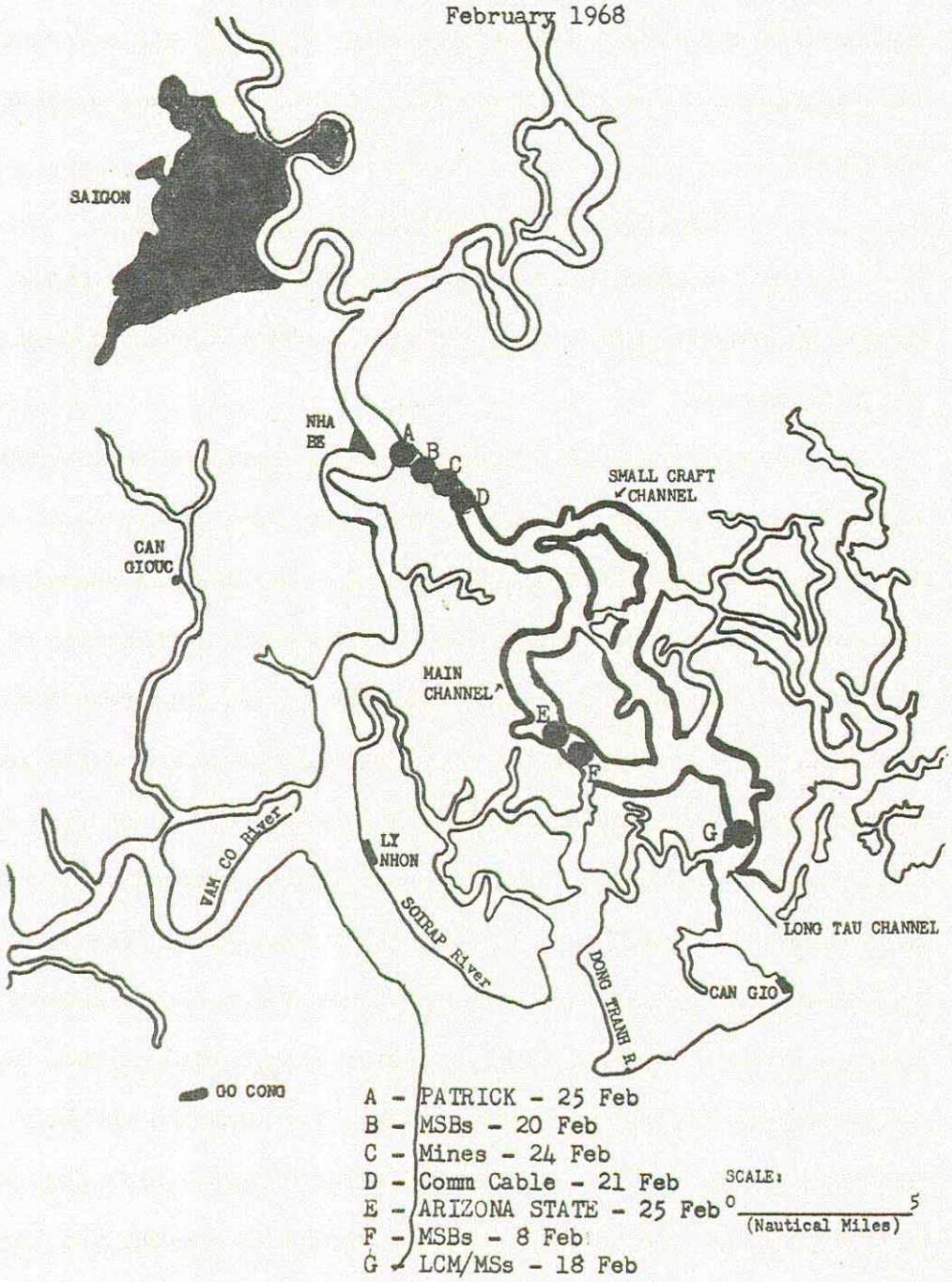
RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

February 1968



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forces on the river, Vietnamese Regional Force troops swept the area. The sweep netted negligible results.

At 0615 on the morning of 18 February, two Landing Craft Medium/Minesweepers (LCM/MS), operating 15 miles southeast of Nha Be, had just completed their downriver sweep operation on the Long Tau and had swung north to head back upriver. The boats were just off the west bank of the river when suddenly an RPG 7 rocket round slammed into LCM/MS 8 just aft of the port .50 caliber machine gun. The bright flash of the impacting round momentarily blinded the boat captain, BM2 Robert D. GRAY, USN. He and one other crewmember were also wounded by flying shrapnel. BM2 GRAY and his crew quickly rallied to the attack and commenced firing against the enemy ambush point from which enemy automatic-weapons fire raked the port side of the boat. After clearing the kill zone, the two boats joined in making two firing passes on the ambush site, suppressing the enemy fire. PBRs operating in the area arrived on the scene and reconned the area with fire. Enemy losses were undetermined. One additional Navyman received minor wounds during the engagement. LCM/MS 8 sustained a hole in the armor plating from the exploding rocket and 37 bullet holes along the port side.

On 20 February MSBs 33 and 46 became the target for enemy rocket fire, three miles southeast of Nha Be. Fortunately, the four RPG-type rockets passed over the boats. PBRs and Navy "Sea-

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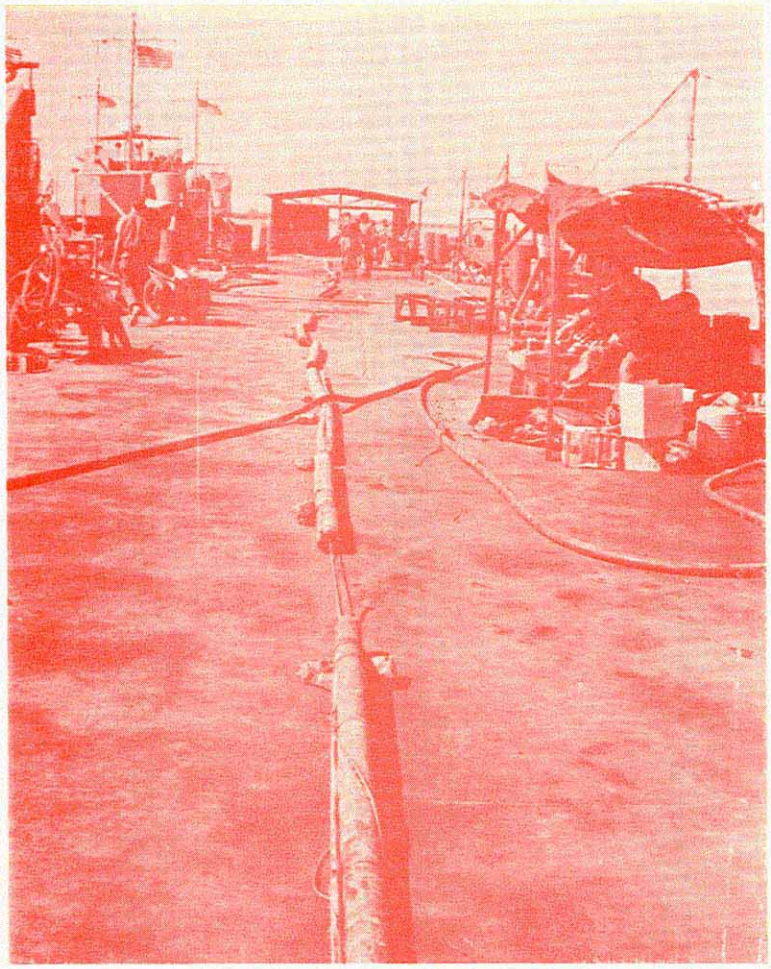
wolves" put in strikes on the area from which the fire originated; enemy casualties were unknown. There were no U. S. losses.



Viet Cong communications line recovered from Long Tau River south of Nha Be.

On 21 February a special minesweeping detail swept the Long Tau, three miles southeast of Nha Be, at a location where electrical wire was swept three days previously. When more wire was

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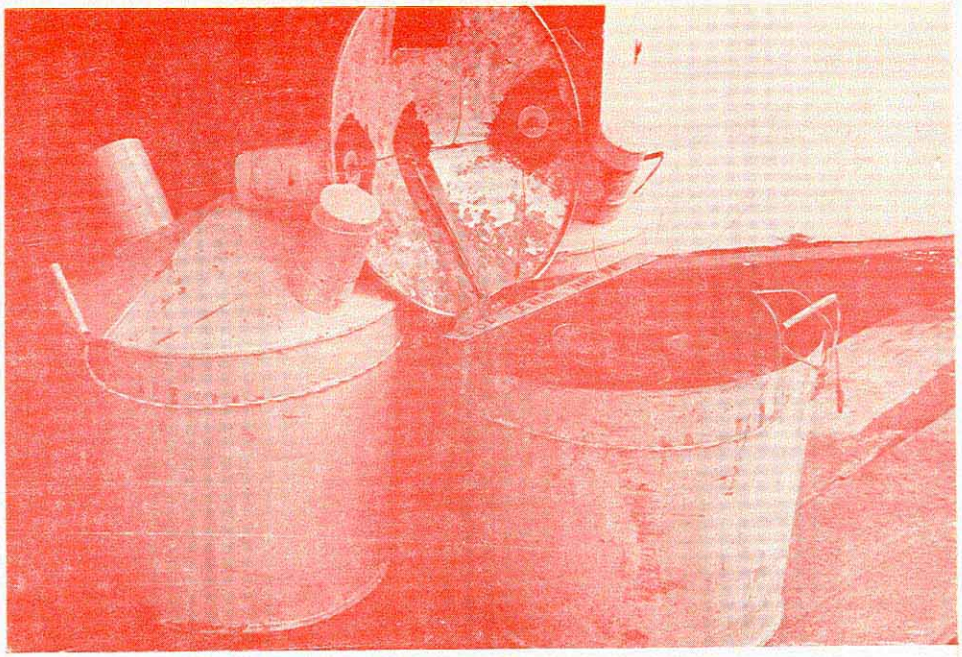
recovered, a U. S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team attempted to locate and recover a possible mine plant. No mine was found, however, the sweep operation netted about 100 yards of double-strand communication wire, of which approximately 50 yards was enclosed in split Betelnut logs anchored to the bottom of the river with rocks. From the physical appearance of the recovered material it appeared that this was an attempt to provide a communications link across the Long Tau at a known Viet Cong crossing point.



Six of these Viet Cong water mines were recovered on the Long Tau River just south of Nha Be on 24 Feb. The mines were ~~control~~ Contact type and free floating and were tied two to a group.

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On 24 February a routine PBR patrol, operating about four miles southeast of Nha Be on the Long Tau River, sighted three clusters of metallic objects floating with the tide. The objects were recovered by EOD personnel and identified as floating contact mines. Each cluster contained two mines, which were about the size and shape of a standard U. S. Navy office wastebasket, with a conical cover and painted turquoise. Two flashlight-size horns protruded from the top of each mine and contained electrical contacts connected in parallel with three 1.5-volt flashlight batteries and four U. S. 75-mm recoilless-rifle rounds. This was the second report of contact watermines in the Rung Sat Special Zone; the first being reported in December 1966.

On 25 February the Viet Cong attacked two American ships transiting through the Rung Sat Special Zone. In the first incident SS ARIZONA STATE was hit by three rounds of recoilless-rifle fire, six miles southeast of Nha Be on the Long Tau River. About one-half hour later the commercial tug PATRICK was hit by one round of recoilless-rifle fire. PBRs and armed helicopters quickly responded to both attacks taking the ambush sites under fire with undetermined results. Both ships suffered only minor damages. There were no personnel casualties.

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DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) River

On 4 February Mark II PBRs 725, 727, 728 and 731 suffered heavy losses while engaged in action on the upper Mekong River, just south of the Cambodian border. The boats, from RIVSEC 535 based at Binh Thuy, were operating from the U. S. Army's Special Forces' Camp Thoung Thoi. At 1430 the PBRs received a call requesting support for a Regional Force unit pinned down by an estimated company of Viet Cong. As the patrol proceeded up the Honh Ngu Canal it encountered sporadic small-arms and automatic-weapons fire, which was returned by the PBRs. Proceeding further towards the besieged outpost, the fire became intense with rockets and automatic-weapons fire. The patrol reached the outpost and called in an artillery strike which saturated the river bank along the entire length of Viet Cong concentration. At 1650 the artillery lifted and the patrol commenced a high-speed exit of the area, requesting an air strike as they exited. Once more, as they exited, the PBRs received heavy rocket and automatic-weapons fire with PBRs 728, 731 and 727 receiving direct rocket hits. One rocket hit PBR 728 in the stern which put her out of control, causing her to beach and partially sink, stern first. PBR 731 returned to the beach to recover the crew who had abandoned the boat. FN William E. HAYENGA, USN, the PBR 731 engineer, unarmed and without regard

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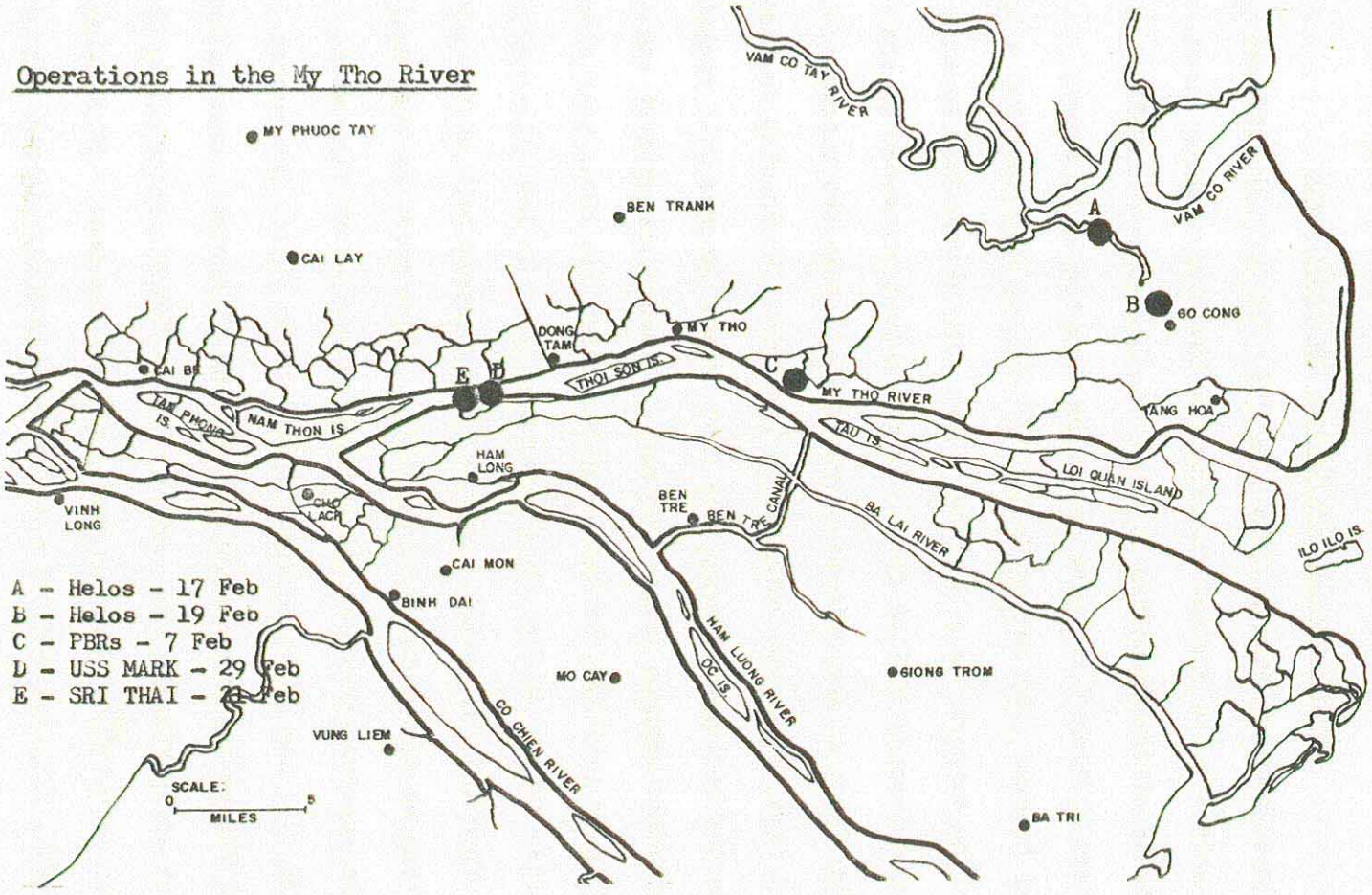
Operations in the My Tho River



A - Helos - 17 Feb
B - Helos - 19 Feb
C - PBRs - 7 Feb
D - USS MARK - 29 Feb
E - SRI THAI - 28 Feb

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for his own safety, went ashore and, while under heavy fire, assisted two survivors to PBR 731. PBRs 725 and 731 then exited the river and returned to the base camp. Artillery and air strikes were requested to destroy PBR 728 to prevent exploitation by the enemy, which was then accomplished. Despite efforts on the part of the crew, PBR 727 sank in 40 feet of water due to rapid flooding. It was secured to the beach by lines and subsequently recovered. Total U. S. casualties were eight U. S. Navymen wounded and one boat totally destroyed. This was the first combat loss of a Mark II PBR. The forward gunner on PBR 725, GMG3 Thomas J. CRAGHEAD, USN, later died of his wounds. Although seriously wounded CRAGHEAD continued to provide suppressing fire during the rescue operations of the five PBR 731 crewmen. Enemy casualties were 12 killed (plus 10 probable).

On 7 February a PBR patrol detected a Viet Cong ammunition stock pile partially hidden under a hay stack, about five miles southeast of My Tho. As the lead boat closed the bank to take the target, identified as at least 18 boxes of U. S. 105-mm howitzer rounds and 1 box of .50 caliber ammunition, under fire, the boat received sniper fire. The sniper fire was returned and suppressed. The hay stack, when hit by the PBR's fire, exploded in an orange-yellow fire ball 50 feet in diameter. There were no friendly casualties. In the exchange of fire, PBR crewmen killed one Viet Cong.

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On 17 February, while flying a reconnaissance mission in an area about 12 miles northeast of Go Cong, a Navy light helicopter fire team detected a large concentration of sampans, some measuring over 40 feet. It was estimated that there were over 300 sampans including about 50 of the large type. The "Seawolves" made multiple attacks on the sampans until their ammunition supply was exhausted. They then rearmed and refueled at Go Cong and returned to the area where they destroyed 3 large sampans and severely damaged or destroyed 20 of the smaller types. In addition to the attack on the sampans the Navy armed helicopters put in an air strike against a tree line where 300 Viet Cong were reported to be located. When the three-hour mission was finished the "Seawolves" had killed 30 of the enemy. In view of the saturating fire of the armed helicopters it was very probable that the number of wounded Viet Cong was high. There were no friendly casualties.

Two days later Navy "Seawolves" attacked two camouflaged Viet Cong troop sampans detected about a mile northwest of Go Cong. As the helicopters made their firing runs the enemy engaged the "Seawolves" with ground fire, wounding one of the Navy flyers. The enemy fire, however, did not deter the accuracy of the "Seawolves'" firepower as they destroyed 1 junk and killed 26 communist troops. A ground sweep conducted later that same day by Provincial Reconnaissance Units recovered 17 AK-47 automatic weapons, 4 Chinese

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Communist machine guns and 1 U. S. M-60 machine gun.

On the morning of 21 February PBRs operating 10 miles west of My Tho went to the aid of the Thai tanker SRI THAI when that ship was attacked by enemy recoilless-rifle fire. The PBRs made an immediate firing run along the river bank and were ready to commence another when the tanker began to smoke. The PBRs broke off their attack and went to assist the tanker that had been hit twice. Medical aid was given to two seriously wounded Thai crewmen who were later evacuated to Dong Tam. Navy "Seawolves" arrived and teamed up with the PBRs for a combined attack on the enemy positions. The attack was followed by fixed-wing air strikes that leveled the recoilless-rifle ambush site. The day's action netted 2 Viet Cong killed, 9 structures destroyed, 24 structures damaged and 2 sampans destroyed. There were no friendly casualties except for the two Thai crewmen. Minor damage was sustained to the merchant ship. This area had been the scene of four recoilless-rifle attacks to shipping in a four-day period. On 25 February, after the seventh attack on shipping in seven days, CTF 116 offered to escort all shipping through the area with PBRs.

The presence of a PBR escort did not deter the determined enemy for, on 29 February, USS MARK (AKL-12), a Delta supply ship was attacked with recoilless rifles, heavy automatic, semi-automatic and small-arms fire in the same area of the previous ambushes. One

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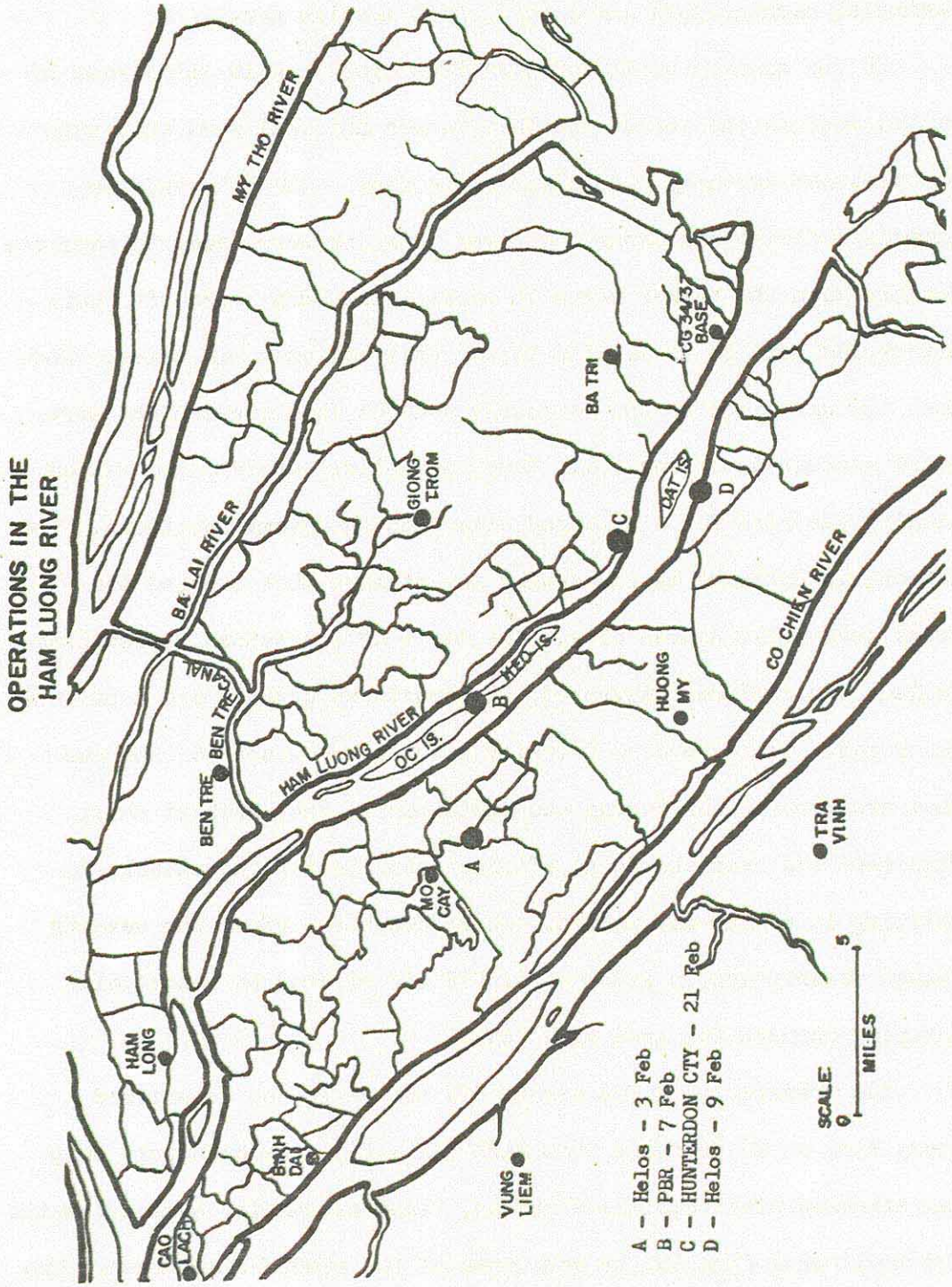

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recoilless-rifle round impacted on the starboard side maindeck amidship. The exploding projectile penetrated the hull and ruptured a fire main and fuel tank vent line. Flying shrapnel inflicted wounds to 12 men stationed in a repair party. The ship had gone to general quarters prior to entering the attack area. The escorting PBRs immediately charged the Viet Cong firing position on the south bank and encountered additional heavy fire. The patrol boats completed two firing passes touching off several secondary explsoions. These were followed by four more secondary explosions set off by a "Seawolf" strike. There were no further friendly casualties and losses to the Viet Cong were undetermined when contact was finally broken off.

Operations in the Ham Luong River

On the morning of 3 February a light helicopter fire team from TU 116.3.8 conducted a devastating strike against enemy troops, located about a mile south of Mo Cay. As the "Seawolves" raked the communist troops with machine gun and rocket fire, moderate automatic-weapons fire was encountered. The armed Navy helicopters killed 35 Viet Cong, destroyed 3 structures and damaged 2 others. The "Seawolves" sustained no casualties.

On 7 February PBRs operating on the Ham Luong River, about five miles east of Mo Cay, engaged and sank a Viet Cong troop-transport sampan loaded with Viet Cong youths. An intelligence

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agent reported 50 of the youths were killed or wounded in the engagement.

On 9 February "Seawolves", defending Giong Trom subsector in Kien Hoa Province, reported receiving a voluminous hail of enemy fire, more rapid than any previously encountered, from what seemed to be a Vulcan-type weapon.

Shortly before midnight on 10 February, Navy "Seawolves" were scrambled to support a Vietnamese outpost, located on the lower Ham Luong about three and one-half miles north of Than Phu, that was under attack. The outpost defenders marked the enemy target area with a flaming arrow and .50 caliber tracers. The two armed helicopters directed their 2.75-inch rockets and machine guns against the target and suppressed the Viet Cong fire. The "Seawolves" killed 15 of the communist insurgents and wounded 13 and destroyed 1 B-40 rocket launcher.

On 21 February USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) provided shore bombardment in support of a friendly ground operation conducted about 10 miles upriver from the mouth of the Ham Luong. For almost two hours the ship provided saturation fire against various targets to the north of the river as directed by the ground commander. On one occasion the ship's fire impacted in the middle of a Viet Cong platoon killing at least 10 of the enemy. There were no casualties sustained by HUNTERDON COUNTY.

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Operations in the Co Chien River

On 12 February a Navy light helicopter fire team, on a routine patrol on the lower Co Chien River, was advised that 200 Viet Cong were located about four miles south-southeast of the town of Cau Ngan. The enemy was in contact with Popular Force troops who were being forced to retreat in the face of the massed enemy attack. The "Seawolves" put in their air strike along a tree line starting a fire that spread when fanned by a high wind. Eight Viet Cong were killed and 22 wounded in the action; 34 structures were destroyed. There were no casualties sustained by the "Seawolves".

On 20 February USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 786) conducted a shore bombardment against a reported enemy troop concentration located on the northern outskirts of the city of Phu Vinh. The ship's 40-mm cannon fire killed 20 and wounded 20 Viet Cong.

Operations in the Bassac River

Navy light helicopter fire teams, flying numerous missions in the opening phase of the Viet Cong offensive in support of beleaguered outposts and ground units along the Bassac River, exhibited themselves in a highly professional manner. On 31 January 27 communist insurgents were killed and 16 others were wounded in one air strike. In three separate strikes conducted on 2 February a total of 72 of the enemy were killed by the "Seawolves" air power.

On 4 February a PBR patrol detected a sampan and junk exiting

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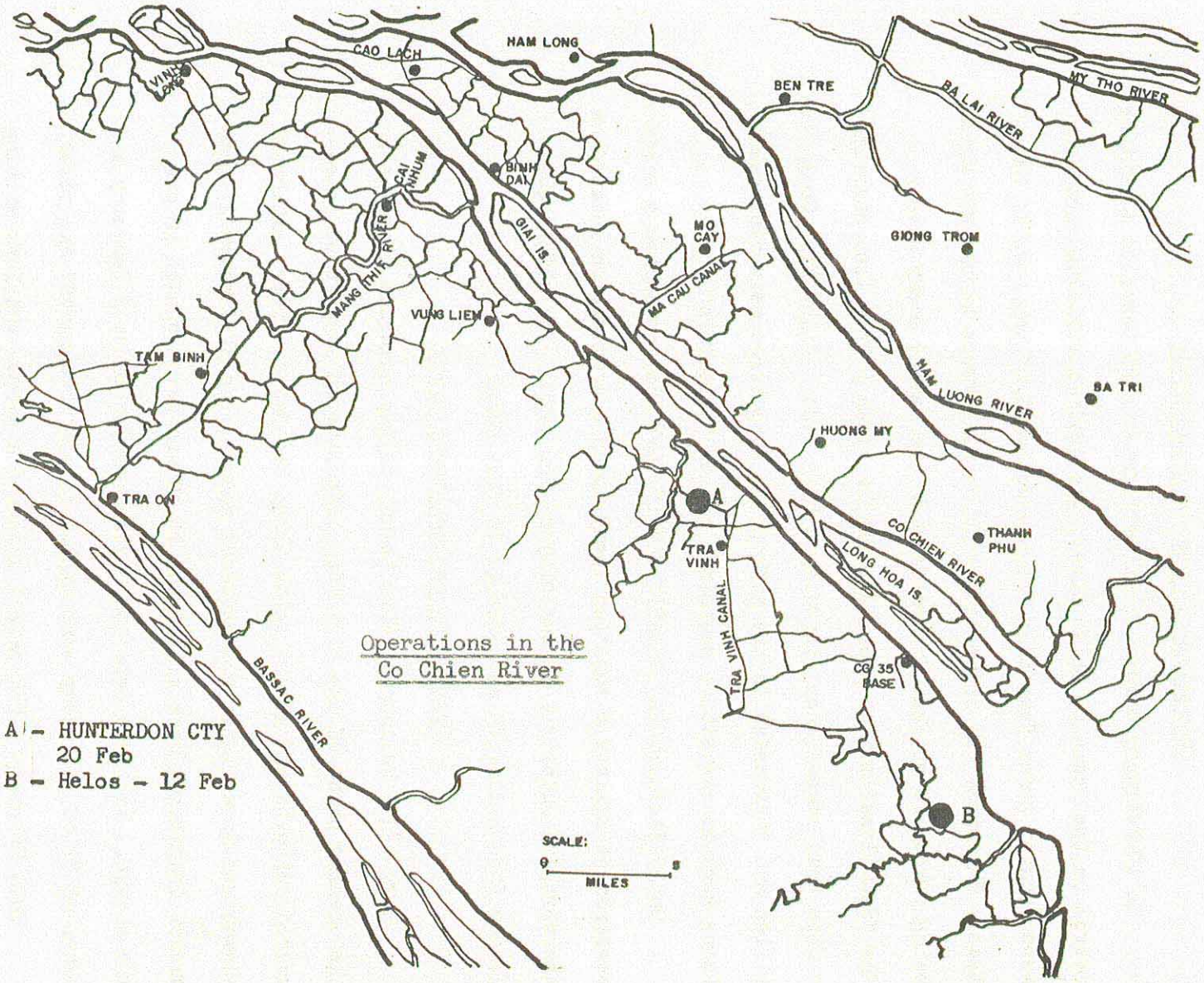

Operations in the Co Chien River

A - HUNTERDON CTY
20 Feb
B - Helos - 12 Feb

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from a canal, 15 miles southeast of Can Tho. As the patrol pursued the two crafts, the junk trying to evade, capsized in the waves; the sampan managed to slip back up the canal. As the PBRs closed the area the enemy fired upon them with a heavy barrage of automatic and small-arms fire from at least 12 firing positions on both banks, followed by eight rounds of B-40 rockets from the south bank. All rockets missed their targets. Four additional PBRs were soon on the scene to assist while two more set up a blocking position to the north to prevent a possible Viet Cong crossing. Navy "Sea-wolves", a LCM(R) with 5-inch rockets and USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST 846) were directed into the area to blast the enemy position. Captured in the encounter was a cargo of crates containing 60 rounds of B-40 rockets. An additional crate and a bundle of green uniforms sank and were not recovered. Another enemy crossing attempt was prevented, with the attendant loss of valuable rockets, by GAME WARDEN forces. Casualties inflicted upon the Viet Cong were undetermined. There were no friendly losses.

On 10 February, while on a routine PBR patrol, PBR 58 was struck by what was believed to be a 40-kilogram command-detonated water mine, about 11 miles southeast of Can Tho. The mine, however, only achieved a low-order detonation, blowing a 1- by 2½-foot hole just forward of the coxswain flat causing extensive damage to the underwater hull. The boat was beached but before salvage

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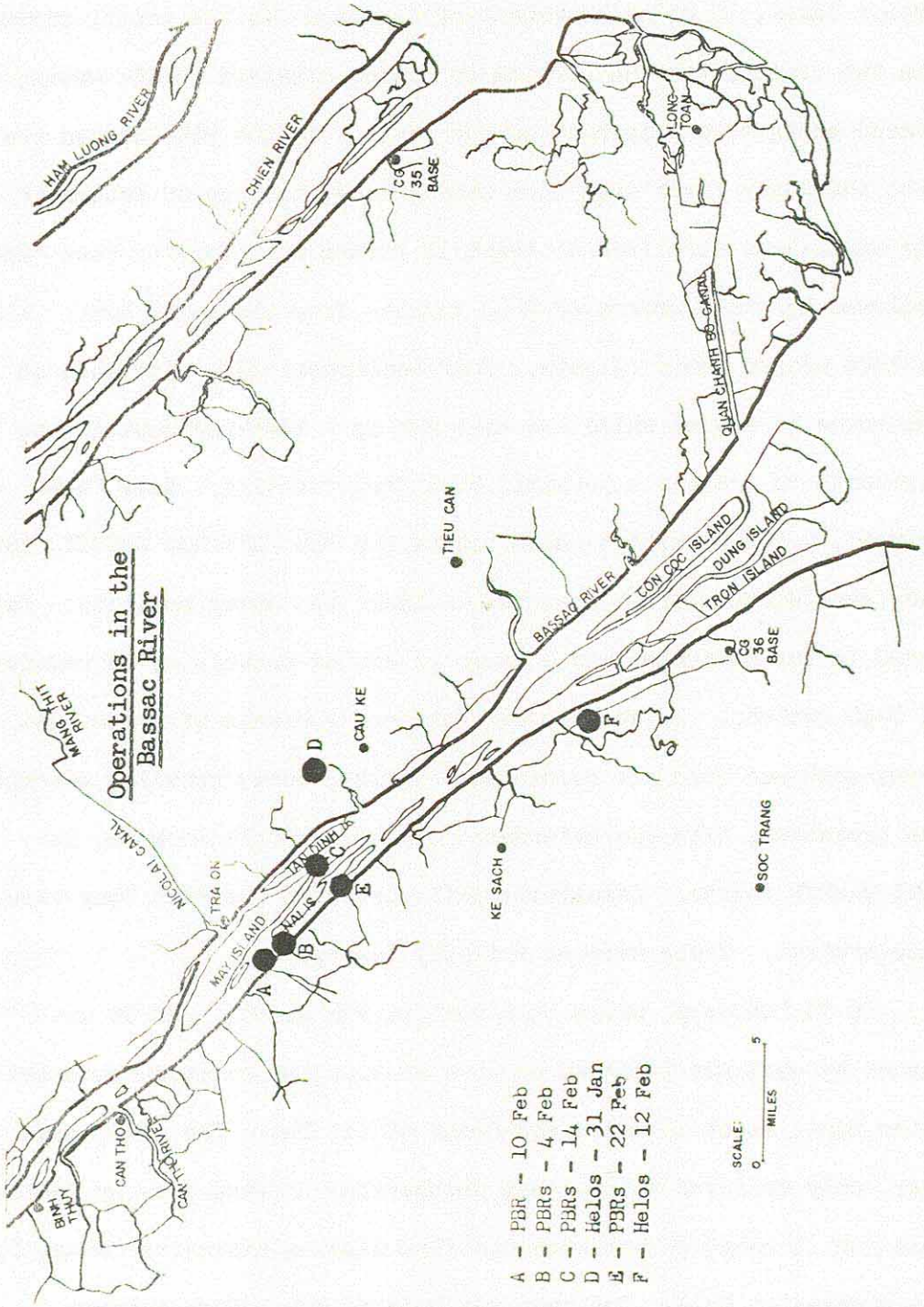

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operations could be completed the river tide flooded the boat. The damaged boat was later returned to Binh Thuy for repairs. There were no personnel casualties.

On 12 February Navy "Seawolves" killed 11 and wounded 1 Viet Cong while supporting an outpost under attack about seven miles northeast of Soc Trang.

On 14 February GAME WARDEN units encountered the heaviest concentration of enemy firepower to date in the vicinity of Tan Dinh Island. The action began when a two-boat PBR patrol, making a routine night transit between Tan Dinh Island and May Island, came under intense automatic-weapons fire from both islands. The boats made two firing passes employing all weapons but were unable to suppress the enemy fire. The patrol was shortly joined by two more boats who also engaged the enemy while the Viet Cong continued their fire. A light helicopter fire team attacked the targets, identified as at least six .50 caliber positions and ten .30 caliber positions, plus AK-47 and small arms firing positions. The helicopter fire did not deter the enemy gunners. Three more PBRs joined in the melee as all boats continued to receive extremely intense automatic-weapons fire. Fixed-wing F-100 jets were called in and hit the target area with bombs and napalm followed by additional helicopter strikes. Five PBRs made a final firing pass and once again received extremely intense automatic-

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weapons fire and 12 B-40 rockets. During the action that lasted for three and one-half hours, three Navymen were wounded, four PBRs were hit and one F-100 was shot down by the well-fortified and entrenched Viet Cong forces. Casualties inflicted on the enemy were undetermined.

On 17 February, LT(jg) Frank G. BOYCE, USN, attached to SEAL Team Detachment ALFA, Eighth Platoon, led 60 Vietnamese Provincial Reconaissance Unit (PRU) troops in a mission against a Viet Cong-controlled area in Ba Xuyen Province. The PRUs captured 23 Viet Cong and accounted for a possible 20 Viet Cong killed. One PRU was killed.

On 22 February a PBR patrol, while on an intelligence/psychological operations mission, was ambushed with automatic weapons from both sides of a narrow channel at the northwest section of Nai Island. The patrol returned the fire and headed for the Bassac River. As the patrol was about to exit the channel six B-40 rockets were fired at the boats. PBR 37 was hit in the after.50 caliber gun, destroying the gun. PBR 56 took two rounds in the starboard bow below the water line. Two crewmen were wounded and both boats were peppered by flying shrapnel. The patrol returned to Binh Thuy where repairs were made. Enemy casualties were undetermined.

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GAME WARDEN UNITS

On 15 February CTF 116 directed the commanders of Task Groups

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116.1, 116.2 and 116.3 to implement a proposal approved by the Senior Advisor, IV Corps Tactical Zone, providing for a ready-for-action USN/VNN package force for use in joint RF/PF small-unit operations. The force was intended to be used primarily against enemy staging areas and tax collection points along the Mekong Delta waterways.

On 16 February, in order to develop commo-liaison/line of communication intelligence in support of the GAME WARDEN mission, CTF 116 initiated an experimental operation employing SEALs in conjunction with PRU troops in Phong Dinh, Vinh Binh, Chau Doc and Kien Giang provinces. Six SEALs from Detachment ALFA, Eighth Platoon, and two from Detachment ALFA, Seventh Platoon, were to operate as two-man units in each of the four provinces. Additional SEAL personnel were to be deployed to exploit intelligence gathered by the SEAL/PRU teams. The two-week operation was to be the basis for future expanded intelligence gathering activities.

On 18 February a study of enemy vulnerabilites submitted by CTF 116 to COMNAVFORV included this assessment of the Tet Offensive: "The offensive campaign recently conducted by the Viet Cong cost the enemy a high price in lives lost, but has not diminished his capability to continue the insurgency at pre-campaign intensity for an indeterminate period. GVN forces have been severely hampered by the necessity to defend the population centers. GVN re--

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sources have been spread thin, thus permitting the Viet Cong a wide selection of targets. If the enemy objective was to demonstrate that the GVN and FWMAF could not effectively defend the people of the Delta he must be judged successful... There is no evidence, however, of the Vietnamese people rallying to the VC cause."

On 19 February USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838) changed to the operational control of CTF 116 and arrived on station in the Ham Luong River. After embarking River Section 532 (TU 116.3.4) and Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE, Detachment FIVE (TU 116.3.8), HUNTERDON COUNTY relieved USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821) as TU 116.3.6 and commenced GAME WARDEN operations.

On 21 February CTG 117.4, the operational commander of the three Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACVs) operating in Vietnam, changed to the operational control of CTF 116 for a period of about one week to evaluate the suitability of PACVs for GAME WARDEN operations. The PACVs were determined unsuitable and returned to CTF 117.

On 22 February HARNETT COUNTY changed to the operational control of CTG 76.8.

On 24 February SEAL Team Detachment ALFA, Ninth Platoon, relieved SEAL Team Detachment ALFA, Sixth Platoon and assumed TU 116.2.0.

On 25 February Commander River Division 55 and RIV SEC 521

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became elements of Task Force CLEARWATER, established under the operational control of Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, to provide security for naval logistics craft operating on the Perfume and Cua Viet rivers.

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GAME WARDEN STATISTICAL SUMMARY
February 1968

1. PBR Statistics:

a.	Total Patrols (two boats):	Day 816.5	Night 844
b.	Total Contacts:	Day 42,211	Night 3,015
c.	Total Inspected:	Day 10,098	Night 1,186
d.	Total Boarded:	Day 21,524	Night 788
e.	Total Detained:	579	
f.	Sampans/Junks Detained:	1	
g.	Total Patrol Hours:	41,158.5	

2. Helicopter Fire Team Statistics:

a.	Total Flight Hours:	1,334.7
b.	Helo Missions:	
	(1) Preplanned strikes:	261
	(2) Reaction:	208
	(3) Targets of Opportunity:	221
	(4) Support:	296

3. GAME WARDEN Totals:

a.	Fire Fights:	
	(1) PBR:	52
	(2) Helo:	106
	(3) LCPL:	1

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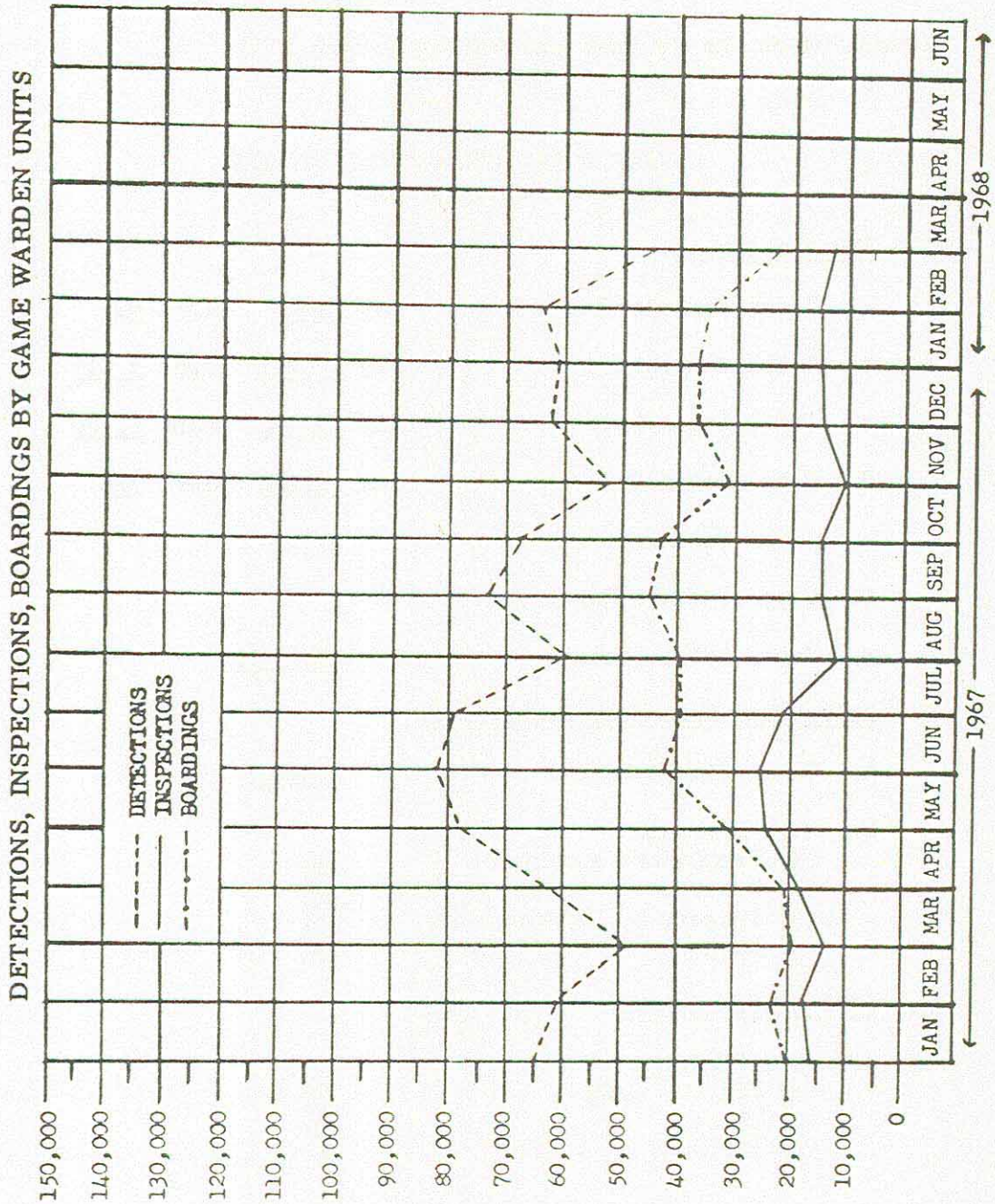

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b. Sampans Destroyed: 135 Damaged: 176 Captured: 12

c. Junks Destroyed: 3 Damaged: 2

d. Structures Destroyed: 329 Damaged: 227

e. Enemy KIA: 288 KIA (Poss.): 27 WIA: 64 Captured: 11

f. Friendly KIA: 3 WIA: 61

g. Friendly Battle Damage:
(1) PBR: 72
(2) Helo: 25

h. PBR "Medevac": 82

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE (TASK FORCE 117)

MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE OPERATIONS

The early days of February found the Viet Cong continuing their aggressive and bold Lunar New Year (Tet) Offensive against the major provincial cities of South Vietnam. The Mobile Riverine Force rose to the occasion by immediately coming to the defense of several beleaguered Delta cities. As the general situation throughout the Mekong Delta rapidly deteriorated, the MRF assumed an offensive posture and launched several intensive search and destroy operations. As the month ended and the Viet Cong offensive was stalled, the MRF made plans to return to Dinh Tuong Province, confident that their courageous actions had added immeasurably to "saving the Mekong Delta".

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

Shortly after midnight on the morning of 1 February, units of RAD 91, transiting south on the Ruong Stream in Giao Duc District seven miles northeast of Sa Dec, were ambushed by a heavily bunkered enemy force. However, this time the riverine units were anticipating a possible ambush in the area -- the scene of the 4-6 December Battle of Ruong Stream in which the Viet Cong lost 266 men. As the riverine assault craft approached the three-mile portion of the enemy-

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infested waterway where the previous attacks had taken place, the artillerymen on the artillery barges were directed to level their 105-mm howitzers and load them with deadly "Beehive" anti-personnel rounds.

At twenty minutes past midnight history repeated itself, and the unsuspecting Viet Cong initiated their ambush, employing automatic-weapon, rocket and recoilless-rifle fire from both banks of the 30-yard wide stream. The troop-laden ATCs, the ASPBs, monitors, and artillery barges retaliated with an awesome array of firepower at point-blank range against both banks of the stream. Enemy fire was silenced. Enemy casualties were undetermined while friendly losses amounted to one U. S. Navyman killed. A monitor boat captain, Boatswain's Mate Second Class William M. COMER, USN, was instantly killed during the 25-minute running gun battle.

Reassembling at the Mobile Riverine Base (MRB), anchored near Vinh Long, the MRF refueled, rearmed and resupplied in the fiery glow of the holocaust emanating from Vinh Long City. Due to the priorty of operations in Dinh Tuong Province and fearing a possible assault on the district towns of Cai Be and/or Cai Lay, the riverine craft deployed to a holding area just south of Cai Be and about six miles north-

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east of Vinh Long, where they awaited further orders.

By 1000 on 1 February when the attacks on Cai Be and Cai Lay failed to materialize, the MRF was tasked to reinforce the besieged city of My Tho. Minutes after receiving the urgent plea for assistance, the MRF withdrew elements of the 3/47th Infantry Battalion from the temporarily secured Vinh Long Airfield, and commenced the 25-mile transit to My Tho.

At 1515 the assault troops from elements of the 3/47th and the 3/60th were beached at the My Tho waterfront, and became heavily engaged with the fiercely resisting guerrillas. Meanwhile, the MRB relocated from the vicinity of Vinh Long, followed the assault boats down river and arrived at Dong Tam shortly after 1500.

The battle for My Tho raged continuously for the next 21 hours as ground elements conducted a northward advance through the western portion of the city and waterborne elements provided blocking support along the My Tho waterfront.

By the morning of 2 February the combined US/GVN military forces had sufficiently subdued the Viet Cong offensive so that the striking power of the MRF assault units could be better utilized in another area of the badly battered Mekong Delta. Prior to withdrawing from the once quiet provincial capital the MRF left 115 dead Viet Cong on the sanguineous battlefield.

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Friendly casualties consisted of 3 U. S. soldiers killed and 67 wounded.

Although positive identification of the enemy was not made by U. S. personnel, the commanding general of the ARVN SEVENTH Division stated that the Viet Cong 261st (A) Main Force, the 263rd Main Force and the 514th Local Force Battalions were all identified fighting in My Tho.

The Viet Cong assault on My Tho was marked by a wanton disregard for losses inflicted on innocent civilians and their property. Their scheme of battle included a campaign of atrocities directed against ARVN officers and Vietnamese government officials and their families. As of 2 February, there were 64 civilians reported killed, 638 wounded and 4,939 homes destroyed in My Tho.

Later that morning, in an attempt to interdict the withdrawal of the fleeing Viet Cong, the MRF redeployed its assault forces to the Cam Son Secret Zone in western Dinh Tuong Province. Waterborne landings were made along the Ba Rai Stream to the south of Cai Lay during the afternoon and evening of 2 February.

On 3 February waterborne assaults were made north of Cai Lay and the area was expanded in the hope of locating the elusive Viet Cong. Contact was very light and this situation continued until the next morning. MRF actions on 3-4 February resulted

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in 27 Viet Cong killed, while friendly forces had 7 personnel wounded, 4 of whom were Navymen.

Operations in Vinh Long Province

The next afternoon the MRF reacted with lightning speed, when it once again demonstrated its operational flexibility by shifting the area of operations and coming to the defense of the already badly battered city of Vinh Long. The decision to relocate to Vinh Long was based on first-hand intelligence from the sector advisor that two to three Viet Cong battalions were going to lay siege to the city that evening, and an on-the-scene observation of the grim situation by the MRF intelligence officer.

At approximately noon the MRB was underway for Vinh Long, arriving at 1630. During the afternoon riverine units of RADs 92 and 111 backloaded their troops and lifted them down the Ba Rai Stream to the Mekong River. The units received some enemy rocket and automatic-weapons fire during the transit, but there were no casualties.

The 3/60th Infantry Battalion was landed at the Fire Support Base (FSPB near the mouth of the Ba Rai Stream on the Mekong River) and air lifted into landing zones on the southwestern side of Vinh Long. Elements were again landed at Vinh Long Airfield to augment the security of that installation.

Meanwhile the riverine column transited the Co Chien River to

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Vinh Long and then turned into the Long Ho Stream, where RAD 91 with the 3/47th conducted beach landings southeast of Vinh Long in order to block enemy escape routes. While the infantry units assaulted the beaches three miles southeast of Vinh Long, the riverine craft established waterblocks and fire support stations in the area. Heavy contact with the enemy was rapidly established, and the battle raged throughout the night. The fighting continued on the 5th until mid-afternoon when the enemy, reportedly elements of the Viet Cong 306th and 308th Main Force Battalions, chose to break contact. The bone-weary soldiers and exhausted boat crews returned to the MRB for their first rest after eight continuous days of intense operations.

The next morning, a one-company reconnaissance-in-force operation, supported by RAD 111, was launched to the west-southwest of Vinh Long to ascertain the status of several RF/PF outposts along the Cai Cam Stream. Two landings by elements of the 3/60th were made without incident; then at 1100 two minesweepers, A-111-2 and A-111-3, conducting sweep operations ahead of the troop carriers, were struck above the water line with rockets and automatic-weapons fire. The ambush, which occurred two miles southwest of Vinh Long, caused minor boat damage and wounded one sailor.

Another infantry company was lifted into the area by RAD 111

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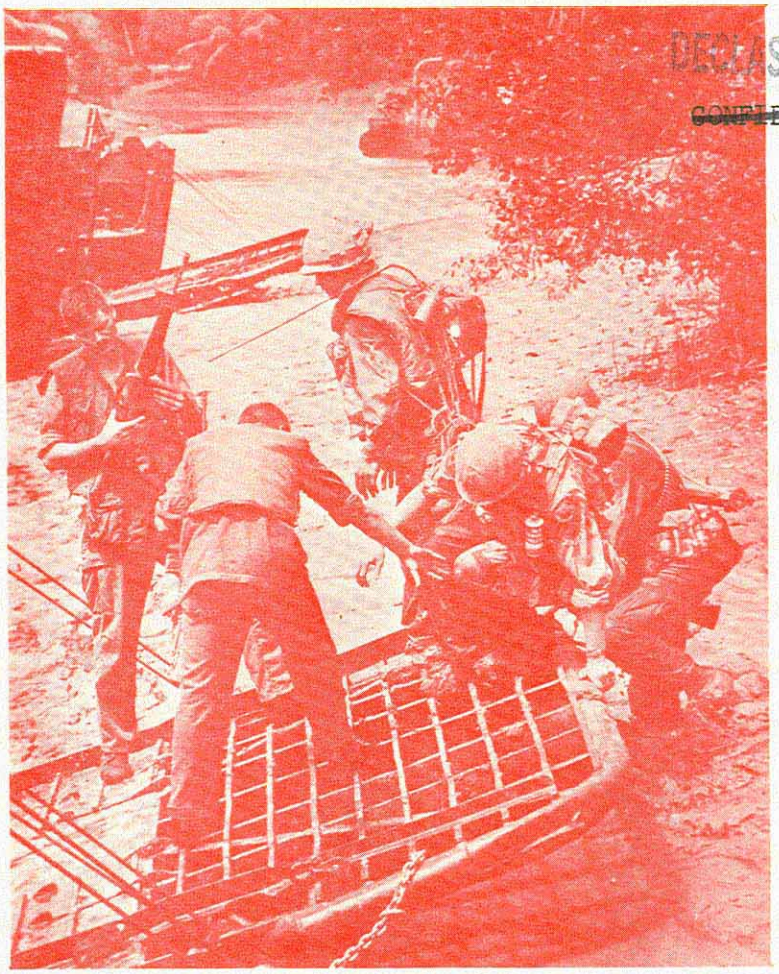

Mud-encrusted and bone-weary, Army ground troops are assisted aboard Navy riverine craft after eight days of continuous fighting.

and assaults were conducted on both sides of the waterway. From 1100 until 2100, heavy contact with a sizeable enemy force was maintained as more infantry elements of the 3/47th and 3/60th were landed by RADs 92 and 111. The engagement continued with diminishing intensity until the afternoon of 7 February when the area was deemed relatively secure and the MRF units were withdrawn at 1530.

The cumulative losses inflicted on the Viet Cong by elements of the MRF during the three-day operation were 138 killed, 121

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Viet Cong suspects detained, 43 weapons captured and 45 bunkers and 84 concussion grenades destroyed. Navy casualties consisted of 1 sailor killed, Radioman Third Class Samuel M. BOYCE, USN, and 14 wounded, while Army personnel suffered 4 killed and 62 wounded.

On 8 February USS BENEWAH (APB 35), RAD 112, and one battery of barge-mounted artillery escorted by elements of RAD 91, deployed to Dong Tam on 40-minutes notice. The remainder of the MRB followed at first light the next morning, arriving at the Dong Tam anchorage at 1000. This sudden move was precipitated by intelligence estimates which indicated that the Viet Cong were going to renew and intensify their attempts to capture My Tho.

The afternoon and evening of 9 February were spent preparing and formulating plans for still another emergency move to Nha Be in Gia Dinh Province. Early that afternoon instructions were issued by COMUSMACV that the MRF was to be positioned at Nha Be no later than 1200 on 10 February for a four-day operation in the southern approaches to Saigon. Large scale attacks on Saigon were anticipated, and the MRF mission was to prevent enemy reinforcements and resupply from the south.

A flurry of hurried reconnaissance flights and briefings followed, while the AMMI pontoons were stripped of their

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ammunition and infantry field equipment and moved to the Dong Tam basin; towing more than one AMMI across the South China Sea at this time of the year was not practicable. Plans were distributed at 2200 on 9 February, but at midnight, as the first units were loading onto the boats, the order to deploy to Nha Be was rescinded and deferred until further ordered.

Meanwhile, in a series of light skirmishes, the assault forces of the MRF continued to prosecute Operation CORONADO X in the area north of Dong Tam. During the early morning hours of 11 February, RAD 91, supporting Task Force SIX-GUN (Army artillery barges), moved into the Xang Canal and established security on the canal while FSPB HESSIAN was employed about five miles north of Dong Tam. At the same time, RADs 92 and 111 moved their battalions to Dong Tam for subsequent air mobile lifts into Cai Lay and Long Dinh districts of Dinh Tuong Province.

On 11 February, orders were again received from COMUSMACV directing the MRF to commence a riverine movement to the Nha Be area on 12 February. Once again, the MRB became a beehive of activity as units made final preparations for the transit of the South China Sea during the unfavorable northeast monsoon season. These preparations included chaining and disassembling pontoons, and also shoring and securing the 700 tons of ammunition on the MRB LST. However, once again the plans were held in abeyance

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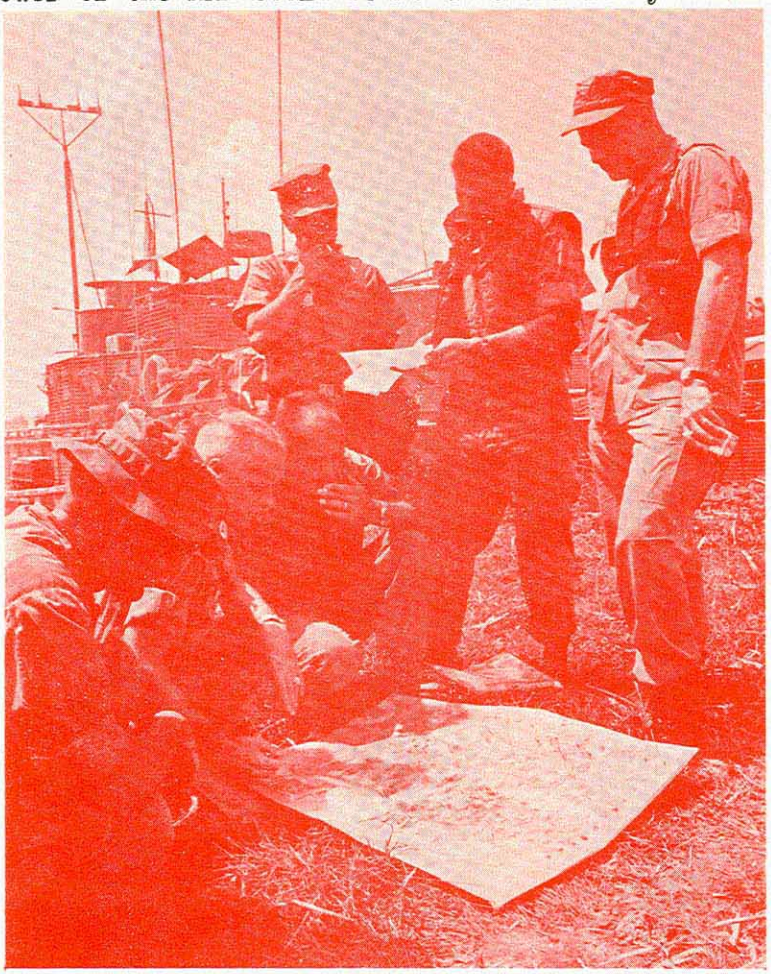
pending a final decision by COMUSMACV as to where the mobile striking power of the MRF could be most beneficially utilized.



Captain Robert S. SALZER, USN, Commander Task Force 117, (standing extreme right) and Colonel Bert DAVID, USA, Commanding Officer, 2nd Brigade of the NINTH Infantry Division, (kneeling second from left) along with operational staff officers of the joint Army/Navy Mobile Riverine Force, formulate battlefield strategy during a recent operation.

During the period 9-12 February, the combined Army/Navy team killed 69 Viet Cong and captured 85 individual weapons and 199 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds, while

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also destroying 98 bunkers. There were 3 U. S. soldiers killed and 43 wounded during the action; Navy losses amounted to 2 sailors wounded when the base at Dong Tam was mortared on 11 February.

Since the beginning of the Tet Offensive, the base at Dong Tam received a cumulative total of more than 1,000 rounds of mortar fire. One U. S. soldier was killed when an ammunition dump was hit, causing moderate damage to surrounding buildings; otherwise, damage was minimal.

Operations in Phong Dinh Province

On 12 February Operation CORONADO X terminated abruptly when the decision was made to launch strike operations against a lucrative target concentration in the Can Tho area. Shortly after noon on 12 February, the MRB, including the barge-mounted artillery, but less APL-26, proceeded up the Mekong River to an anchorage at the eastern entrance to the Vam Nao Crossover, 35 miles northwest of Sa Dec. The ships arrived there at approximately 2000.

Due to the ominous situation threatening the Binh Thuy and Can Tho airfields and Can Tho City itself, two companies of the 3/60th Infantry Battalion, embarked in APL-26 and river assault craft of RAD 111, were positioned near Vinh Long during the night of 12 February. The ground troops were to be air

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lifted from Vinh Long to Can Tho, if required.

On the morning of 13 February with a favorable high-tide, the MRB transited the shallow and treacherous Vam Nao Cross-over into the Bassac River, and then proceeded down river to Can Tho, arriving at 1310 that same day. APL-26 under tow, taking the same route as the other MRB units, rejoined the MRB at Can Tho on 14 February.

On 14 February, after a 110-mile transit from Dong Tam to Can Tho, the MRF commenced Operation CORONADO XI in the Cai Rang district Southwest of Can Tho.

Intelligence sources indicated that a major concentration of Viet Cong battalions were operating in the vicinity of Can Tho. Exclusive of local force elements, the enemy was estimated to have a field force of over 2,500 men amassed in the area. As of 14 February, Viet Cong forces were believed to include the following units:

A. 306th Main Force Battalion, previously heavily engaged at Vinh Long, but estimated to be capable of fielding two companies.

B. 309th Main Force Battalion with an estimated strength of 500 men.

C. 303rd Main Force Battalion with an estimated strength of 450 men.

D. TAY DO I Battalion, regarded as an elite group with an

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estimated strength of 500 men.

E. TAY DO II Battalion (307th Main Force Battalion), believed composed of a cadre of TAY DO veterans and filled out with raw recruits specially for this campaign. Their strength was estimated at 240 men.

F. U MINH 10th Provincial Main Force Battalion with an estimated strength of 400 men.

G. TN 3173 Battalion (Headquarters Security) with an estimated strength of 200 men.

H. Military Region III Headquarters with an estimated strength of 200 men.

Realizing that the MRF was going into an unfamiliar area, the Intelligence Division commenced an intensive effort to compile all available data on the terrain, waterways, bridges, and enemy threat within a 12-mile radius of Can Tho. A meeting at Binh Thuy on 14 February of both Army and Navy intelligence officers located at the various U. S. and ARVN commands in the area, plus helicopter aerial-reconnaissance, provided the additional and up-to-date intelligence required to complete the detailed operational planning.

RADs 92 and 111 landed the 3/47th and the 3/60th Infantry Battalions in several unopposed landings around Can Tho City. Initial contact with the enemy was very light, however, later

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that day, the ground troops discovered one of the most lucrative weapons and ammunition caches ever found by the MRF. The cache contained 460 B-40 rounds, 166 B-40 charges, 249 fragmentation grenades, 112 mines, 5 modern weapons, 200 pounds of explosives, a large amount of AK-47 ammunition in cans, and 166 mortar and recoilless-rifle rounds of which 89 were 120-mm mortar rounds.

At 1600, the 3/47th established solid contact with an estimated two-three enemy companies six miles west-southwest of Can Tho, resulting in heavy fighting throughout the remainder of the day. After a series of intermittent fire fights which continued until shortly before midnight, the enemy withdrew during the early morning hours of 15 February.

The riverine craft with their embarked infantry units then withdrew from the initial area and assaulted new beaches several times during the next two days as the area of operations was enlarged two-fold. Contact remained sporadic and on the afternoon of 17 February, the MRF troops were withdrawn and returned to the MRB. Fifty-two enemy combatants were killed and 273 bunkers and 8 sampans were destroyed during the four-day operation. U. S. losses amounted to 8 soldiers killed and 38 Armymen wounded.

Based on a request from the Senior Advisor, IV Corps, two

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one-battalion sweep operations were conducted, one in the area surrounding the Can Tho Airfield and the other around the Binh Thuy Airfield. These two airfields, both to the northwest of Can Tho, were considered prime targets of the Viet Cong and both were rather loosely defended by ARVN units stationed at various locations in the general area. In addition to their obvious military significance, the Can Tho Airfield perimeter contained a Viet Cong prisoner-of-war compound with about 2,000 inmates. Tree lines leading to both fields offered excellent avenues of approach for attack.

On 18 February RAD 91 moved to a location just outside of Can Tho and supported Task Force SIX-GUN which established Fire Support Base HOTCHKISS in order to provide artillery coverage for both of the planned operations. RAD 92 and 111 then lifted the 3/47th and 3/60th Infantry Battalions down the waterways around the two airfields, but negative contact was gained with the nomadic enemy.

The next evening at 1700, RAD 111 lifted the 3/60th into a pickup zone near the MRB for further air mobile lift into landing zones about eight miles west of Can Tho; the infantrymen were needed to reinforce the ARVN 1/33-3/33 Infantry Battalions who were in heavy contact. The 3/47th was also air lifted into the same area later in the evening to assist

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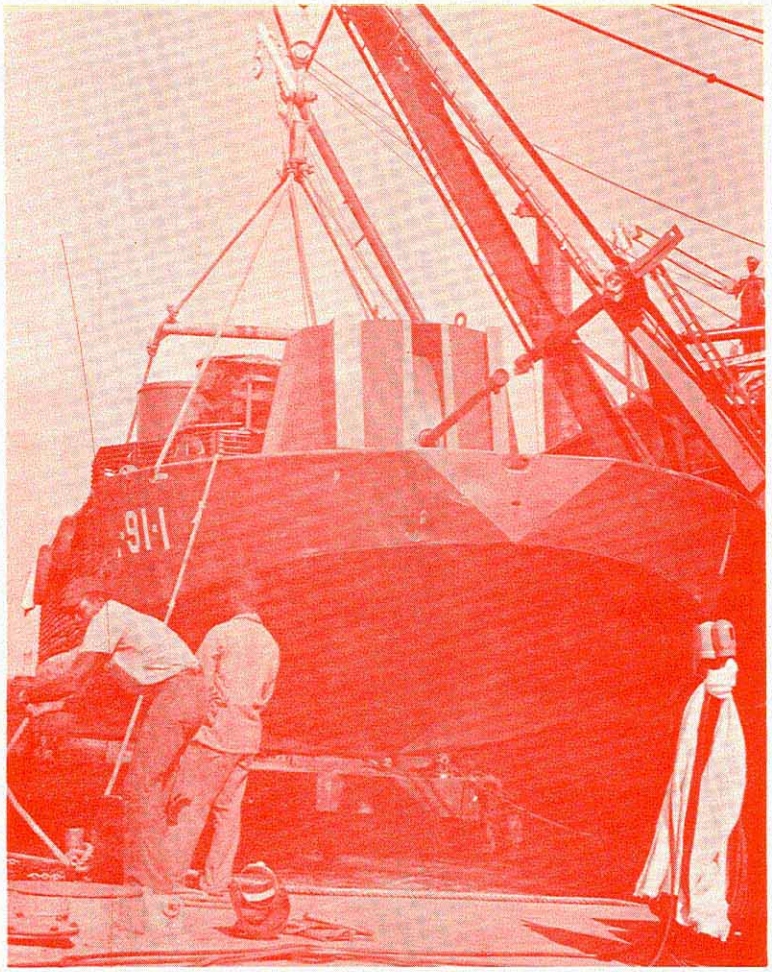

Monitor 91-1, which was struck in mid-February by two B-40 rockets while patrolling the Can Tho River nine miles west of Can Tho, is shown in an earlier picture being lifted aboard the repair ship USS ASKARI (ARL-30) for routine repairs.

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the 3/60th. Meanwhile, RADs 91 and 112 conducted patrols on the Can Tho River in conjunction with the Vietnamese Navy RAG units to interdict sampan traffic and provide waterblocks to prevent enemy exfiltration from the area of operations.

At 2217 that same evening, monitor 91-1, an assault boat of TU 117.1.1 patrolling on the Can Tho River nine miles west of Can Tho, was struck by two B-40 rockets. The projectiles penetrated her 40-mm turret and wounded seven crewmen, four of whom required medical evacuation. One Vietnamese interpreter was also wounded in the fire fight. In spite of the battle damage and the wounded personnel aboard, the rugged craft fought back and suppressed the automatic-weapons and small-arms fire coming from three different gun emplacements.

At 0140 on 20 February, another monitor, M-92-2, on patrol in the Can Tho River eight miles west-southwest of Can Tho, was hit by a recoilless-rifle round, but there were no casualties and damage was minor. Ground action in the area continued until the early afternoon, resulting in 31 Viet Cong killed. Five Army personnel were killed, while 6 Navymen and 26 soldiers were wounded.

Operations in the Can Tho area intensified on 22 February, when the MRF, in conjunction with the ARVN 21st Division, launched a very productive riverine operation against the

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Military Region III Headquarters located deep in enemy-infested territory in Phung Hiep District of Phong Dinh Province. The river assault craft penetrated 14 miles inland from the Bassac River through the city of Phung Hiep to beaches along the network of narrow, man-made canals which interlaced the area. Many of these canals were heavily clogged with dense plant growth.

Another of the obstacles to entry into the area was the low bridge at Phung Hiep town, where the vital Highway 4 crossed the Cai Con Canal. Arrangements were made for the IV Corps Engineers to move by road to Phung Hiep Town and raise the bridge by 0830 on 22 February. The riverine movement was timed to coincide with the raising of the bridge.

On the morning of the operation, RAD 111 with the 3/60th Infantry Battalion entered the Cai Con Canal at 0630 and passed under the raised bridge just after 0830. RAD 92, with the 3/47th embarked, followed close behind, and after receiving sniper fire from the north bank of the Lai Hieu Canal 19 miles south-southwest of Can Tho, landed their troops short of the planned objective area. There were four sailors slightly wounded by the sniper fire.

A sizeable enemy force was spotted by supporting light helicopter fire teams, and a lucrative target rapidly developed. The operation, conducted against the target of opportunity, achieved a maximum tactical advantage against a surprised enemy, killing

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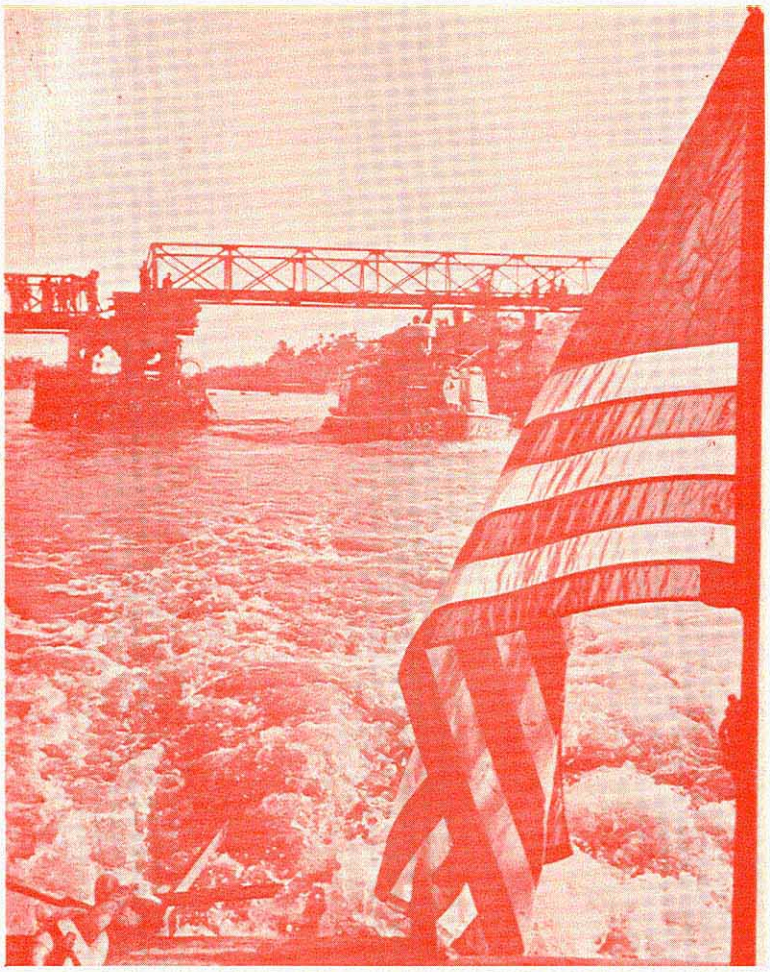

Riverine units proceed under the newly-raised bridge over Cai Con Canal in Phong Dinh Province.

60 Viet Cong in the first hour of battle. While the prime objective, the Viet Cong Military Region III Headquarters, successfully evaded the trap, the MRF units considered that the high-kill ratio made the operation a success. The cumulative casualties for the two-day operation were 66 Viet Cong killed, while friendly forces suffered no fatalities but had 4 sailors and 2 soldiers wounded.

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Since enemy contact was not reestablished on the morning of 23 February, and tidal conditions precluded a late afternoon transit under the Phung Hiep bridge, the infantry troops were backloaded and returned to the MRB by 1630.

On 24 February the MRF, in cooperation with Task Force 116, conducted a one-day waterborne cordon and infantry search and clear operation on May Island in Tra On District of Vinh Binh Province. The island, about five miles southeast of Can Tho, was a known Viet Cong crossing corridor from Cai Rang District into Tra On District and the Mang Thit/Nicholai Canal. It had also been the scene of repeated ambushes against PBR patrols on the Bassac River.

The new concept of operations included a complete naval blockade of the island utilizing 44 assault craft from TF 117 and 10 GAME WARDEN PBRs from TF 116. The river assault craft were stationed around the island at 500-yard intervals with the 10 PBRs interspersed along the blockade. After broadcasting instructions to the local inhabitants to have them all report to the detention center for processing, an infantry sweep of the island was conducted, but yielded negligible results. No Viet Cong were killed or wounded, although four prisoners-of-war were captured, two of whom were political cadre. Forty-three bunkers were also destroyed. Even though the operation did

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not inflict any serious battle damage on the Viet Cong, it was anticipated that this operation served as an incentive for ARVN forces to conduct similar future operations in the area.

At 1900 that evening a PACV, chopped to CTF 116 for GAME WARDEN operations and patrolling on the O Man Stream 10 miles west of Binh Thuy, was struck by a B-40 rocket round and small-arms fire. The vehicle was beached to keep it from sinking while PBRs, riverine assault craft and elements of the 3/47th Infantry Battalion established a defensive perimeter around the downed vehicle. The area where the action occurred was reportedly an operational base area for the Tay Do I and II battalions. The next afternoon an Army CH 54A "Flying Crane" lifted the disabled PACV to Binh Thuy and the defensive force was dissolved.

On 26-27 February the MRF conducted riverine strike operations in the Cai Rang District in an area centered about two miles west of Can Tho. The TF 117 boats lifted the infantrymen to the beaches from where they were further air lifted to the landing zones. The first wave landed unopposed, but the succeeding waves were assaulted with heavy automatic-weapons fire which downed one helicopter and damaged eight others. The foot soldiers of the 3/60th Infantry Battalion took many casualties, including 10 killed instantly. Fierce bunker-fighting continued throughout the long day and night as the 3/60th pressed the attack with

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supporting artillery and air strikes.

Under the cover of darkness the enemy made a concerted effort against the assault craft which were maintaining water-blocks on the Can Tho River to prevent Viet Cong exfiltration. The determined and well-armed enemy struck the first riverine craft at 2029 on 26 February, when a large caliber round struck the bow ramp of ATC-111-6, patrolling nine miles west of Can Tho on the Can Tho River. ASPB-111-6 moved in to assist the troop carrier and was also taken under fire from the same location. Both units returned the fire and temporarily silenced it. A few minutes later, at 2040, ATC-91-9 observed a recoilless-rifle round whistle over the boat, and returned the fire, saturating the ambush position with its guns. There were no friendly casualties during any of these actions and only minimal boat damage.

At 0215 the next morning, ASPB-112-4 came under intense enemy fire from both banks of the Can Tho River six miles southwest of Can Tho. The boat sustained several B-40 rocket hits which wounded two sailors and caused major flooding. Assault units in the immediate area sped to the aid of the sinking boat. Monitor 112-1 took the damaged ASPB in tow and started for the fire support base, however the rapidly flooding boat sank and had to be cast off.

For the next hour and thirty minutes, the Can Tho River

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became a virtual battleground as the heavy weaponry from the Viet Cong rockets/recoilless-rifles and the U. S. Navy riverine units filled the air. At 0220 ASPB-111-4, patrolling seven miles southwest of Can Tho, was hit by a barrage of assorted weapons. One projectile, believed to be a recoilless-rifle round, pierced the aluminum superstructure and shattered against the heavy armor plate around the coxswain's flat, detonating the round. The explosion killed the two men inside, Boatswain's Mate First Class Jeider J. WARREN, USN, and Boatswain's Mate Third Class James L. LIEN, USN, and wounded three other crew-members. Running out of control, the disabled ASPB beached itself, and was later towed back to the fire support base.

As other units moved in to assist the two stricken ASPBs, they also came under heavy fire from a well-entrenched enemy. A monitor and three ATC's from RAD 111 were subsequently hit by automatic weapons and rocket/recoilless-rifle fire during the night, as was ASPB-112-7; however no further casualties occurred.

It became evident that the fleeing insurgents were attempting to break through the water blockade in order to exfiltrate from the pincer movements of the ground forces in the area of operations. Enemy casualties were undetermined; however, both banks of the river were heavily raked with 40-mm, 20-mm, .50 caliber and M-60 automatic weapons, and 40-mm rifle grenades.

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Viet Cong casualties were inevitable. Of prime importance was the fact that the waterborne block was not breached and the enemy was denied egress from the area.

MRF action against the enemy during the two-day operation yielded the following cumulative results: 68 Viet Cong killed and 1 captured. The MRF also uncovered a large cache containing 27 weapons, 280 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds, 20 mines, 125 grenades and over 14,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition. Friendly forces had 2 sailors and 19 soldiers killed while 10 Navymen and 77 Army personnel suffered wounds.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE UNITS

On 6 February, CDR R. H. SULLIVAN, USN, relieved LCDR F. E. RHODES, USN, as Commander River Assault Squadron ELEVEN.

On 7 February the last four of the originally programmed thirty-two ASPB's arrived in-country at Vung Tau by sealift.

The three PACVs of Coastal Division 17 were chopped to CTF 116 for operational control on 20 February. This arrangement was formulated to offer the PACVs the opportunity to conduct GAME WARDEN patrols on the main rivers. Unfortunately, the PACV was still fraught with mechanical problems as PACV #2, in transit from Dong Tam to Binh Thuy, sprung a bad oil leak and had to be towed to Binh Thuy.

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Lieutenant Commander F. R. BANBURY, USN, was relieved by Lieutenant Commander D. M. ALDERSON, USN, as Commanding Officer, USS COLLETON (APB 36) on 22 February 1968.

Lieutenant Commander M. A. STOWELL, USN, relieved Lieutenant Commander G. SAUCIER, USN, as Commanding Officer, USS BENEWAH (APB 35) on 27 February 1968.

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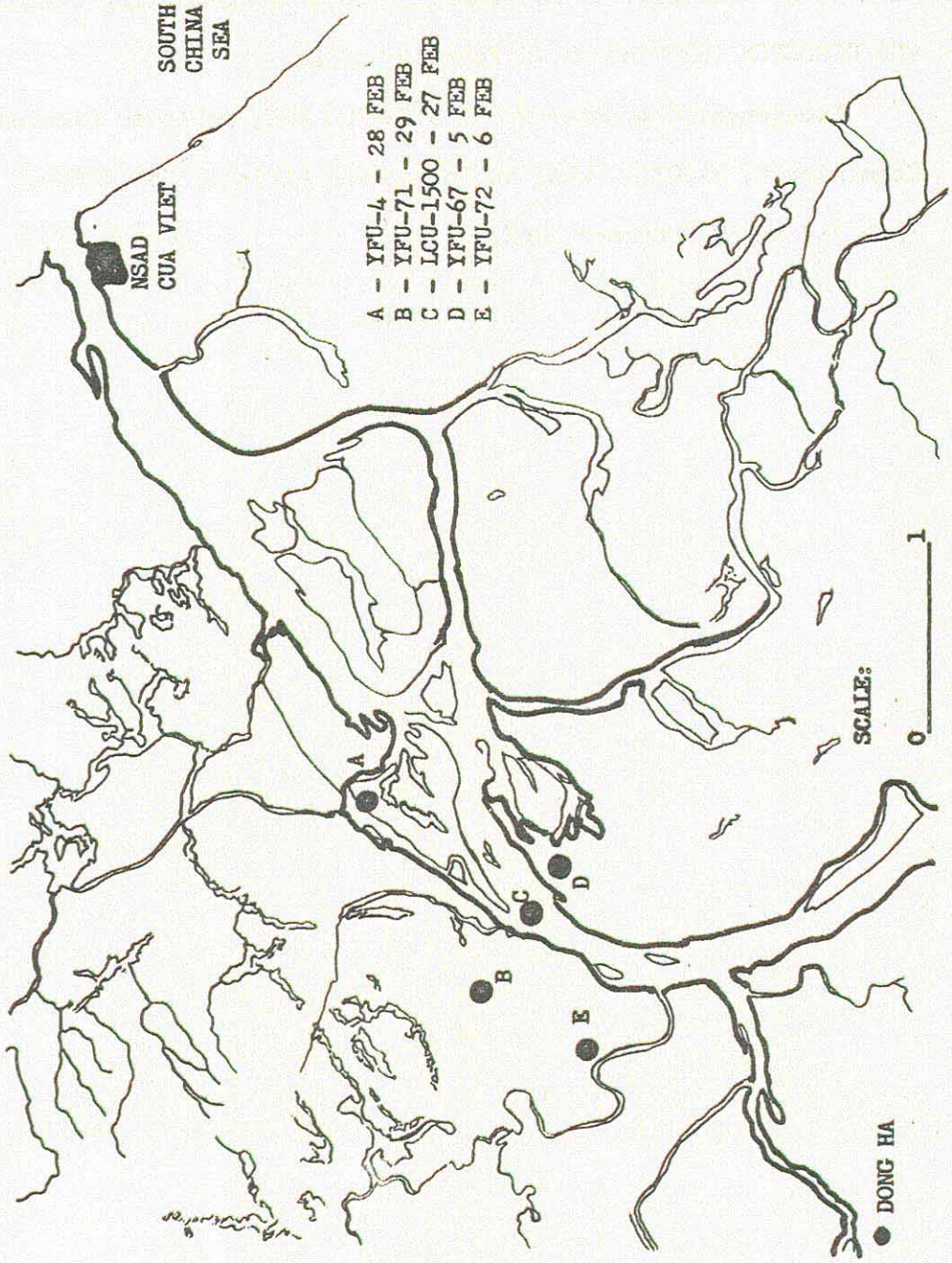
OPERATIONS IN THE CUA VIET RIVER



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TASK FORCE CLEARWATER

During the Tet Offensive the enemy initiated a large scale assault against the vitally important logistic craft which traverse the Perfume and Cua Viet rivers in the northern I CTZ. The intensity of these continuing attacks was so great that on 20 February 1968 Deputy Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Forward), requested that a naval task force be organized to coordinate the overall activities concerning the movement and protection of the utility craft which ply the

YFU-72 - filled with high explosive ammunition - makes trip up the Perfume River to Hue. Crewmembers take positions around the cargo with weapons.

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rivers daily with strategically important supplies and ammunition.

In rapid response to the above request, COMNAVFORV organized Task Force CLEARWATER (TFCW). Task Force CLEARWATER, with headquarters at Tan My, became operational on 24 February and was placed under the direct operational control of Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force. Commander, Task Force CLEARWATER had river patrol boats (PBRs), helicopter gunships, attack aircraft, artillery and ground security troops at his disposal for protecting the utility craft convoys.

Initially, Task Force CLEARWATER concentrated on organization and protection of the shipping on the Perfume River between Tan My and Hue. However, on 29 February Dong Ha Supply River Security Group was established to perform the same function on the Cua Viet River between Cua Viet and Dong Ha.

Even after the establishment of Task Force CLEARWATER, the enemy continued to harass and ambush the utility craft as they moved their supplies along the rivers. At month's end the enemy threat was still very strong but it was apparent that many of his planned attacks were thwarted by the convoy and protective procedures initiated by CTFCW.

The following tabulation is a chronology of the events which occurred during February on the Perfume and Cua Viet rivers and precipitated the establishment of Task Force CLEARWATER.

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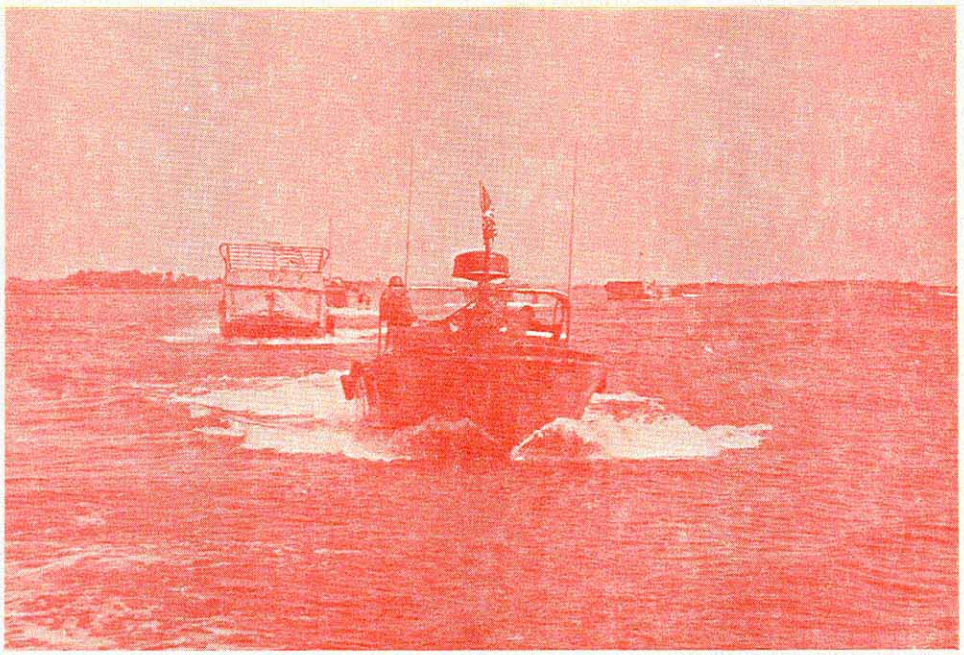

A PBR escorts a logistics convoy on the Cua Viet River. The boat is one of several units that compose Task Force CLEARWATER.

PERFUME RIVER

DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
2 FEB	LCM-8 #871 bladder boat	Underwater explosion	0
6 FEB	LCM-8	Small-arms/mortar fire damage to side plating.	0
	YFU-69 LCU-1615	Small-arms and mortar, recoilless-rifle and automatic-weapons fire. YFU-69 received recoilless-rifle fire or rocket rounds penetration of forward port compartment.	0

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
7 FEB	LCM-8 #920 and 926 and sweep boats escorted by PBRs	Received small-arms fire enroute Hue; small-arms and mortar fire on return.	0
8 FEB	LCU-1615 and sweep boats escorted by PBRs	Heavy small-arms fire received, one PBR damaged.	1 WIA
8 FEB	LCU-1556 joined above convoy	Came under fire.	0
11 FEB	YFU-68, YFU-52 LCU-1498 and LCM-8 #850 diesel bladder boat with junk boats and PBR escort	PBR received near miss from two B-40 rockets.	0
11 FEB	LCM-8 and LCU-1614, PBRs and sweep boats	PBR holed by shrapnel from one B-40 rocket.	0
12 FEB	LCM-8 with escorts VNN LCM-6	Received some fire, LCM-8 hit by B-40 rocket.	0
13 FEB	LCU-1498	Received one sniper round which penetrated a POL drum starting a small fire. Extinguished immediately.	0
14 FEB	LCM-8	Damaged by recoilless-rifle fire. Round penetrated port side of ramp-room and another portion of round penetrated starboard side. Explosion hit hydraulic and air lines rendering steering gear and ramp mechanism inoperative.	0

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
14 FEB	LCM-8	Second LCM-8 holed by similar round in same vicinity. 6x6 inch hole in void No. 6, six inches above waterline. Boat operable.	0
15 FEB	YFU-68	Received RPG round. Minor damage.	0
15 FEB	LCM-6 #13	Received RPG round through starboard side midships about three feet above waterline which exited on port side.	0
15 FEB	LCM-6 #13	Received another RPG round through starboard side with same result.	0
16 FEB	LCU-1499 LCU-1569	While at Hue ramp, mortar round impacted on the ramp in vicinity of boats.	4 USN WIA 4 USA WIA
16 FEB	LCM-8 #920	Received RPG-7 round through starboard side midships about four foot above waterline. Round was apparently a dud and did not penetrate well deck.	0
17 FEB	LCM-8 #850 bladder boat	Hit by RPG round setting diesel cargo on fire.	1 USN KIA 1 USMC WIA
17 FEB	LCU-1615	Beached on Hue ramp, hit by mortar round.	3 WIA
17 FEB	LCU-1580	Anchored in stream, hit by mortar round.	1 WIA
17 FEB	LCU-1499	Received shrapnel from unknown round.	0
17 FEB	Vicinity of command hut, Hue ramp	Mortar round impacted.	3 WIA

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
17 FEB	Hue ramp	Shrapnel from unknown round.	1 WIA
18 FEB	Craft at Hue ramp under mortar fire	Received small-arms and RPG fire.	0
18 FEB	LCM-8 #925	Received hits on river. Ramp damaged and bladder full of shrapnel holes.	1 WIA
18 FEB	LCU-1482 LCU-1624	Craft mortared at Hue ramp.	1 KIA 2 WIA
18 FEB	YFU-70	Mortared at Tan My	1 KIA 5 WIA
18 FEB	YFU-69	Hit by RPG round.	0
18 FEB	LCU-1535 YFU-56	Superficial damage.	0
19 FEB	LCU-1482	Sunk at Hue ramp.	0
19 FEB	LCU-1624	Temporarily out of commission, required tow.	0
21 FEB	LCM-8 #923 bladder boat	Hit by unknown enemy fire, boat engulfed in flames, beached by coxswain.	0
22 FEB	YFU-7	Received one RR round.	0
22 FEB	LCU-1494 loaded with refugees	Received RR hit.	0 USN casualties: 1 USMC WIA 8 refugees KIA Unknown number refugees WIA

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
23 FEB	LCU-1535 LCU-1494 LCM-8	Convoy attacked from both banks of river. LCU-1535 hit by RPG. LCU-1494 hit below waterline starboard bow. LCM-8 hit, one engine out of commission.	1 USA KIA 5 ARVN WIA
24 FEB	LCU-1571 LCU-1614 LCM-8	Convoy attacked from both banks of river. LCU-1571 hit by RPG's starboard side and port quarter. LCU-1614 hit by RPG starboard side. LCM-8 near miss.	1 USA KIA 2 USN WIA
24 FEB	LCU-1571 and sweep boat	Return convoy attacked from both banks of river. LCU-1571 hit by RPG starboard side. Sweep boat hit by RPG.	0
26 FEB	LCU-1574	Hit by RPG fired from east bank.	2 WIA
27 FEB	YFU-12	YFU-12 destroyed, hit by three B-40 rockets.	1 MIA 4 WIA
28 FEB	LCM-6 #12	Hit by RPG on port side.	1 WIA

CUA VIET RIVER

DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
2 FEB	LCM-8	Damaged by small-arms fire.	0
4 FEB	Cua Viet ramp	Eight rounds mixed artillery and rockets received	0

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
5 FEB	YFU-67	Attacked by mortars and recoilless-rifle fire.	5 WIA
5 FEB	Cua Viet ramp	Eight rounds artillery received	0
6 FEB	YFU-72	Attacked by mortars and recoilless-rifle fire.	4 WIA
7 FEB	Cua Viet ramp	Six rounds of rocket fire received	0
10 FEB	YFU-7	Recoilless-rifle and small-arms fire received	0
19 FEB	Cua Viet ramp two LCM-8 USNS LST 117	Heavy rocket attack. Four MOGAS bladders destroyed, one bladder blistered, two bladders punctured, one LCM-8's starboard side and starboard engine badly damaged, LST 117 received minor hull damage.	1 WIA
20 FEB	Dong Ha ramp YFU-58 YFU-72	Six rounds artillery. YFU-58 hull damage above and below waterline, YFU-72 minor damage.	4 WIA
21 FEB	LCM-8	Hit by RPG round on port side.	0
21 FEB	Cua Viet ramp	Heavy mortar attack	1 USA WIA
21 FEB	Dong Ha ramp	Six rounds artillery received	1 USMC WIA
22 FEB	Convoy attacked	Received RPG and small-arms fire, no damage.	0
22 FEB	Convoy attacked	10 rounds artillery, minor damage.	5 ARVN WIA

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
22 FEB	Convoy attacked	RPG and small-arms, no damage.	0
22 FEB	Cua Viet	70 rocket/artillery rounds, no damage.	0
23 FEB	Cua Viet	10 rounds artillery, minor damage.	0
23 FEB	Convoy attacked	RPG and small-arms fire, no damage.	0
23 FEB	LCM-8	Hit by RPG on starboard quarter causing fire in engine.	0
24 FEB	Cua Viet	7 separate artillery attacks, approximately 5 rounds each, minor damage.	1 EOD KIA
24 FEB	Convoy attacked	RPG, mortars and small-arms fire, YFU-62 minor damage.	3 WIA
24 FEB	Convoy attacked	RPG, mortar and small-arms fire, no damage.	0
24 FEB	Dong Ha ramp	10 rounds artillery, minor damage.	0
25 FEB	Two convoys attacked	Mortar and small-arms fire, no damage.	0
25 FEB	Dong Ha bridge ramp LCU-1556 YFU-56 YFU-70 LCU-1475	12 rounds of artillery, LCU-1556 extensive damage to stern, YFU-56 severed rudder cable, YFU-70 minor hull damage, LCU-1475 minor hull damage and minor engine damage.	0
26 FEB	Dong Ha bridge ramp	11 rounds of artillery received, no damage.	0
26 FEB	Cua Viet	7 rounds of artillery received, no damage.	0

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DATE	CRAFT	INCIDENT	PERSONNEL CASUALTIES
26 FEB	Convoy attacked	Small-arms, recoilless-rifle and mortar fire received.	0
26 FEB	LCM-8	Received 18-inch hole port side above water-line from RPG rocket.	1 USMC WIA
27 FEB	LCU-1582	Hit by RPG rocket port side in engine room.	0
27 FEB	LCU-1500	Hit by RPG rocket.	1 KIA 4 WIA
28 FEB	YFU-4	Hit by RPG on starboard side.	1 KIA 2 WIA
28 FEB	Convoy attacked	RPG and mortar fire. No damage.	0
29 FEB	YFU-71	Hit by RPG and rifle fire.	1 USMC KIA 3 USN WIA
29 FEB	Dong Ha ramp	7 rounds artillery, minor damage received.	0

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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, DANANG

The Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Danang, and its various outlying detachments were continually harassed by Viet Cong offensive tactics during the month of February. The Dong Ha/Cua Viet area received 26 separate rocket/artillery attacks during the month. In addition, NAVSUPPACT Danang logistic support craft continuously received small-arms, recoilless-rifle,and mortar fire while transiting between Cua Viet and Dong Ha. A total of 27 craft were hit during the month with varying degrees of damage as a result. Seven persons were killed and 42 were wounded as a result of the enemy attacks on the craft. At month's end, the enemy artillery threat to the LSTs at the Cua Viet ramp continued to be the most serious threat to cargo operations in this area.

Meanwhile, logistic support craft were also being ambushed and attacked while transiting between Tan My and Hue. Even though the craft were transiting the river in convoys, escorted by PBRs and helicopter gunships, 44 craft were hit with varying degrees of damage resulting from the attacks. Five persons were killed and 37 were wounded as a result of the enemy attacks on these craft. As a result of the Communist offensive during February, the monthly throughput at Hue was only 5,633 short tons-24 percent of January's total.

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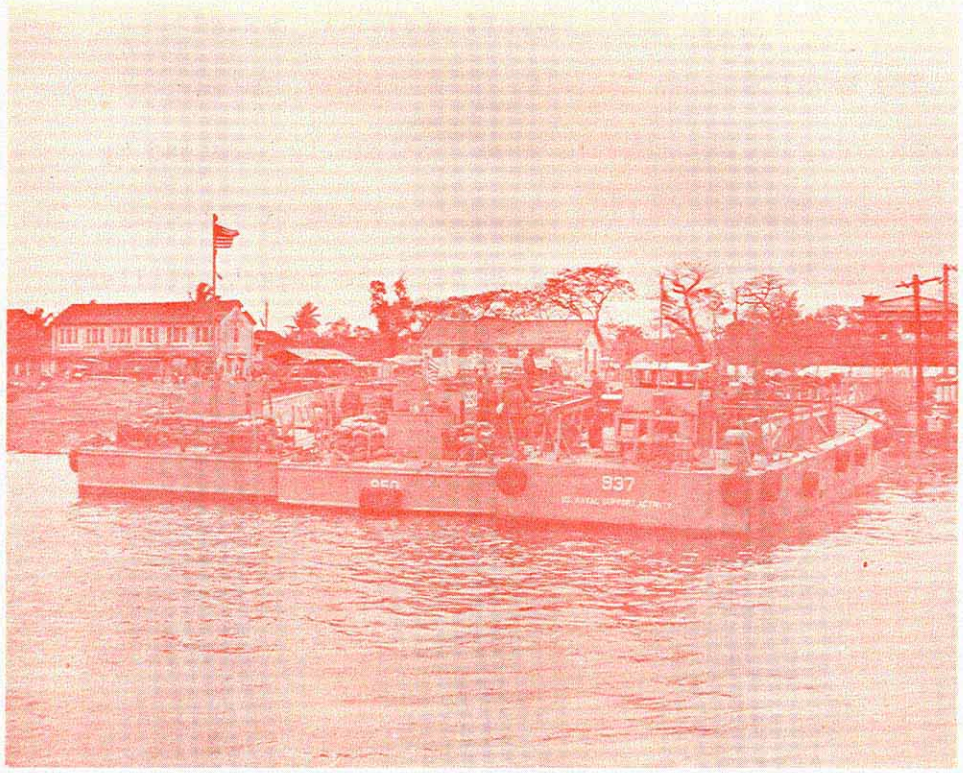

U. S. Navy landing craft wait to be unloaded at the LCU ramp in the city of Hue. During a massive enemy attack in early February, the Viet Cong flag flew from the building at left as enemy troops pinned down the ramp crew with sniper fire.

A total of 23 of the YFU/LCUs damaged by the enemy attacks were repaired by NAVSUPPACT Danang's Small Craft Repair Facility. At month's end, two LCU/YFUs were under repair for battle damage and an additional two craft, requiring extensive repairs, were being readied for shipment to the Ship Repair Facility, Subic Bay, Philippines, for early overhaul.

Other enemy attacks throughout the I CTZ resulted in damage to many facilities where NAVSUPPACT Danang had the repair responsi-

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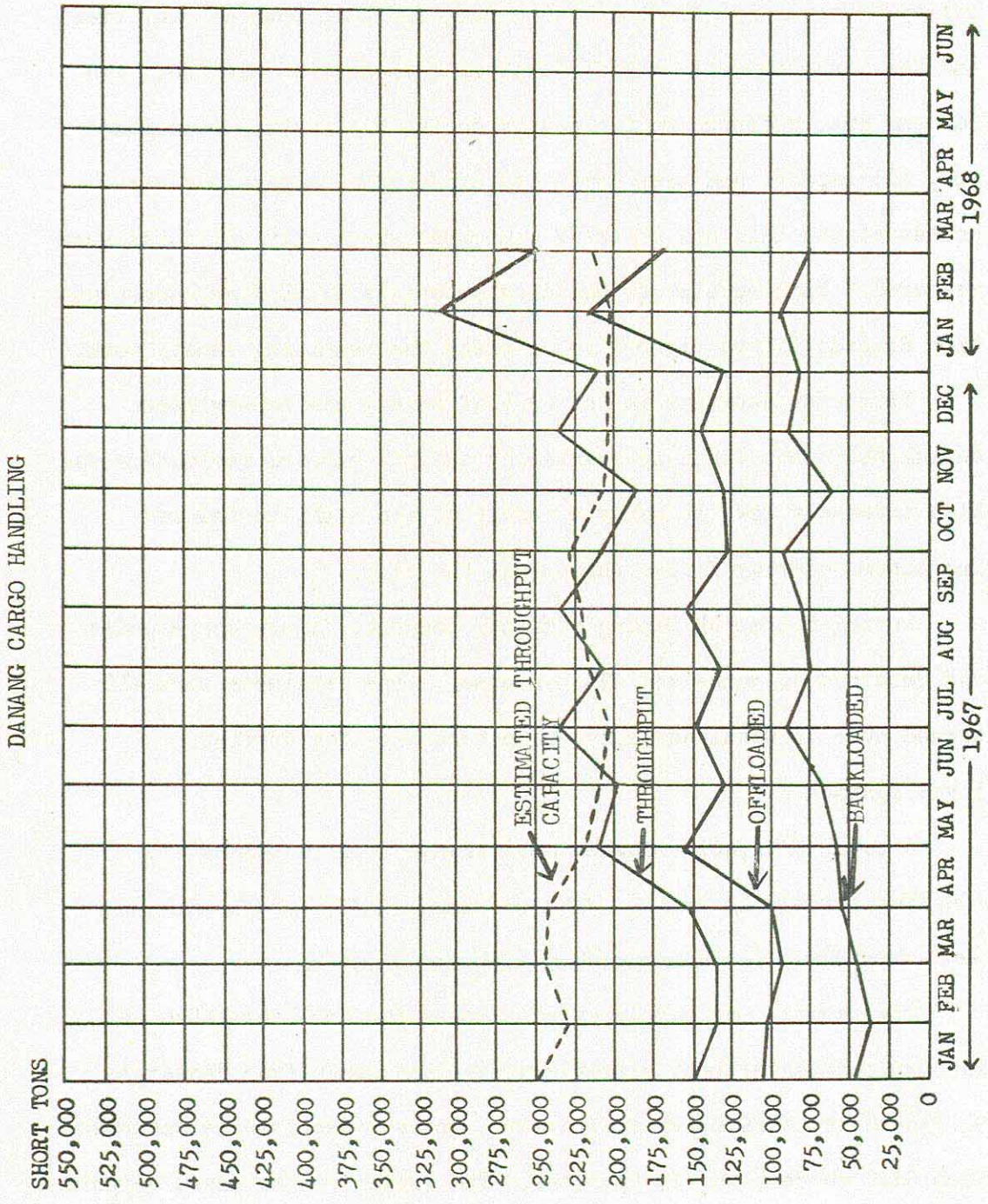

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bility. Facilities at Danang, Phu Bai, Chu Lai, Dong Ha, Cua Viet and Khe Sanh, as well as MACV advisory compounds at Hieu Duc, Phu Bai and Hue, suffered battle damage during the month. At month's end, all repairs had been completed except for hangars and warehouses at Chu Lai, and the MACV compounds where only utilities were restored. Upon receipt of building materials THIRD Naval Construction Brigade forces planned to complete the remaining repair work.

Terrorist activity in the city of Danang was non-existent during the month and sniper activity against exposed perimeters was also extremely low; probably a result of the tight curfew and increased security forces throughout the city.

During the month Danang's harbor security forces apprehended and detained 94 junks and 275 personnel. The detainees were all turned over to Naval Advisory Group personnel for further investigation.

A total of 1,461 refugees were transported to Danang via LCU/YFUs during the month. Of this total, 1,321 of the refugees were from Hue and the remainder were from Dong Ha.

The overall net supply effectiveness for the Danang-Chu Lai support complex dropped slightly during the month from January's 91.7 percent to 89.0 percent; overall gross effectiveness decreased from 88.0 percent to 87.1 percent. The impact of increased support requirements for newly arrived U.S. Army units accounted for the decrease.

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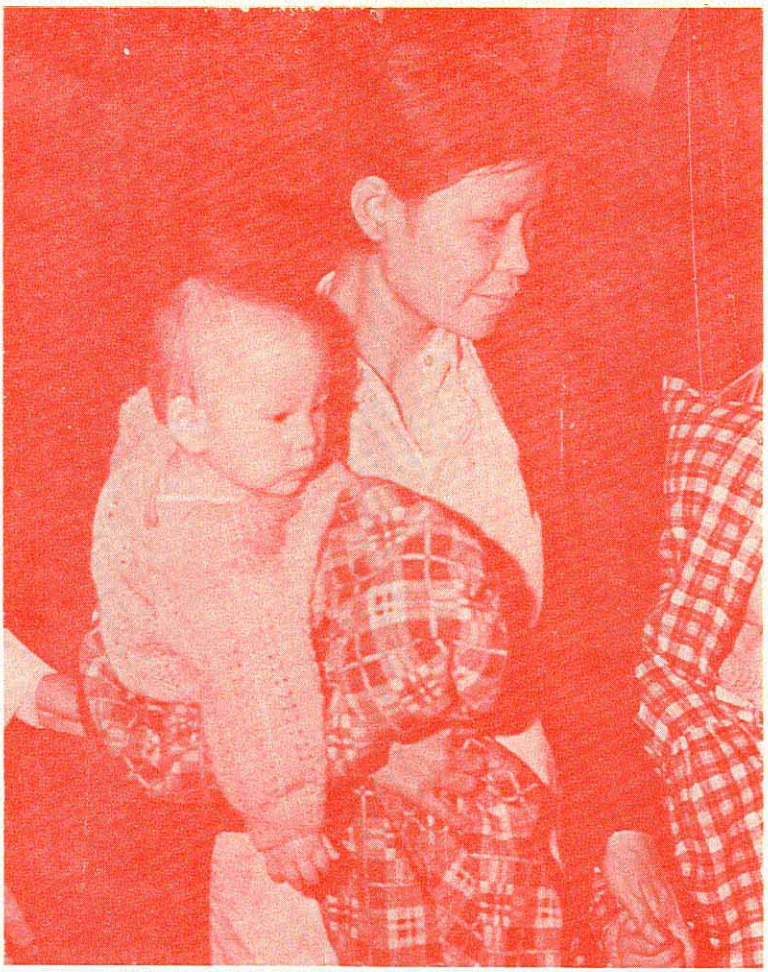

This mother and her child were among several hundred refugees brought to Danang from Hue by U. S. landing craft. The mother reflects an expression of relief as she waits at the Navy landing in Danang.

Weather and sea conditions during the month permitted normal fuel transfer operations at all sites. A six-inch bottomlay system was installed at Cua Viet and at month's end, work on the beach portion of the line was still in progress. The Chu Lai pipeline from Rosemary Point to the tank farm was completed on

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21 February. The completion of this project permits AOG resupply of Chu Lai regardless of weather and sea conditions.

Army augmentation of terminal operations at Danang commenced during February with the contribution of 10 hatch teams with associated equipment, working at the deep water piers. Additionally, five new LCU ramps at Dong Ha were manned and equipped by the Army from the start of operations on 16 February. Additional truck companies to assist in port clearance and additional personnel to man the Dong Ha Depot have been requested from the Army.

The NAVSUPPACT Danang Station Hospital experienced an unprecedented number of admissions during February when 2,175 patients were admitted. This number of admissions is an increase of 818 over the previous high which was recorded during January 1968. Of the total number received at the 567-bed hospital, 1,278 were admitted for combat injuries, 678 for various diseases, and 219 for non-combat injuries. A total of 464 persons were treated and returned to duty during the month and 937 were evacuated out of Vietnam. In addition to the patients admitted to the NAVSUPPACT hospital, 891 patients were relocated to other medical facilities.

At month's end, the NAVSUPPACT Danang personnel level was 9,098 and the number of United States and other free-world forces supported by NAVSUPPACT was 160,294.

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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

Throughout the first half of February, Viet Cong harassment in the Saigon area was extremely heavy. Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Saigon headquarters personnel were busily engaged in the defense of the headquarters buildings and billets throughout the city. As a result of the initial Viet Cong offensive, one NAVSUPPACT Saigon headquarters sailor (Aviation Maintenance Administrationman First Class Richard L. WENDEL, USN) was killed and another wounded.

During the morning of 6 February, a NAVSUPPACT vehicle was ambushed while en route to Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The ambush resulted in one NAVSUPPACT officer (Lieutenant William R. ROBSON, SC, USN) being killed and three additional personnel wounded.

During the initial stages of the Viet Cong Tet Offensive the facilities of NAVSUPPACT's detachment at Vinh Long came under an intense attack. The initial attack, which consisted primarily of automatic weapons and small-arms harassment of the Vietnamese RAG base, the Navy villa and the NAVSUPPACT detachment pier area, commenced during the early morning hours on 1 February. When the enemy attack was intensified with mortars, the NAVSUPPACT compound was evacuated and the naval personnel proceeded to the Vietnamese RAG base where a perimeter

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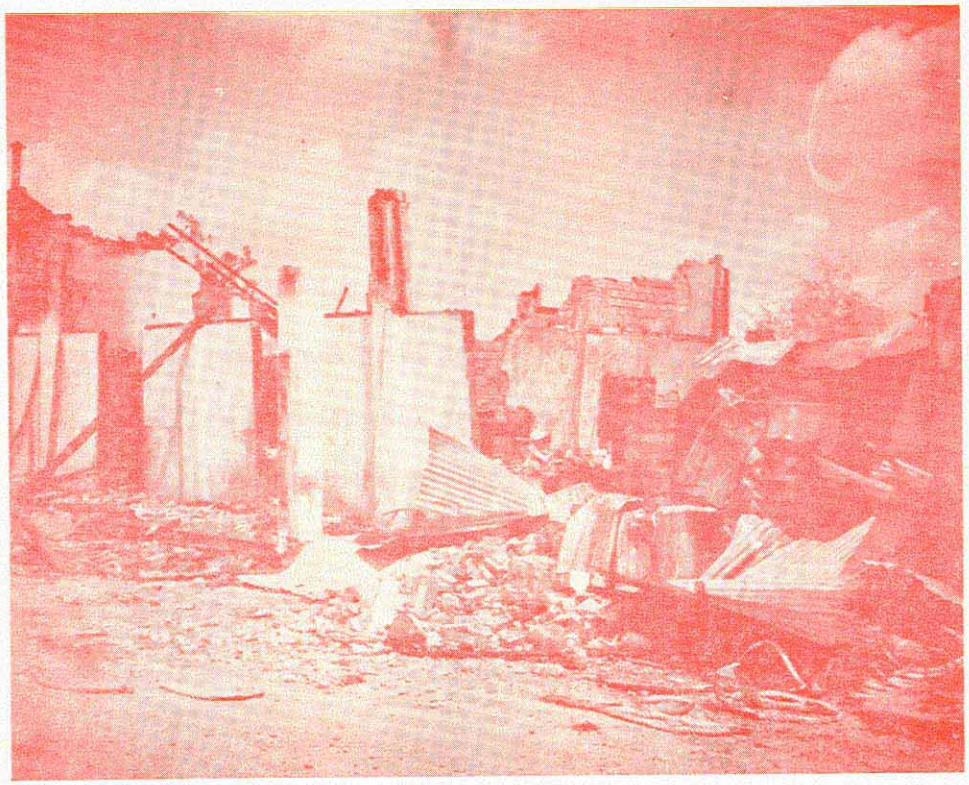
defense was established. All U. S. Navy personnel were subsequently evacuated to USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 786) as the attack grew more intense. The Tactical Operations Center with all communications facilities and the adjacent supply storeroom were



This was all that remained of the Vinh Long Tactical Operations Center following an enemy attack on 1 Feb.

completely destroyed by fire. On the morning of 2 February, U. S. Navy SEALs and an advance party of NAVSUPPACT Saigon Detachment Vinh Long sailors reoccupied the Navy villa. At the same time, CTF 116 units returned to the RAG base and augmented the

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Vietnamese Navy's base defense. The remainder of the NAVSUPPACT detachment's personnel returned to the villa during the afternoon and manned defensive positions.

The Navy villa at Vinh Long came under another mortar attack on the 27th of February. During this attack three rounds scored direct hits within the compound, causing extensive material damage and injuring one Navyman.

The Viet Cong commenced a heavy mortar attack on the city of My Tho at 0105 on the 18th of February. During the attack, which lasted approximately three and one-half hours, no direct hits were received at the NAVSUPPACT Saigon, Detachment My Tho compound. However, near misses sprayed billet and pier areas with shrapnel, resulting in slight wounds to nine naval personnel.

The NAVSUPPACT detachment at Nha Be received three rounds of 75-mm recoilless-rifle fire at 0020 on 29 February. One round scored a direct hit on the barracks and a second round exploded approximately 10 yards from the barracks. A third round exploded near the generator plant and disrupted power to the southern and western portions of the base. Four additional recoilless-rifle rounds landed in the water near the helicopter pad but caused no damage. NAVSUPPACT detachment personnel casualties resulting from this attack included one sailor (Seaman Kenneth C. LOCKWOOD, USN) killed and three wounded.

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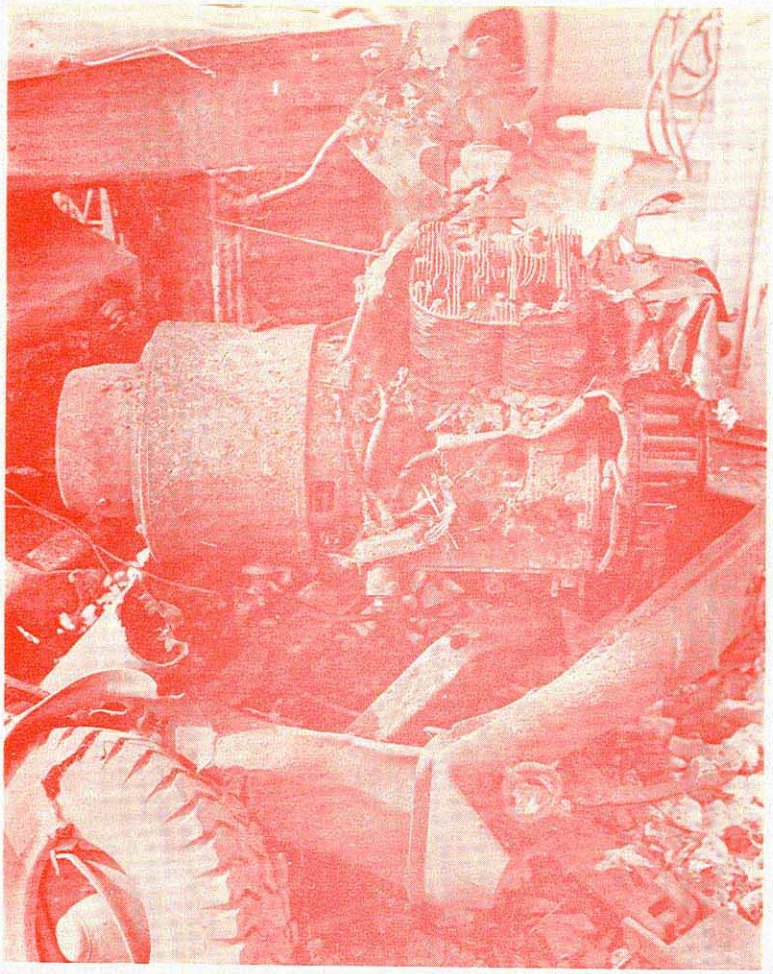

A Viet Cong rocket attack destroyed this aircraft pre-oiler unit during an attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base on Feb. 18. The pre-oiler unit came from the Naval Support Activity Air Operation Department in Saigon.

A rocket and mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base during the early morning hours of 18 February resulted in damage to all flyable NAVSUPPACT Saigon aircraft. Two C-117s, one US2B and one H-34 aircraft sustained varying amounts of shrapnel and concussion damages. The aviation support equipment storage area received a direct hit,

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resulting in varying amounts of damage to equipment. The office and shop quonset huts also sustained moderate damage, but no personnel casualties resulted from this attack. COMFAIRWESTPAC responded immediately upon notification of attack damages and provided one C-54 and crew from Agana, Guam; one C-47 from NAS Sangley Point; and one US2B and crew from Fleet Composite Squadron FIVE, Detachment, Naha, Okinawa. These aircraft enabled NAVSUPPACT Saigon to provide support to all bases which had fixed-wing facilities and to maintain a full MARKET TIME flight schedule. NAVSUPPACT aircraft transported 1,906 passengers and 319,256 pounds of cargo during the month.

Despite continuous enemy harassment, NAVSUPPACT Saigon surface craft carried out their assigned resupply missions throughout the Mekong Delta during February. The support ships and craft hauled a total of 2,929.7 short tons of cargo during the month.

Approximately five miles west of Dong Tam on 19 February, YFR 890 received four rounds of recoilless-rifle fire while transiting the My Tho River en route to an ammunition resupply rendezvous with USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821). Damage to the YFR was light and one person was slightly wounded. The YFR proceeded on its assigned duty.

YFR 889, while transitting the My Tho River en route to a rendezvous with APL 55 for ammunition resupply on 26 February, received one B-40 rocket round and automatic-weapons fire. The B-40 round hit

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deck cargo consisting of ammunition and resulted in the loss of one ton of 40-mm ammunition. Damage to the YFR was light and one crewman was slightly wounded. The YFR returned the fire and proceeded to the rendezvous.

USS MARK (AKL 12) was attacked by 11 rounds of recoilless-rifle fire while transiting east on the My Tho River approximately three miles west of Dong Tam on 29 February. The ship was at general quarters because of previous attacks on NAVSUPPACT Saigon craft in the same general area and had three PBRs as escorts. The attack was expected from the north bank of the river and the PBRs were positioned on the port side of the ship. However, the attack came from the south bank of the river and one round hit the starboard side main deck amidships, penetrated the hull and ruptured the fire main and a fuel tank vent line. Shrapnel penetrated the galley and wounded 12 men in a repair party. The escort PBRs made two firing runs on the beach and received recoilless-rifle, automatic-weapons and small-arms fire in return. The firing runs by the PBRs resulted in two secondary explosions. A Navy helicopter fire team made an air strike on the same area which resulted in four secondary explosions.

During February the number of line items carried by NAVSUPPACT Saigon totalled 63,356. Meanwhile, overall gross and net material support effectiveness increased slightly to 66 and 81 percent,

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respectively.

During the month, support of the Mobile Riverine Force in General Use Consumables by the Army's 53rd General Support Group, Vung Tau, RVN, was terminated in view of the limited support offered. NAVSUPPACT Saigon assumed the responsibility for this support.

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THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

February's construction effort by the 12 battalions of the THIRD Naval Construction Brigade was continually hampered throughout the month by enemy action and poor weather. Despite these obstacles, however, battalions efficiently repaired the enemy's extensive damage to already completed projects and pushed other construction in an all out effort to meet schedules.

Numerous significant projects were completed by the various Seabee battalions during the month. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FIVE (MCB-5), located at Camp Barnes, Dong Ha, completed: the wiring and remodeling of two Butler buildings; the construction of a 24- by 48-foot reinforced concrete operations center bunker; a 30- by 70-foot concrete communications bunker; 33 Southeast Asia (SEA) huts; and two 500-man galleys for the THIRD Marine Division. The Seabees of MCB 5 also drilled two wells and erected a water tower for the complex. They finished the wiring and partitioning of six Butler buildings and rebuilt 18 SEA huts, which had been destroyed by the enemy action, for the Force Logistic Supply Unit. Road work by MCB 5 resulted in the completion of a two-lane steel bridge on Route #9 and the placement of abutments for another bridge on the same road. The constructionmen of MCB 5 replaced five culverts and patched numerous mine-damaged areas in a successful effort of keeping Route #1 open for traffic north of Dong Ha. During the

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month, the Seabees of MCB 5 also completed six miles of POL pipeline leading from Dong Ha to Quang Tri.

At Chu Lai, MCB 6 completed construction on phase one of a 400-bed "medevac" hospital. Within the same area they also finished the construction of support facilities that included a 4,300 square foot enlisted men's barracks, a 2,200 square foot laundry, and a 2,200 square foot registrar and admission building. Also at Chu Lai, the primary power sub-station (10,000 KVA) was activated and now supplies Marine Air Group TWELVE (MAG 12) and MAG 13 flightlines with electrical power. In early February MCB 6 completed 13 earth berms at the U. S. Army's Americal Division Ammunition Supply Point (ASP).

Major projects completed by MCB 9 during the month included: a shower and water tank for the 7th Marines south of Danang; an extension of the Red Beach power distribution system; four 4,000 square foot pre-engineered metal buildings for the Danang exchange; and 7 two-story wood-framed barracks near the Danang Air Base.

During February the tactical situation prohibited MCB 8 from working on Route #1, Col Co Road, and the Hue by-pass. As a result, MCB 8 redirected their horizontal effort to the completion of three pads in the Force Logistic Service Group ASP area; the upgrading of 30,000 square yards of new taxiway for the Phu Bai airstrip; the grading and completion of the Tan My temporary

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LST facility; and the preparation of numerous pads for future vertical construction. MCB 8's vertical efforts during the month included the erection of two 3,000-barrel fuel tanks at Phu Bai.

At Quang Tri MCB 10 constructed a total of 131 SEA huts, a single and a double elevated Butler building to be used as aircraft hangars, nine quonset huts and one standard Butler building. In Quang Tri city proper, MCB 10, despite heavy Viet Cong offensive actions, completed the Integrated Wideband Communication System facility site and the rehabilitation of the civilian hospital. Further north at Camp Carroll, MCB 10 completed the cantonment area and repaired 20 of the buildings damaged by enemy action.

Also during the month, MCB 10 completed 8.6 miles of single lane road from Route #1 at Hai Lang to the coast in a period of just seven days. This road, which tremendously improved logistic support in the I CTZ, was later upgraded to a two-lane heavy traffic road.

The Cu Loa Re MARKET TIME radar site, which consisted of three berthing huts, a galley, operations building, radar tower, and miscellaneous support facilities, was completed by MCB 40 during February. MCB 40 in conjunction with MCB 6 also completed phase one of the Chu Lai "medevac" hospital. This project included a 40-bed intensive care ward, two 50-bed wards, a central supply room, 500 feet of covered walkway, and the transformation of the

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former intensive care unit into an operating room.

MCB 62, working from Camp Haskins at Danang, continued its support of Force Logistic Command (FLC), the Marine's 1st Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Battalion (LAAM) and ASP 2. At FLC, phase II of the permanent electrical distribution was placed on the line; a mezzanine was added to the 7th Motor Transport Battalion supply warehouse; and two more rigid frame buildings were added to their covered storage area. At the 1st LAAM Battalion site, five buildings were completed except for wiring. At ASP 2, one guard tower was erected, the steel roofs for two ammunitions pads were placed and the pads compacted.

MCB 128, working from Camp Faulkner at Danang, East, completed 16 projects during the month of February. Major completions included a 1,000 square foot administration building, 5 two-story barracks, and 1 BOQ for the 212th Aviation Battalion. At the Marble Mountain Air Facility, 194,000 square feet of runway was resurfaced and five 40- by 100-foot rigid frame metal buildings were erected. A water treatment plant and supporting buildings were also completed at Camp Tien Sha by the Seabees of MCB 128.

At Hoi An five 16- by 32-foot hootches were erected by MCB 58 for the Republic of Korea Marines.

The aggressive determination and responsiveness of MCB 121 kept Route #1 open in the Phu Bai/Phu Loc region during the entire Viet Cong Tet Offensive despite deadlined equipment from road mine

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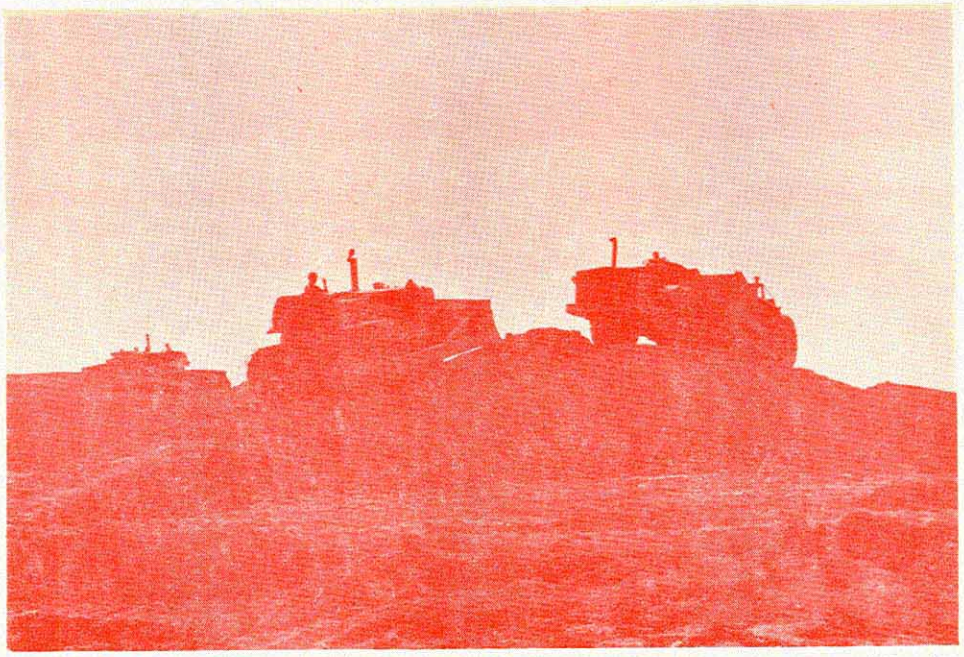
damage and enemy harassment.

The majority of MCB 121's vertical effort was directed to the high priority new construction needed to support several newly arrived U. S. Army units. Among the completed projects were a 40- by 80-foot operations bunker which was built to withstand a direct 122-mm rocket hit, 1000 feet of revetments, and 4 additional bunkers. Other projects completed by Phu Bai-based MCB 121 included a bakery, two administration buildings, and one Butler building.



Navy Seabees from MCB 128 transport soil near Danang in preparation to build storage spaces at Ammunition Supply Point ONE (ASP-1).

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An increased buildup of American Forces in Vietnam brought these MCB FOUR Seabees to the Republic of Vietnam a month and a half earlier. They are unloading baggage and cargo after being airlifted to Camp Haskins, Danang.

The versatility, mobility, and "Can Do" spirit that have become synonymous with the name Seabee were demonstrated during February by MCB 4. The Seabees of MCB 4 had been undergoing technical and military training at Port Hueneme, California for the past four months, with a planned return to Vietnam on 1 April 1968. On 5 February the Battalion was alerted for probable early deployment to Vietnam and within hours after notification, the first part of the battalion was en route; a few days later the entire battalion

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was in Vietnam. The battalion was temporarily segmented to support MCBs 9 and 58 in the Danang area, MCBs 6 and 40 in Chu Lai, and MCBs 8 and 121 in the Phu Bai area.

In addition to the many projects completed during February, numerous significant projects were begun or continued by the THIRD NCB battalions.

At Phu Bai MCB 8 began construction of the 1st MARDIV hospital and continued work on four Butler buildings for Marine Air Group (MAG) 36.

Working from Camp Carroll at Phu Bai in support of newly arrived Army units, MCB 121 was continuing work on three Butler buildings, a data processing facility and a chapel.

During the month MCB 40 spent considerable time repairing small but widespread mortar, rocket, and blast damage caused by enemy offensive actions. These efforts did not disrupt the continuing work on the Chu Lai ASP, which required 750,000 yards of sand for the creation of 24 large berms. MCB 40 was also continuing work on the Quang Ngai hospital.

MCB 53, working from Camp Adenir, Danang, East, was primarily concerned with the construction of the NAVSUPPACT Danang hospital complex. At month's end, the operating rooms, intensive care unit, and wards for the 200-bed expansion project were nearing completion. Other miscellaneous projects under construction at the hospital

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included a urology clinic, a two-story barracks and two storage buildings. MCB 53 was also working on the 1st Logistic Command's 500-man galley and theater, plus 7 quonset huts for the Army's 5th Special Forces.

During the month, MCB 58 was relocated from Camp Haskins to Hoi An to develop critical ROK Marine facilities. Despite enemy harassment and delays caused by the closing of Route #1 from Danang to Hoi An, work progressed at a rapid pace on the 8,000-man cantonment.

The continuing offensive action by the Viet Cong during the month of February resulted in 4 Seabees being killed and 38 wounded.

During the period 1 to 5 February, Gia Le and Phu Bai Combat Bases came under enemy rocket attacks. As a result of one of these attacks the engineering office of MCB 8 was completely destroyed. Both MCB 8 and MCB 121 manned their perimeters during the hours of darkness of this period.

On the morning of 19 February the LCU ramp at Dong Ha received incoming enemy artillery rounds which resulted in three members of MCB 5 being wounded.

The continual harassment of the Dong Ha Combat Base was climaxed on 26 February when 300 rounds of rocket, mortar and artillery impacted on the base. Twenty rounds landed within MCB 5's camp

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and caused extensive damage to buildings and equipment, and resulted in six Seabees being wounded in action.

During an enemy attack on Tam Ky City on 31 January, a 55-man detail of MCB 6 participated in the successful defense of the province headquarters. The MCB 6 detail was credited with 46 enemy killed while only 1 Seabee was injured.

MCB 9's effort during February was considerably hampered by enemy activity and harassment. On 1 February the MCB 9 checkpoint on Route #3 came under small-arms fire. Two Seabees were wounded in a subsequent investigation patrol during which six Viet Cong suspects were captured. On 6 February the lead 5-ton tractor-trailer in an MCB 9 convoy was damaged by a land mine, and on 23 February a 31,000 board-foot stockpile for the Liberty Bridge was destroyed by enemy action.

MCB 128 suffered two men killed in action on 4 February when their jeep struck a land mine near a Marine encampment northwest of Danang.

MCB 62 details were involved in seven incidents of sniper fire or land mines during February; for the most part, damage was light. However, on 17 February one man was killed and four were wounded when a MCB 62 convoy was ambushed and mined on Route #1, approximately two miles south of Hai Van Pass.

On January 30th, during the early stages of the Viet Cong

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Tet Offensive, MCB 53's Camp Adenir at Danang, East, was mortared and resulted in 17 Seabees being wounded.

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MILITARY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CIVIC ACTION OPERATIONS

The extensive plans and preparations for psychological operations scheduled for the Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tet) holiday period and thereafter were nullified by the Viet Cong's simultaneous attacks against cities and military installations throughout the Republic on the closing day of January. The vicious attacks were launched in violation of the agreed truce and during the most revered holiday season. Immediate action was instituted to bring to the people of South Vietnam and to the enemy forces the true story of these actions. Some of the major themes stressed were:

1. The enemy's shameful violation of the spirit of Tet after deceiving everyone by their truce announcements.

2. The NVA/Viet Cong leadership misled and betrayed their soldiers.

3. The call for a general uprising was emphatically rejected by the population of South Vietnam which rallied around the Government of Vietnam.

4. The United States was giving full support to the Government of Vietnam in the restoration of public services and the reconstruction of installations destroyed by the barbaric enemy attacks.

During the month there were 94 hours of aerial broadcasts, 384 hours of surface broadcasts and 293,334 leaflets

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distributed.

The enemy's Tet Offensive presented a fertile psychological opportunity to discredit the enemy and thereby gain and reinforce adherents to the Government of Vietnam. However, the first priority was to strengthen the confidence of the civilian population in the ability of the elected officials to restore security and the orderly functioning of the government.

The President of Vietnam issued a decree establishing a high level committee, headed by the Vice President, to direct and coordinate the activities of all GVN agencies, both civilian and military, in expediting civil recovery from the enemy's treacherous Tet Offensive. U. S. naval forces quickly responded and provided the following support to the GVN's "Project Recovery":

1. Dollar value military supplies: $51,560.00
2. Manpower: 4,735 man-days
3. Transportation services rendered: 20,372 ton-miles

Assistance rendered to the Vietnamese civilian population by the Vietnamese Navy and the U. S. Naval Advisory Group in the form of food, clothing, medical supplies, building materials and other miscellaneous items amounted to $54,663.00. Operations were conducted in 27 locations in the Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh area and 6 locations in the Fourth Riverine Area--The Civic Action Team consisted of doctors, dentists, psychological operations and intelligence personnel, photographers and reporters,

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as well as security forces. The doctors and dentists conducted sick call, performed minor surgery and dental work, distributed medicine and disinfectants and administered inoculations. The psychological operations personnel distributed food to refugees and other needy people, broadcasted information in response to psychological operations guidance, issued elementary sanitation instructions, passed on information as to how members of the Viet Cong could defect and attempted to help the people solve minor problems. Intelligence personnel mingled with the refugees and collected intelligence information throughout the operations. Approximately 1,500 tons of fresh water was also furnished to seven hamlets visited. In the Mekong Delta the Vietnamese Naval Hospital Ships HQ 400 and HQ 401 performed 23,106 medical treatments and distributed food to 84,650 people during the month.

Individual naval units continued to display the humanistic spirit of the Navyman as they rendered support wherever possible to help the Vietnamese recover; however, the military tactical situation somewhat hindered the progress of Civic Action in many cases. Nevertheless, concerted efforts were made to provide medical assistance to the refugees and materials were furnished to allow them to rebuild their destroyed and damaged homes.

In I Corps Tactical Zone, naval mobile construction battalions reported an increase in intelligence collection among the refugees.

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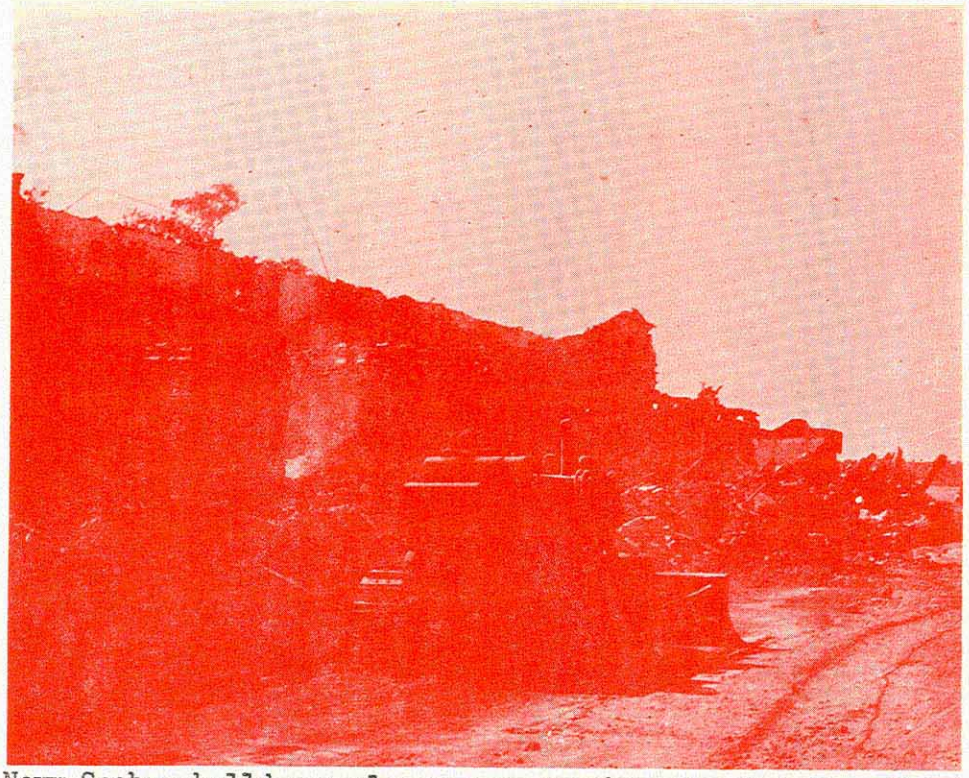
Although the Seabees were primarily engaged in military construction projects, their contribution was significant in the rebuilding of destroyed homes and roads and in drilling wells.



A Navy Seabee bulldozer clears away wreckage in Vinh Long City following the Viet Cong's Tet Offensive in early February.

On 22 February, Hospital Corpsman Second Class Gene WHEAT, USN, Naval Support Activity, Danang, departed on another of his frequent visits to the Hoa Vang District south of Danang to bring medical assistance to the many villagers. When Corpsman WHEAT did not return, a search was instituted for WHEAT and his assistant travelling with him. Residents of Tau Hanh Hamlet, the site of the

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intended MEDCAP, advised the search party that the Viet Cong had ambushed the jeep and killed the two riders. Corpsman WHEAT had lost his life bringing help to those in need.

In their efforts to assist the Vietnamese people in recovering from the effects of the Tet Offensive, GAME WARDEN (TF 116) units contributed $2,120 worth of military supplies and 524 man-days of labor. The units conducted 217 medical evacuations, helped restore several damaged homes, and supplied food, clothing, water, fuel and other necessities to refugees, outposts and towns.

USN Civic Action Statistical Summary

February 1968

PROGRAMS:

	Man Days	Expenditures (VN$)
Economic Development	6	188,120
Education	404	240,049
Social Welfare	2002	802,435
Transportation	192	18,169
Refugee Assistance Support	1010	3,491,844
TOTALS	3614	4,740,617

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS: 527,351

INSTITUTES ASSISTED:

	Number
Schools	18
Hospitals/dispensaries	69
Orphanages	17
Others	15

PERCENT OF U. S. CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS CONDUCTED JOINTLY WITH:

	Percent
Other FWMAF	52

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	Percent
RVNAF	32
U. S. civilian voluntary agencies	10
Average percent of self-help by VN civilians	19.2

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SALVAGE OPERATIONS

On 3 February a demolition team from Harbor Clearance Unit ONE embarked in YDB-2 arrived at Poulo Obi Island off the southern tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula and commenced clearing the narrow channel and the LCU beach landing area of obstructions. After two days of extensive demolition work using several shaped charges, 400 pounds of C-4 explosive, and 1,000 feet of primer cord, the demolition team cleared a 90-foot wide channel and the beach landing area of coral and rock obstructions. The team arrived back at Vung Tau on 7 February.

On 5 February fragmentary reports were received by CTF 117 that ASPB-92-3 had sunk in 20 feet of water near the mouth of the My Tho River. The unit, one of two loaned to CTF 116 for a 30-day evaluation with PBR's, suffered an exhaust boot failure, causing the boat to flood and sink. The next morning, YLLC-3, with HCU ONE, Team Four embarked, got underway from Vung Tau and arrived at the salvage site at 1230. The efficient salvage team had the boat completely buoyant within six hours and towed the ASPB back to Dong Tam, arriving at 2355 that evening.

On 6 February YLLC-4, with Team Three embarked at Dong Tam, was temporarily released from the operational control of CTF 117 to sail to Thong Thoi, four miles east of Tan Chau in Chau Doc Province, to recover a sunken PBR for CTF 116. PBR 727, which had received a direct B-40 rocket hit, sank in 40 feet of water

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while moored at a U. S. Special Forces Camp. The PBR was successfully recovered on 7 February.

On 15 February YLLC-4, with Team Three embarked, sailed deep into the area of operations southwest of Can Tho to salvage ASPB-92-1. The ASPB had attempted to beach due to flooding through the bilge system, but it partially submerged to the coxswain's flat. YLLC-4 raised the assault craft later that evening, and the riverine minesweeper was towed to USS ASKARI (ARL 30) at the MRB for repairs.

Efforts to locate ASPB-112-4, which was sunk by enemy B-40 rockets on 27 February on the Can Tho River approximately six miles southwest of Can Tho, were severely hampered by swift currents and not knowing exactly where the boat had been sunk. Search efforts by units of TG 117.2, UDT-12 with Aqua Darts, EOD team with the AN/PQS 1 sonar set and YLLC-4 were finally successful on the afternoon of 28 February. The sunken ASPB was located approximately 1,000 yards from where it was ambushed. Due to the hotly contested area in which the boat was lost, salvage operations were delayed until the morning of 29 February. About 1800 that evening the lifting straps of YLLC-4 parted, making it necessary to buoy the sunken craft until salvage operations could be resumed on 1 March.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Project CLARINET SEAWARD (formerly SEARCHLIGHT--upgrading communications facilities at COMNAVFORV, the Coastal Surveillance Centers and GAME WARDEN bases) showed very little progress during the month of February except for the Vinh Long site. After the destruction of the fixed facilities at the start of the Tet Offensive, replacement communications facilities were installed on the YR-9. The decision was made to install the permanent (CLARINET SEAWARD) equipment in a structure to be erected on the top deck of the mobile GAME WARDEN barge. Construction was started on the Cat Lo site with a firm beneficial occupancy date (BOD) of 15 March.

Task Force CLEARWATER was established in I Corps during the later part of February. COMNAVFORV provided one Lieutenant and one Chief Petty Officer to assist CTF CLEARWATER in establishing communications/operations centers at Tan My and Cua Viet and on the Mobile PBR Base ONE. The additional communications equipment required for CLEARWATER was obtained by utilizing uninstalled or shelf equipment from COMNAVFORV/COMNAVSUPPACT Danang/III MAF. Programming for the permanent equipment was initiated by COMNAVSUPPACT Danang.

In CLARINET TACK (formerly STARBOARD TACK--the use of communication vans transportable by helicopters) the VHF frequency modifications were delayed due to problems involving frequency

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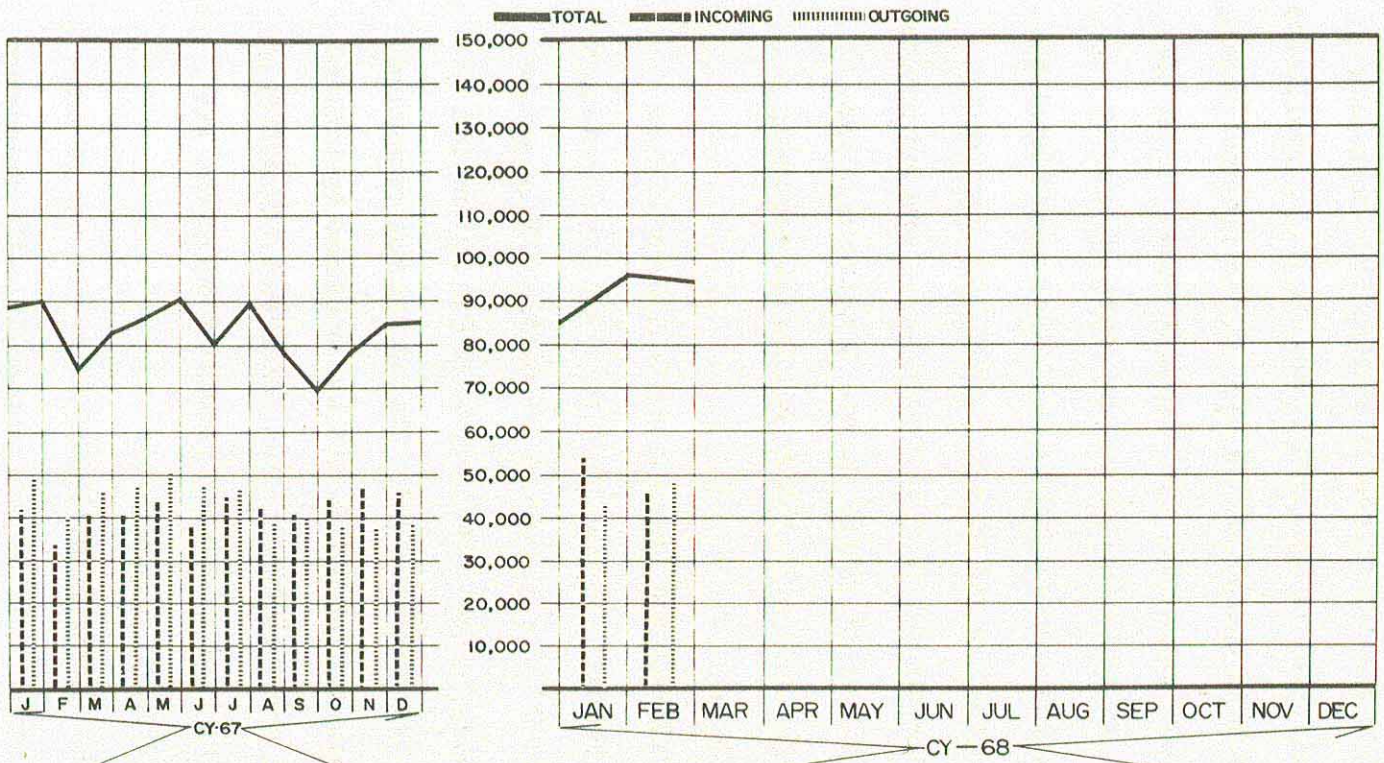
MONTHLY MESSAGE TRAFFIC



1	1	1	1	1	.2	.5	.9	1.4	1.3	1.3	FLASH	2.2	3.0	
21	20	19	18	16	17.5	18.1	17.9	21.2	23.3	19.7	IMMEDIATE	21.3	23.0	
60	61	63	63	66	64.6	62.9	61.6	57.3	57.4	58.9	PRIORITY	56.3	57.2	
18	18	17	18	17	17.7	18.5	19.6	20.1	18.0	20.1	ROUTINE	20.2	16.8	

PERCENT OF TOTAL

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clearances. These problems were expected to be rectified in March.

Project CLARINET RAMROD (formerly BOWLINE--NAVCOMMSTA Cam Rahn Bay) made considerable progress during the month when permanent power facilities, less a no-break capability at the communications center, were accepted by the U. S. Navy on 22 February. The receiver site shifted to a power source provided by the Vinnel Corporation on 24 February. Vinnel power to the transmitter site was 95 percent completed with the exception of the sub-station, which was awaiting the delivery of transformers.

A total of 94,399 messages were handled by the COMNAVFORV Message Center during the month of February. This was a decrease of 1,759 messages from the January totals.

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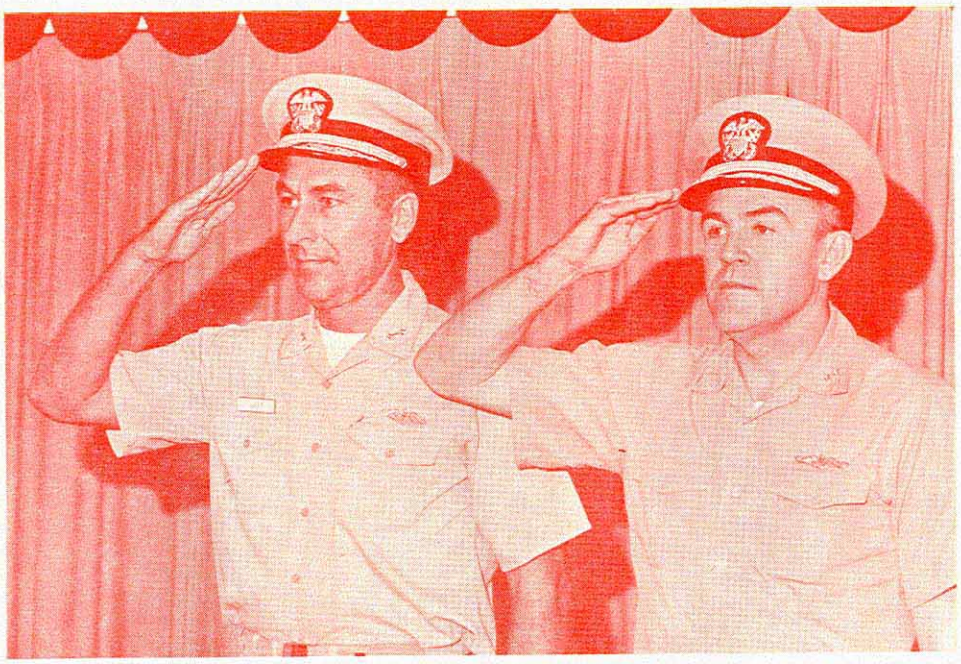

Rear Admiral James B. OSBORN (right) and Rear Admiral Paul L. LACY, Jr., salute the colors during change-of-command ceremony held at the Naval Support Activity in Danang. RADM. OSBORN assumed command of the Danang naval installation on 5 February.

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ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

The Deputy Secretary of Defense directed that in view of the operational situation in South Vietnam, all visits by military and civilian personnel be held to a strictly controlled minimum until further notice. As a result of this directive, several scheduled visits by U. S. Navy officials and other dignitaries were subsequently cancelled.

On the morning of 5 February Rear Admiral James B. OSBORN, USN, relieved Rear Admiral Paul L. LACY, Jr., USN, as Commander, U. S. Naval Support Activity, Danang. Rear Admiral OSBORN assumed his new duties after completing a thorough orientation and indoctrination tour which covered the four Corps Tactical Zones of Vietnam. Rear Admiral OSBORN reported from Washington, D. C., where he served as Ad Hoc Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Study Group.

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NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP

VIETNAMESE NAVY

The personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy (VNN) on 29 February was 16,386 officers and enlisted men; of this number 1,303 were officers, 3,209 were NCOs and 11,874 were enlisted men. The number of unauthorized absentees stood at 786; this large number was attributed to the inability of personnel to return to their parent commands during the Tet Offensive. There were no VNN personnel discharged as deserters during February.

Military operations associated with the Tet Offensive minimized formal training accomplished during February. An increased use of Fleet Command and logistic lifts units in defensive operations resulted in non-availability of ships for underway training. The VNN Underway Training Unit was scheduled to resume its program in March. Courses at the Vietnamese Naval Advanced Training Center, Saigon, were cancelled throughout February while the Naval Training Center, Nha Trang, lost three weeks of training. In their vital sector operations, augmenting Khanh Hoa Province forces, naval training center personnel performed nightly patrols, conducted sweeps, manned listening posts and maintained an excellent defense posture. At the Naval Recruit Training Center, Cam Ranh Bay, one week of training was lost while the personnel were on alert and

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maintained a ready-reaction force. Joint operations were conducted with U. S. Army Military Police and U. S. Navy Harbor Defense Units.

Fleet Command

During February the Fleet Command had 27.8 ships available daily, maintaining 13 ships on station in MARKET TIME operations, 9 ships on river patrol and 5 ships for static defense and naval gunfire support duty. Fleet Command ships fired 187 naval gunfire support missions, searched 405 junks and 1,838 persons and detained 2 junks and 7 persons.

Fleet Command units continued to distribute "psywar" materials to junks and craft investigated and carried on an extensive civic action program in Saigon. (See page 122). The Fleet Command also assumed responsibility for a refugee camp in the village of Binh Thai, 10 miles north of Qui Nhon, providing security and sanitation facilities while augmenting the food supply and quarters available.

Patrol craft (PCs and PCEs) were utilized in the First, Second and Fourth Naval Zones while Patrol Gunboats (PGMs) were used in all four naval zones and the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). These ships fired 78 naval gunfire support missions during February. In gunfire support missions on 13 and 14 February, PC 06 killed six Viet Cong and wounded or killed seven others who were

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carried away. These missions were in defense of the Cau Can Defense Post on the western shore of Phy Quoc Island. On 19 and 20 February, PCE 11 supported Phu Yen Province forces and Coastal Group 23 units four miles west of the coastal group base at Song Cau. Answering the request for naval gunfire, PCE 11 accounted for 9 Viet Cong killed and 11 reported wounded or killed and carried away.

Landing Support Ships (LSSLs and LSILs) fired 95 naval gunfire support missions and provided patrol services in the Third Naval Zone, the Capital Military District, the RSSZ and the Fourth Riverine Area, concentrating their efforts in defense of Delta cities besieged by the enemy during the Tet Offensive. On the night of 5-6 February, LSIL 327 supported Coastal Group 36 and Ba Xuyen Province units on Dung Island in the lower Bassac River. The ships gunfire accounted for 33 Viet Cong killed and numerous others killed or wounded and apparently carried away.

On 9 February, five miles northeast of Can Tho, LSIL 328's gunfire produced a secondary explosion, while killing 15 Viet Cong and wounding 8 others. On 18 February LSSL 226 provided gunfire support to Vinh Long Province units, eight miles northeast of Can Tho, resulting in 15 Viet Cong killed, 7 wounded and 7 individual weapons captured.

While Motor-Launch Minesweepers (MLMs) continued daily sweep operations in the Saigon, Long Tau, Nha Be and Dong Nai rivers,

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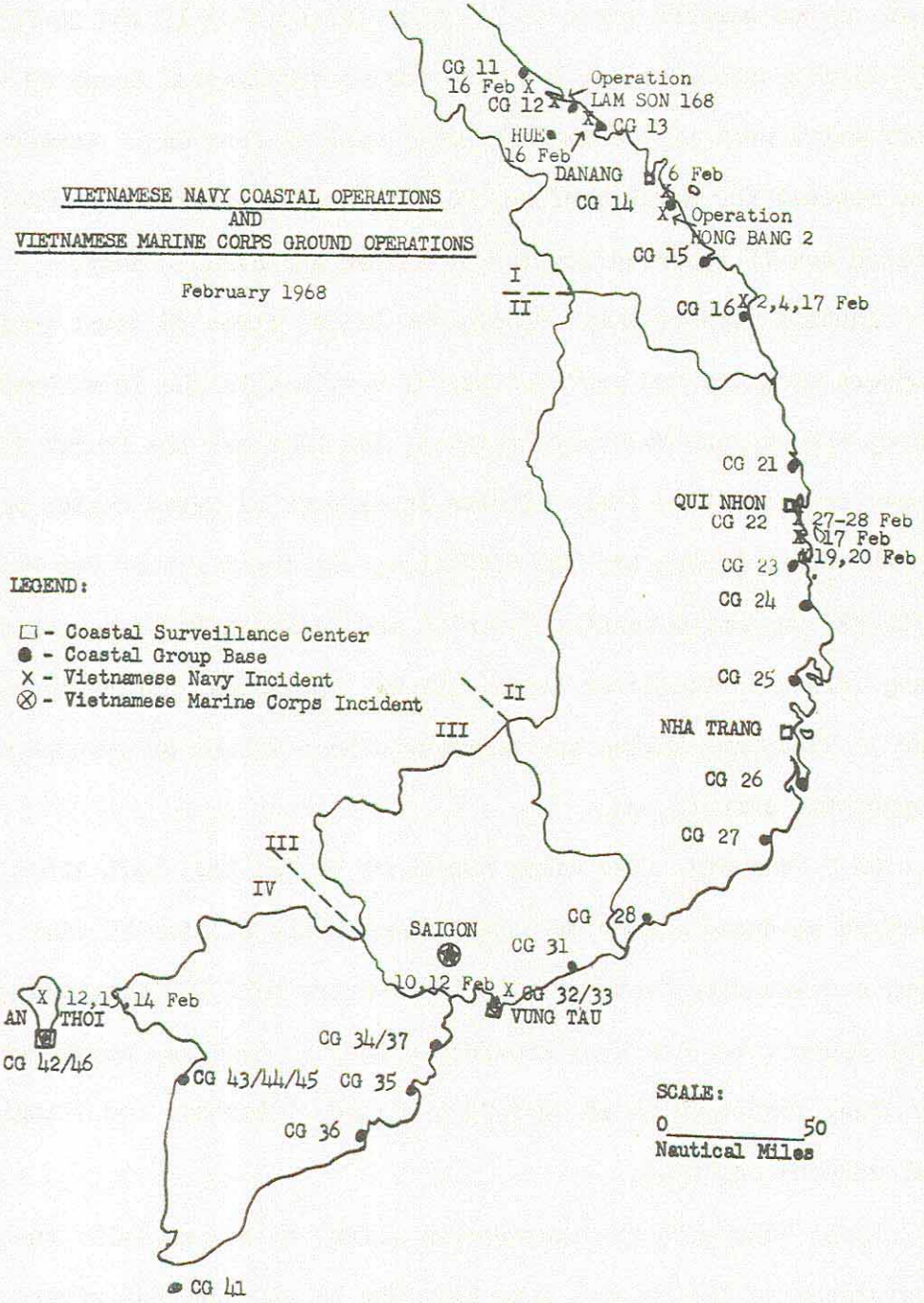

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the Coastal Minesweepers (MSCs) provided much needed gunfire support in the Fourth Naval Zone. MSC 114 fired 14 naval gunfire support missions during February. On 12 February, MSC 114 gunfire killed 18 Viet Cong and wounded or killed 25 others in support of Cau Can outpost on Phu Quoc Island.

LDNN (VNN UDT) were restricted in their operations with U. S. Navy SEALs during February by the Tet Offensive. The LDNN personnel were assigned missions in the Capital Military District, including defense of VNN Headquarters and counter-ambush and patrol duties. On 13 February, three Viet Cong were captured by LDNN who were providing security for a civic action mission being conducted by VNN Headquarters personnel in Gia Dinh Province near Saigon.

Coastal Force

In February, with an average of 194 junks available, approximately 172 were employed daily. Coastal Force units searched 22,333 junks and 72,738 persons; they detained 55 junks and 368 persons.

Coastal group junks from all naval zones were used during the first of the month in defensive, "medevac" and logistic operations to relieve besieged towns and villages after the massive Tet Offensive. The six VNN River Assault Group (RAG) craft, assigned to the First Naval Zone, operated with Coastal Groups 11 and 12 to secure the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers for friendly river traffic and patrol boats. During February heavy contact was made with the

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enemy; one LCVP was sunk and one moderately damaged; one Yabuta junk was sunk and another heavily damaged and an LCM was damaged but was repairable.

Coastal Group 12 and RAG boats provided troop and logistic lifts for Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and Regional Force/Popular Force (RF/PF) troops and acted as a blocking force for search and destroy/ambush operations. On 2 February three Coastal Group 12 sailors were wounded at Hue when their junk was attacked during troop-lift operations and a RAG officer was also wounded later that day. The enemy was well-entrenched in the area and intelligence indicated attacks were imminent. On 4 February a RAG LCM, carrying ammunition for resupply of ARVN units in the vicinity of Hue, was attacked by 81-mm mortars and .50 caliber machine gun fire on the Perfume River. One VNN sailor was killed and four others were wounded in this ambush. The LCM, though damaged, returned to the coastal group base under its own power.

Meanwhile, Coastal Group 16, further south, engaged the enemy at two defense posts on 2 and 4 February.

Three Viet Cong were killed and numerous weapons were seized on the 2nd as the coastal group naval gunfire supported the Son Hoi Defense Post, three miles northeast of Quang Ngai City. One and one-half miles to the south, four more of the enemy were killed and three wounded on 4 February when a PF outpost was defended by Coastal Group 16 gunfire. On 6 February Coastal

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Group 14 engaged the enemy in a fire fight near Hoi An which wounded three VNN sailors and killed one Viet Cong. Later that day, Operation HONG BANG 2 combined one platoon and four junks of Coastal Group 14 with one PF squad in an area sweep two miles east of the coastal group base. Three VNN sailors were wounded and one Viet Cong suspect was captured along with numerous weapons and ammunition. It was reported that several more Viet Cong were killed or wounded and carried away after the skirmish.

The U. S. advisor to Coastal Group 11 was wounded by small-arms fire on 16 February when the junk he was on was participating in a blocking mission in support of a U. S. Marine Corps operation on the Cua Viet River. The advisor was "medevaced" to Danang and treated for a deep chest wound and later returned to limited duty. Coastal Group 13 that same day was involved in a search and destroy operation in Thua Thien Province, 32 miles northwest of Danang. A Coastal Group 13 party and 30 PF troops launched an attack against an estimated two Viet Cong platoons. A TF 115 PCF provided 81-mm mortar fire in support of the operation. One PF solider was wounded during the fire fight; numerous blood trails indicated the enemy took dead or wounded from the battlefield. Later intelligence indicated three Viet Cong were wounded and two were killed as a result of this confrontation.

On 17 February two junks of Coastal Group 16 were ambushed while patrolling the Tra Khuc River near Quang Ngai City. One junk was

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sunk and one radio, a .30 caliber machine gun, two automatic rifles, one carbine and one M1 rifle were lost. The coastal group commanding officer and three VNN sailors were wounded and two sailors were reported missing in action. On 20 February a river convoy, consisting of four Coastal Group 12 junks, two LCMs and one LCVP, came under recoilless-rifle fire on the Perfume River, three miles north of Hue. One LCVP was sunk but the weapons aboard were recovered. One junk and two LCMs received minor damage and two VNN sailors were wounded in the action.

The combined VNN/USN/USMC complex at Cua Viet received 140-mm rocket and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) artillery fire on 21 February. No rounds landed in the coastal group compound; the USMC 1st AMTRAC Battalion compound received approximately 60 rounds. Secondary explosions occurred in the ammunition dump and one round landed in a village to the south. Coastal Group 11 units assisted in the movement of the civilian casualties; three Vietnamese civilians were killed and six were wounded.

Operation LAM SON 168 was conducted by Coastal Group 12 units, two Ranger groups and Tua Thien Province units on 27 and 28 February, north of Hue. This two-day operation netted four Viet Cong and several documents captured.

Coastal Force units of the Second Naval Zone carried out numerous "mopping up" missions after the initial onslaught by the enemy during the Tet holiday period. Junks ran resupply missions

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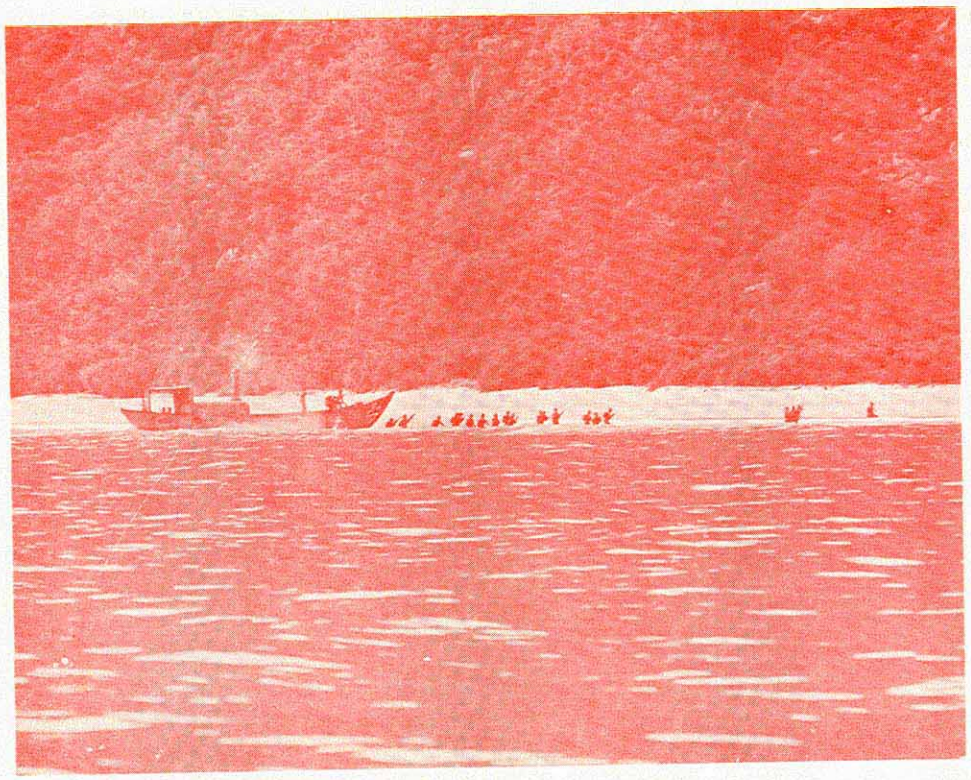
for the civilian population, the military and civilian police forces of the provinces. Once these forces regained their composure and strength, they began to conduct search and destroy/ambush operations within their areas, seeking, pursuing, yet rarely encountering the enemy.



Yabuta junk landing PF troops during a sweep operation along the South China Sea coastline.

On 17 February Coastal Group 23 units and Phu Yen Province units landed on a peninsula, 15 miles south of Qui Nhon, where a PF platoon had been reported overrun. Fire support from PCE 11,

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a TF 115 PCF, and USS CLARION RIVER (LSMR 409), as well as artillery, provided the landing party with security and support against the Viet Cong. A search of the entire peninsula failed to raise the enemy. A village chief, his wife, a hamlet chief and two PF soldiers were found murdered and their bodies mutilated. One sampan and various amounts of ammunition and weapons were seized although the Viet Cong escaped; 11 PF soldiers were reported missing. On the night of 19-20 February, PCE 11 provided gunfire for a Coastal Group 23 unit making a sweep in Phu Yen Province, 20 miles south of Qui Nhon. Nine Viet Cong were killed and another 11 were wounded or killed but carried away during the operation. Once again on the night of 27-28 February, PCE 11 and Coastal Group 23 teamed up in Phu Yen Province, 10 miles south of Qui Nhon, to capture 28 Viet Cong; 1 VNN sailor was wounded.

Two Viet Cong, a First Lieutenant and an NCO, defected to the Coastal Group 35 "psywar" team in the Third Naval Zone on 3 February. The officer revealed that he had 21 years of service, including three years of officers' school in Hanoi. The Hoi Chanhs were taken to the Coastal Surveillance Center at Vung Tau for further interrogation.

On 5 February a 40-man landing party from Coastal Group 35 encountered heavy small-arms fire from Viet Cong attacking a village outpost in Phu Vinh Province, two and one-half miles

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northwest of the coastal group base. The sailors drove off the Viet Cong, who had assassinated the village chief, killing three of the enemy and wounding one. A coastal group security force remained in the village until sunset to ward off possible recurrent attacks.

CG 35 craft transiting a narrow river with a landing party poised for action.

That same day a Coastal Group 36 ambush team was inserted near their base to aid a RF company as it pursued an estimated Viet Cong company three miles to the south. The RF company gained contact

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but the Viet Cong quickly dispersed and the RF troops quit the area. The VNN ambush team remained to seek out the enemy. After three hours the team reboarded their craft and were returning to their base when they were ambushed. Supported by TF 116 light helicopter fire team and LSIL 327, the sailors landed again and attacked the enemy. Later reports indicated three Viet Cong were killed and eight wounded.

On 10 February Coastal Group 32/33 units and two vedettes assigned to Vung Tau Naval Base were ambushed eight miles northeast of the city of Vung Tau. The force had been conducting a blocking operation on all waterways east and west of the Vung Tau Peninsula to prevent Viet Cong infiltration. The lead vedette was struck by B-40 rocket fire and automatic-weapons fire; three VNN sailors were wounded. Vietnamese Marine Corps artillery and U. S. Air Force air strikes augmented the junk's return fire. An estimated 25 of the enemy were reported killed by the combined forces. For the next two days junks of Coastal Group 32/33 patrolled the waterways, conducting interdiction fire into the general area of the earlier attack. At 2000 on 12 February, two Coastal Group 33 junks were ambushed; the lead junk took a direct hit by a B-40 rocket in the pilot house. Although damage was limited, a VNN sailor was killed and another was wounded.

During the night of 10-11 February, 49 Viet Cong were captured

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by two platoons of Coastal Group 34/37. Sweeping near their base in Kien Hoa Province, the VNN sailors also destroyed numerous bunkers. On 12 February a Coastal Group 34/37 six-man team was attacked, two miles south of their base on the Ham Luong River, while en route to a patrol area to conduct a "psywar" broadcast. Immediately reinforced by two squads of PF troops in coastal group junks, the force returned fire for an hour, evacuating a mortally wounded PF soldier amidst the fray. A TF 116 light helicopter fire team arrived and provided additional gunfire support. One Viet Cong was captured and intelligence reports revealed that 4 Viet Cong were killed and 14 were wounded. Despite the incident the "psywar" team carried out its broadcasting mission in an area south of the action.

With intelligence gained from a Hoi Chanh an operation was conducted by Coastal Group 36 and a 50-man Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) team on the night of 13-14 February. Two coastal group junks landed the PRU team eight miles northwest of the Coastal Group 36 base on the Bassac River. During a one and one-half hour sweep the PRUs were credited with 5 Viet Cong killed and 11 of the enemy with numerous weapons and documents captured. None of the friendly forces were injured. Again, in the early morning of 20 February, Coastal Group 36 and PRUs combined forces to conduct another successful attack

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on Viet Cong entrenched on Dung Island in the Bassac River. Captured Viet Cong revealed more of the enemy were to arrive at 1000 that morning. A 15-man PRU team remained in ambush while the coastal group units stood by off the island's shore. At 1030 all personnel boarded the junks; one Viet Cong had been killed and nine others, including two Viet Cong infrastructure cadre, were captured.

That same day Coastal Group 34/37 operated with ARVN forces in Kien Hoa Province, two miles north of the coastal group base in an effective search and destroy operation which netted 45 Viet Cong killed. There were indications of numerous others killed or wounded and carried away. The combined forces suffered no casualties; 25 of the enemy and various weapons were captured and 30 bunkers were destroyed.

February 21 proved to be a day fraught with skirmishes. Coastal Group 34/37 conducted sweep operations with district troops seven miles north of their base in Kien Hoa Province, killing 1 Viet Cong and capturing 10 others and their weapons. Coastal Group 35 units in Phu Vinh Province, two miles northwest of their base, came to the relief of province forces under attack. Silencing the enemy, coastal group personnel found one Viet Cong killed while friendly losses were two killed and three wounded. Several weapons and ammunition were seized. On the northern tip of Dung Island, Coastal Group 35 craft and a PRU team conducted sweep operations that yielded nine Viet Cong captured including

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a female district commissar. The remainder of the month consisted of light contact with the enemy for the coastal groups.

Junks of the Fourth Naval Zone were utilized to relieve cities and villages in their operational area from the ravages of the Tet Offensive. Sporadic mortar and rifle fire in the cities and in the countryside continually reminded the people of the presence of the enemy. Civilian river traffic was negligible and Fourth Naval Zone junks resupplied the cities as well as transported wounded or ill civilian and military personnel. Offensive operations were limited during the month but psychological operations were carried out with no disruptions.

The Kien An-based junks of Coastal Group 43/44/45 stepped up patrols in the Cai Lon River and Rach Gia Bay. During the month Rach Gia City came under a series of attacks that caused only slight damage but posed ever-present dangers to the people. Housing areas of VNN dependents were damaged to some extent; two dependents were killed and three were wounded on 13 February during one mortar attack.

Riverine Area Naval Commands

At the end of February the RAGs and the River Transport and Escort Group (RTEG) had 225 craft assigned. A daily average of 138 craft were available for operations and 126 were employed. The Viet Cong threat present in the Third and Fourth Riverine Areas

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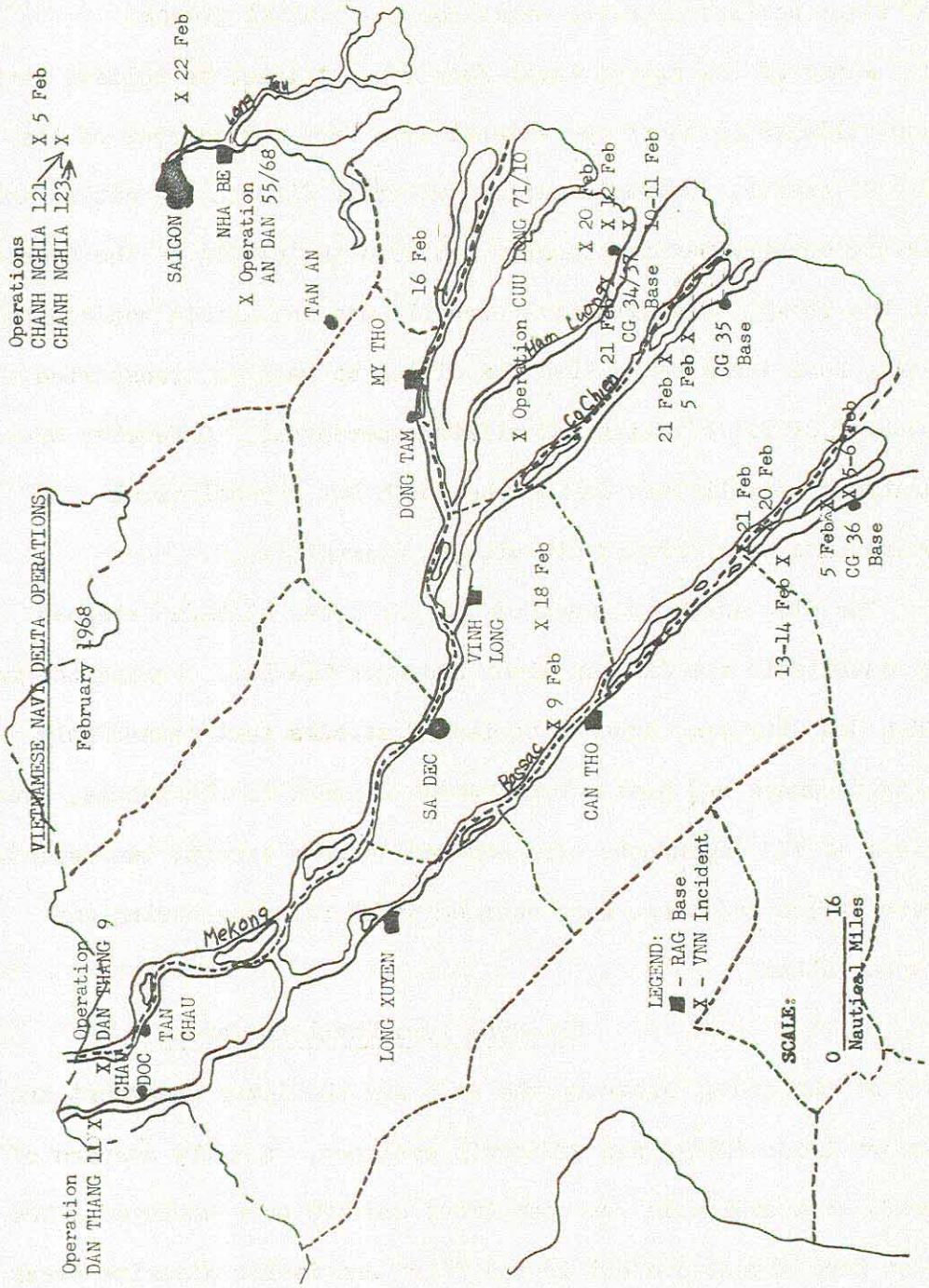

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and the RSSZ resulted in increased use of river assault craft for static defense. River Assault Group 22 provided two and sometimes three boats in support of the VNN headquarters' operations. Regional Force river patrol boat companies and RAGs 22 and 28 conducted river patrols and provided support for search and destroy operations in the RSSZ. Operations conducted by the U. S. Army 1st Division in Gia Dinh and Bien Hoa provinces received 200 boat-days of support from RAG 30. River Assault Group 27 provided 223 boat-days of support to operations conducted by the ARVN 50th Infantry Regiment. In Saigon, RAG 24 craft, which were being overhauled at the Eastern Repair Facility, were employed for defense of the Capital Military District. A three-boat detachment from RAG 24 remained at Tan An and was instrumental in the successful defense of that city on 10 February. As a result of the Tet Offensive, RAGs expanded civic action operations to include relocation of refugees and logistic lifts of food and supplies while civilian river traffic was at a standstill.

In Binh Duong Province RAG 28, supporting Binh Duong Province forces during the early stages of the Tet Offensive, contributed strongly to the defense of the provincial capital, Phu Cuong, 10 miles north of Saigon, during Viet Cong attacks on 1 February and on the night of 5-6 February. River Assault Group 28 craft provided fire support, flank security, blocking forces and later,

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indirect fire support and illumination. At 2300 on 5 February, a RAG monitor took a B-40 rocket hit that killed two VNN sailors but caused slight damage. The monitor was beached while repairs were made and two days later the craft was returned to duty. On 6 February RAG 28 craft supported the 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron in Operation CHANH NGHIA 121, west of Bien Hoa on the Dong Nai River. Twenty Viet Cong were killed while five others and numerous weapons were captured by the combined forces.

On 10 February three craft from RAG 24 were credited with the successful defense of the national highway bridge at Tan An in Long An Province. The craft joined with U. S. and ARVN forces to defend Tan An City and accounted for 30 Viet Cong killed. On 15 February, elements of RAG 28, one RF company, one ARVN infantry company, one national police company and elements of the RF river patrol company, combined forces west of Bien Hoa for Operation CHANH NGHIA 123. Seven Viet Cong were killed and three were captured along with weapons and documents in their possession.

Meanwhile, RAG 30 craft were operating with the U. S. 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, 10 miles east of Saigon along the Dong Nai River. The RAG units conducted search and destroy missions, established waterborne check points, provided fire support reconnaissance for ground troops and established floating night ambushes with embarked Army elements. On 22 February an Army barge convoy,

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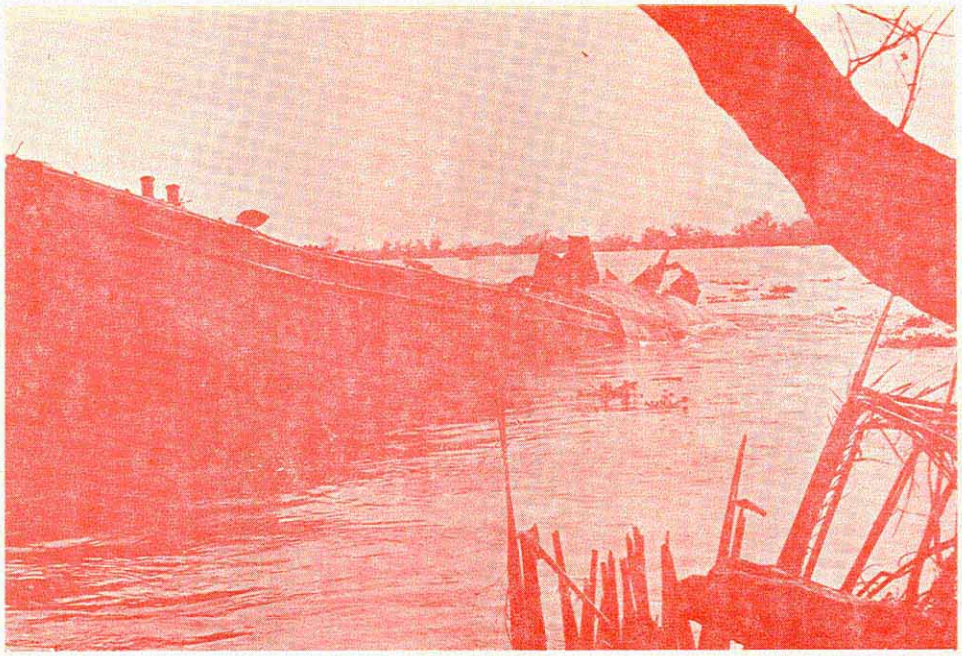

An Army ammunition barge sunk on the Dong Nai River resulting from enemy attack 10 miles east of Saigon on 22 February.

consisting of eight ammunition barges and two tugs, was attacked on the Dong Nai River, 10 miles east of Saigon. RAG 30 craft proceeded to the scene and found five barges still afloat, two of these burning. Two craft were dispatched to render assistance while the remaining units fired on the ambush area and subsequently put embarked troops and a VNN landing party ashore. Two additional barges sank and one other exploded. As the force conducted a search, RAG 30 coordinated a "medevac" for 13 personnel wounded during the attack. Six Viet Cong were killed, one B-41 rocket

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and one AK-47 were captured and a quantity of electric wire and nylon line, suspected to be part of a mine device, was recovered.

Operating throughout the month with the ARVN 50th Infantry Regiment, RAG 27 and RF units made slight but continuous contact with the enemy. On 26 February, Operation AN DAN 55/68, conducted north of Ben Luc, 14 miles southeast of Saigon on the Vam Co Dong River, resulted in four Viet Cong killed and one captured. Several weapons, a quantity of ammunition, a sampan motor, medical supplies and documents were seized.

The RAGs of the Fourth Riverine Area illustrated their effectiveness and versatility during February as they were committed to the defense of the Delta cities. The cities of Vinh Long, My Tho and Can Tho, in particular, were struck by the enemy and the RAGs based near those cities shared in the responsibility for the cities' defense and the ultimate victory over the Viet Cong and NVA. The price paid for repulsing the enemy was impressively slight. Although the number of U. S. and ARVN casualties were unknown, RAG units suffered 2 killed and 11 wounded, with 3 VNN sailors reported missing. The Viet Cong had over 300 killed in the battle of Vinh Long alone.

At Vinh Long the enemy infiltrated the city and, after a mortar barrage at 0250 on 31 January, attacked all government installations. By dawn the city, except for the areas immediately

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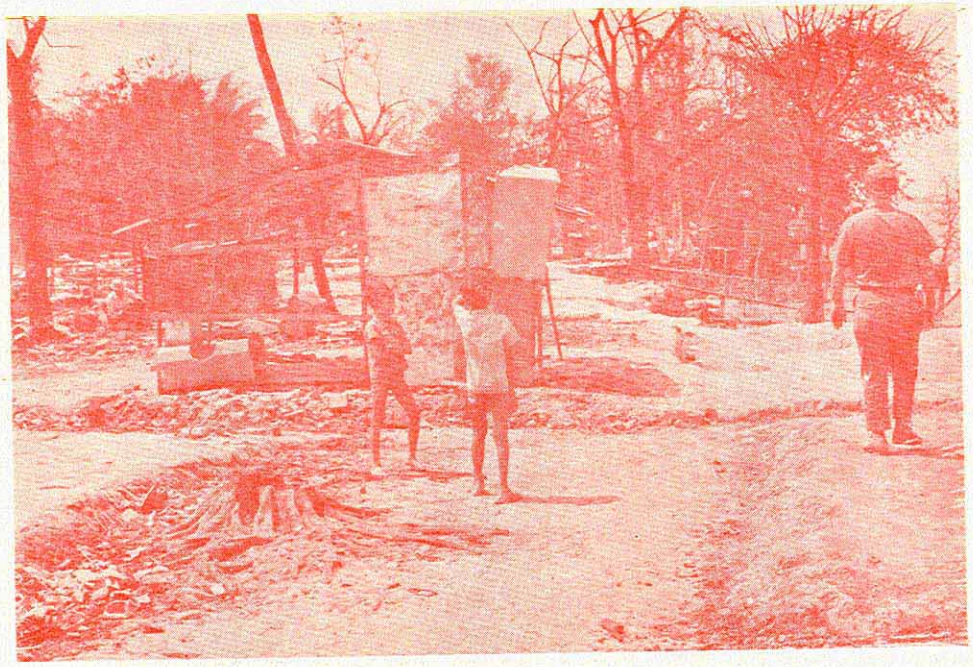
surrounding the RAG base and the airfield, was under enemy control. Leaving 40 men to defend the base, the craft of the RAGs 23/31 got underway and were joined by LSSLs 226 and 229, forming one large task force to support the base and friendly ground units in the city and along the nearby canals. During the following week the task force evacuated over 2,500 refugees from the city and surrounding villages to a mid-river island, resupplied the island and the troop units in and near the city, and provided almost continuous gunfire support in the battle for the city.



Vietnamese youngsters and an American advisor view the remainder of one section of Vinh Long after the Tet Offensive.

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When the insurgents began fortifying the waterfront area of Vinh Long the heavily-gunned LSSLs and monitors destroyed every building within 300 yards of the river's edge; similarly, the base defense force was forced to destroy the dependent housing area when the Viet Cong attempted to overrun the base by massing troops in the sailors' homes. On 4 February two divisions of the Riverine Assault Force, with two battalions of the U. S. Army's 9th Infantry Division embarked, supplemented the weary defenders; by the 8th the combined force had secured the city and the Vietnamese units turned to the major task of rebuilding.

In the defense of My Tho, RAG 21/33 craft carried out amphibious assaults with an ARVN 7th Infantry Division battalion and the 7th Reconnaissance Company, conducted gunfire support missions, made ammunition lifts and acted as a blocking force for the ground troops. From the initial attack at 0400 on 31 January until 3 February the Viet Cong continued to pound the city; however, withdrawing that day at 1000, the enemy left over 400 of their dead in the city. My Tho was regained at the cost of 2 VNN sailors wounded, 25 ARVN soldiers killed and an unreported number wounded. Meanwhile, at Can Tho, the craft of RAGs 25/29 patrolled the Bassac River and the Can Tho River, south and west of the city, preventing additional enemy infiltration and supporting defending units of the ARVN 21st Division on the north bank of the river.

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On 1 February the monitors of the task force laid down a 100-round barrage of 81-mm mortar fire, killing 40 Viet Cong and repulsing an attack on the ARVN compound. Recalled a few hours later, the craft killed 25 more of the enemy and repulsed a second attack. That same day another river patrol attacked an enemy cargo junk, killing 40 Viet Cong troops attempting to transit the Can Tho River, two miles west of the city. On the 2nd the river patrol team was ambushed by an enemy force, three miles southwest of the city; the patrol team escaped without casualties while killing 25 of the enemy.

At Chau Doc RAG 32 was conducting similar operations for the defense of that city. Ammunition runs from Long Xuyen, troop lifts, blocking force operations and normal patrol duties were carried by this RAG during the first few weeks of February.

Normal RAG operations were not resumed until the second half February; the first half being filled with special logistic lift missions of ammunition, POL, food and personnel. As the cities regained composure, the RAGs turned again to normal patrols, offensive operations and civic action missions. On 16 February RAG 21 units landed an ARVN 7th Infantry battalion and one RF company on two small islands in the My Tho River near the northern edge of Loi Quan Island. As the troops ashore conducted sweeps of the islands, the RAG craft surrounded each island as a blocking force.

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RAG commandament symbolizing strength and courage to the populac of Republic of Vietnam as it travels a river in the Delta.

The sweep netted 37 Viet Cong suspects. That same day, RAG 31 units resupplied outposts on the Ham Luong River and RAG 25 units lifted supplies to Ca Mau from Can Tho for the first time since the Tet Offensive. Each mission was conducted without incident and the RAG advisors noted the opportunity of immediate exploitation of the "psywar" and civic action programs as the people urgently needed, and wholeheartedly accepted, the aid of the Government of Vietnam.

On 18 February the enemy renewed his attacks on Vinh Long

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and My Tho with little success. At 0200 a mortar attack on Vinh Long was followed by approximately 100 Viet Cong infiltrators. RAG 23/33 personnel accounted for 21 Viet Cong killed as they ambushed the enemy at 0230. At 0730 this same RAG raider team attacked a Viet Cong platoon and six more of the enemy were killed. ARVN units battled the enemy most of the day as fixed-wing and helicopter air strikes were called in on Viet Cong positions. The enemy was finally forced to withdraw, sneaking out of the city under the cover of darkness.

At the same time, My Tho received 100 rounds of 82-mm mortars. No further attempts were made by the enemy to infiltrate and little damage was recorded.

On 20 and 23 February RAG 26/32 units conducted Operation DAN THANG 9 and 11 in Chau Doc Province near Chau Phu City. The combined forces of provincial and ARVN units and RAG craft resulted in 17 Viet Cong killed and numerous weapons captured while friendly casualties were 5 ARVN wounded. Also on 23 February, Operation CUU LONG 71/10 was conducted by RAG 23/31 units and ARVN forces in Kien Hoa Province, 13 miles south-southwest of My Tho. Thirty-three Viet Cong were captured. ARVN troops suffered two killed and four wounded.

Logistics

In February the VNN conducted 50 logistical support missions

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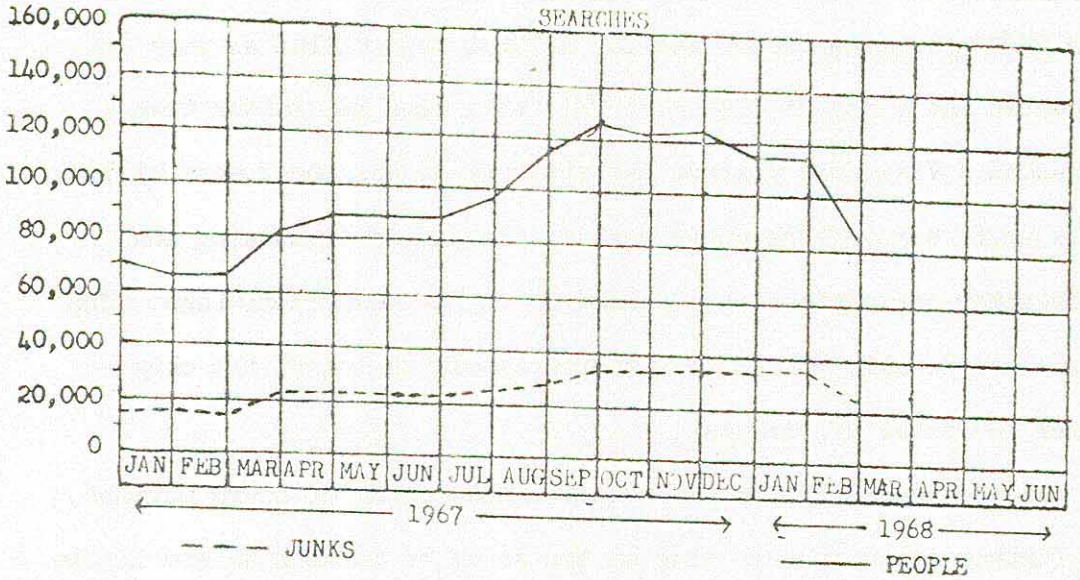
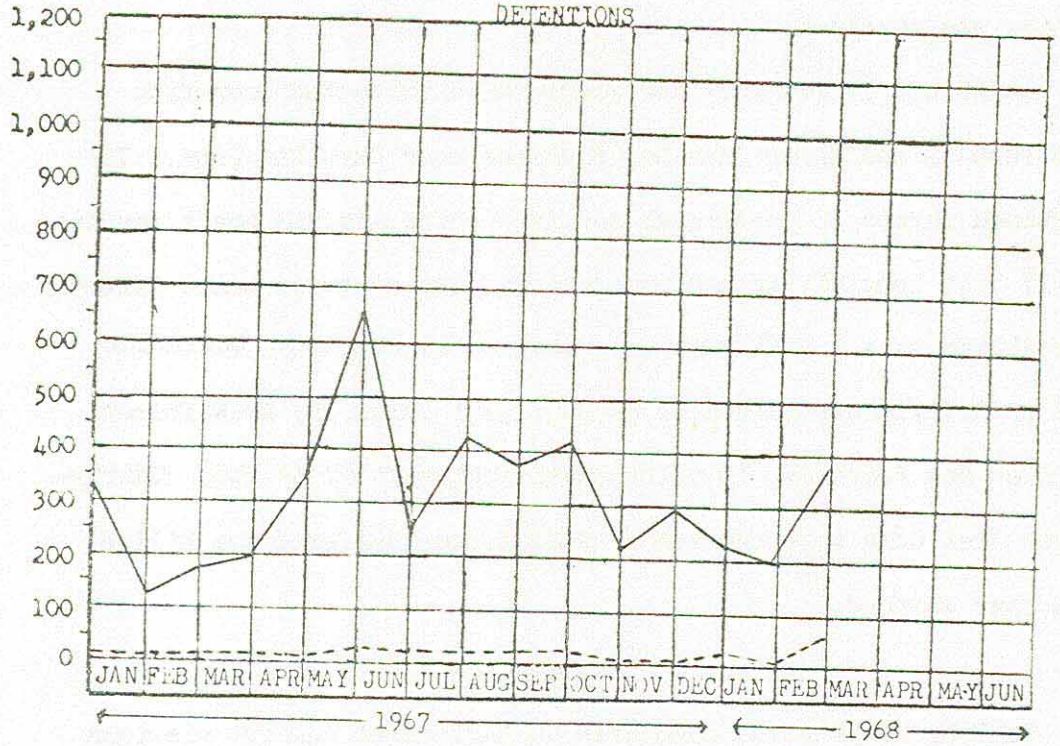
SEARCHES AND DETENTIONS
BY VIETNAMESE NAVY SEA, COASTAL AND RIVERINE FORCES





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which accounted for the lifting of 4,523 tons of cargo and 11,370 personnel. Tank Landing Ships (LSTs) lifted 1,398 tons of cargo and 5,266 personnel; Medium Landing ships (LSMs) lifted 1,506 tons of cargo and 1,875 personnel; and Utility Landing Craft (LCUs) lifted 1,619 tons of cargo and 4,229 personnel. The VNN Supply Center had a gross effectiveness of 71 percent on a total of 4,397 requests for items and a net effectiveness of 82.9 percent on 3,717 requests for items normally carried in the supply system.

Vietnamese Navy Statistical Summary
February 1968

	Searched		Detained	
Coastal Force	Junks	People	Junks	People
I NZ	7,281	20,409	0	57
II NZ	6,231	20,688	55	305
III NZ	6,181	23,799	0	6
IV NZ	2,640	7,842	0	0
Sub-totals	22,333	72,738	55	368
Fleet Command Patrol Ships	405	1,838	2	7
Riverine Area Craft	2,388	7,735	0	1
Totals	25,126	82,311	57	376

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VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS

During the month of February the six infantry battalions of the VNMC operated in I and II Corps Tactical Zones and Capital Military District. The infantry battalions and the artillery battalion were committed to operations 100 percent of the time. During February the operational control of the six battalions was characterized by constant change. (See page 167).

Until 2 February Task Force A, composed of the 5th and 6th Battalions and Battery C, VNMC Artillery Battalion, conducted operations in II Corps Tactical Zone under the operational control of ARVN forces. That day the 6th Battalion was returned to Saigon and assigned to the Capital Military District. By 6 February ARVN forces had relieved the remainder of Task Force A, the 5th Battalion and Battery C, which also returned to Saigon. On 9 February the task force headquarters and 1st Battalion deployed to Phu Bai in the I Corps Tactical Zone under the operational control of ARVN forces. The 5th Battalion arrived at Phu Bai on 12 February and on 14 February the 4th Battalion and Battery B, VNMC Artillery Battalion arrived at Phu Bai. Thus Task Force A was in force and became actively engaged in the battle of Hue.

Throughout the month these battalions pursued their objectives, gaining ground one day, only to be checked the next. Heavy friendly losses were taken each day while inflicting still heavier losses

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on the enemy. On 24 February the west wall of the city of Hue was secured by the 5th Battalion, while the south wall was being taken by the 4th Battalion. The toll of many lives was paid those days as Task Force A remained, patrolling and sweeping to hold the Citadel, Hue Island and the area to the south of the Perfume River. By 27 February mopping-up operations were conducted by small-unit patrols of each element of the task force. Weapons and ammunition of such vast quantity were uncovered that the material was either destroyed in place or buried with the Viet Cong bodies. The following statistics illustrate the magnitude and results of the battle operations as conducted by Task Force A at Hue.

VC/NVA	622 KIA	29 VC CAPTURED	278 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED
VNMC	80 KIA	365 WIA	1 MIA
US	1 WIA		

Weapons Captured:

12	Rocket launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
1	Rocket launcher, Soviet, RPG-7 (B-41)
2	Mortar, 60-mm
5	Heavy machine gun, ChiCom, 12.7-mm, type 54
3	Light machine gun, U. S., .30 caliber
1	Light machine gun, U. S., 7.62-mm M-60
18	Light machine gun, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, type 56
72	Rifle, assault, Soviet, 7.62-mm, AK-47
5	Rifle, U.S., 5.56-mm, M-16
18	Rifle, U. S., .30 caliber, M-1
1	Rifle, Browning automatic, U. S., .30 caliber
1	Submachine gun, Danish, M-51
2	Submachine gun, U. S., .45 caliber, M-3
6	Submachine gun, Soviet, 7.62-mm, K-50
50	Carbine, Soviet, 7.62-mm, SKS
1	Carbine, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, type 56
35	Carbine, U. S., .30 caliber, M-1

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Weapons Captured:
1 Pistol, U. S., .45 caliber
1 Pistol, flare
17 Pistol, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, type 54
1 Pistol, French, 7.65-mm

Before deploying to Task Force B in the Saigon area on 18 February, the 2nd Battalion was utilized in the Capital Military District. Continuous daily contact was made by the battalion as it conducted Operation TRAN HUNG DAO. Moving from district to district, the battalion cleared and secured areas where the enemy had held temporary positions. Material results of the 2nd Battalion from 1 to 18 February were as follows:

VC/NVA	41 KIA	8 VC CAPTURED	365 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED
VNMC	2 KIA	19 WIA	

Weapons Captured:
3 Rocket launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
1 Rifle, U. S., .30 caliber, M-1
6 Submachine gun, Soviet, 7.62-mm, K-50
2 Carbine, U. S., .30 caliber, M-1
1 Pistol, German, 9-mm, P-38
1 Pistol, U. S., .38 caliber

Similarly, until they joined Task Force B on 9, 10 and 14 February, the 6th, 5th and 3rd battalions participated in Operation TRAN HUNG DAO in the Capital Military District, pursuing the enemy which had conducted terrorist and offensive operations throughout Saigon. From western Gia Dinh Province, five miles west of Saigon, to Thu Duc, four miles northeast of Saigon, these VNMC battalions raked out the enemy in repeated encounters. Total results of these three battalions were as follows:

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VC/NVA	80 KIA	32 VC CAPTURED	301 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED
VNMC	3 KIA	21 WIA	

Weapons Captured:

2 Rocket launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
3 Light machine gun, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, type 56
31 Rifle, assault, Soviet, 7.62-mm, AK-47
2 Carbine, U. S., .30 caliber, M-1
1 Carbine, Soviet, 7.62-mm, SKS
3 Pistol, U. S., .45 caliber
2 Rifle, Browning automatic, U. S., .30 caliber
4 Submachine gun, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, K-60
3 Submachine gun, U. S., .45 caliber, Thompson
2 Pistol, ChiCom, 9-mm
2 Pistol, ChiCom, 7.62-mm, type 54
1 Pistol, unknown

At the first of the month Task Force B, the 1st and the 4th Battalions, under the operational control of the Joint General Staff, continued the battle near Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The enemy, attacking from the north, met difficult opposition in the Task Force until 3 February when they broke contact with the Marines. Daily offensive operations were then conducted by the Task Force. From 5-8 February 154 Viet Cong suspects were detained by the Marines. On 9 February, the 6th Battalion relieved the 1st battalion as the 1st went to Phu Bai. The addition of the 5th Battalion completed Task Force B on 10 February and Operation TRAN HUNG DAO resumed; continuous offensive operations were conducted throughout the northeast portion of Saigon. Light enemy contact was made although numerous Viet Cong suspects were detained. The 5th Battalion moved to Task Force A on 12 February and on the 14th the 4th Battalion

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was relieved by the 3rd to go to Task Force A. The 3rd and 6th battalions, now composing Task Force B, continued to carry on patrolling operations, detaining suspects on a regular basis but not encountering the enemy. The 2nd Battalion returned to the operational control of Task Force B on 18 February. Between 18 and 24 February the 2nd and 6th Battalions experienced no enemy contact but detained a total of 345 suspects.

The 3rd Battalion, however, was engaged by an estimated enemy battalion on 18 February. A company of the battalion was defending the eastern approach to the Binh Loi Bridge over the Saigon River in northeast Saigon. The Marines were reinforced by an additional company of the 3rd Battalion on the eastern side of the bridge, two Vietnamese tanks on the western side and a U. S. light helicopter fire team overhead. When the friendly forces were attacked from the west the VNMC units from the east pressed westward as a company of the 6th Battalion formed a blocking force behind the enemy, 500 yards to the west. The VNMC suffered 14 Marines killed and 32 wounded while 142 enemy lay dead on the battlefield and 3 Viet Cong were captured after the battle.

The next day similar attacks were made on the Marine battalion on the east of the bridge and then on the west. Throughout the day the Marines pursued the enemy, occasionally coming upon an estimated platoon, but generally encountering harassing, well-concealed enemy

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troops. Helicopter gunships, both U. S. and Vietnamese Air Force, provided overhead support as the Marines killed 65 Viet Cong. Five Marines were killed and 12 were wounded.

For the remainder of the month, the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Battalions continued offensive operations in their areas of responsibility in northeast Saigon. Occasional enemy contact was made, additional bodies were discovered and numerous enemy suspects were detained. Task Force B recorded the following results for the month of February:

VC/NVA	1,273 KIA	61 VC CAPTURED	1,983 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED
VNMC	127 KIA	604 WIA	1 MIA
US	4 WIA		

Weapons Captured:
77 Crew-served weapons
367 Individual weapons

Operational Control Summary

UNIT	DATE	OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF
First Battalion	1-8 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC
	9-29 Feb 68	Task Force A, VNMC
Second Battalion	010001H-010759H	Task Force B, VNMC
	010800H-011000H	42nd Airborne Battalion, ARVN
	011000H-180800H	CMD
	18-29 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC
Third Battalion	010001H-041430H	CMD
	041430H-061330H	Task Force B, VNMC
	061330H-141100H	CMD
	141100H-29 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC

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UNIT	DATE	OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF
Fourth Battalion	1-13 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC
	14-29 Feb 68	Task Force A, VNMC
Fifth Battalion	1-5 Feb 68	Task Force A, VNMC
	061830H-101200H	CMD
	101200H-11 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC
	12-29 Feb 68	Task Force A, VNMC
Sixth Battalion	1 Feb 68	Task Force A, VNMC
	2-8 Feb 68	CMD
	9-29 Feb 68	Task Force B, VNMC

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APPENDIX I

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The enemy's massive Tet Offensive during the early days of February and the continuation of sporadic mortar/rocket attacks produced an aura in which the ministry of the Navy chaplains was brought nearer and more meaningful to those involved in the crisis. The complexity and variety of the chaplains' ministry and the demands made upon it in this war situation were brought to the fore.

In addition to the divine, memorial and other special religious services conducted during February, special mention must be made of the inter-service/inter-unit coverage that Army, Navy and Air Force chaplains provided. Due to the inability to fulfill commitments because of the enemy's presence or in the absence of unit chaplains, the chaplains of all services readily availed themselves to the needs of the servicemen, whether Army, Navy or Air Force. Despite the precarious nature of travel throughout South Vietnam, more so in February than before, the chaplains continued to travel by plane, helicopter, boat or vehicle to make drop-in visits to units and ships all over Vietnam.

In the hospitals, especially this month, it seemed the chaplains were omnipresent as the wounded were brought in from the field. Two new wards were opened in February at the Naval Support Activity Danang Station Hospital and the following remarks by Chaplain Robert M. HARRINGTON, best illustrate the situation as it was:

"February 1968 was the busiest month in the two-year history of NSA Hospital, Danang, RVN. The bed capacity now is 597 beds, two new wards having opened this month. Two thousand one hundred and seventy-five patients were admitted. During the peak days the walking wounded and the Vietnamese nationals were not counted, simply put in the holding barracks until evacuation facilities could be found for them. Some times the helicopters had to hold over the landing pad, waiting their turn to unload the wounded."

Chaplain Marion McCOY reflected:

"Sleep became a commodity that one thought of often but found only in naps of an hour or two during brief lulls while waiting for more casualties to arrive. I even learned on a couple occasions that it is possible to get a quick nap on a canvas stretcher tucked away in a quiet corner, though I would not recommend this as a permanent arrangement....Each patient was seen by Chaplain HARRINGTON and myself as they came into the hospital for treatment as well as being visited on the wards by the chaplains if they remained as patients.. ...One of the bright spots of each week is the visits that the many field chaplains make to the men of their command who are hospitalized. I never cease to be impressed by the devotion of our many chaplains who regularly visit their sick and wounded. The men deeply appreciate and look forward to these visits."

Despite the urgent necessity of providing spiritual guidance to the servicemen defending the Vietnamese people from Communist aggres-

sion, the chaplains regarded the demands as "opportunities of service." Chaplain Charles J. McCOY sums up the spirit of all Navy chaplains in Republic of Vietnam when he says ".....what frustrating, anxious days - but I wouldn't trade my job with anyone....."

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