

WELCOME ABOARD



RIVER PATROL FLOTILLA FIVE

ARTHUR WHYTE PRICE, JR.
United States Navy



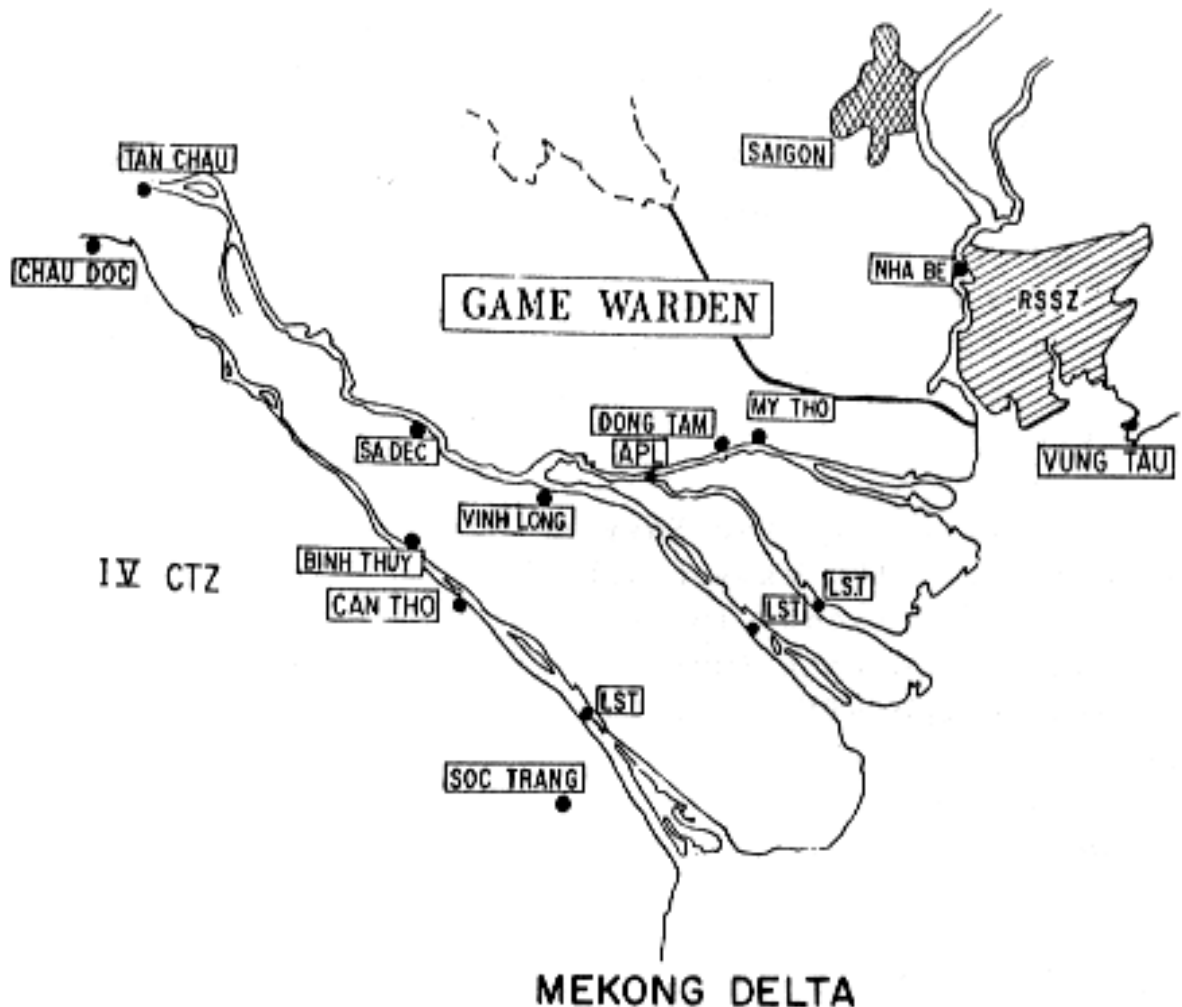
Captain Price became the Commander River Patrol Force on 3 April 1968. As Commander Task Force 116 he exercises operational control over 250 River Patrol Boats (PBR), Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron Three, four specially refitted Landing Ships Tank (LST) for helicopter and PBR operations, thirteen minesweeping craft (MSB and LCM/MS), and SEAL Team Units. The River Patrol Force headquarters is located in the heart of the Mekong Delta and IV Corps Tactical Zone at Binh Thuy on the Bassac River.

He first enlisted in the Navy in November, 1939. In 1943 he entered the Navy Flight Program and was graduated and commissioned in the year 1944. Captain Price has served as a junior officer in various commands ashore and afloat. In 1956 he became the Executive Officer of the USS STRIBLING (DD 867). In February 1958 he took command of the high speed transport USS LIDDLE (APD 60).

After a tour of duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel he was ordered to recommission and assume command of the USS ASHLAND (LSD 1) in 1961. During his service career he completed studies at night for his BS Degree with the University of Maryland. He is also a graduate of the Management Course at the Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, Calif. In 1964 he joined the staff of Commander Amphibious Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, as Force Operations Officer.

Captain Price came to Vietnam after completing a tour of 17 months as Commanding Officer USS DULUTH (LPD 6). During the Spring and Fall of 1967 while serving with the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Ready Group ALFA in the I Corps area of Vietnam the ship received the Meritorious Unit Commendation and Captain Price was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" and the Vietnam Distinguished Service Medal Second Class.

Captain Price is married to the former Peggy Wynn, who resides in Coronado, California, with their six children.

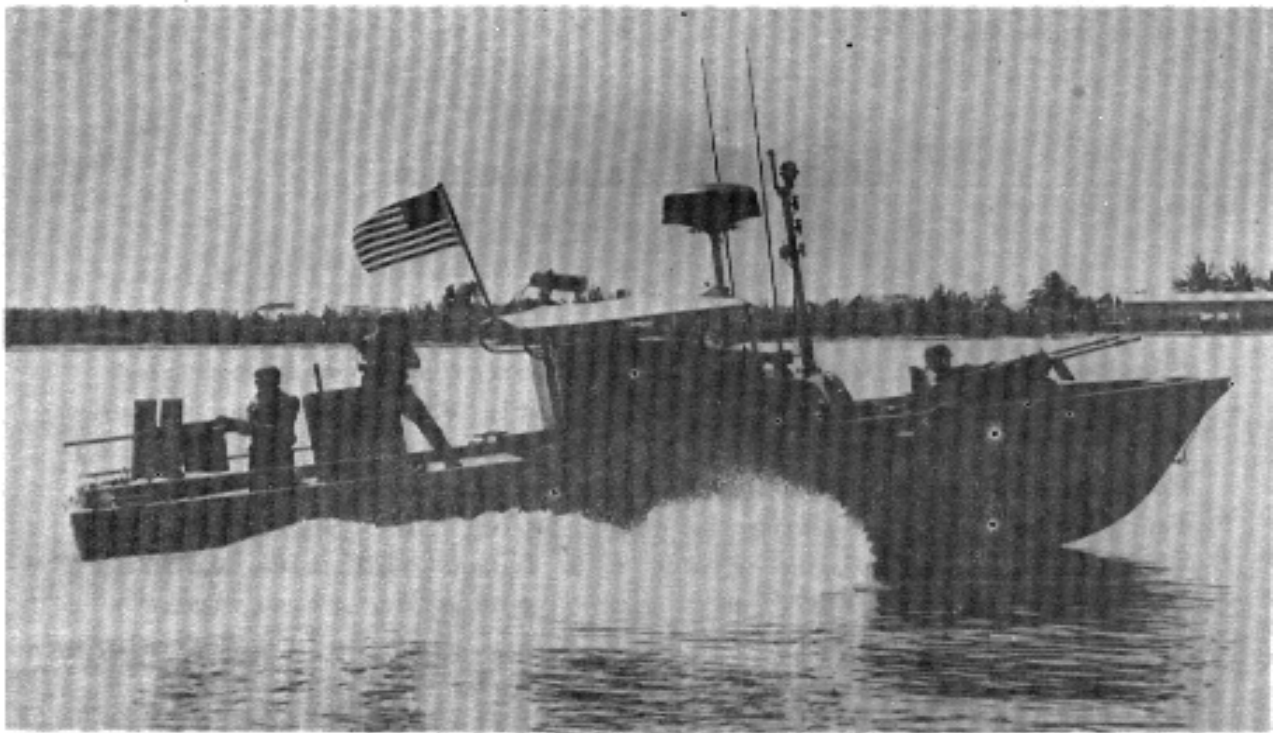


OPERATION GAME WARDEN

Since March 1966, the Viet Cong's movement on many of the waterways of South Vietnam has been seriously hindered by the U.S. Navy River Patrol Force (TF 116) engaged in Operation GAME WARDEN. Initially operating in the Rung Sat Special Zone, the Force expanded into the heart of the Mekong Delta in May 1966, and now operates from four shore and four mobile bases in the Delta, a shore base in the Rung Sat, and a mobile base in I Corps. In mid-1968 the administrative and operational arms of the Force were combined into a flotilla under the administrative control of Commander Amphibious Forces Pacific and designated River Patrol Flotilla FIVE. The Force is under the operational control of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam.

Over half the population of South Vietnam live in the Mekong-Delta southwest of Saigon, a flat-land of well-defined rice paddies tangled in miles of connecting rivers and canals. In better times, the rich soil would provide rice for all of Vietnam with large quantities remaining for export. Now, with an estimated 80,000 Viet Cong guerrillas undermining the political and economic order, production has been choked to a fraction of pre-war levels.

Defeating this highly determined and elusive enemy requires steady unrelenting pressure on as many fronts as possible. Considering the population density, these are extraordinary demands, and they are reflected in the mission of Operation GAME WARDEN.



U. S. Navy PBR on combat patrol.

Commander River Patrol Force (CTF 116) directs Operation GAME WARDEN from his headquarters at Binh Thuy, near the IV Corps Tactical Zone Army Headquarters in Can Tho. From here, he controls day and night patrols covering all the major water arteries of the Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone, a strategic mangrove marshland surrounding the main shipping lane to Saigon.

The world's most powerful Navy is fighting the Vietnam riverine war using a 31-foot fiberglass craft, the River Patrol Boat (PBR), armed with three .50 caliber machine guns and assorted small arms.

The primary goal is to prevent enemy use of the main river highways for troop movements and re-supply. To this end, curfews have been established at night and daytime traffic is constantly stopped and searched.



U. S. Navy UH-1B "Seawolf" gunship

Improperly manifested cargo and civilians without identification are thoroughly investigated. A Vietnamese National Maritime Policeman rides each patrol to check papers. Suspected Viet Cong are further investigated by local Vietnamese and U.S. intelligence authorities.

GAME WARDEN units fulfill varying support roles in this war of many fronts. Vietnamese Regional and Popular Force outposts along the river continually call for PBR assistance when attacked by the Viet Cong and Vietnamese Army regulars use the patrols as blocking forces for their ground sweeps.

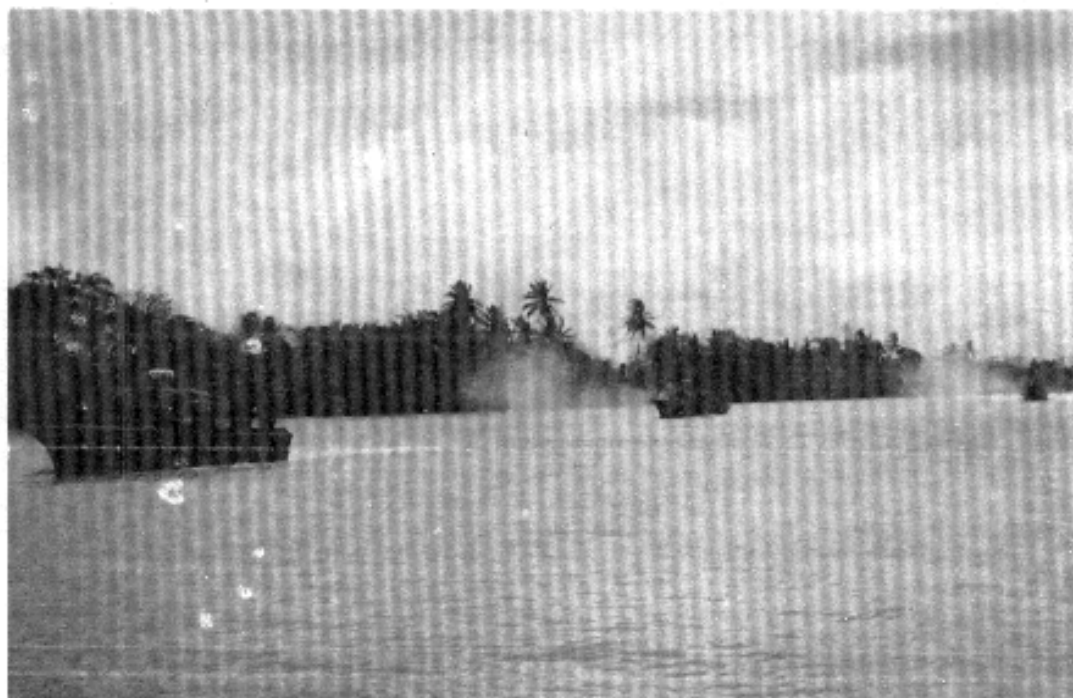
Daily contact with Vietnamese on the river has presented unique opportunities for civic action and psychological warfare. Medical Civic Action Projects (MEDCAP's), a joint effort in which whole villages are selected for medical assistance by a doctor and his team, are regularly conducted.

These projects are paying off. To many Vietnamese, the PBR is a welcome friend on the river. This favorable climate is exploited whenever possible to win an increasing number of ralliers and discredit the Viet Cong propaganda.

The PBR itself is particularly well suited to her many roles. Small, fast and well armed, she can run down evading sampans and escape frequent enemy ambushes. Twin water jets steer and propel the craft at speeds in excess of 20 knots. A crew of four, usually captained by a Petty Officer First Class, man the after .50 caliber and forward twin .50 calibers, along with the other weapons the boat carries. Patrol boat operations are supported by UH-1B "Huey" armed helicopters bristling with machine guns and air-to-surface rockets.



A Seawolf flies cover for PBR's on the Cho Gao Canal



PBR's make high-speed firing runs against enemy concentrations along the Bassac River.

Nicknamed "Seawolves", the Navy airman operate from seven scattered sites in the Delta and Rung Sat, providing fire support and reconnaissance for PBR's. They assist in fire fights against enemy sampans and Viet Cong ambushes. Seawolves also provide support for other friendly ground or waterborne units, carrying out rocket and strafing strikes, rescuing downed pilots or others in distress, and covering for medical evacuation. The helicopters belong to the Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific.

Operation GAME WARDEN also includes among its assets SEAL Teams and Tank Landing Ships (LST) from the Amphibious Forces and Minesweeping Boats (MSB) from the Pacific Mine Force.

Wooden-hulled Minesweeping Boats (MSB) and conventional landing craft (LCM) fitted with sweeping gear sweep the Long Tau River channel, which winds



U.S. Navy MSB underway in Rung Sat Special Zone



Vietnamese Popular Force troops wade ashore from a PBR during an assault on Tan Dinh Island in the lower Bassac River.

45 miles through the Rung Sat Special Zone to the port of Saigon. Their job is to find and destroy enemy mines which threaten both civilian and military shipping. A ship sunk in this vital waterway could choke Saigon's civilian economy and cut an important Free World Forces supply route as well.

The SEAL Teams operate in small squads, moving well inside Viet Cong territory. They are highly trained in clandestine anti-guerilla warfare and strike at selected targets to give the VC a taste of their own tactics.

Special SEAL support elements with heavily armed and armored boats insert the squads and provide fire support for rapid recovery at the end of a mission.



SEAL's in Viet Cong territory



SEAL's set demolition charges on a bunker in a Viet Cong stronghold.

Completing the GAME WARDEN support picture are three LST's deployed near the mouths of the main Delta rivers. Each ship is outfitted to carry ten PBR's and a helicopter fire team of two Seawolves and to provide maintenance and berthing facilities for the crews. The LST's are great offensive assets in their own right. Moving freely on the rivers, they can react quickly to reports of enemy concentrations by bringing a fleet of PBR's to bear and firing their own 40mm gun batteries in support.



LST support ship for helo and PBR operations

Full strength of the Force is 250 PBR's and 71 helicopters, operated and supported by over 2,000 GAME WARDEN sailors. Men of the River Patrol Force wear a black beret, on which the Force patch appears. The patch, circular in shape, bears a MACV shield in the upper center and in the lower portion a sword across two rivers, indicating the Force's mission of interdicting enemy traffic on the waterways. Flanking these two symbols are four lightening bolts, representating the rapid reaction capability of the four elements of the Force--PBR's, Seawolf helicopters, SEAL's and minesweeping craft. Inscribed on the upper perimeter of the patch is "RIVER PATROL FORCE" and on the bottom is "TF 116", the Navy task force numerical designator.

The war in the Delta has many facets, no one outweighing another in importance. The GAME WARDEN sailor can be just as canny as the enemy and is constantly aware of the consequences his actions may have on the divided loyalties of a war-torn people - a big job.



The forward gunner on a PBR looks through the sights of his twin .50 caliber machine gun.