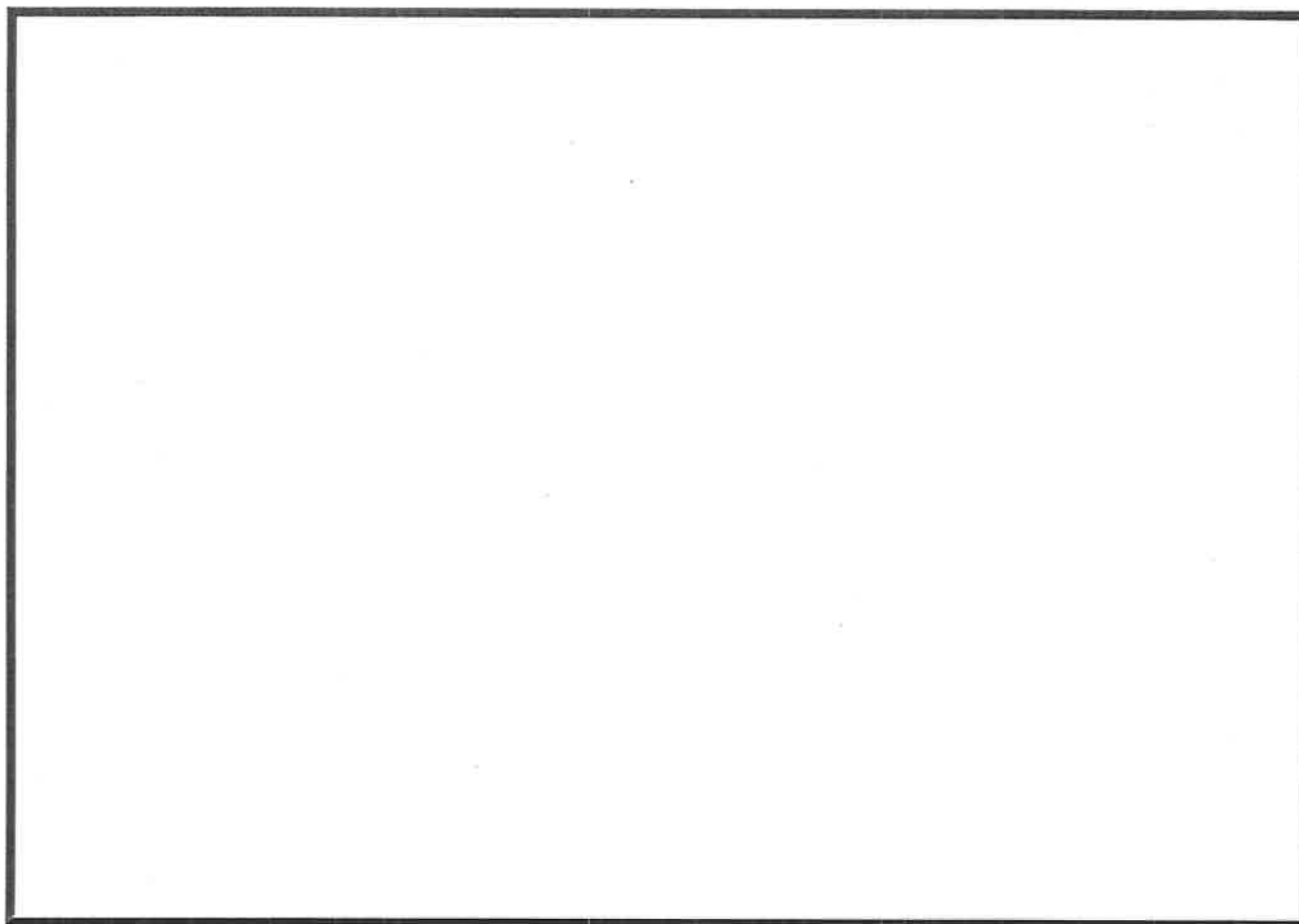


# VRC-50 Det Diego Garcia, BIOT

Providing Long Range COD Service to the Persian Gulf





## US-3A Loadmasters

The following are the names of the US-3A "Miss Piggy" Loadmasters. I know there are more, so email the webmaster if your not here yet.

AMH1 Anderson	AMH1 Felhofer	ADC Carter	AD1 Biell	AMS1 Ja
AE2 McCord	AMS1 Ricket	ABH1 Hicks	AD1 Neel	AME1
AME1 Bynum	AE2 Knox	AME1 Tate	AE1 Silvers	AD3 D
AMH2 Cornutt	AE2 Tufnell	AE3 Conroy	AD2 Owens	AD1 P
AMSAN Stack				

## FACTS ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA

### ISLAND DESCRIPTION

Diego Garcia is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) formed in 1965 from territory belonging to Mauritius and the Seychelles. The island is one of 52 in the Chagos Archipelago, which extends over 1,000 square miles. The archipelago is located in the heart of the Indian Ocean, south of India and between Africa and Indonesia.

The tropical island is a narrow coral atoll with a land area of about eleven square miles, nearly enclosed. The configuration is that of a "V" drawn by a shaky hand. The island stretches 37 miles from tip to tip, with the narrowest part being north-northwest. Three small islands dot the mouth of the lagoon which is approximately 13 miles long and 13 miles wide. The lagoon is from sixty to one hundred feet deep with numerous coral heads in most areas. Shallow water is found on the island on the ocean side, as well as in the lagoon. The island's mean height above sea level is 4 feet. The climate is typically tropical, with warm temperatures and high humidity throughout the year. The average yearly rainfall is 100 inches. Island flora is lush, consisting in large measure of coconut trees which were the staple of the island. Additionally, there are a variety of other tropical plants and trees including large hardwood trees such as baobab, guayule, and casahuate. Care is taken during construction operations to preserve the ecology of Diego Garcia. The island's vegetation is sparse, but interesting and varied. No dangerous wildlife exists on the island. The only land scorpion with a sting comparable to that of a bee. Land crabs, coconut crabs and hermit crabs abound. There is a coconut rat scurry about. The largest creatures are the approximately 300 donkeys whose ancestors were used in the abandoned plantation in the days before mechanization.

### RECENT HISTORY

In December 1966, the United Kingdom and the United States signed a bilateral agreement making the British Indian Ocean Territory available for defense purposes to both governments. Both British and American forces have been on the island. On 23 January 1971, a nine-man advance party from NMCF-40 landed on Diego Garcia to gather planning information and to initiate preliminary survey for beach landing areas. Subsequently, about 100 personnel arrived on Diego Garcia. They marked underwater obstructions, installed temporary navigational aids and cleared the beach. Additional personnel. Then, on 20 March 1971, an additional party of 160 men arrived. Construction began on a U.S. Naval Communication Facility on Diego Garcia. Construction was accomplished by the U.S. Naval Construction force (Seabees).

During December 1972, personnel of the Naval Communication Station Precommissioning Detachment arrived on the island for commissioning. On 20 March 1973, U.S. Naval Communication Station, Diego Garcia was officially commissioned. The Communications Facility consisted of an austere communication station and necessary supporting facilities including an airstrip.

A major change to the island organization occurred with the establishment of the Navy Support Facility on October 1, 1977. Commanding Officer, NAVSUPFAC assumed all duties and responsibilities previously held by the Island Commander. The nucleus for the NAVSUPFAC came from the original Communication Station personnel. All billets, other than those dedicated to communications support, were transferred to NAVSUPFAC who is responsible for maintaining and operating facilities and providing service support of several tenant shore activities and units of the operating forces.

Recent world developments have highlighted Diego Garcia's importance to the defense posture of the U.S. Commencing with the Yemen crisis in the spring of 1979, the Iranian crisis of 1979-81, and continuing through the Gulf War/Desert Storm in 1990-91, Diego Garcia has played a primary role in the support of Naval units in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf areas. In the spring of 1980, a large monetary appropriations bill was passed to expand island facilities to meet future operational requirements. These overall island improvements assure that Diego Garcia will remain a vital link in our defense structure in the years ahead.

### VRC-50 DETACHMENT

VRC-50 established a permanent detachment in 1982 to provide long range COD service to deployed units. The detachment remained until 1991. The first maintenance spaces were nothing more than 2 truck trailers. The detachment moved into the old air terminal. Additional rooms and office space was constructed by the VRC-50 building. Soon the detachment was relocated to the VP hangar. The living accommodations for the men, or *Pig Fixers*, followed a like path. Starting out in Splinterville, then gradually moving to

Eventually the detachment was moved to a new BEQ. The detachment was present for many of the ch on Diego Garcia. From the new control tower, to a new club, chow hall and even an additional gym.

