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At 0250 on 31 January a Cam Ranh Bay STABLE DOOR patrol succeeded in surfacing an enemy swimmer through the use of routine offensive grenade drops in the vicinity of the Norwegian tanker SS PELICAN. This was the first time in STABLE DOOR history that a swimmer had been captured. Approximately one-half hour later, while the captured swimmer was being questioned, an explosion occurred on the bow of the SS PELICAN, causing moderate damage. Initial interrogation of the swimmer indicated that additional swimmers were in the Cam Ranh Bay area operating as three-man teams.

Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit ONE (IUWU 1) continued operations in Vung Tau, detaining 13 persons and five craft during the month for improper identification, curfew violations and suspicious actions.

At Cam Ranh Bay, IUWU 2 detained 48 persons and one junk during January.

IUWU 3 at Qui Nhon expended many hours of patrol effort during the month providing a blocking force for numerous scheduled land sweeps of the surrounding area.

During the month one officer and five enlisted men arrived at Vung Ro Bay to conduct advance planning and liaison with local U. S. Army commands in preparation for establishing a STABLE DOOR

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unit at Vung Ro. The permanently assigned personnel for this unit were expected to arrive in-country about 1 March 1968.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE (TASK FORCE 116)

The New Year's truce period of 311800H December to 020600H January was violated early on the morning of 2 January when the Viet Cong initiated an attack against the PBR and minesweeper support base at Nha Be. One minesweeper was destroyed and two Navy-men were wounded in the attack. As the PBRs continued to interdict enemy river crossings, the Viet Cong retaliated with intensified firepower, employing heavier weapons. Although GAME WARDEN units were engaged in only 61 fire fights with the communist insurgents they suffered their highest monthly casualty total to date--one killed and 82 wounded. In greater evidence was the increased use of rocket, rifle-grenade, recoilless-rifle and heavy automatic-weapons fire from ambushes in an attempt to destroy the patrol boats. The increased B-40 and B-41 rocket attacks alone killed one PBR sailor and wounded 36 others, in addition to one Department of the Navy civilian, as the Viet Cong scored hits on the patrol boats. However, the enemy suffered greater losses--120 killed, 36 wounded and 51 captured--as Operation GAME WARDEN continued to deny the Viet Cong the free use of the waterways of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone.

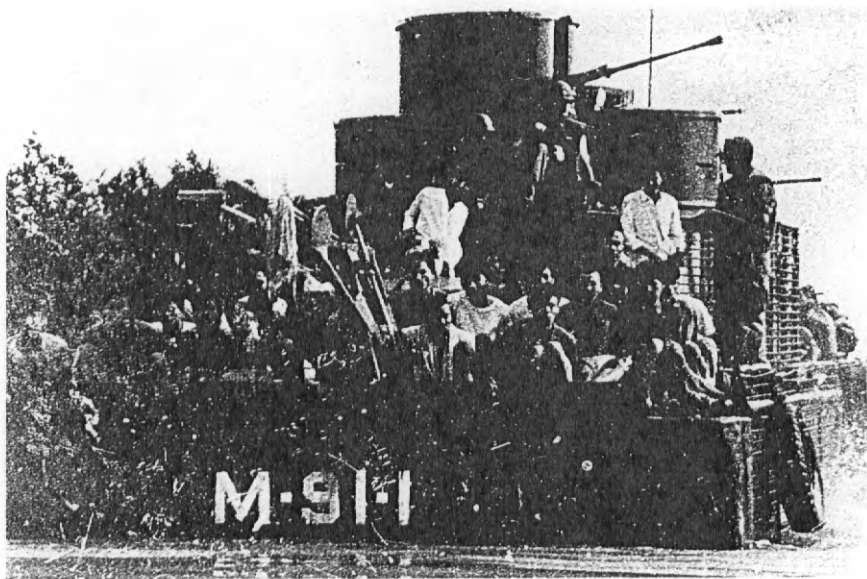
In I Corps Tactical Zone, PBR operations commenced on 9 January for the second time.

On 10 January a Viet Cong swimmer, wearing sophisticated

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diving equipment, was detected on the upper Co Chien river. This was the first sighting in IV Corps Tactical Zone of a swimmer so equipped.

During the month Operation PREAKNESS III was conducted along the Ba Lai River and Operation WIND SONG I was conducted in the Thom Creek/Mo Cay Creek area, in the vicinity of Mo Cay in Kien Hoa province. Both operations achieved a high degree of success in the destruction of enemy assets and the capture of Viet Cong suspects and documents of high intelligence value.



Viet Cong prisoners crowd the stern of a Mobile Riverine Force Monitor after they were captured during Operation WIND SONG I, a combined 116/117 operation near Mo Cay in Kien Hoa province.

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During the Tet holiday period BOLD DRAGON I was conducted on the upper Bassac River. On 29 January PBRs commenced patrols from Chau Doc to the Cambodian border to counter any possible Viet Cong movement or resupply efforts during the Tet truce period that was declared from 291800H to 310600H. The truce was terminated, however, at 0945 on 30 January, due to numerous Viet Cong-initiated attacks throughout South Vietnam. The intended major effort of the enemy was fully manifested when the massive Tet Offensive was launched in the early morning hours of the 31st against cities and military installations throughout the Republic.

Task Force 116 units played a prominent role in the defense of several cities that came under attack during the major Viet Cong Tet Offensive. At My Tho SEAL and PBR personnel augmented the defense of U. S. billeting areas in the city. PBRs attacked Viet Cong infiltrators from the waterways adjacent to My Tho and Ben Tre. Light helicopter fire teams from Task Units 116.3.8 and 116.3.9 supported My Tho and Ben Tre almost continuously. Vinh Long was the scene of heavy fighting, during which GAME WARDEN units were confronted by the advancing enemy. Navy "Seawolves" from Task Unit 116.2.9 flew extensive missions in support of Vinh Long Airfield and the surrounding area. Around Sa Dec PBRs maintained a blocking force as ground units counter-attacked the Viet Cong to expel them from the city. In Chau Doc four PBRs from River Section 535, five

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PBRs from River Section 513 and SEALs from Detachment Alfa, Eighth Platoon, contributed significantly to saving the city from seizure by the communist insurgents. The SEALs waged intense combat within the city against the Viet Cong, while PBRs attacked enemy positions and evacuated civilians and wounded personnel. PBR crews went ashore four times to secure helicopter landing zones and further joined SEAL personnel to assist in the base defense at the U. S. Special Forces Camp. In the Saigon area armed helicopters from Task Unit 116.4.8 operated from Nha Be in support of U. S. elements at the U. S. Embassy and Tan Son Nhut Air Base, including BOQ-3 near the air base that had been breached by the Viet Cong. In I Corps PBRs participated in the defense of the strategic LCU ramp at Hue. Casualties to Task Force 116 personnel and assets were light during the attack.

I CORPS RIVER PATROL GROUP

On 9 January GAME WARDEN forces, consisting of 10 PBRs, commenced operations on the Hue River, the De L'Ouest and De L'Est Lagoons and the Cau Hai Bay. The GAME WARDEN Tactical Operations Center and PBR Mobile Support Base I for River Section 521 was located at Tan My.

On 31 January PBRs joined with ARVN and U. S. ground forces in a counter-offensive against Viet Cong forces attacking the Hue LCU ramp. Eight patrol boats charged up the Hue River, following

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the commencement of the Viet Cong Tet Offensive, and encountered heavy mortar, rocket and sniper fire when they arrived at the LCU ramp. The enemy appeared to be in control of the northern bank of the Huong river opposite the LCU ramp. The patrol boats made repeated firing runs until the enemy fire was suppressed and the north bank was secured by U. S. Marines the same evening. PBRs remained in the area to maintain the security of the ramp. Two PBR crewmen received minor wounds in the day-long action.

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

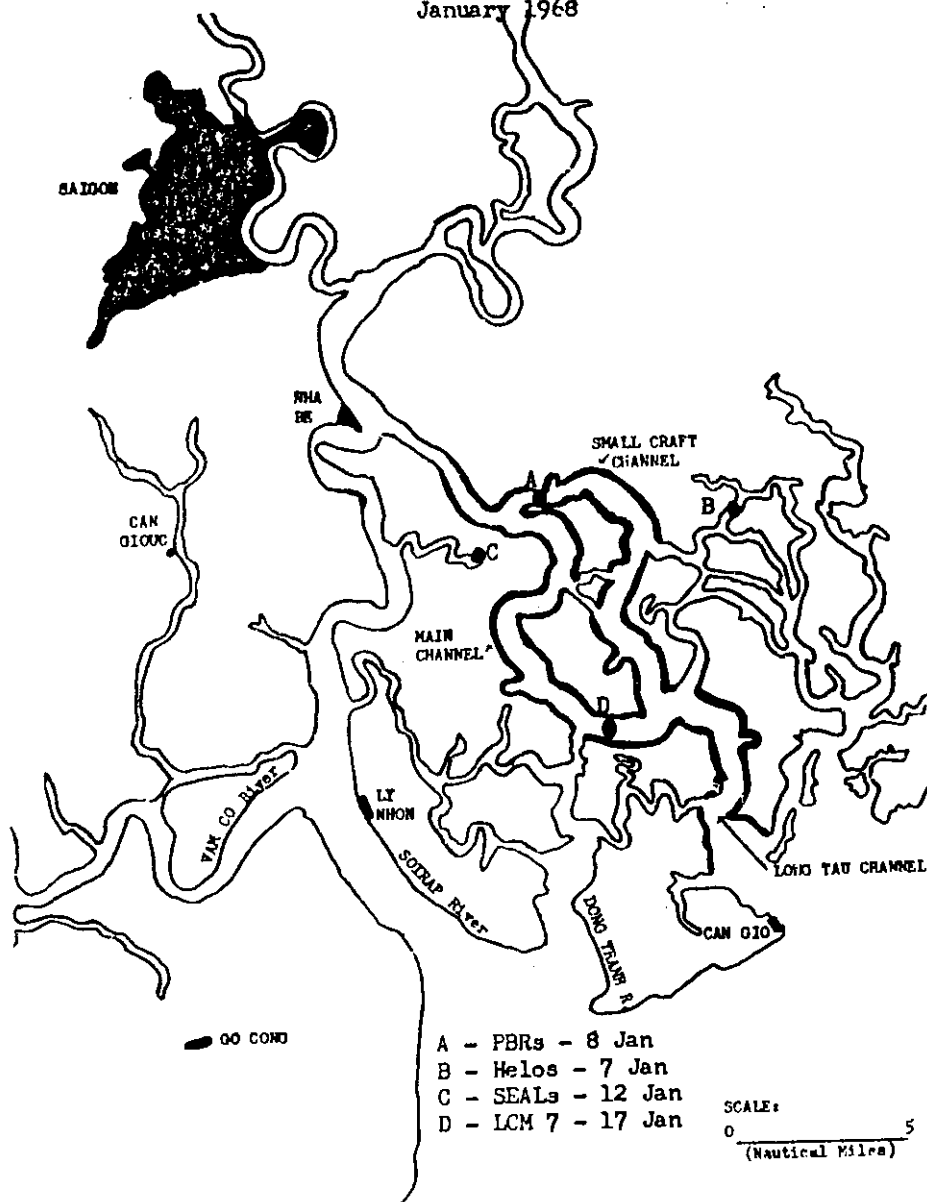
At 0105 on the morning of 2 January, the Viet Cong initiated a 75-mm recoilless-rifle attack against the Navy base at Nha Be, located 7 miles south of Saigon. Task Group 116.2 units got underway to assume defensive positions as the general alarm sounded. About 10 enemy rounds hit in the vicinity of the pier area as the boat crews maneuvered their boats away from the pier. All boats were able to get underway except MSB 22 which sustained a direct hit during the initial barrage. A raging fire broke out on the boat and burned for one hour. Although the crew valiantly tried to save the minesweeper, the damage inflicted was so extensive the boat was beyond repair and subsequently stricken from the Naval Vessel Register. Two Navy men were wounded in the attack. No other damage was sustained by the base or other attached units. Also

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

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targeted by the enemy was the Nha Be tank farm, a commercial operation located adjacent to the Navy base. The Viet Cong hit four tanks; however, there were no secondary explosions or fire as a result of the attack.



An Operation GAME WARDEN PBR inspects several sampans on the Long Tau river, south of Saigon.

On the morning of 7 January a U. S. Army UH-1D helicopter on a visual reconnaissance mission observed three sampans and one large, covered junk loaded with rice and four Viet Cong in a restricted area, 13 miles east-southeast of Nha Be. A Navy light helicopter

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fire team scrambled to the area and attacked the reported targets. One 45-foot junk, one 30-foot sampan and two 10-foot sampans were destroyed and the four occupants were killed by the "Seawolves". One helicopter crewman received a minor wound during the strike.

On 8 January two Mark II PBRs from River Section 524 were conducting a test fire mission on the upper Dong Tranh river when a B-41 rocket hit PBR 738 on the after .50-caliber gun shield. The explosion destroyed the gun shield, spewing shrapnel throughout the boat. PBR 737, responding immediately in defense of the stricken boat, opened fire on the enemy position and suppressed the attack. Eight Navy men were wounded (one seriously) in the ambush. One civilian attached to the Navy Research and Development Unit Three, Saigon, on board to observe the weapons test, also received a minor wound.

At 1915 on 12 January, SEALs established an ambush on the Cat Co stream, located about six miles southeast of Nha Be. Immediately after landing the SEALs heard three warning shots from the southeast, answered by a single shot from the north. As the SEALs lay in wait the same signal sequence was repeated twice again an hour apart. The disciplined SEALs continued their stealthy vigil and, at 0030, two sampans approached from the north. The ambush was sprung, killing four Viet Cong in the initial burst of fire. Enemy fire was then received from the opposite bank and returned

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by the SEALs. Moaning was heard and M-79 grenades were fired in the direction of the sounds--the sounds stopped. The SEALs withdrew and relanded upstream a short distance to conduct a patrol. At 0900 the SEALs withdrew after having failed to make further contact with the enemy. There were no friendly casualties. Captured were two large sampans with outboard motors.

On 17 January LCM 7, minesweeping on the Long Tau River, was hit by small-arms fire. There were no casualties. This harassment fire followed two recovery incidents of suspected command-detonating wire since 10 January. Two days later a third recovery was made. It was noted that the word "NAVY" was stamped on one connector lug attached to the heavy duty three-strand insulated electrical wire.

DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) River

On 6 January "Seawolves" swept in to assist ARVN troops that were under attack and pinned down by enemy forces, 20 miles northwest of My Tho. The light helicopter fire team, operating from Vinh Long, made repeated attacks on the Viet Cong, permitting the ground units to withdraw in an orderly manner to more secure positions to the north. When the enemy fire had been suppressed the helicopters evacuated 11 critically injured ARVN troops. Enemy

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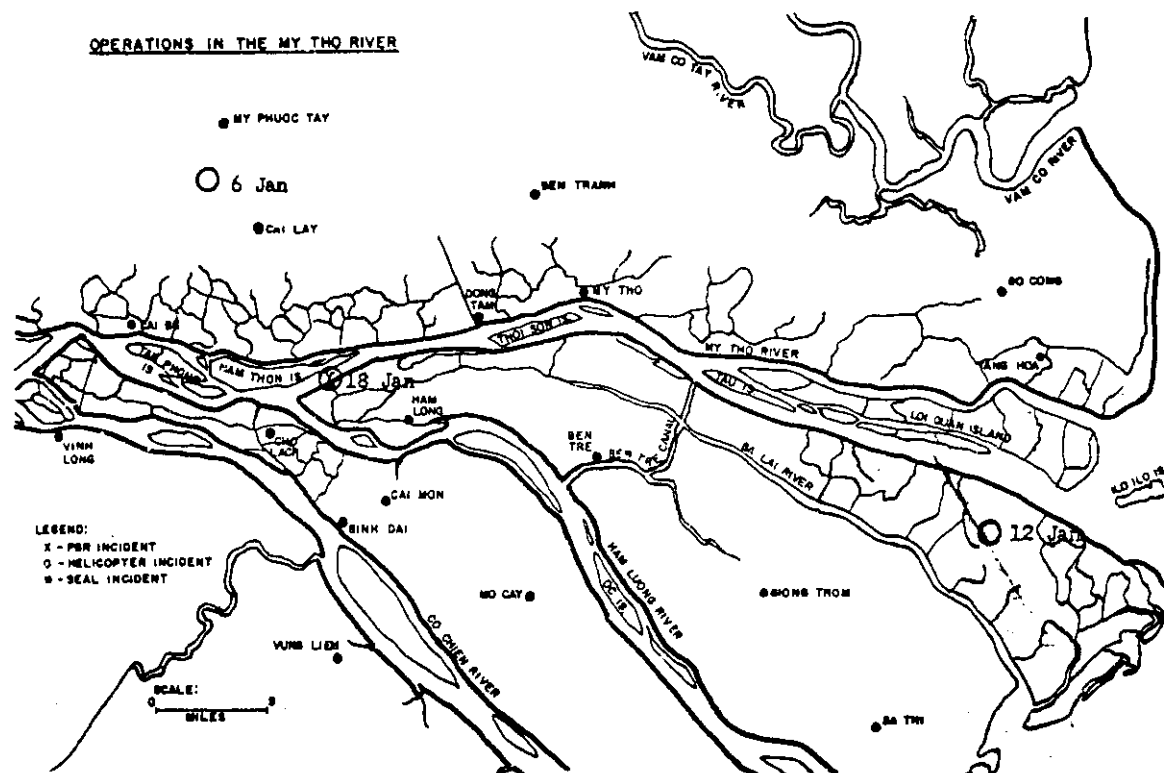
casualties were unknown. There were no Navymen wounded during the action.

On 12 January a light helicopter fire team en route from Vung Tau to their base at Dong Tam received an intelligence report that a large Viet Cong ceremony was being held in an area about 15 miles due south of Co Cong in Kien Hoa province. The "Seawolves" swung south and when on the target they saturated the area with machine-gun fire and 2.75-inch rockets. Four structures were left destroyed and six additional ones damaged as the helicopters headed home. Later intelligence received from the Kien Hoa Sector Advisor reported that the "Seawolves'" attack killed 14 Viet Cong, wounded 16 others and destroyed one 60-mm mortar and one BAR. There were no friendly casualties.

On 18 January a PBR patrol, proceeding west on the My Tho river en route to its patrol station, observed two sampans evading into a canal located $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the confluence of the My Tho and Ham Luong rivers. PBR 153 gave chase and, as the boat closed the river bank, an estimated Viet Cong platoon sprung their ambush. The enemy opened fire at a range of about 75 meters with an unknown type of rocket, 57-mm recoilless-rifles, automatic weapons and small arms. The patrol boat received two direct rocket hits--one exploded in the coxswain's flat and the other impacted on the radar dome--followed by a recoilless-rifle round in the port side. The Boat

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OPERATIONS IN THE MY THO RIVER



LEGEND:
 X - PBR INCIDENT
 O - HELICOPTER INCIDENT
 * - SEAL INCIDENT

SCALE:
 0 5 MILES

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Commander, BML William R. GOLDMAN, though seriously wounded, contemptuously defied the fire in the cockpit and maneuvered his boat to the center of the river while the after .50-caliber gunner returned the enemy's fire. PBR 112 reversed course and commenced a firing run to suppress the Viet Cong attack. While the enemy continued to fire on the patrol, PBR 112 went alongside the stricken boat and removed the crew members from the burning craft. A second PBR patrol, operating in the area, sped to the scene of the attack and commenced suppressive firing runs. The three boats then proceeded to Dong Tam with the four wounded crewmen (two serious) and one wounded Vietnamese Maritime Policeman. "Seawolves" arrived overhead and covered the burning craft until a patrol from River Section 534 arrived and extinguished the fire. An airstrike was called in after the helicopters had expended their ordnance on the target area. PBR 112, having returned to the scene of the action, adjusted the airstrike for the forward air controller. Two Vietnamese A-1 Skyraiders conducted the strike, hitting the target with 250-pound general purpose bombs, napalm and 20-mm cannon fire. Numerous people were seen running from the ambush site during the air attack. The number of enemy casualties was undetermined; however, two structures and two bunkers were destroyed and four structures were damaged. It was strongly apparent that the evading sampans were a ruse to draw the PBRs into the ambush.

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Shortly before midnight on the night of 22 January, two squads of SEALs were landed on the north bank of the Mekong river, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Sa Dec. Squad 6A patrolled northwest about a half mile and established an ambush site. At 0200 the following morning, they opened fire on an unlighted sampan, killing the four Viet Cong occupants. The squad then moved to the southeast a short distance where they killed two more of the enemy detected in yet another unlighted sampan. The squad moved in a southeasterly direction to await a rendezvous with Squad 6B. Squad 6B, after landing, had patrolled to the northwest. In reaction to 6A's initial contact, an estimated seven Viet Cong in the vicinity of Squad 6B opened fire from the north bank of the Tien Giang river in the direction of Squad 6A. The SEALs established a hasty ambush and laid in wait. Shortly thereafter, Viet Cong on the south bank of the river returned the fire from their comrades on the north bank. Several cries of pain were heard as the Viet Cong exchanged fire between themselves. Still undetected, Squad 6B initiated their ambush at 0203 on the 23rd, directing their fire simultaneously on a sampan with one occupant aboard and at the Viet Cong on the north bank of the river. The lone Viet Cong was killed. Casualties to the group on the north bank were unknown. As the squad left their ambush site and headed for a join-up with Squad 6A, they contacted and killed one more communist insurgent. The SEALs finally

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withdrew from the area at 0430 after achieving eight kills. There were no U. S. casualties.

Operations in the Co Chien River

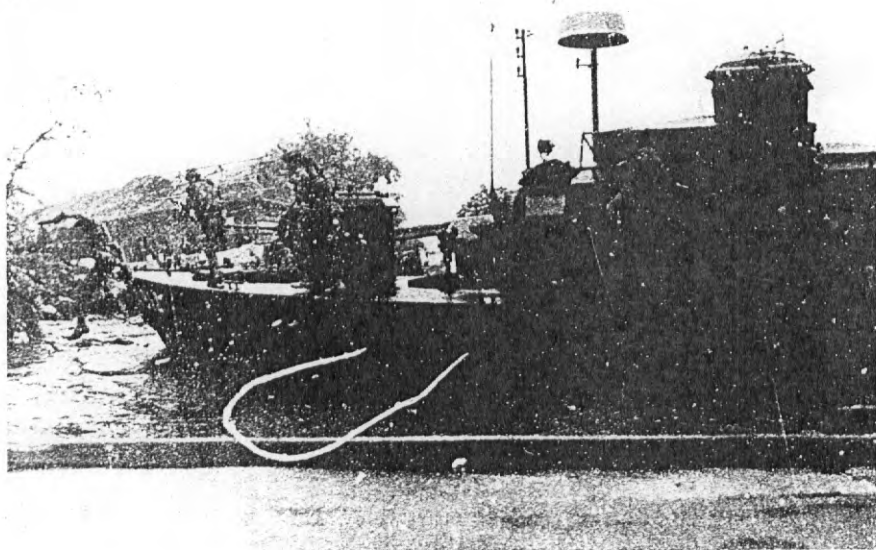
On 4 January, three PBRs from River Section 534 were heading north, on a routine patrol on the Mang Thit river, about 13 miles southeast of Vinh Long, when ambushed by a suspected company of Viet Cong. The enemy opened fire on all boats simultaneously from both banks of the river with an extremely effective initial volley aimed at the coxswain's flats and forward gun tubs. All three forward gunners were wounded in the opening moments of the fire fight. The patrol boats retaliated against the enemy positions but were unable to suppress the fire which included at least one U. S. M-60 machine gun and one U. S. M-79 grenade launcher. The boats cleared the ambush area to effect a helicopter medical evacuation of the wounded. A total of four PBR sailors received battle injuries. Gunner's Mate Third Class Dell R. CLAIBORNE, USN, died four days later from a head wound sustained when an enemy bullet pierced his helmet. Casualties inflicted upon the enemy were undetermined.

On 10 January a PBR, conducting an engineering trial in the vicinity of Vinh Long, sighted a swimmer, clad in full rubber suit, face mask and a single air tank, as he breached in the wakes of two other PBRs operating on the river. The swimmer, who was about

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10 feet from the boat, immediately submerged. A search of the area, using concussion grenades, achieved negative results. There had been previous incidents involving swimmer/sappers; however, this was the first sighting of a fully equipped frogman, suggesting the increased use of underwater ordnance by the enemy.



U. S. Navy SEALs leap from a TF 117 ASPB to raid an enemy base camp during Operation WIND SONG I, a combined 116/117 operation in the Thom/Bo Cay Creek area of Kien Hoa province.

On 25 January Operation WIND SONG I was conducted in Kien Hoa province by units of Task Group 116.2 and Task Force 117, with Commander River Division 52 as Officer in Tactical Command. The mission

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was directed against the Viet Cong-controlled area along the Thom and Mo Cay canals, a major canal waterway linking the Co Chien and Ham Luong Rivers and furnishing the sole route of commerce to Mo Cay district town. The force included eight PBRs, two monitors, four ASPBs (the monitors and ASPBs chopped to CTG 116.2 from CTF 117 for the period of the operation), two SEAL platoons, and two light helicopter fire teams. With the first light of dawn the flotilla of small boats sortied into the inland canal from the Co Chien River. While transitting the canal, psychological operations were conducted and all water traffic was searched. Flying ahead of the boats, the Navy "Seawolves" began blasting enemy bunker positions along the canal while the SEALs were put ashore at the upper and lower ends of the canal. As the SEALs moved in, the "Seawolves" continued their airstrike as the boats along the canal began their attack against Viet Cong positions. Viet Cong resistance was limited to sporadic small-arms fire, but there was no doubt about his presence. Nearly every structure flew a Viet Cong flag and contained pictures of communist leaders. When the SEALs completed their sweep, they had captured 51 Viet Cong suspects. The operation proved to be highly successful, for in addition to the captured suspects, the force killed five Viet Cong and wounded two others in the action. The enemy suffered extensive losses as the armada destroyed five tons of rice, over 30 bunkers, 25 sampans

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and motors, a Viet Cong propaganda center and two Viet Cong tax stations. Also captured were numerous documents of significant intelligence value. There were no friendly casualties.

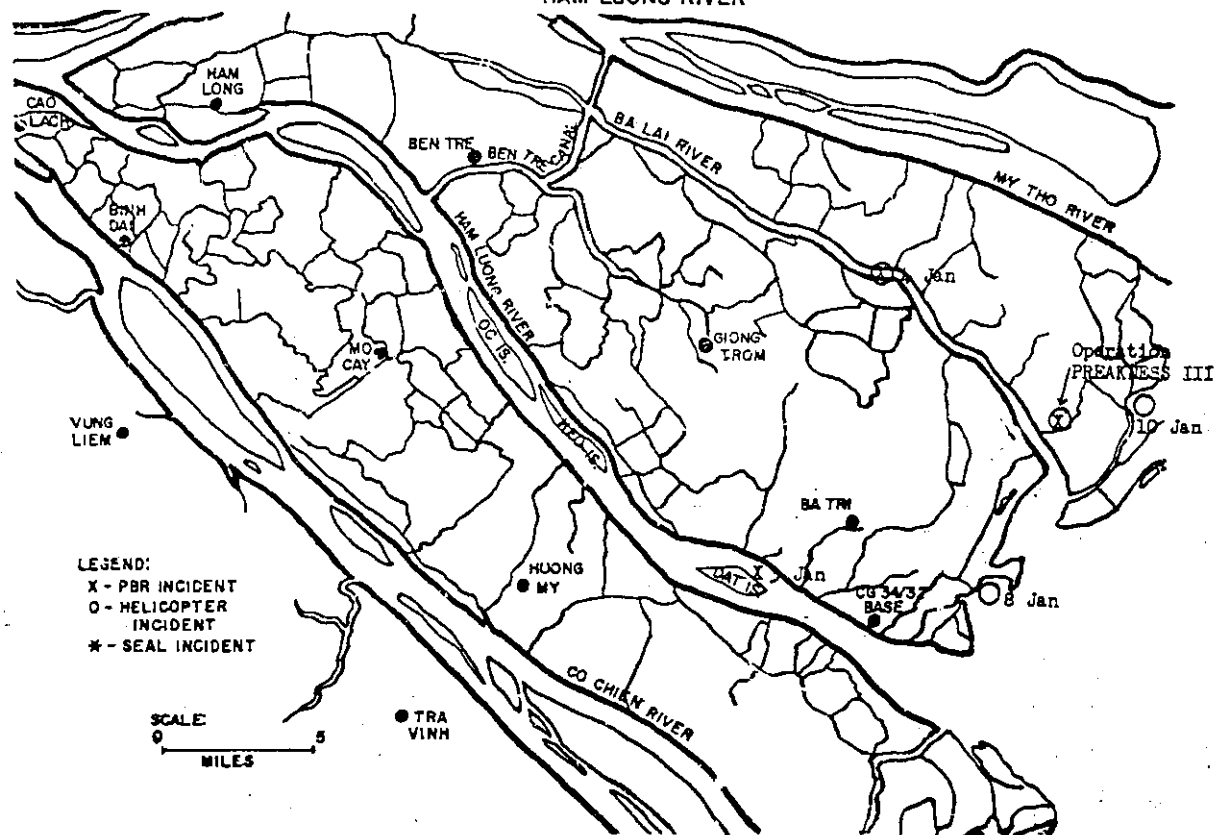
On 27 January, while conducting harassment and interdiction fire against bunkers and trenches 25 miles southeast of Vinh Long, PBR 52 was hit by a white phosphorous rifle grenade. The grenade detonated while in flight, just inside the starboard engine armor, about two feet above the engine covers, with the center of mass traveling to the port side and finally resting on the deck forward of the engine covers. The impact blew the after gunner and the engineer over the side and ignited the boat captain's clothing. The boat captain turned his boat toward the beach and jumped into the water to extinguish his burning clothes. He then remanned his boat to help put out the fire burning on board. The damaged boat was beached and a helicopter medical evacuation called in for one crewman that was seriously wounded. A security perimeter was established around the boat by the covering PBR and additional PBRs that rushed to the scene. Overhead, "Seawolves" provided additional cover for the surface units. PBR 52 was subsequently refloated and returned to base for repairs. Four PBR sailors were wounded in the action. One Viet Cong was seen running on the beach and taken under fire with unknown results.

Operations in the Ham Luong River

While on a routine patrol on the night of 3 January, PBRs 101

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OPERATIONS IN THE HAM LUONG RIVER



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and 103 interdicted a sampan crossing the river from west to east, about 23 miles southeast of My Tho. The two occupants jumped into the water when detected and were taken under fire by the patrol with unknown results. Enemy fire was then received from the west bank of the river as PBR 103 pursued the unmanned sampan, that still had its motor running, and hooked onto it with a grapnel. PBR 101 returned and suppressed the enemy's fire while the captured sampan was towed clear of the area. The patrol had stopped a Viet Cong ammunition crossing--contained in the sampan were 60 bangalore mines, 40 claymore mines, 200 electric primers, 150 rounds of Chinese Communist ammunition and six fragmentation grenades.

On 4 January, while supporting a Popular Force landing on the Ba Lai river, 20 miles southeast of My Tho, three PBRs from River Section 534 received heavy small-arms and automatic-weapons fire from enemy ground positions. The patrol boats directed their guns from the river while the "Seawolves" attacked from overhead, but the combined fire power failed to deter the determined enemy. Meanwhile, the Popular Force troops conducted their ground sweep and uncovered 60 60-mm mortar rounds wired with command detonators. Also discovered were Viet Cong flags, uniforms and sewing machines in a monastery. As the troops were withdrawn from the beach, the enemy fire continued. The Navy armed helicopters made additional firing runs and received enemy fire on each pass of the target area. When all

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friendly forces were cleared from the area, artillery fire was directed on the monastery and surrounding enemy positions. Known enemy casualties were 11 Viet Cong killed, one captured and nine sampans and four structures destroyed. Two PBR crewmen and two Vietnamese troops were wounded in the action. All PBRs were hit by small-arms or automatic-weapons fire and one helicopter received a bullet hole in the fuselage.

On 8 January a Navy light helicopter fire team on routine patrol spotted a large concentration of enemy junks and sampans just north of the mouth of the Ham Luong river along the coast of the South China Sea. The "Seawolves" then piloted their armed gunships in an attack against the enemy resupply force, expending 2.75-inch rockets and 7.62-mm machine gun fire in repeated attacks. Although light small-arms and automatic-weapons fire was returned there were no friendly casualties. Two secondary explosions were observed in the surface targets and were estimated to be comparable to that of 155-mm shells. Four junks and 10 sampans were destroyed and 20 other craft were damaged.

On the evening of 10 January, Operation PREAKNESS III was launched along the Ba Lai river, an area of high Viet Cong activity, particularly around the focal points of Thu Ba Lai village and Ong Luong Canal. The first was a major staging, administrative and rest area, while the second area was a major receiving and transportation

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center for arms and ammunition. Both areas are located near the mouth of the Ba Lai river. Units of TG 116.3 and TG 117.1 joined in the assault on the Viet Cong-infested areas and marked the first joint undertaking of this nature between units of the River Patrol Force and Riverine Assault Force. SEALs, PBRs, two Navy light helicopter fire teams and six Assault Support Patrol Boats (ASPBs) made the transit. The strike force destroyed 24 sampans, 34 huts and 20 bunkers. The naval units noted mud and mud/log offensive bunkers facing the entire length of the canal and many signs of recent enemy activity. There were no friendly casualties.

On 10 January, while conducting a Ba Lai patrol, Navy "Seawolves", acting on an intelligence report, attacked a high-level Viet Cong meeting near the mouth of the Ba Lai river. The armed helicopters made repeated passes over the target for 15 minutes, and destroyed one structure and damaged three others. A large secondary explosion was observed from the primary target structure. Two Viet Cong were known to have been killed by the air attack; however, an intelligence report received the next day from Binh Dai sub sector raised the enemy casualty figures to 17 killed and 23 wounded. There were no friendly casualties.

On 31 January Navy "Seawolves" and PBRs aggressively engaged the communist insurgents following the enemy's vicious and destructive attack on the city of Ben Tre. For two days, the Navy helicopters

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were constantly airborne, making repeated strikes against the Viet Cong who had overrun parts of the city, while the PBRs operated on the river to close off the enemy's avenues of resupply. As the tide of battle swung in favor of the friendly forces, the patrol boats and "Seawolves" continued to attack the retreating enemy as they faded back into the countryside.

Operations in the Bassac River

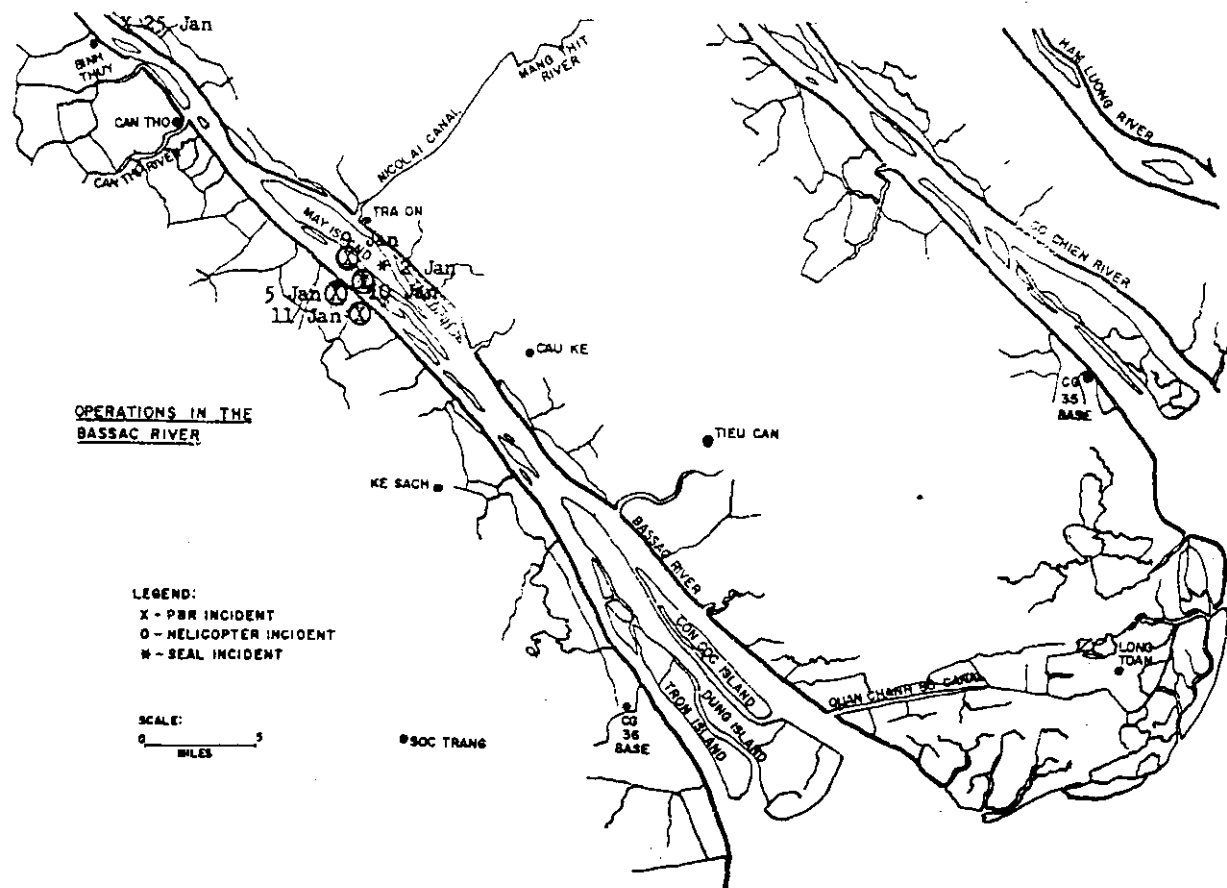
On the morning of 2 January, SEALs, accompanied by a Hoi Chanh, were landed about 12 miles southeast of Can Tho. The Viet Cong returnee led the SEALs to two enemy huts where a Viet Cong security element was encountered. In the ensuing fire fight, six Viet Cong were killed and the area secured. The huts were set ablaze and 800 pounds of rice were destroyed before the SEALs moved on to a cache site nearby. They located one hole four feet by two feet and four feet deep, reinforced with bamboo and covered with mud. The cache hole was empty. The SEALs placed a claymore mine with an anti-disturbance mechanism in the bottom and withdrew from the area under sniper fire. Later that evening, the Hoi Chanh directed a squad to a known Viet Cong communications liaison cadre about two miles northeast of the morning incident. The SEALs captured their man; however, he was killed when he attempted to escape as the SEALs were withdrawing. There were no friendly casualties in either operation.

On 5 January two PBRs supported Popular Force landings on an

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island located on the Cai Con canal, 18 miles southeast of Binh Thuy off the Bassac River. In the period between 0700 and 1400, the troops made three landings accompanied by PBR landing parties. "Seawolves" made repeated strikes against the enemy as contact was gained. The successful operation was highlighted by the courage and initiative displayed by the Popular Force troops when joined in combat with GAME WARDEN units against a common foe. Two U. S. Navy sailors received minor wounds during the action. Six Viet Cong were killed--four by the PBRs, one by the Popular Forces and one by the "Seawolves". Six structures were destroyed and six others heavily damaged by the Navy guns. Two sampans were sunk and four individual weapons were captured before the day's activity was terminated.

Shortly after noon on 9 January, a PBR patrol, operating 11 miles southeast of Can Tho, was ambushed by the enemy. PBR 722 was drifting about 125 meters from the beach when a crewman spotted a rocket as it appeared, coming from the heavy foliage on the shore. The B-40 rocket trailed black smoke throughout its trajectory, impacting the boat on the port side aft. The cover boat, PBR 725, instantly opened fire on the ambush site, deterring any further launchings. Both boats commenced firing passes and came under automatic-weapons fire from at least seven different firing positions. Unable to suppress the enemy fire and to prevent PBR 722 from sinking, the boat was beached. PBR 725 continued to direct its guns

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against the enemy until all ammunition was expended. The boat, even though lacking any firepower, remained in the area to direct helicopter strikes on the target. Additional PBRs arrived on the scene shortly thereafter and relieved PBR 725. PBR 722 was refloated and returned to the base at Binh Thuy. Seven PBR sailors received minor wounds in the fire fight that continued for over two hours. Only one Viet Cong body was found after the battle; however, numerous blood trails were detected in the area along with one Chinese Communist rifle. The next day the enemy scored another direct rocket hit against PBRs operating 12 miles southeast of Can Tho. The action commenced when a PBR patrol entered a canal on Nai Island and immediately came under enemy fire. The boats reversed course back to the main river, escaping a barrage of B-40 rockets that landed within 10 feet of the boats. PBRs 723 and 726 responded to the call of the boats under fire and, at full power, roared to the scene of the action. Meanwhile, a Navy light helicopter fire team scrambled from Binh Thuy to join in the fire fight. The four boats were making firing runs against the enemy positions when another rocket was fired, hitting PBR 723 portside amidships, just above the water line. The round passed through the boat without detonating. The PBR withdrew from the battle and headed home at full speed to keep the boat on step, thereby preventing flooding through the two holes. The extent of enemy casualties was undetermined; however, a large secondary

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explosion was observed in the vicinity of the rocket launchings. Four PBR crewmen were wounded in the action.

At about 1400 on the afternoon of 11 January, a PBR patrol, operating 11 miles southeast of Can Tho, received one B-40 round and small-arms fire from the west bank of the river. The boats opened fire and the enemy responded with two more B-40 rocket rounds. The aim of the enemy gunners manning the rockets was off, but small-arms marksmen scored hits on the attacking boats. When word of the ambush reached the PBR base at Binh Thuy, Navy "Sea-wolves" were scrambled at 1458, followed by a decision to execute Operation QUICK KILL at 1515. SEALs were landed just south of the ambush site at 1550 and a sweep of the Viet Cong-infested area was commenced under the supporting fire from PBRs and Navy helicopter gunships. At 1705 after working their way north, the SEALs came upon an enemy bunker. A fire fight erupted as the occupants poured out of the bunker with guns blazing. One SEAL, Seaman Apprentice Roy B. KEITH, USN, was killed when hit by an automatic-weapon burst. Five Viet Cong were killed in the return fire of SA KEITH's shipmates. The operation terminated at 1820 after no further contact was made. Captured in the operation were three AK-47 automatic rifles, one B-40 rocket launcher, three B-40 rounds, and 120 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, plus numerous documents. It was considered that the quick reaction of all forces was the primary reason for

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the successful operation and capture of the weapons. It was recommended that a force of U. S. Army or U. S. Marine troops be attached to river commands for this type of quick reaction operation.

Acting on an intelligence report, on 25 January, that the Naval Support Activity Detachment Binh Thuy (headquarters for Commander Task Force 116), would be attacked at 2230, five PBRs conducted a close-in support patrol. At 2238 the PBRs engaged an enemy force that had attacked one of the patrol boats from multiple positions across the river from the GAME WARDEN base. In the exchange of fire, during which time the Viet Cong used recoilless rifles, automatic weapons and small arms, three Navymen were wounded slightly. Enemy casualties were unknown.

On 31 January units of the River Patrol Force were instrumental in saving the capital of Chau Doc Province from destruction during the Tet Offensive. Their actions substantially contributed to saving the lives of many civilians, including American and Vietnamese government employees. The units, composed of PBRs, a platoon of SEALs and a Naval Support Activity LCM-6 support craft, were the tactical units of Operation BOLD DRAGON. Their mission was to prevent the Viet Cong from infiltrating men and supplies across the Cambodian border, three miles west of the city, during the scheduled Lunar New Year truce.

At 0200 on the 31st, the SEALs made first contact with the Viet

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Cong during a reconnaissance mission along the frequently used routes of enemy infiltration. The Navy men had stealthfully come upon a reinforced platoon of Viet Cong, near the border, covering the crossing of an estimated 200 enemy troops. Because of the size of the enemy force, the SEALs withdrew to the river to join up with the PBRs and report their intelligence.

At 0310 the city of Chau Doc came under a heavy enemy attack by a large concentration of enemy troops, estimated to be about 1,400 men. As the enemy attack began, two PBRs and the LCM-6 were tied up at the piers in Chau Doc, while the other two PBRs were on the Bassac rendezvousing with the SEALs.

The LCM, with a full crew aboard, got underway in less than five minutes, followed by the two moored PBRs, with only a boat captain and one crewman aboard each boat. The other PBR crewmen were at the Special Forces' Camp ARNN, where the crews were being billeted.

As the LCM and PBRs made their way out into the main stream of the river, the LCM was hit by a 57-mm recoilless-rifle round above the waterline, wounding two crewmen.

The PBR commanders requested men from the LCM to man the .50 caliber machine guns. Even though Hospital Corpsman Third Class David B. CROCKETT, Jr., USN, was wounded twice, he volunteered, along with two other crewmen, to transfer to one of the PBRs where

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he manned one of the machine guns.

The PBRs made repeated firing runs on the enemy positions while resupplying from the LCM support boat, but were unable to suppress the enemy's fire. They were successful, however, in keeping much of the enemy's forces tied down until the other PBRs and the SEALs arrived about two and a half hours later.

Upon their arrival, and under intense small-arms and automatic-weapons fire, the PBRs disembarked the SEAL platoon into the city. The patrol boats then commenced a series of firing runs on the enemy positions while the SEALs began the rescue of U. S. citizens who were trapped in the town.

By 0830 that morning, they had been successful in rescuing 10 U. S. and six Vietnamese Government civilian employees. One of the U. S. civilians had been wounded. By prearranged signal, the PBRs came in, picked up those rescued, and evacuated them to the LCM at midstream in the river--500 yards offshore.

The SEALs then returned to the main part of the city of Chau Doc, taking and securing key military and civilian installations. One SEAL, Aviation Structural Mechanic (Hydraulics) Second Class Clarence T. RISHER, III, USN, was killed while engaging an enemy rooftop heavy automatic weapons position. Fighting ferociously from an adjacent rooftop without consideration for his own safety, AMH2 RISHER, before being mortally wounded, neutralized the enemy

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position and freed his teammates who were pinned down by the withering Viet Cong fire.

At 1130 that morning, five PBRs from River Section 513 at Sa Dec, dispatched to assist the operation, arrived on the scene. By this time, the Special Forces' Camp Arnn was under heavy attack from all sides. The Task Unit Commander, Lieutenant John F. DOYLE, USN, formed the nine PBRs in column and made firing runs on the enemy attacking the camp. During one of the runs, one of the PBRs received a direct hit by a rocket, disabling the craft for the remainder of the action. The boat, however, made it to the LCM where emergency repairs were made to keep it afloat.

At four different times during the day as the heavy fighting continued, the SEALs and PBRs were able to secure temporary landing zones for helicopters. On another occasion, following three attempts aborted due to heavy enemy fire, the PBRs finally charged in and successfully resupplied friendly forces with ammunition.

At 1930 two PBRs evacuated 13 Vietnamese military and civilian personnel to Long Xuyen medical facilities about 24 miles downriver. Two SEAL corpsmen accompanied the PBRs during the transit, administering first aid to the wounded. At 0300 the next morning, 1 February, the two PBRs returned to Chau Doc, bringing fresh water and medical supplies.

About 0730 that morning, after having been withdrawn the night

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before to resupply and regroup, the SEALs were again landed at Chau Doc, where they began flushing the Viet Cong out of buildings and securing the city's hospital which had become an enemy stronghold. During the fight for the hospital, the PBRs completed about 30 firing runs to break down the enemy resistance. After the friendly forces retook the hospital, the two SEAL corpsmen began treating the wounds of Vietnamese military and civilian personnel.

By 0800, the combined force of SEALs and PBRs broke the enemy blockade around the Special Forces camp. While the other PBRs provided cover, one PBR beached at Camp Arnn to pick up the PBR sailors who had been trapped there.

For the remainder of the operation, and until the Navy units were ready to return to their bases at Binh Thuy and Sa Dec on 2 February, the SEALs kept key installations in the city secure while the PBRs patrolled and blockaded all water entrances into the city. There was one U. S. sailor killed and four wounded while the Viet Cong had at least 20 killed during the action between the communist insurgents and the Navy men. All boats participating in the operation sustained hostile fire damage of a varying degree, ranging from small arms to rocket hits.

GAME WARDEN UNITS

On 3 January the task force organization was revised to effect

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a greater responsiveness to the complex demands of the diverse elements of the force, and to enhance the capability for coordinating these elements regardless of location. Commanders of river patrol units were redesignated Task Group Commanders. Task Element Commanders were similarly upgraded to Task Unit Commanders in most cases. The task force was reorganized as follows:

Task Organization	Operational Title	CDR/CO
TF 116	River Patrol Force	COMRIVPATFOR
TG 116.1	Bassac River Patrol Group	COMRIVDIV 51
TU 116.1.0	Delta SEAL Support Unit A	OIC SEAL Team Det A Eighth Platoon
TU 116.1.1	Bassac River Patrol Unit A	OIC RIVPATSEC 511
TU 116.1.2	Bassac River Patrol Unit B	OIC RIVPATSEC 512
TU 116.1.3	Bassac River Patrol Unit C	OIC RIVPATSEC 535
TU 116.1.4	Bassac River Patrol Unit D	Not Activated
TU 116.1.5	Not Assigned	
TU 116.1.6	Bassac River LST Support Unit	CO, USS JENNINGS CTY
TU 116.1.7	Not Assigned	
TU 116.1.8	Bassac River Helo Support Unit A	OIC HAL-3 DET 1
TU 116.1.9	Bassac River Helo Support Unit B	OIC HAL-3 DET 7
TG 116.2	Co Chien River Patrol Group	COMRIVDIV 52
TU 116.2.0	Delta SEAL Support Unit B	OIC SEAL Team Det A Sixth Platoon
TU 116.2.1	Co Chien River Patrol Unit A	OIC RIVPATSEC 513
TU 116.2.2	Co Chien River Patrol Unit B	Not Assigned
TU 116.2.3	Co Chien River Patrol Unit C	OIC RIVPATSEC 523
TU 116.2.4	Co Chien River Patrol Unit D	OIC RIVPATSEC 522
TU 116.2.5	Not Assigned	
TU 116.2.6	Co Chien River LST Support Unit	CO, USS GARRETT CTY
TU 116.2.7	Not Assigned	
TU 116.2.8	Co Chien River Helo Support Unit A	OIC HAL-3 DET 4
TU 116.2.9	Co Chien River Helo Support Unit B	OIC HAL-3 DET 3
TG 116.3	My Tho River Patrol Group	COMRIVDIV 53

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TU 116.3.0	Delta SEAL Support Unit C	OIC SEAL Team Det A Seventh Platoon
TU 116.3.1	My Tho River Patrol Unit A	OIC RIVPATSEC 533
TU 116.3.2	My Tho River Patrol Unit B	OIC RIVPATSEC 532
TU 116.3.3	My Tho River Patrol Unit C	OIC RIVPATSEC 534
TU 116.3.4	My Tho River Patrol Unit D	OIC RIVPATSEC 531
TU 116.3.5	Not Assigned	
TU 116.3.6	My Tho River LST Support Unit	CO, USS HARNETT CTY
TU 116.3.7	Not Assigned	
TU 116.3.8	My Tho River Helo Support Unit A	OIC HAL-3 DET 5
TU 116.3.9	My Tho River Helo Support Unit B	OIC HAL-3 DET 6
TG 116.4	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Group	RSSZ Advisor
TU 116.4.0	Rung Sat Special Zone SEAL Unit	OIC SEAL Team Det G
TE 116.4.0.1	Rung Sat Special Zone Boat Support Element	OIC MST-3
TE 116.4.0.2	Rung Sat Special Zone SEAL Support Element A	OIC SEAL Team Det G ALFA Platoon
TE 116.4.0.3	Rung Sat Special Zone SEAL Support Element B	OIC SEAL Team Det G FOXTROT Platoon
TE 116.4.0.4	Rung Sat Special Zone SEAL Support Element C	OIC SEAL Team Det G BRAVO Platoon
TU 116.4.1	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Unit	COMRIVDIV 54
TE 116.4.1.1	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Element A	OIC RIVPATSEC 541
TE 116.4.1.2	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Element B	OIC RIVPATSEC 542
TE 116.4.1.3	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Element C	OIC RIVPATSEC 543
TE 116.4.1.4	Rung Sat Special Zone Patrol Element D	Not Activated
TU 116.4.2	Rung Sat Special Zone Mine- sweeping Unit	OIC MINRON 11 DET A
TU 116.4.3	Not Assigned	
TU 116.4.4	Not Assigned	
TU 116.4.5	Not Assigned	
TU 116.4.6	Rung Sat Special Zone LST Support Unit	Not Activated
TU 116.4.7	Not Assigned	
TU 116.4.8	Rung Sat Special Zone Helo Support Unit A	OIC HAL-3 DET 2

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TU 116.4.9	Rung Sat Special Zone Helo Support Unit B	Not Activated
TG 116.5	Not Assigned	
TG 116.6	Delta SEAL Group	OIC SEAL Team Det A
TU 116.6.1	Delta Boat Support Unit	OIC MST-2
TG 116.7	Not Assigned	
TG 116.8	Helio Support Group	CO HAL-3
TG 116.9	Not Assigned	
Not Assigned	I Corps River Patrol Group	COMRIVDIV 55
Not Assigned	I Corps River Patrol Unit A	OIC RIVPATSEC 521

On 9 January River Section 521 commenced GAME WARDEN operations in I Corps Tactical Zone.

On 9 January River Section 534 (TU 116.3.3) commenced operations from APL-55 located near Dong Tam on the My Tho river.

On 10 January Commander Task Force 117 changed operational control of one Assault Support Patrol Boat (ASPB) to Commander Task Force 116 for a 30-day period to evaluate the suitability of the craft for GAME WARDEN operations. Commander Task Group 116.3 was assigned evaluation responsibility.

On 17 January River Section 524, based at My Tho, commenced operations on the My Tho River.

From 28-31 January, four PBRs from River Section 535 (TU 116.1.3) at Binh Thuy extended GAME WARDEN patrols to the upper Bassac River during the Tet holiday period to prevent an expected influx of enemy supplies from Cambodia. The PBRs were based at the U. S. Special Forces camp at Chau Doc.

From 29-31 January, five PBRs from River Section 513 (TU 116.2.1)

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at Sa Dec patrolled the upper Mekong river to guard against an expected infiltration of supplies during the Tet holiday period. The PBRs were based at the U. S. Special Forces camp at Thuong Thoi.

On 31 January, River Section 531 shifted from USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821) to My Tho and assumed TU 116.3.2. River Section 532 shifted from My Tho to HARNETT COUNTY and assumed TU 116.3.4.

GAME WARDEN STATISTICAL SUMMARY

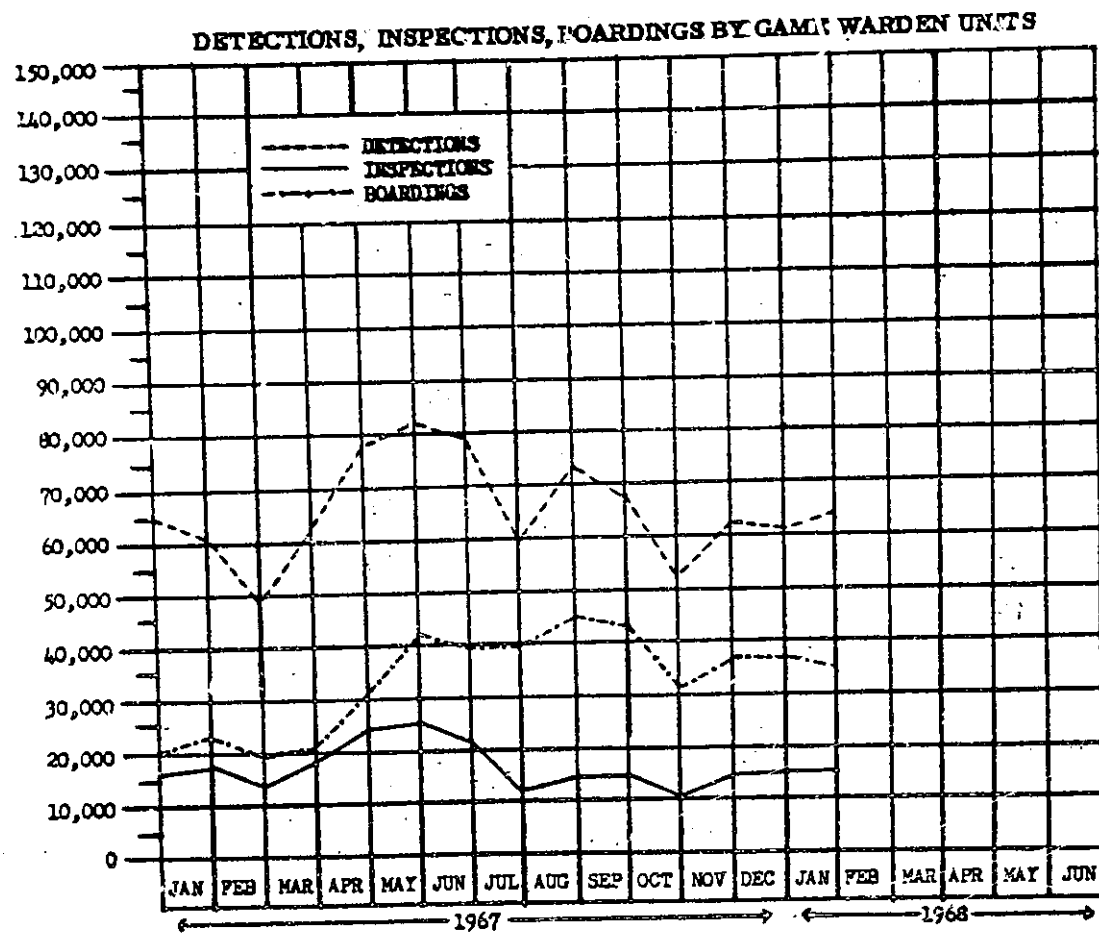
1. PBR Statistics:

- a. Total Patrols (two boats): Day 819.5 Night 813
- b. Total Contacts: Day 58,212 Night 5,968
- c. Total Inspected: Day 14,440 Night 2,276
- d. Total Boarded: Day 33,259 Night 2,293
- e. People Detained: 1,257
- f. Sampans/Junks Detained: 55
- g. Total Patrol Hours: 21,891.5

2. Helicopter Fire Team Statistics:

- a. Total Flight Hours: 1,369.7
- b. Helicopter Missions:
 - (1) Preplanned strikes: 151
 - (2) Reaction: 92
 - (3) Targets of opportunity: 142
 - (4) Support: 300

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3. GAME WARDEN Totals:

a. Fire Fights:

(1) PBR 43

(2) Helo 16

(3) LCM 1

(4) LCPL 1

b. Sampons: Destroyed 124 Damaged 116 Captured 11

c. Junks: Destroyed 7 Damaged 1

d. Structures: Destroyed 263 Damaged 125

e. Bunkers: Destroyed 77 Damaged 1

f. Enemy: KIA 120 KIA (Poss.) 47 WIA 36 Captured 51

g. Friendly: KIA 1 WIA 82

h. Friendly Battle Damage:

(1) PBR 43

(2) Helo 25

i. PBR MEDEVAC: 61

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE (TASK FORCE 117)

MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE OPERATIONS

The operational atmosphere for the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) in the month of January ranged from the relative calmness and serenity of the New Year's Truce period to the explosive and devastating holocaust of the Viet Cong Tet offensive. With the return of USS BENEWAH (APB 35) and USS COLLETON (APB 36) to the Mobile Riverine Base (MRB), the MRF once again regained their operational mobility, relocating from the Mekong to the Ham Luong and Co Chien Rivers while supporting strike operations against targets in Kien Hoa, Vinh Long, Long An and Dinh Tuong provinces.

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

Throughout the New Year Truce Period (311800H Dec-020600H Jan), units of the MRF conducted riverine operations in the Cam Son and Ban Long Secret Zones of Dinh Tuong province. These operations were designed to sever suspected Viet Cong-utilized channels of supply.

During the truce period there were no significant engagements with the enemy, although on 1 January the troops in the field received some automatic-weapons fire while in interdiction positions along the Ba Rai stream, 11 miles northeast of Vinh Long. Close fire support from two ASPBs and two monitors of TU 117.1.1 silenced the enemy fire. There were no friendly casualties and Viet Cong

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losses were undetermined.

On 3-4 January the MRF made preparations for strike operations in the Giong Trom District of Kien Hoa province. This two-battalion search and destroy phase of Operation CORONADO IX (5-7 January) was undertaken to locate and destroy elements of the Viet Cong 516th Local Force and the 518th Main Force Battalions.

Late on the evening of 4 January, after elements of the MRF departed for the area of operations, all underway units were recalled to participate in a search and rescue operation for a downed L-19 observation plane. The light spotter plane crashed east of the Xang canal in the vicinity north of Long Dinh, seven miles north of Dong Tam in Dinh Tuong province. The special search and rescue operation was conceived, planned and executed within hours of the reported crash, and the search units of the MRF moved out from Dong Tam at 0200 under the cover of darkness to commence the operation. At 0755 on the same morning, an Army gunship discovered the wreckage with the bodies of both occupants alongside the aircraft. In view of the fact that both bodies were stripped of all documents, the operation was deemed compromised and subsequently cancelled.

Operations in Vinh Long Province

After a brief two-day maintenance period the MRF conducted a two-battalion search and destroy operation in the Don Nhon district

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of eastern Vinh Long province.

River Assault Squadrons NINE and ELEVEN provided support to elements of the 2nd Brigade of the U. S. NINTH Infantry Division as they operated in a Viet Cong sanctuary heretofore unmolested by the combined Navy/Army assault forces of the MRF.

On the afternoon of 7 January heavy contact was established with two platoons of enemy guerrillas, 21 miles east of Vinh Long. In the ensuing six-hour battle the Viet Cong fought furiously but left behind 28 of their dead comrades. Sporadic sniper fire and small fire fights continued throughout the night as naval riverine craft established waterborne blocks to intercept any exfiltrating Viet Cong.

As a result of this two-day running battle the Viet Cong had 30 men killed and two prisoners captured, while friendly casualties consisted of two sailors and eight soldiers wounded.

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

On 10 January, taking advantage of the newly raised bridge northwest of Cai Be, a two-battalion riverine operation was conducted in the Cai Be district of Dinh Tuong province. This phase of Operation CORONADO IX (10-12 January) was planned to locate, entrap and destroy the 261st Main Force Battalion and local Viet Cong guerrillas.

Supported by three artillery sites, which were emplaced during

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the night and early morning hours, RADs 91 and 111, consisting of 45 assorted riverine craft, moved single file up the Thong Lui Stream with their embarked troops. Upon reaching the junction of the Thong Lui and Tra Lot streams, RAD 111, with the 4/47th embarked, held up while RAD 92 with the 3/60th moved up the narrow Tra Lot stream to the north and assaulted beaches on the north bank at 1015.

At 1045, approximately three miles to the west, RAD 111 landed the 4/47th on the east bank of the Hai Muoi Tam canal, about seven miles northwest of Cai Be, to try and entrap the elusive enemy.

At 1430, upon being informed that the 3/60th to the east was heavily engaged with elements of the Viet Cong 261st Main Force Battalion, RAD 111 backloaded the 4/47th and lifted them up the shallow Tra Lot stream to the area of intense fighting, five miles north-northwest of Cai Be. Due to the rapidly ebbing tidal waters in the barely navigable Tra Lot Stream, the riverine units were forced to withdraw to the deeper Thong Lui Stream and Mekong River.

Meanwhile, Alfa Company of the 3/60th, which had been airlifted into the objective area, became isolated by savage enemy fire and suffered heavy losses with one man killed and 32 wounded. Pinned down and short of ammunition and supplies, the Army unit spent a long, arduous night awaiting the dawn and "medevac"

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helicopters. Nighttime attempts to re-supply and evacuate the wounded and beleaguered troops were futile as enemy weaponry thwarted the helicopters.

The operation continued through the next afternoon when the bone-weary troops departed the objective area, leaving behind 73 dead Viet Cong. The U. S. Army troops suffered 21 killed and had 59 wounded in the bitterly contested battle with the Viet Cong 261st Main Force Battalion.

Operations in Long An Province

On the evening of 11 January, during the passage back to Dong Tam, a request was received from the Commanding General, U. S. NINTH Infantry Division, to react to an intelligence report of a large enemy buildup in the Binh Phouc district of Long An province. Plans were rapidly formulated and issued during the night while necessary boat repairs, refueling and provisioning were accomplished.

After having "rested" at Dong Tam for six hours, RAD 112 commenced the rapid-reaction operation at 0430 by escorting the artillery barges to the fire support base. RAD 111 with the 4/47th embarked, got underway at 0630 and RAD 91 with the 3/60th aboard, followed them one-half hour later.

Initial contact was made as riverine units of RAD 111 were preparing to land troops and were ambushed from the banks of the Vam Co Tay river, about 11 miles northwest of Go Cong. The enemy

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fire, consisting of recoilless-rifle, B-40 rockets and automatic-weapons fire, was suppressed with flamethrowers, rifle grenades and 20-mm, 40-mm and .50 caliber gunfire, and the landings were conducted without further interference. There were seven Viet Cong killed and 44 bunkers destroyed in the two-day operation while friendly forces went unscathed. The exhausted troops returned to the MRB on the evening of 13 January for a two-day respite.

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

On 16 January assault forces of the MRF conducted a joint cordon and search operation with the Vietnamese National Police from My Tho. The search was conducted in An Quoi village, located just east of the Dong Tam Base, which had been the subject of reports indicating infiltration by the Viet Cong.

Units of the MRF formed a cordon around three sides of the village, while RAD 91 provided a four-ASPB water block on the fourth side, and thus sealed off the area while Vietnamese National Police conducted a thorough search of the village. As a result of this operation 68 Viet Cong suspects were detained, and 12 soldiers were wounded by booby traps.

Operation CORONADO IX, which commenced on 2 November, terminated in Dinh Tuong province upon the culmination of this cordon and search operation. Cumulative results were: friendly forces suffered 76 killed and 374 wounded while the enemy lost 434 killed

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and 611 detained.

Operations in Kien Hoa Province

Two days later the MRF initiated Operation CORONADO X (18-19 January), a two-battalion strike operation in the Giong Trom district of Kien Hoa province. The operation was characterized by scattered contact with hit-and-run rocket assaults directed at the assault craft.

At 0749 on 18 January, an ATC (flamethrower), T-112-1, was struck by two B-40 rocket rounds while on a blocking station at the confluence of the Ong Buong stream and Ben Tre river, six miles southeast of Ben Tre. The explosion killed Lieutenant Commander Robert E. CONDON, USN, the Commanding Officer of Underwater Demolition Team TWELVE, and wounded one crewmember.

The next morning two ASPB's, A-91-3 and A-91-7, proceeding south of the Tai Phu stream, three miles southeast of Ben Tre, were ambushed by B-40 rockets and automatic-weapons fire from the west bank. The enemy fire was rapidly silenced, but Viet Cong casualties were undetermined. One Vietnamese interpreter was slightly wounded.

Operations in Dinh Tuong Province

On 22 January the MRB relocated to the convergence of the Mekong and Co Chien rivers in order to provide support for MRF units conducting Operation CORONADO X (22-23 January) in the Cai Be district of Dinh Tuong province. Enemy contact was sporadic

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during the two-day operation with six U. S. soldiers killed, while enemy casualties were unknown.

At 1425 on 24 January, YTB-785, transitting in the middle of the My Tho river en route from Dong Tam to the MRB, was hit by an RPG-7 (B-41) rocket round. The incident, which occurred about five miles west of Dong Tam, caused minor damage to the tug's main engine exhaust stack and slightly wounded one sailor and one Vietnamese interpreter. GAME WARDEN PBRs on patrol in the area, and Dong Tam-based Navy helicopter gunships scrambled to the ambush site and saturated the area with rocket and machine gun fire. Enemy casualties were undetermined.

Operations in Kien Hoa Province

At first light on 25 January the MRB relocated to the intersection of the Ham Luong and Ben Tre rivers to support riverine operations in the Mo Cay and Huong My districts of Kien Hoa province. Although the assault forces had operated in the area before, the relocation of the MRB into the Ham Luong River constituted another first for the MRF.

The primary mission of this operation was to locate and destroy elements of the 570th Viet Cong Local Force Battalion and elements of an unknown battalion operating in the area. Contact in the area of operations was very light during the first day; however, late in the afternoon, in response to an urgent plea from the Province

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Chief for help, the MRF commenced making plans to shift its area of operations to Truc Giang district, north of Ben Tre. The MRB relocated to a location east of My Tho to provide close support to the MRF assault forces.



U. S. Navy river assault craft and river patrol boats move up the Rach Thom/Mo Cay Canal during a combined Task Force 116/117 operation, 50 miles southwest of Saigon in the Mekong Delta.

At 0630 the next morning RAD 111, with the 3/6Cth embarked, got underway for the new objective area. At 0807 the riverine craft were ambushed with rockets and heavy automatic weapons fire at the

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intersection of the Bai Lai river and the Giao Hoa canal, four miles east-northeast of Ben Tre. The awesome firepower of the Navy boats, consisting of 20-mm, 40-mm, .30 caliber and .50 caliber gunfire, silenced the enemy positions and the infantry troops were then landed on the south bank of the Bai Lai river to commence a counterattack. Two Navymen suffered minor wounds during the fire fight. Enemy losses for the two-day operation were very light with one Viet Cong killed, 13 prisoners captured and 34 bunkers destroyed. U. S. Army casualties consisted of two soldiers wounded.

The Tet Offensive

On 27 January, in preparation for the continuation of Operation CORONADO X, the MRB shifted from its anchorage east of My Tho back to Vinh Long. Once again, the MRB demonstrated its tremendous mobility by effecting four major moves within four days by relocating from Vinh Long to Ben Tre to My Tho and finally back to Vinh Long.

The next day the MRF formulated extensive plans and commenced preparations for the scheduled Tet interdiction operations during the Tet Truce period (29 January - 3 February). The operation was designed to interdict anticipated intensification of Viet Cong re-supply efforts in western Dinh Tuong and eastern Kien Phong provinces.

On 29 January the MRF penetrated western Dinh Tuong province,

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