

THE JACKSTAFF NEWS

VOL. I No. 21

U.S. NAVAL FORCES II, III, IV. CORPS. VIETNAM

August 11, 1967

'Game Warden' Strikes by Waterway and Air

Gunfire Support Missions Highlight MT Operations

Operation Market Time was highlighted during the past few weeks by numerous gunfire support missions.

Some of the most spectacular results were obtained by the Coast Guard cutters Point Banks and Yakutat, firing on separate missions on July 17.

Mortar and machine gun fire from the Point Banks, supporting Vietnamese troops, touched off 17 secondary explosions 190 miles southwest of Saigon.

Requested to hit enemy targets near the coast, the 82-foot cutter lobbed 44 rounds of 81mm mortar and directed more than 600 rounds of .50-caliber automatic weapons into the area. The Vietnamese described the target coverage as "excellent".

One of the large blasts was described as "bright white and red, spewing flames and sparks above the treeline".

Point Banks is a unit of Coast Guard Division 11, based at An Thoi.

The Yakutat, on patrol 60 miles southeast of Saigon in the South China Sea, destroyed 13 enemy emplacements during a pre-planned coastal bombardment mission.

About 11:30 a.m. the cutter's five-inch rounds caused a secondary explosion that spewed 125-foot-high, streamer-like clouds of white smoke.

Yakutat, a 311-foot high-endurance cutter, received no enemy fire during the mission.

Two Swift boats suppressed an enemy rocket attack on a Vietnamese Navy junk base July 26.

At 7:30 p.m. Swift Boats 46 and 49 out of Da Nang observed seven to ten rocket rounds being launched towards the base. The 50-foot fast patrol craft moved in toward shore and saturated the area of launching with .50-caliber machine gun fire. No further rocket launchings were sighted.

On July 16 the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Point Garnet killed

(Cont. on Page 3)

Game Warden personnel were active on the water and in the air during the past few weeks as Navy Seawolf helicopters and river patrol boat sailors inflicted heavy damages and casualties on enemy forces.

Often the Navy airmen and patrol boat sailors teamed up to hit the foe with a deadly one-two punch, as on July 29 when an attempted ambush was broken up with five enemy killed.

At 10:50 a.m., PBRs 141 and 143 of the Vinh Long-based River Patrol Section 523 were on patrol along the Co Chien river at a point 75 miles southwest of Saigon when they spotted three sampans entering a nearby canal.

When the PBRs moved in to investigate and fired warning shots across the bows of the sampans, they received small arms and automatic weapons fire in return from the south bank of the canal.

Fight out of Ambush

Opening up with .50-caliber machine guns and 40mm grenades, the PBRs fought their way out of the ambush. The enemy were firing from five different ambush positions set up along the canal banks.

Joined by PBR 136, also of Patrol Section 523, and a fire team of Navy Seawolf helicopters, the PBRs went back into the canal.

As the PBRs pounded the enemy positions with .50-caliber machine gun fire and 40mm grenades, the Seawolves swept into the area with rocket and more machine gun fire.

The enemy fire was soon suppressed and the Navy units accounted for at least five enemy dead.

There were no U.S. casualties in the encounter. Patrol Officer for the PBRs was First Class Petty Officer H.S. Hyder.

But both the Seawolves and river patrol boats were also able to hit the enemy hard on their own.

A Seawolf helicopter fire team killed 15 enemy Saturday morning, July 15, while attacking personnel fleeing from an air strike on a grenade factory 65 miles southwest of Saigon.

The fire team was on a regular patrol when it received a request to search for escaping enemy after the grenade factory had been hit at about 8 a.m. by Air Force planes.

Helos Attack

The helicopter crews spotted the enemy fleeing the area and attacked.

The helicopter fire team also destroyed five huts, damaged four, destroyed two sampans and damaged nine.

And the PBR sailors did well on their own, too.

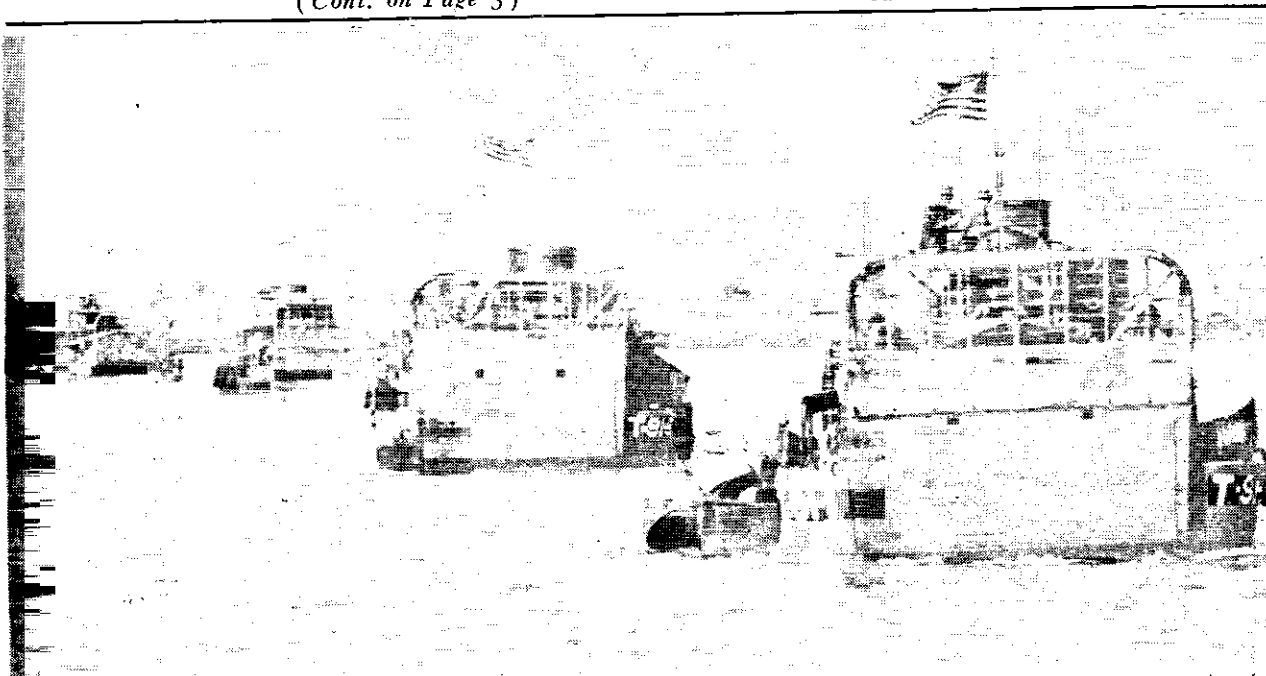
At 4 p.m. on July 23 crews of two PBRs on the Mekong River five miles east of Sa Dec spotted ten enemy sampans.

As the PBR crews moved in to investigate, they received enemy small arms fire from the sampans and from nearby structures.

The PBR crews returned the fire, killing six enemy and setting off two secondary explosions. They also destroyed or damaged nine of the sampans and four of the structures.

Two PBRs and a Vietnamese Maritime Policeman killed four enemy and detained one in two separate engagements July 25 on the Bassac River.

(Cont. on Page 3)



HERE COMES THE ARMY-NAVY!—Armored troop carriers of the Navy's River Assault Flotilla One carry U.S. Army troops into battle. The new American force in the Delta is continuing to keep the enemy off balance with search and destroy operations of his former sanctuaries. The riverine force recently conducted an operation in Dinh Tuong Province that has accounted for 280 enemy killed in an area about 15 miles west of My Tho. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by C.B. Hall, PH3)

'You Make America Strong, Brave, Free'

Nearly forty 8 to 10 year olds in a small school in Hampton, Florida sat down one afternoon, took pencil and notebook paper and wrote forty letters to the sailor-Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, MCB 71, based on the sands of Chu Lai, South Vietnam.

Nine-year-old Jane E. Lott wrote, "To me you are the nicest, kindest, bravest men in the whole universe. And you make America what it is—strong, brave and free. You know you can win against the Viet Cong because, like America, you're strong."

Other comments in the forty letters read... "You should be here because the girl's dresses are getting shorter... You know, the more I think about sailors, the more I want to join the Air Force... I love you all... When I get old enough I might come to help you fight, but I am only ten years old.

"We are working pretty hard in school, but I know you are working 8 times harder... I bet you guys need some air-conditioning to cool you off... I'm glad you guys are fighting for our country... If I had a big enough envelope I would send you a girl."

"Did you hear Elvis Presley got married... I wish you could come home... the girls keep getting better looking (WOW!) in the U.S... the girls around here are better looking and their skirts keep getting shorter and shorter."

One young lad, Marshal C., showed a bit of serious concern over the current Vietnam conflict when he wrote... "First I want to thank you all for fighting in this lousy, rotten war. But the main thing is to keep the torch of freedom going. Personally, I don't think North Vietnam is being very nice about the whole thing."

Steve Hall put his 10-year-old thoughts to the Vietnam-based Seabees another way...

"I'm dropping a line,
And not an explosive mine.
You better be glad,
'Cause if I had,
This I quote,
You wouldn't be reading this note.
Now at the end of all,
Good-by from Steve Hall."

Forty young minds put forty thoughts down on forty different pieces of notebook paper to 800 men of a Naval construction battalion in Vietnam—all said the same thing, we are proud of you. We wish the war was over and you would come home.

From a Seabee on the sands of Chu Lai, South Vietnam, "I wish the same and thank you for the letters."

The Jackstaff News

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B.C.



Chaplain's Corner Five Will Get You Ten

by Chaplain O'Brien

"Five will get you ten." How often we hear this phrase on AFRS or watch it on television here in Vietnam!

This catchy slogan reminds us that five dollars invested in an overseas savings deposit account will draw ten percent interest. The number of men and the amount of their investment shows that we know a good deal when we see one.

I wonder why the same people who jump at the opportunity to realize a profit on their money fail to do likewise when it comes to investing their time and talent? Today you must decide how to invest your time and talent. Waste it or use it?

That question is asked daily. Do you realize a return on your investment or do you throw it away or neglect it because of laziness or indifference?

The difference between a man who fails lies in the use or waste of time and talent today.

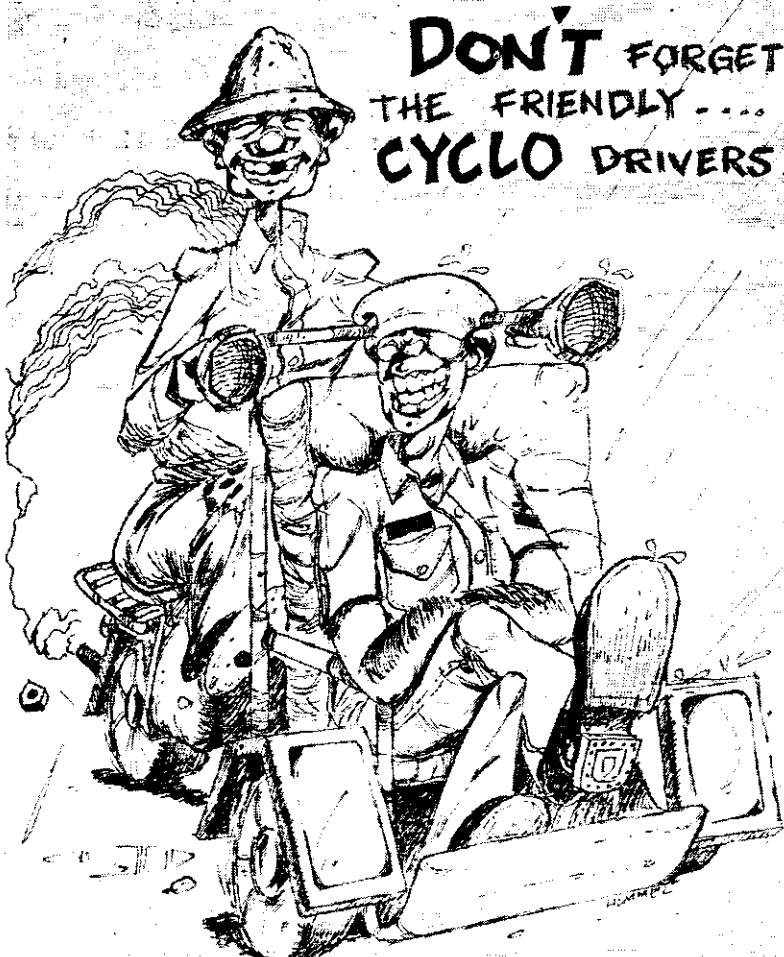
Padre's Quotes:

Make with the brain waves—afterthought wouldn't be necessary with a bit more forethought.

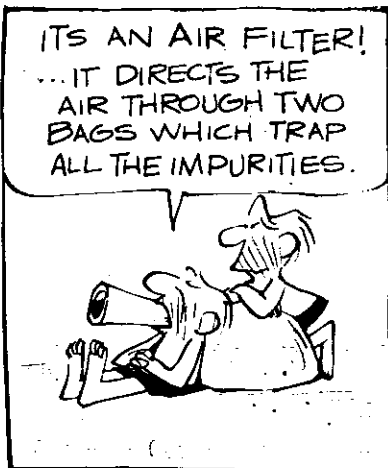
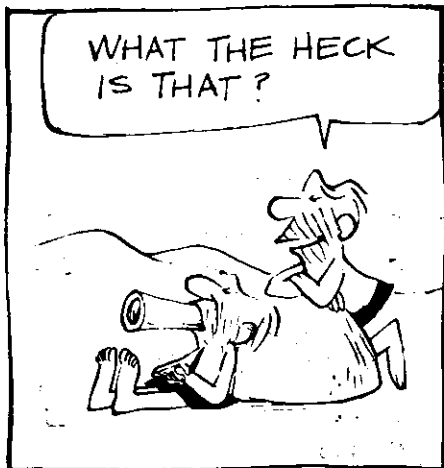
Security is entertaining a new idea without taxing all your energy.

Thought for the week: when a person can't hold liquor, a bottle should.

Hummel's Vietnam



by johnny hart



Nha Be Hit; Navymen React Fast

Quick action by U.S. Navy boat crews and detachment personnel averted near disaster in the early hours of Thursday morning, Aug. 3, when the enemy staged a midnight mortar attack on the Naval Base at Nha Be, 10 miles southeast of Saigon.

The Navy crewmen rushed to their river patrol and minesweeping boats and within minutes had them positioned to counter the enemy mortar and recoilless rifle attack.

"All of the boats were away from the pier five minutes after the first enemy round fell," said Navy Lieutenant Paul E. Guay, Officer-in-Charge of River Patrol Section 543.

Out Lightning Fast

"We had pre-planned areas to take the boats to in an attack like this," he said. "We had them out there lightning fast."

Lieutenant (jg) Ray Frey, a patrol officer with PBR Section 543, told of getting the boats away from the pier.

"I ran to the pier, leaped into the next boat in line and took off," he related. "Two seamen went with me.

"At the time I got there the rounds were falling in the pier area and shrapnel was whizzing all around the place," he said.

"We got the boat underway," he continued, "and about three seconds later a round exploded right where the boat had been. As we took off I looked back and saw about four rounds of what looked like recoilless rifle fire exploding behind us. We started zigzagging and got away from it."

Enemy mortar and recoilless rifle fire were observed coming from across the Long Tau and Nha Be Rivers east and southeast of the base. The PBRs positioned and poured heavy machine gun fire and grenades into the enemy.

U.S. Army "gunships" and Navy Seawolf helicopters joined an AC-47 "spooky" aircraft on the scene and despite heavy enemy fire from automatic weapons, countered with intense rocket and machine gun fire.

Aircraft Strike

"The aircraft were really effective," said Lt. Guay. "You could see their tracers and rockets going in after the enemy."

The nearby fuel tank farms took several hits, but firefighters swiftly brought the fires under control. The civilian community of Nha Be also suffered damage.

The air and river units suppressed the enemy fire after 20 minutes of fighting.

Despite the heavy enemy barrage, the exploding rounds caused only light damage to Navy craft and base structures.

Twenty-four U.S. personnel were reported wounded—none seriously.



EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE—The Naval Support Activity Detachment at Vinh Long was recently visited by a delegation of Vietnamese provincial leaders, including the provincial chief, as an expression of friendship and gratefulness. Cdr. T. Lewis, Commander River Division 52, is accepting a case containing Vietnamese and United States flags from (left to right) Miss Hien, Miss Young and Lt. Col. Huynh Diep, Province Chief. The delegation also arranged for joint Vietnamese-American prayer services at Vinh Long churches.

Game Warden PBRs, Helos Pound Enemy

(Continued from Page 1)

In the first encounter, PBRs 37 and 38 were on routine Operation Game Warden patrol on the Bassac when, at 11:30 a.m., the patrol was informed by Vietnamese civilians on the river that enemy soldiers were preparing to ambush the PBR support ship USS Garrett County (LST 786).

Upon investigation, the PBR crewmen spotted four men on the beach. When a Vietnamese Maritime Policeman, accompanying the patrol boats, boarded a civilian sampan to go in to the beach and question the four men, they attempted to evade into a nearby treeline.

Policeman Makes Kill

Taking the escaping enemy under fire, the Vietnamese policeman killed one and detained another.

Continuing with their combat patrol, the PBRs were 15 miles southeast of their previous encounter, near the mouth of the Bassac, when at 5:15 p.m. they sighted a motorized sampan towing two other sampans along the river.

There were three men in the motorized sampan and two others in each of the other boats.

Spotting the PBRs, all three sampans attempted to evade to the nearby beach. Ignoring warning shots from the patrol boats, the enemy soldiers jumped onto the riverbank and ran towards the cover of nearby foliage.

Opeing up with .50-caliber machine guns and 40mm grenades, the PBRs killed three of the enemy and sank two of the sampans. The third sampan was captured.

PBRs 37 and 38 are units of River Patrol Section 511, based at the USS Garrett County (LST 786).

Patrol Officer for the two-boat patrol was Chief Petty Officer Terrance M. Digenan.

But the American Navymen also suffered casualties.

One U.S. Navymen was seriously wounded and three others and a Vietnamese National Policeman suffered minor wounds July 25 when their PBR was hit by an enemy recoilless rifle round at 3 p.m., 18 miles southeast of Can Tho on the Bassac River.

Can Tho Boat Hit

The Can Tho-based boats were on normal patrol when one of the boats was hit in the starboard side by the round.

An American Navymen was killed in the "Forest of Assassins" on the Long Tau River just after midnight July 23.

While on a routine patrol of the main shipping channel leading to the South Vietnamese capital city, the Nha Be-based PBRs were hit by an unknown number of rounds of enemy fire.

Moving into the area, two other PBRs opened up, saturating the enemy positions with machine gun

fire and grenades. Enemy casualties are unknown.

Another Navymen was killed when a Seawolf helicopter was downed by fire from the enemy-controlled Dung Island near the mouth of the Bassac River July 21. The helo crashed onto the island.

Another Seawolf picked up three wounded crewmen. The enemy then moved in and camouflaged the helo.

Units of Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group 36, covered by fire from six U.S. Navy River Patrol Boats and Navy and Army helicopters, moved ashore to help recover the downed aircraft.

The Vietnamese sailors found the aircraft already stripped. They continued to search and recovered the helicopter's weapons, some ammunition and radio equipment hidden by the enemy in a nearby house.

Later an Army heavy duty Chinook helicopter lifted the downed Navy "huey" from the jungle and carried it to Soc Trang.

Market Time Report

(Continued from Page 1)

three enemy soldiers, destroyed four sampans and blasted two enemy bunkers while supporting Vietnamese Army forces 180 miles southwest of Saigon.

The cutter provided naval gunfire support to ARVN troops who had encountered an estimated two platoons of enemy soldiers.

The Point Garnet is a unit of Coast Guard Division 11 based at An Thoi.

The recent capture of an enemy trawler by Market Time forces has resulted in a message of congratulations by General W.C. Westmoreland, Commander Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. The message read as follows:

"Naval forces have achieved a significant success during the operation conducted against an arms-bearing trawler on July 14-15 1967. Flawless execution indicates the high degree of efficiency and competency of the officers and men of your command. Please pass my personal congratulations to all participants for outstanding performance."

Have Plane, Will Travel

By Lieutenant Commander R.R. Hassel

The phone rings and is promptly answered, "NavSuppAct Air Operations, Mellema speaking, sir."

The message is urgent, "This in Lieutenant McKellar, I have a request for immediate delivery of 10,000 lbs. of 50-caliber ammunition to An Thoi. They had a fire fight last night and they expect more activity tonight."

"They're in critical supply now and the LST on the regular supply run won't get there until late tomorrow. Can you handle it?"

"Yes sir!, 809 just got back from the south run. I'll have Lieutenant Yoak call you back as soon as he gets in from the aircraft."

A typical request for immediate response from the nontypical aviation unit which has built an unparalleled reputation of dependable service. Neither squadron nor detachment, Air Cofat is the only one of its kind in the Navy. Led by Lieutenant Commander Dick Corey, the air arm of Naval Support Activity, Saigon consists of seven officers and 21 enlisted men who fly and maintain the units' three C-47s and one C-45.

Air Cofat provides service for eleven detachments throughout II, III and IV corp areas. Regular courier runs keep routine movements of personnel and administrative traffic flowing smoothly while the other aircraft are used to resupply the detachments within a priority arrangement.

Around the World, Twice a Month

You might be impressed by a few isolated facts, such as the airline flying enough miles to encircle the earth twice every month or carrying enough personnel monthly to supply the complement of an aircraft carrier along with sufficient provisions for their maintenance over that period.

But these facts are meaningless. It suffices to say that with half the manning level of comparable sized units of other services, Air Cofat flies more than twice as many flight hours and carries well over 200% more personnel and cargo! To do a bang-up job takes a lot of everything and Air Cofat has the best!

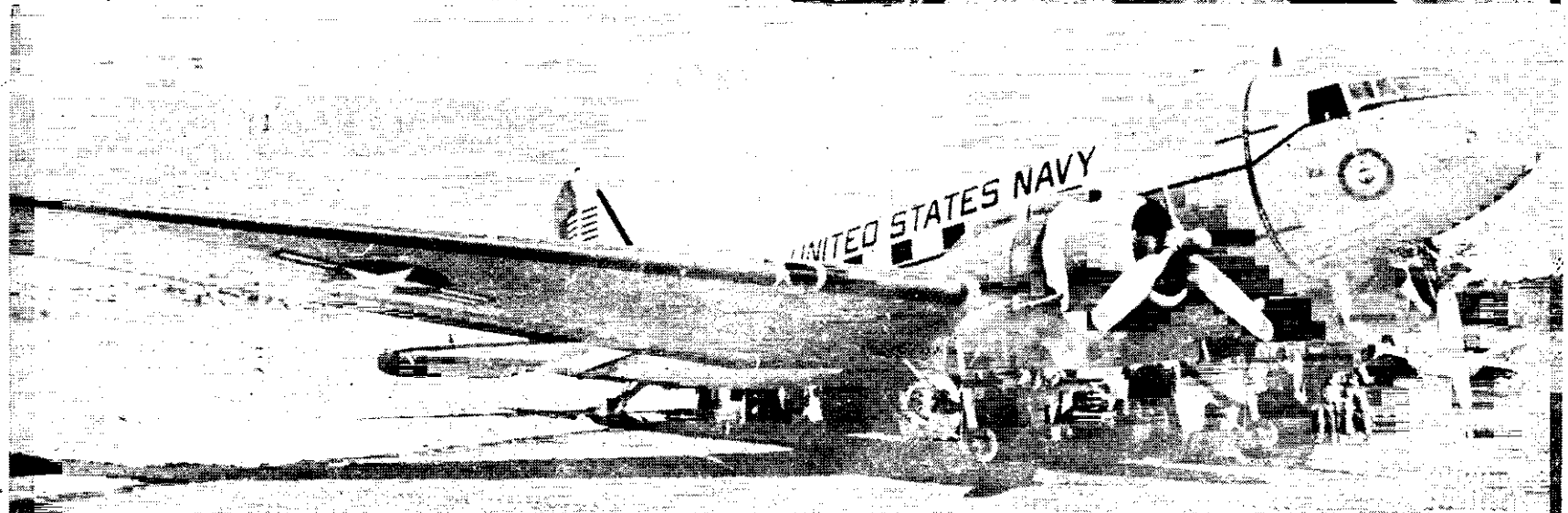
First of all, the experience level of the six aviators is much higher than any other aviation organization in the Navy. As Lieutenant Snyder laments, "3200 hours of flight time and still the junior pilot!" In often chaotic situations, that experience is like money in the bank.

Also vital to the success of their missions is the hard-charging attitude of the men. They have often worked the night through and well into the next day to get an aircraft up to meet a pressing commitment.

(Cont. to Page 5)

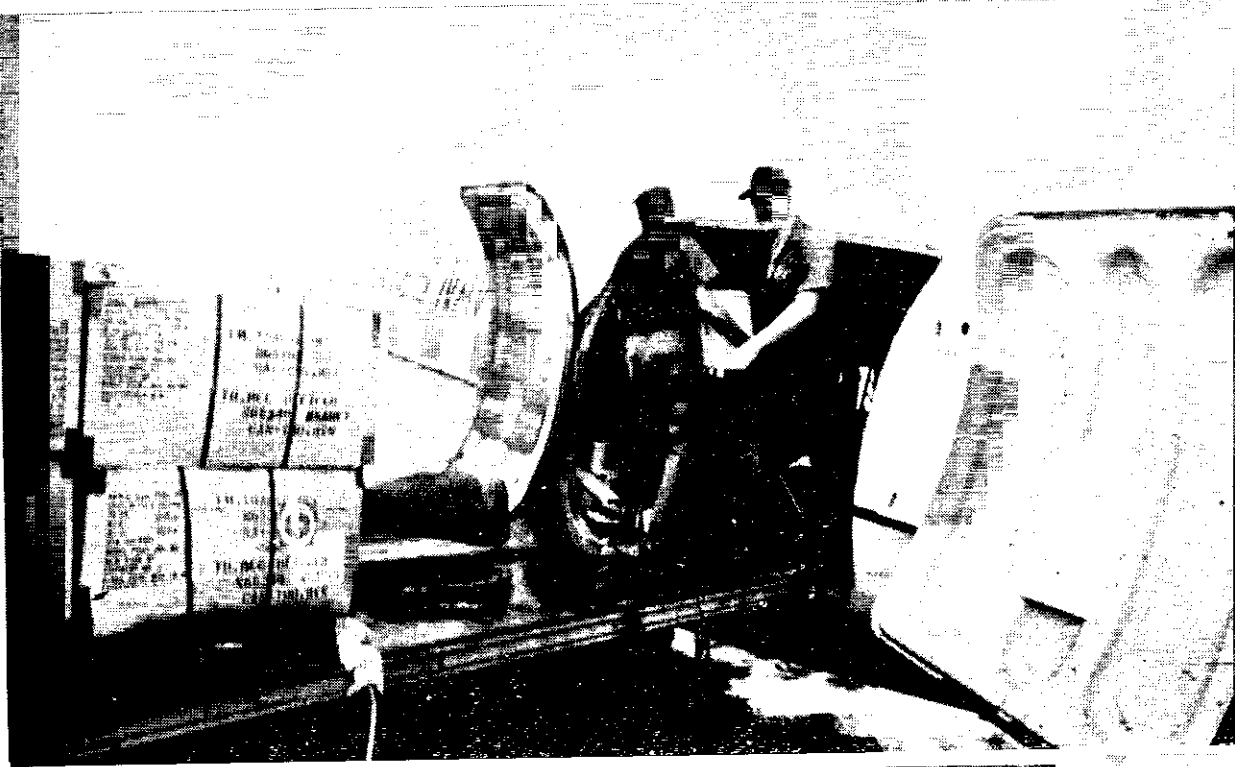


KEY TO SUCCESS—The non-glamorous but vital behind-the-scenes skilled and painstaking maintenance is in large part responsible for the impressive record of Air Cofat.



'BUSH AIRLINE'—Like the old "bush airlines" Air Cofat goes nearly everywhere there is a demand for its services and where there is a few feet of runway. Here one of the C-47s takes a breather at An Thoi on Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Thailand.

(Photos on pages 4-5 Official U.S. Navy Photos by L.M. Lindberg, PH2, and D.L. Bordwell, PH1.)



LOTS OF BUSINESS—The views of the freight and passengers being loaded aboard show Air Cofat's reason for existence. The airline is a vital link between the Navy's bases scattered throughout the Delta and along the coast in support of Operations Game Warden and Market Time. In one month alone, over 2,700 passengers and over 220,000 pounds of cargo were hauled.



(Continued from Page 4)

A cadre of plane captains, first class in every respect, insure that aircraft are ready to provide service to the detachments whenever and wherever it is needed.

I recently had the pleasure of accompanying one of these crews on a round of stops which included :

Vung Tau, a Market Time and Game Warden base where because of strong cross winds we landed on a 2000 ft. matting.

Con Son Island, where a Coast Guard Loran Station and Market Time Radar sites are supplied. Air Cofat services are so appreciated that sandwiches and cold pop met the aircraft.

Vinh Long, a typical PBR support detachment in the Delta with helos parked adjacent to the runway. I thought we should shorten our wings.

VC Sharpshooters Try for 'Big Bird'

Binh Thuy, headquarters of CTF 116 and infamous for VC sharpshooters. Planes have been occasionally hit by enemy small arms fire and one passenger received a Purple Heart after being nicked by a nearly-spent bullet that came through his seat and made it uncomfortable for him to sit down for a few days. But they have never managed to inflict any major damage or seriously wound anyone.

Rach Gia and An Thoi, the shrimp and Nouc Mam captials of Vietnam, where junks are the primary craft for coastal defense.

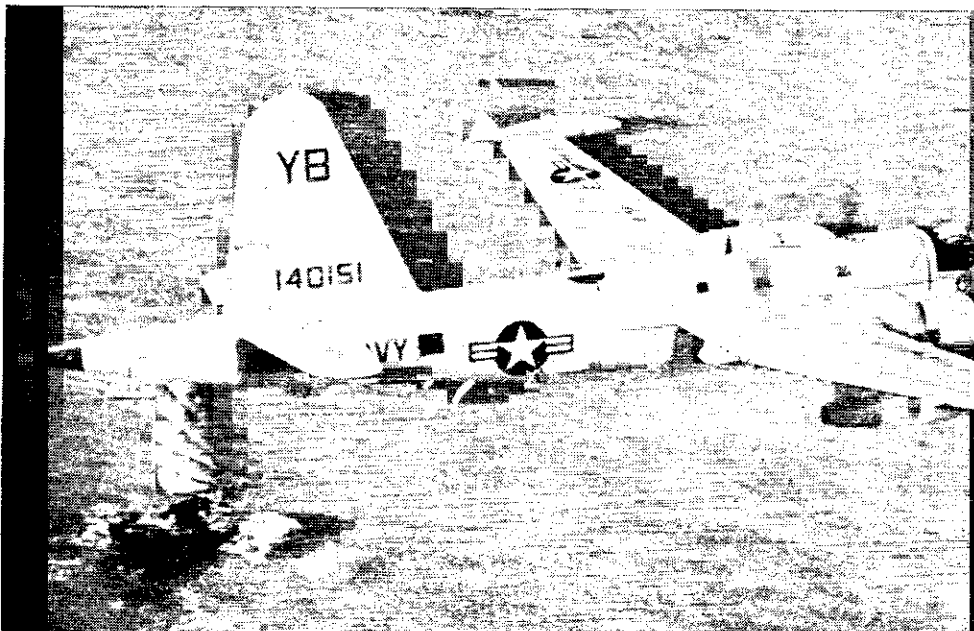
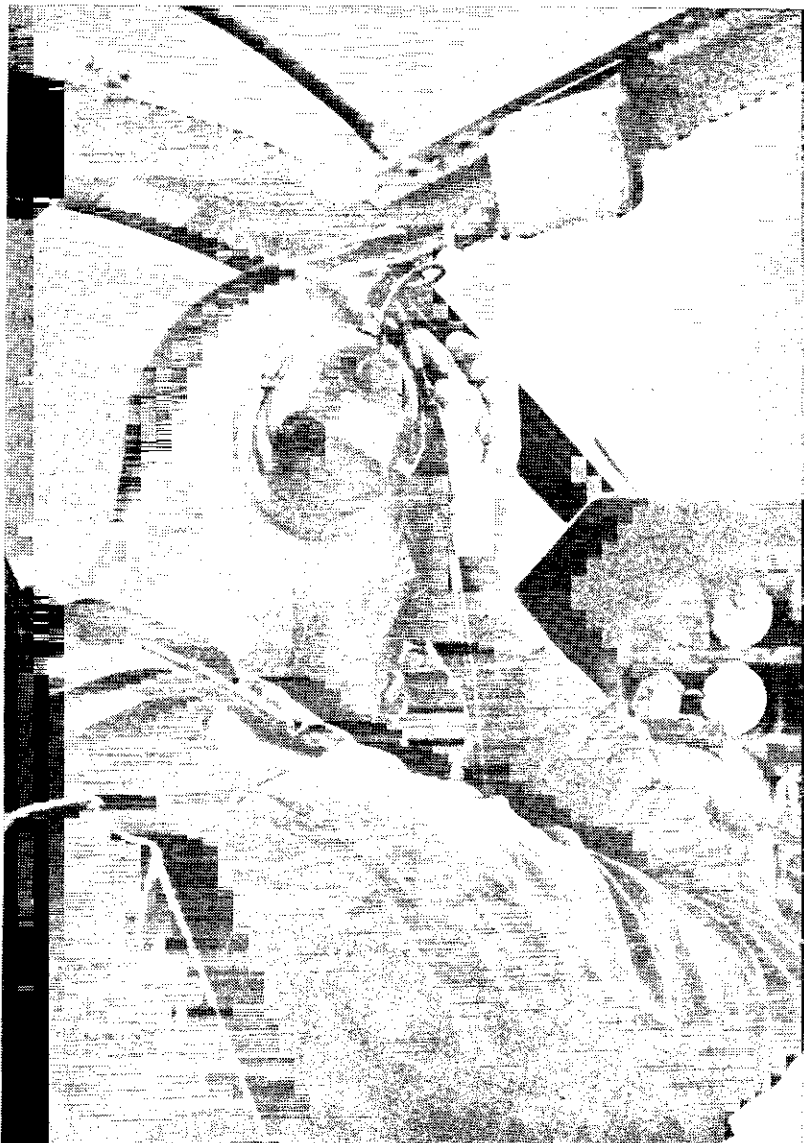
An Long, a small out-of-the-way dirt strip where a Mike boat from YRBM-16 located close to the Cambodian border arrived ahead of us to inspect and secure the runway.



EVERYTHING IS GO — Lcdr. R.R. Hassel gets an "AOK" on his port engine as he prepares to take off for a swing around the detachments.

It was a strange sight when we pulled into chocks back at Tan Son Nhut airport, Saigon. Converging from all directions were mechanics and technicians. Before the 27 disembarking passengers had barely had time to sort out their luggage, the plane was jacked clear off the ground and mechanics were busily changing brake linings, inspecting tires, struts, hydraulic lines, etc.

Engine cowls were removed and oil was being changed. Other men were scrubbing mud encrusted surfaces and examining them for signs of bullet holes and corrosion. Navy Buno 50809 was in for its 60 flight hours inspection.



CLOSER LOOK-- An SP-2H "Neptune" flies low over junks during surveillance coast of South Vietnam. Market Time surface units can be contacted to investiga

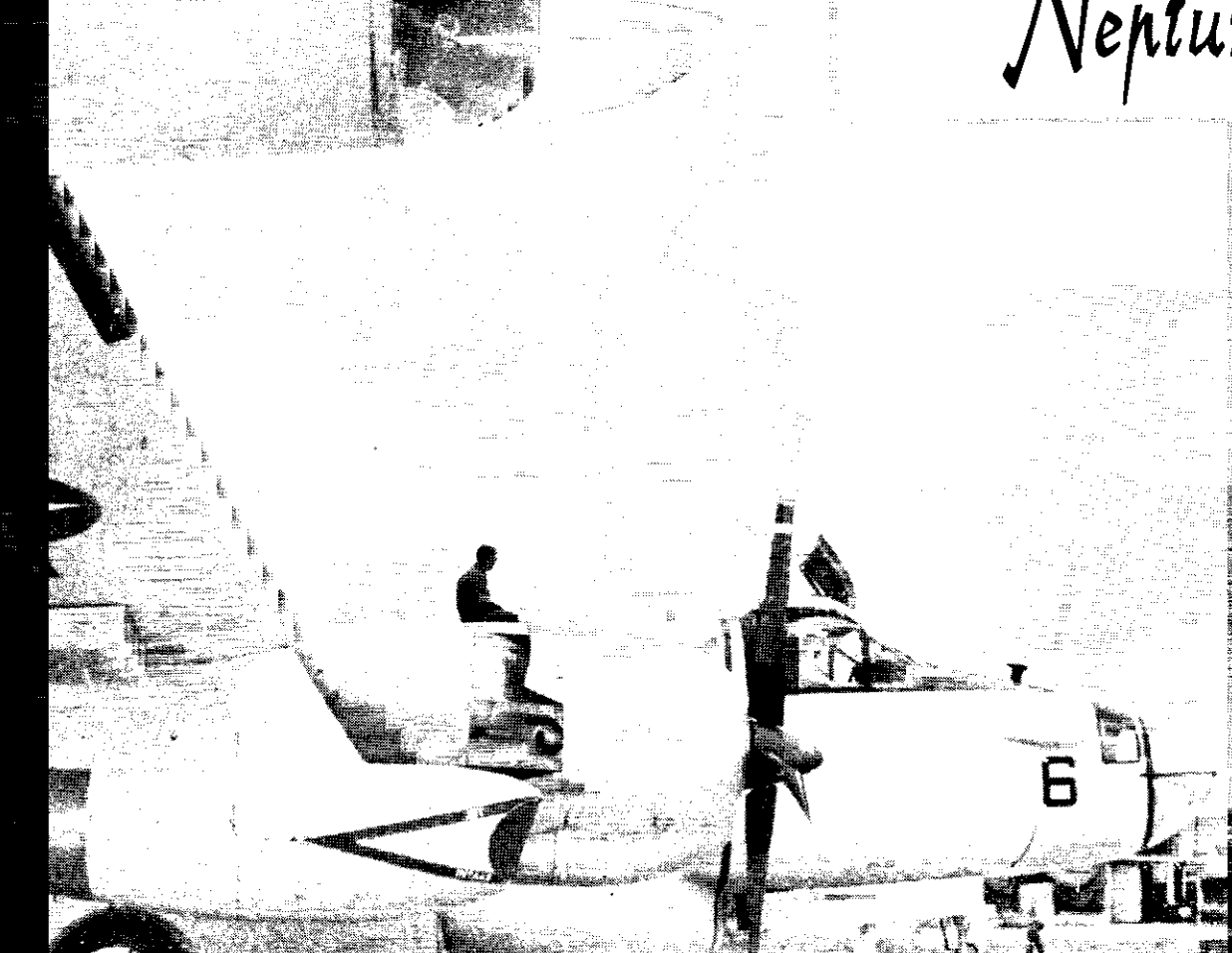


WEARINESS-- U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Donald R. Brown, pilot of an SP-2H Neptune patrol plane, shows his weariness as an eight-hour patrol flight over the South China Sea is nearly over. The pilot is bringing his Neptune back to its base at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon. The plane is a unit of Patrol Squadron 42 (VP-42).
(Official U.S. Navy Photograph By Richard L. White, PH2)

Neptunes Prowl Vietn

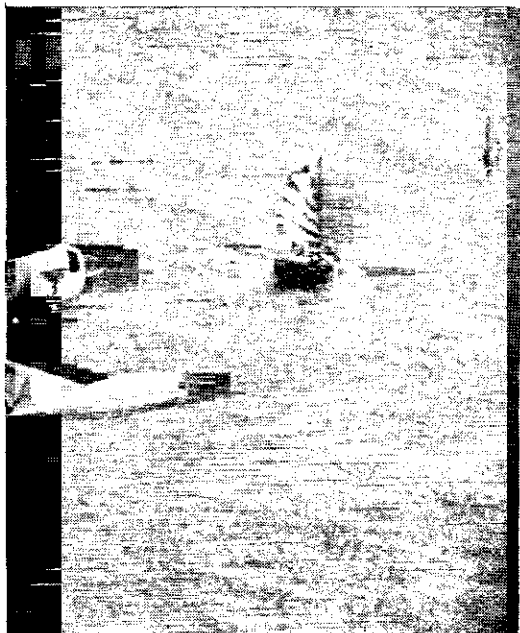
By Richard L. White, PH2, C
CNFVN—The long day begins
Navy's Patrol Squadron 42 (VP-42).

Nine U.S. Navy airmen and two Vietnamese observers climb up into the dark "tunnel" of an SP-2H "Neptune", patrol plane. They are about to begin a surveil-



NEPTUNE AT REST-- A crewmember relaxes on his SP-2H Neptune long range patrol plane. The plane, attached to Patrol Squadron 42 (VP-42), is used as a unit of the Navy's Operation Market Time. It was a Neptune that first spotted the enemy trawler captured this month.
(Official U.S. Navy Photograph By Richard L. White, PH2)

COORDINATION-- An SP-2H Neptune on with the ocean minesweeper USS Leader (M Time area).
(Official

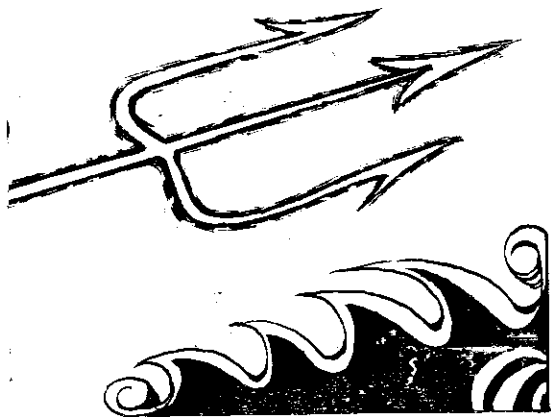


patrols with Operation Market Time off the te suspicious vessels.

(Official U.S. Navy Photograph)



TRACKING -- Navy Lieutenant (jg) Gary J. Brueher, navigator on an Operation Market Time Neptune patrol plane, tracks a suspicious, looking trawler in the South China Sea. The Neptunes work closely with Market Time surface craft to prevent enemy infiltration of men and supplies to the Viet Cong ashore in South Vietnam. (Official U.S. Navy Photograph By Richard L. White, PH2)



Vietnam's Coast

ombat Camera Group, Pacific at one a.m. for crew six of the U.S.

lance flight along the South Vietnam coastline.

For the next eight hours they fly over the South China Sea observing coastal shipping. The

plane crew looks for enemy craft attempting to infiltrate men and supplies to the Viet Cong ashore in South Vietnam.

This little-known phase of naval aviation in Vietnam is a part of Operation Market Time, the Navy's continuing effort to prevent infiltration from the sea.

The SP-2H is designed basically for anti-submarine warfare duties. In Vietnam, they are the "eyes" for Market Time surface craft. Destroyer Escort Picket Ships (DERs), Coastal Minesweepers (MSCs), Swift boats (PCFs) and Coast Guard Cutters are the Market Time surface ships.

When a suspicious vessel is spotted, the Neptune sweeps low to classify the type of craft, determine its nationality, hull number and to photograph it. This information is then forwarded to the nearest Market Time surface ship. If necessary, it speeds to the suspect vessel to investigate.

The surface ship's crew will check the craft's registration papers, cargo manifest and personnel identification papers once the ship nears the Vietnamese coast.

If papers are not in order, the vessel is escorted to the nearest Vietnamese Navy facility, where a

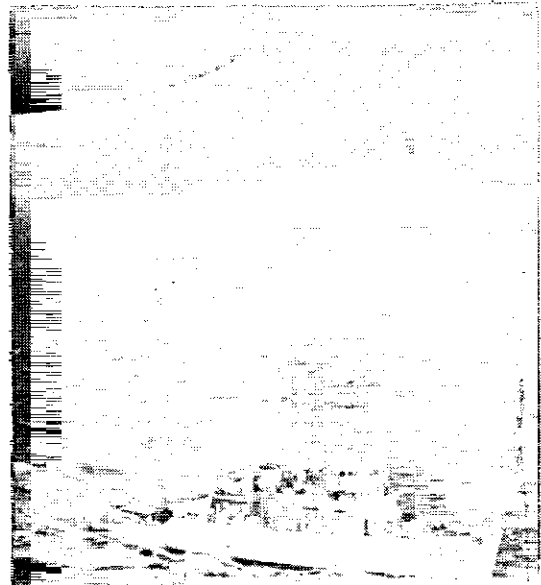
more thorough investigation will be undertaken.

Meanwhile, the Neptune has climbed back to normal altitude to begin another leg of its search pattern along the Vietnam coast.

Finally crew six is relieved on station by another Neptune and the long patrol has ended.

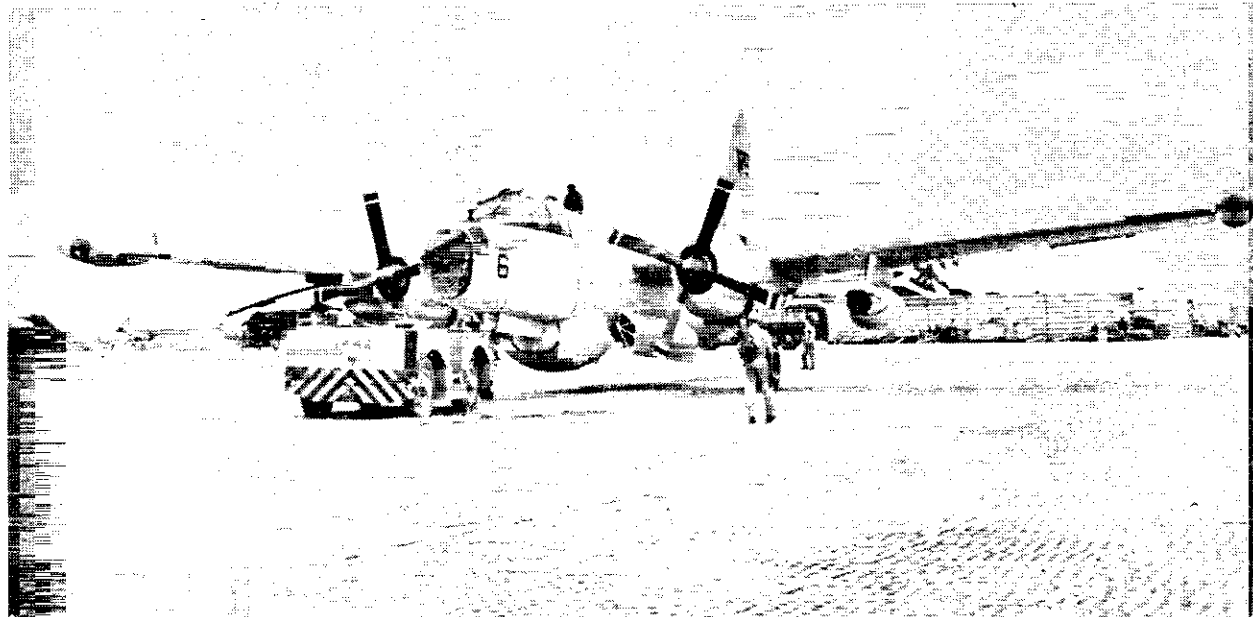
Returning to their base at Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon, the crew is debriefed. Then they begin a short period of rest and relaxation before the next eight-hour patrol.

Patrol Squadron 42, home-based at Whidbey Island, Wash., is commanded by Commander H.L. Beesley.



patrol out of Saigon exchanges information (SO 490) as they both patrol in the Market

S. Navy Photograph by J.E. Penner, PH2)



PRE-FLIGHT -- The crew of a Navy SP-2H Neptune patrol plane prepare their plane for an up-coming eight-hour patrol. The Neptune carries a crew of nine plus two Vietnamese observers.

(Official U.S. Navy Photograph by Richard L. White, PH2)

Human Wedge Saves a Life

Navy corpsmen are accustomed to aiding persons in distress, but the life saving drama was reversed recently when a Navy Chief Petty Officer used his body as a human wedge to keep a corpsman from being crushed between a boat and a barge in Vung Tau Harbor.

Hospital Corpsman Second Class D.C. Keene of the repair ship Askari was getting off a boat onto a barge during rough seas when the incident occurred. Misjudging his step, he slipped and fell into the choppy waters and was unable to get out, despite frantic efforts by crew members.

Chief Petty Officer H. Hamilton, also of the Askari, saw Keene call and immediately jumped in between the 60-ton barge and the 30 ton boat. Using his body as a wedge, he kept the two surging craft apart long enough for crewmen to pull the injured corpsman to safety.

Keene, who suffered a dislocated shoulder and a cracked hip, was transported to the 36th Evacuation Hospital at Vung Tau. Chief Hamilton was not injured.

To Knock Off Chicken Regs

The Naval Inspector General has sent word to all ships and stations to knock off the "chicken regulations" that have bothered Navy men and have become a factor in the Navy's effort to keep good men in the service.

The Navy's IG said, "the extent of corrective action taken will be noted in future inspection reports."

Some of the most common problems and recommended action were pointed out in OpNav Notice 5040 of May 8. Among the problems are:

"Chicken" BOQ and barracks regulations for which no reasonable excuse can be found.

Violating the voluntary spirit of fund-raising drives.

Ineffective request mast procedures which cause men to seek relief from grievances through other channels.

Unequal opportunity for Navy men and their families in communities near service installations.

Other weak spots pointed out by the IG were: delays in processing disciplinary cases; abuse of exchange privileges by Reservists; improper preferential treatment of retired personnel hired into government civilian jobs; inaccurate "head counts" in general messes; a tendency to let the paperwork reduction fight slacken and inadequate security in the operation of salvage yards.

The inspector made strong suggestions on how the trouble spots could be eliminated.



RIVER PATROL BOAT SUPPORT BASE—The Operation Game Warden Base at Vinh Long is a typical NSA Saigon detachment in the Mekong Delta. Two Ammi pontoons joined to form a "T" makeup the main pier.

NSA Saigon Seabees Have Vital Job In Building and Maintaining Bases

By Lcdr. D.B. Hathaway, CEC, USN

If you have not heard of the work accomplished by the Seabees attached to the U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon it is because the Seabees have been too busy to tell the story! The NSA Public Works Department, headed by Commander O.R. Butterfield, CEC, USN, has 120 Seabees distributed throughout II, III, and IV Corps areas of South Vietnam.

The NSA Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining bases for berthing, messing and small boat repairs. These bases support the numerous coastal and river patrol boats which operate from four coastal enclaves from Qui Nhon on the central coast to the island of An Thoi off the southwestern tip of Vietnam and six bases within the Delta area supporting PBR river patrol boats. In addition there are four harbor defense facilities and one tactical base which supports armored LCMs for transport of U.S. troops in clearing the Viet Cong from the Delta.

The RMK-BRJ contractor was only able to construct facilities at six of these sites due to insufficiency of funding. The remainder have been constructed by Seabees of the Public Works Department with an assist from an MCB-9 Detachment under Lieutenant B.R. Hubal, CEC, USN, which built a 250-man tent facility for the tactical riverine base at Dong Tam.

The major coastal bases or Market Time facilities at Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh Bay and Cat Lo, together with the Operation Game Warden bases of Nha Be, My Tho and Can Tho were completed by the contractor.

A typical NSA public works project was the construction of the river base at Vinh Long. This base, strategically located on the Co Chien river, is 55 miles southwest of Saigon. There is a critical shortage of real estate because nearly every square foot of land in the Delta is a valuable food producing rice field and great effort is made to avoid denying this to the farmer.

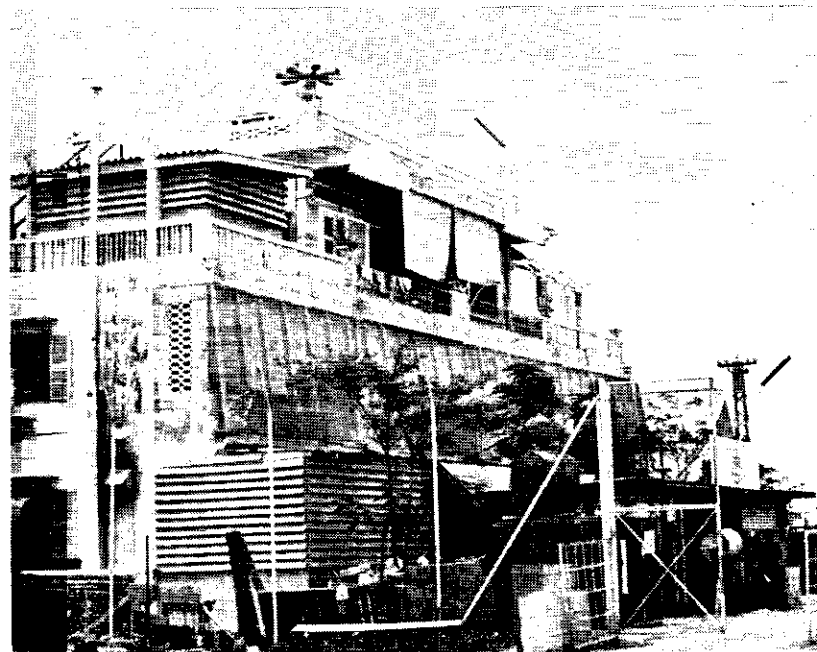
Therefore this base, like others, was co-located with a Vietnamese River Assault Group (RAG). Space for U.S. military administrative functions was provided, but facilities such as repair shops, boat ramps, piers and fuel storage tanks were constructed under the direction of the Maintenance Officer, Lieutenant P.P. Bradford, CEC, USN.

Now the support requirements are increasing and facilities must be enlarged—a difficult task considering the postage stamp allocation.

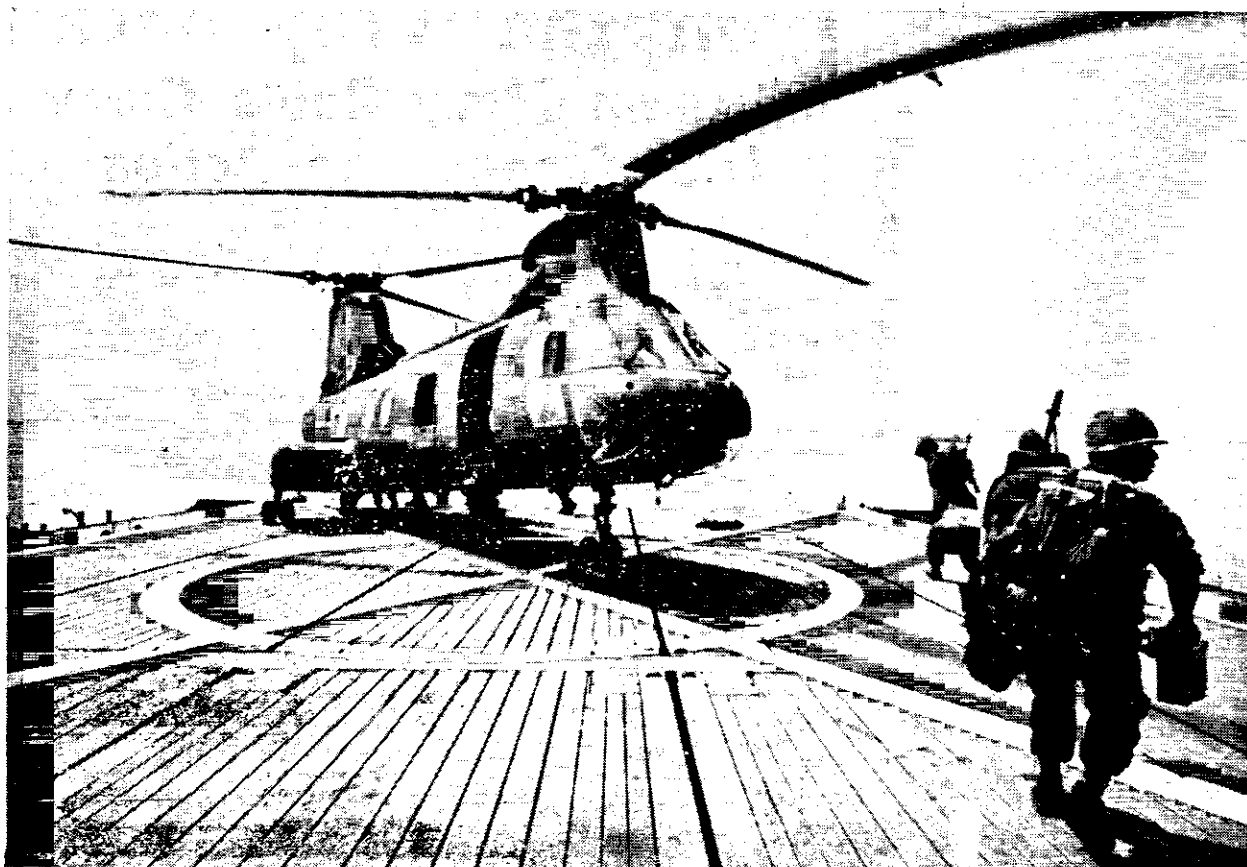
Berthing and messing facilities are located a mile away from the RAG base in a three-story villa. This building is leased from the owner and was rehabilitated by

PW Seabees so that the river boat crews and the supporting personnel would have a home as pleasant and comfortable as possible. This was important considering the lack of recreation facilities in the community and the fact that their entire one-year Vietnam tours may be spent at this particular base.

The NSA Public Works Department has mobile maintenance teams in Saigon which are used for these construction and maintenance projects. In addition, there are automotive maintenance crews directed by EQCM H.T. Beecham who process incoming vehicles for distribution to the detachments. This activity has control of over 100 pieces of automotive and construction equipment.



LIVING QUARTERS—The Seabees extensively renovated and modernized this "villa" at Vinh Long to give the boat crews and support personnel as comfortable and pleasant quarters as possible.



GOING AFTER CHARLIE—Marines board a helicopter on an amphibious assault ship to make a vertical envelopment assault on the target area. Other Marines will go ashore by landing craft. The Navy-Marine team of the Seventh Fleet's Amphibious Force has proven a potent combination in keeping the enemy off balance with surprise landings in VC-influenced areas along the South Vietnam coast.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by R.D. Mocser, JOC)

Successful Amphibious Operation Described As 'Military Marriage'

By C.H. Nelson, JOC

"Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue." These four ingredients to a successful wedding were used by the Navy-Marine Corps team as Operation Beacon Torch got underway.

"Something old" . . . the battle-proven veteran Marines of Battalion Landing Team 2/3.

"Something new" . . . the previously untried amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LPH-10).

"Something borrowed" . . . the experience and knowledge gained from previous amphibious assaults conducted along the South Vietnamese coast.

"Something blue" . . . the ever-present, but sometimes unheralded Navy-Marine Corps team whose responsibility it is to land their Marine comrades on unfriendly shores.

The Navy-Marine Corps team that conducted Operation Beacon Torch is a prime example of a "marriage" which has worked successfully through the years. Joining the "deep-water" Navy-Marine Corps team with the Marines, acknowledged experts in assault warfare, the Navy-Marine Corps team has a proven record of accomplishment.

The Beacon Torch assault was one in a series of thrusts by the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Force designed to keep off balance the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces currently threatening the I Corps area. It started in pre-dawn hours aboard the USS Tripoli, USS Ogden (LPD-5), USS Monticello (LPD-2), and USS Tom Green County (LST-115).

Under eerie red lights aboard the USS Ogden, crewmen worked to disembark landing craft loaded

with Marine tanks and AMTRACKS loaded with combat-ready Marines. Aboard the USS Monticello other Navy-Marine Corps members readied landing craft loaded with tanks, artillery and vehicles. On the USS Tom Green County other logistics support required for an amphibious assault was being steadily loaded into boats for movement ashore.

On the Tripoli the main landing forces — lifted into the primary landing zone — stood prepared as their senior non-commissioned officers and officers briefed them on final preparations for the assault.

On the ship's flight deck young Navy-Marine Corps members, being tried under combat conditions for the first time, checked and double-checked their assigned jobs for the launching of the helicopters. On this ship, as

on aircraft carriers, Navy personnel on the flight deck wear different colored jerseys, each designating a specific job for which that person is responsible. There is yellow for flight deck officers and petty officers, blue for plane handlers, red for crash crew and ordnance, purple for the fuel crews and green for photographers and other specialists.

In an amphibious assault utilizing the "vertical envelopment" concept the element of surprise is in most instances the key to success. The helicopter assault force departed the Tripoli at a time chosen to touch down in the landing zone at 0600 hours. Their job would be to move against three predetermined objectives as rapidly as enemy opposition would allow.

Two hours later the Marines embarked in the USS Ogden's AMTRACKS moved ashore on "Red Beach". Their mission was to secure a fourth objective nearer the beach. From these positions search and destroy operations were conducted throughout the objective area.

Although Operation Beacon Torch was the first combat operation for the USS Tripoli in the Vietnam area, her performance promises the continuance of the happy Navy-Marine Corps "marriage" and nothing but misery for enemy forces in Vietnam.

BMI Sessler Commended

Boatswain's Mate First Class Edward Sessler of River Section 521 has been awarded the **Naval Commendation Medal with Combat "V"** for meritorious service while participating in a joint operation with U.S. and Vietnamese Forces.

The operation was planned to take advantage of flood conditions which existed in Kien Phong Province during October 1966.

From October 4 through October 28, some 192 Viet Cong were killed and 226 suspects detained. There were 417 enemy sampans destroyed or captured and 213 enemy fortifications destroyed. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and documents were captured.

Captained PBR 53

Assigned as boat captain of PBR 53, Sessler and his crew were directly responsible for three Viet Cong killed, one suspect detained and ten sampans and 13 emplacements destroyed.

The citation states, in part, that "Sessler was instrumental in writing a bold chapter in the new history of U.S. Naval Riverine Warfare. His skill in seamanship under conditions of restricted maneuverability was essential to the effective prosecution of strike, search, destroy and blocking missions assigned to his boat.

"Under the extremely hazardous environment of counterinsurgency warfare, in areas conceded to be under Viet Cong control and previously uncontested, encountering sniper fire from dense tree lines along the waterways, susceptible to water mining and ambush, BMI Sessler operated his 31-foot patrol boat with inspired courage and tactical brilliance.

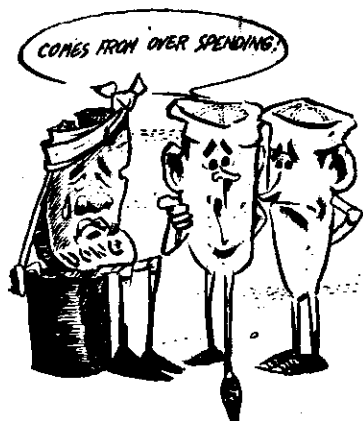
"This operation must be considered extraordinary in the concept of PBR employment. In every phase, BMI Sessler was required to provide the support of his boat in canals and tributary waterways not normally considered as proper operation areas for this craft, due to vulnerability to ambush in close quarters.

Speed Curtailed

"In every instance the inherent advantages of maneuverability and speed of the PBR were significantly curtailed by water weeds and man-made obstructions designed specifically to prevent such incursions and by the inadequate width of the waterways. To offset these disadvantages BMI Sessler had to improvise tactics continually under battle conditions.

"By his eagerness and application during the actions in which he was involved, BMI Sessler gave commendable assistance to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in its struggle against the Viet Cong insurgents.

"By his outstanding performance in battle, BMI Sessler has helped to establish the reputation of Game Warden personnel as combat-ready and willing to engage the enemy under any conditions."



'They Will Be Waiting on the Way Back'

Vietnam Navy Boats Carry U.S. Troops into Action

By Paul Parker, JO2

CNFVN — For three stiflingly hot days they searched for the enemy in his lairs along the narrow banks of the upper Saigon river in War Zone C.

Bristling with heavy caliber machine guns and light cannon, twenty-four ironclad boats, remodeled landing craft of World War II vintage, moved under the 100-degree tropical sun. Heat rippled from their steel decks.

Vietnamese Navy River Assault Groups (RAGs) 28 and 30 were carrying troops of the U.S. Army 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions 40 miles northwest of Saigon in support of a search and destroy operation called "Manhattan".

Lieutenant Ho Quang Minh, Vietnamese Navy RAC Commander, sat on the drainboard deck cleaning his captured .38-caliber automatic pistol.

Nearby sat Lieutenant Bcb Van Nice, USN. Four years earlier as a cadet at the Naval Academy he would never have envisioned himself as he was today, a U.S. advisor to the Vietnamese Navy on a mission in swim trunks and showershoes.

Dressed for Mining

The "modified uniform", he explained, was self protection. Swimming would be much easier if the boat were mined by the enemy.

"This is a collection of small amphibious boats specially converted for work in the riverine areas of Vietnam," Lt. Van Nice said. "Their mission is to operate with troops, placing them in areas by amphibious assault, supporting them as necessary and withdrawing them later.

"My job as advisor is essentially to act as liaison between U.S. forces or other Free World forces with whom we might be working at any time," he continued.

There was no contact with enemy forces during the Army search and destroy operations. It was as Lt. Minh, with three years as RAC Commander and eight years of fighting experience behind him, had predicted.

"Coming back it will get very hot," he said. "There is only one

way back. They will be waiting for us."

It was accurate foresight.

When the enemy struck, they hit hard as the 24 craft were winding their way home.

Two mines exploded in the brown water beside the Commandment (the command boat). Thirty-foot spouts surged black mud up ten feet to her starboard bow and stern. Astern, a third mine blew near a following landing craft.

Small arms and automatic weapons chattered from the riverbank. For long seconds there was only the sound of enemy fire. Then the RAGs opened up with .30 and .50-caliber machine gun fire.

Down the winding river other craft opened fire. Blue gunsmoke soon hung in the air like city exhaust.

Above the din, Lt. Van Nice's voice on the radio was calmly asking the Army Forward Air Controller (FAC) flying overhead for airstrikes.

"The FAC says he can get air strikes in here right away," Lt. Van Nice shouted to Lt. Minh, but we'll have to clear the area fast and stop the three boats in the rear before they move into the strike zone."

Lt. Minh considered the problem. An airstrike would be ideal, but he didn't like the idea of risking those three boats. They'd be sitting targets.

"The jets are running low on fuel," Lt. Van Nice prompted. "Can you stop those boats?"

'No Can Do'

"No can do," Lt. Minh answered with regret.

"No can do," Lt. Van Nice repeated into the radiophone. "Tell 'em to go home . . . and thanks."

The gunfire became sporadic. Soon all was quiet again on the river. The enemy were probably moving out.

It was frustrating. Too close to the enemy to allow for an immediate airstrike and with too much foliage along the river bank to catch the enemy escaping. The RACs passed on toward Saigon.

Word was passed on the radio. No damage to any boats.

The search and destroy mission had ended as Lt. Minh had predicted.

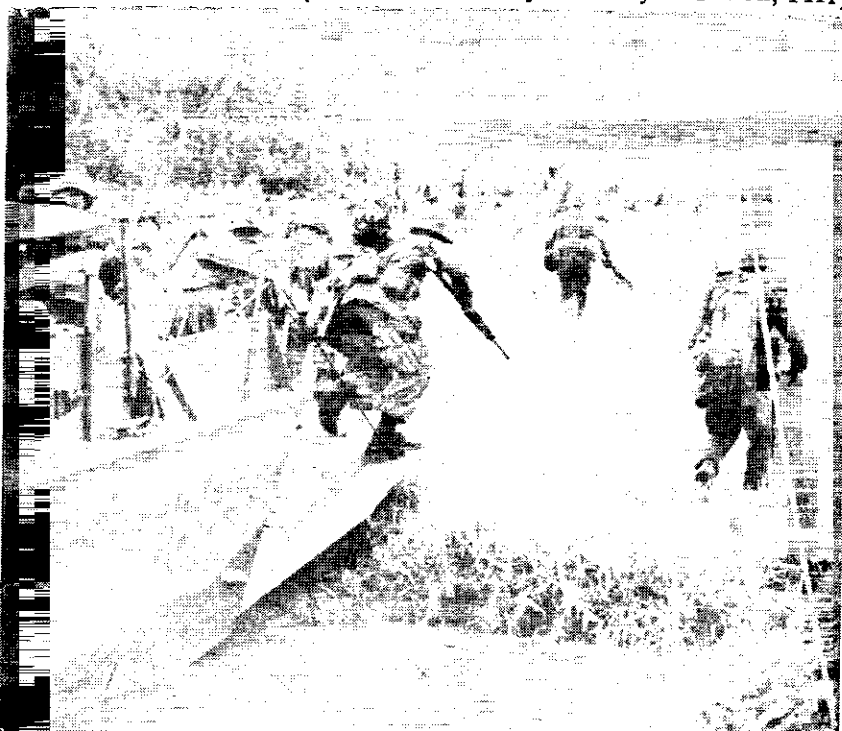
"It is not time to worry until you are going home," he said.

COMMAND SHIP-- The operation was directed from a "Commandment", a converted LCM used as a command ship. The Commandment was the prime target of the enemy ambush attempt.



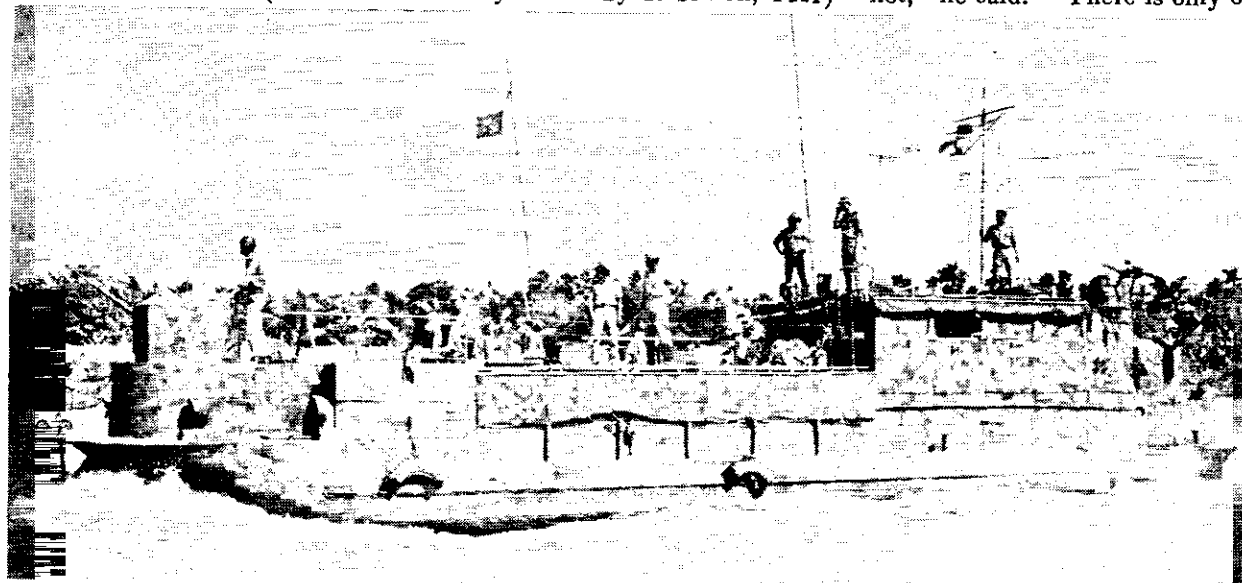
CHOW BREAK-- Lt. Robert Van Nice, U.S. Navy advisor to Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group 30, keeps in touch with the progress of the operation while eating lunch with his Vietnamese counterpart, Lt. Ho Quang Minh. Lt. Van Nice says the swimming trunks are convenient if the boat is mined.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by Robinson, PH1)



SEARCH AND DESTROY-- Troops of the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division go ashore in a VC area along the Saigon River.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by Robinson, PH1)



Doctor-Lawyer-Indian Ends Tour As Malaria Fighter

By Lieutenant (jg) Robert K. Martin

CNFVN— An Oklahoma-bred doctor-lawyer and part Indian (1/16 Cherokee)... left South Vietnam recently after a year here as the United States' chief malaria combatant.

Under Viet Cong as well as mosquito attack for 12 months, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Robert G. Smith served as the Chief of Preventive Medicine for the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. He was responsible to General William C. Westmoreland, commander of all American forces here.

Lcdr. Smith arrived in Saigon in May, 1966 after preparing for his assignment at the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington. Commissioned a lieutenant commander in the Navy (an unusual fact in itself since most Naval officers begin as ensigns... or as lieutenants at best), Dr. Smith is a medical doctor, an attorney-at-law and a public health expert.

Licensed Doctor, Lawyer

He is licensed to practice medicine in Oklahoma, Missouri and Massachusetts and in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and to practice law in Oklahoma and in Massachusetts. He holds degrees from or has attended eight universities, among them the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Harvard, the University of Paris ("The Sorbonne") and the Catholic University of Chile.

He is a graduate of both Harvard's Law School and School of Public Health, as well as a one-time assistant in medicine in the university's Medical School. He was an instructor in law at the University of Tulsa Law School and served as a medical examiner for Tulsa County. He practiced medicine in Tulsa from 1964 to 1966. He was named the "most outstanding young Tulsan" for 1965-66.

Dr. Smith is one of only two known American doctor-lawyer-public health experts and the only one in the U.S. Navy.

Before leaving the States last year, the Broken Arrow, Okla.

native added Vietnamese to his language skills, which already included fluent French and Spanish and a working knowledge of German, Italian and Russian.

Vietnam presented Dr. Smith with a difficult challenge:

"As Chief of Preventive Medicine, I soon realized that one of my main tasks would be the direction of a vast program of aerial spraying to kill insects, particularly the anopheles mosquito, carrier of malaria," Lcdr. Smith said.

"Seventy-five percent of all hospitalized American servicemen who have been in Vietnam are admitted for treatment of tropical diseases rather than for battle wounds," he observed.

Confronted with that fact, he assumed the task of coordinating and supervising all preventive medicine activities of U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine forces in the Republic of Vietnam and of advising the RVN armed forces and other Free World forces on such matters.

He also served as the preventive medicine liaison officer between U.S. military forces and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Visited 27 Provinces

The many-faceted job required that Dr. Smith travel extensively to locate and combat the malaria mosquito problem. Visiting 27 of South Vietnam's 43 provinces, the doctor estimates he traveled 20,000 to 25,000 miles investigating disease outbreaks during his tour.

From the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in the northern provinces to the Ca Mau peninsula at the southern tip of the Republic, Dr. Smith journeyed to study cases of malaria, bubonic and pneumonic plague, cholera, dengue fever, encephalitis and other tropical diseases, some of which are relatively unknown and some for which there is no known treatment.



DOCTOR-LAWYER-INDIAN — Lcdr. Robert G. Smith is a part Cherokee Indian with degrees in medicine and law who served in Vietnam as Chief of Preventive Medicine on the Military Assistance Command Staff.

"Last October we waded up and down jungle rivers of Quang Tri Province not far from the DMZ looking for mosquito larvae," he recalled.

"This was in an area just south of the now-famous Hill 881 near the Laotian border. We learned later that we had passed within a thousand yards of North Vietnamese regiments."

On another occasion, in Vietnam's Central Highlands, Dr. Smith again came in close contact to the enemy. During a low-level spraying suitability mission, the helicopter in which he flew skimmed tree-tops just 50 feet above guerilla forces.

"I think my most unusual experience," Dr. Smith related, "was a visit to a leper colony near Qui Nhon on the South China Sea coast. We had gone to the colony to see if the drug being given to the people to treat leprosy might also keep them from getting malaria."

We had been warned that the region generally was VC-controlled, but it was essential to de-

by Brant parker and Johnny hart

termine whether malaria was occurring in lepers taking the drug," the doctor continued.

"Before we left, several French nuns who were nurses at the colony invited us to swim from the beach there. As we came out of the water, a band of men wearing dark pajamas approached us from the jungle. They got within a couple of hundred yards, then suddenly turned away. I guess they thought we were lepers," Dr. Smith said.

Probably the closest call of all which he experienced during his year in Vietnam was on a trip in the northern provinces. Dr. Smith explained:

Flat Tire Saved His Life

"A flat tire on our jeep delayed us for about half an hour as we traveled to a little village. After changing the tire we continued on and some distance down the road we came upon American Marines carrying mine detectors. A few minutes before they had detected and destroyed three enemy mines buried in the road. Had we not had the flat we may well have hit those explosives!"

Asked about his shipboard experiences, he confessed that the first time he had been at sea was last August when he joined 1,800 Korean soldiers returning home from Vietnam.

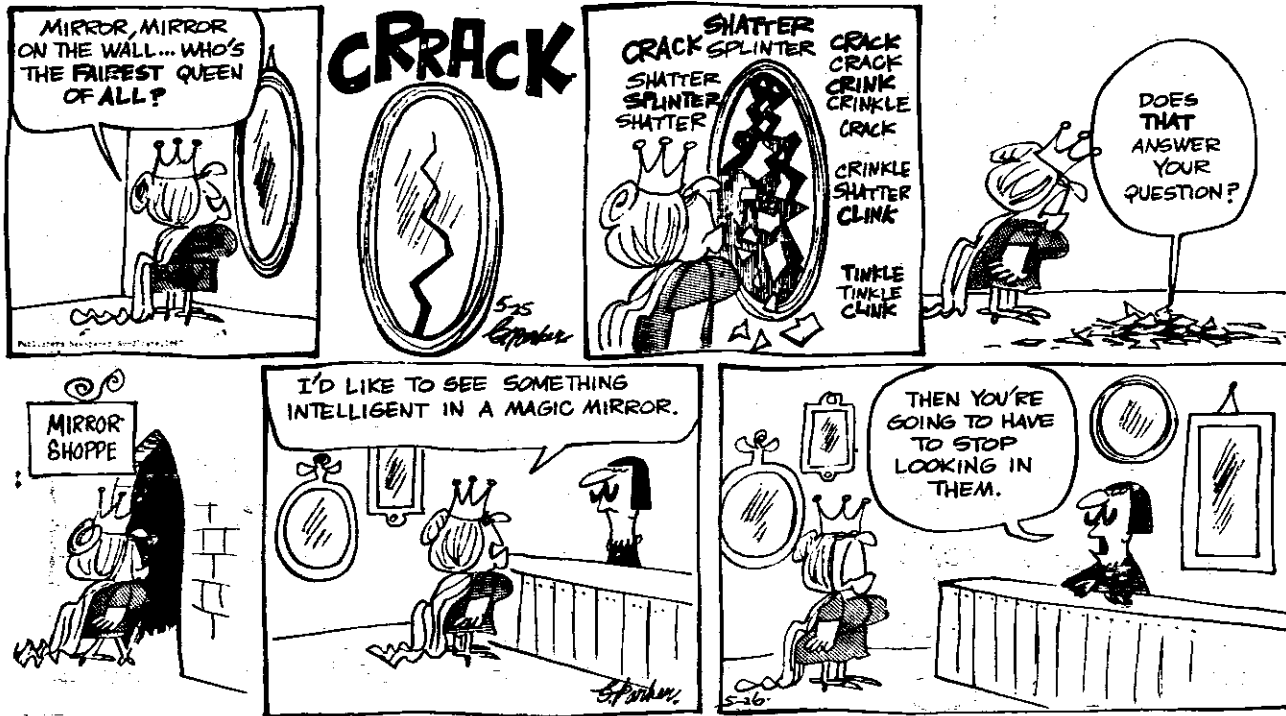
"We sailed from Nha Trang, South Vietnam to Pusan, South Korea on a medical research mission to determine how many cases of a drug resistant strain of malaria might be carried back to Korea among the troops," he said.

"That was my first ship ride," he admitted.

Lcdr. Smith assessed his 12 months in Vietnam as "one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

"After visiting hundreds of towns and seeing firsthand the effects of Viet Cong coercion, I am convinced that our purpose in Vietnam to stop communist aggression is both just and essential. When I saw a three-year-old Vietnamese boy with both legs missing—the result of an enemy terrorist attack—I realized that deliberate acts of atrocity by the Viet Cong are real and must be stopped."

In the States, Dr. Smith has the opportunity to share his knowledge and experiences with other Navy physicians. He reported to the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., where he is instructing Vietnam-bound doctors in the infinite kinds of health problems they can expect to encounter here.



Seabees Bring New Hope to Vietnamese Village

By Bob Veeder, PHC

A 13-man Seabee team is raising the living standards of thousands of Vietnamese people in the fertile valley west of Nha Trang. But the psychological effects of their work are even more important than their physical accomplishments, impressive though these be.

Team number 0807, one of eight teams working on civic action projects throughout South Vietnam, is located in the village of Dien Khanh, just seven miles west of Nha Trang.

The team's major project is the construction of a 225 foot pre-cast concrete bridge with an eleven-foot wide road. When completed the bridge will enable nearly 5,000 farmers to bring their produce to market by a much shorter route. About 60 per cent of the valley's population lives by growing rice, peanuts and corn.

Before the team could begin work on the bridge, they had to build their housing quarters and

shop areas. When they leave the valley, their quarters will be given to the people to be used as a district youth and sports headquarters.

Even before the quarters were finished, members of the team were turning ox-cart trails into roads and installing shower facilities in the surrounding hamlets and villages.

To improve what one team member termed "a highly objectionable fly problem" they leveled off and burned the city dump. Of course all dumps have flies—but this one was within 100 yards of the market and central residential area.

Members of the team even have their families back home involved in the civic action program. Their wives are supplying pajamas to the provincial hospital. Many of the children there suffer from skin diseases and have had their clothing destroyed.

On every job site the value of the team is evident. As the Seabees work they teach. At the bridge, one Vietnamese learns to weld and another learns to build wood forms for casting cement. At another site an equipment operator shows a man how to operate the dump truck and front end loader to help fill the deep ruts in Dien Khanh's roads.

When the Vietnamese learn

these skills they will be able to continue to teach and provide their people with the service that the Seabees have rendered long after the Navymen leave.

The Seabees of Team 0807 and the other seven teams in Vietnam are not only building bridges, roads, houses and sanitation facilities; they are giving hope to people who once had little hope.

But to capture the true meaning of the Seabee's efforts one must be there. There to see the warmth and affection received as they work among the people. To hear the children shout "hello!" and "okay!" as the team works on its various projects. To see their smiles.

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R&R Flights OKed for Leave

Personnel taking 7-day out-of-country leave are now authorized to travel on R&R flights.

Space-required travel to Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Taipei and Singapore may be acquired after R&R passengers and after the booking cut-off date. However, the leave must coincide with the regular departure and return dates of the scheduled aircraft.

For booking send a signed and approved copy of the leave papers to the Naval Support Activity Saigon R&R Office. Be sure the R&R site desired is indicated. The Saigon office will notify you when you are booked.

