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**U.S. NAVAL FORCES
VIETNAM**



**MONTHLY HISTORICAL
SUMMARY
MARCH 1967**

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UNITED STATES
NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM
MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY
MARCH 1967

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
<u>Foreword</u>	11
<u>River Patrol Force</u>	1
Rung Sat Special Zone River Patrol Group	1
Delta River Patrol Group	3
<u>Coastal Surveillance Force</u>	12
MARKET TIME	12
STABLE DOOR	16
<u>Riverine Assault Force</u>	19
<u>U. S. Naval Support Activity, Danang</u>	21
<u>U. S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon</u>	25
<u>THIRD Naval Construction Brigade</u>	28
<u>Salvage Operations</u>	30
<u>Communications</u>	31
<u>Organization and Command</u>	34
<u>Military Civic Action and Psychological Operations</u>	35
<u>Naval Advisory Group</u>	38
Vietnamese Navy	38
Vietnamese Marine Corps	42
USN/VNN/VNMC Statistics for March 1967	APPENDIX I

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FOREWORD

In March, MARKE' TIME units intercepted a steel-hulled trawler attempting to infiltrate supplies into the First Coastal Zone. The trawler opened fire, was driven aground 60 miles southeast of Danang, and exploded.

In the Delta, GAME WARDEN units were faced with a new threat--improved accuracy in Viet Cong sniper fire--amid indications that the enemy had begun receiving high-powered, Russian-type sniper rifles.

In the Rung Sat Special Zone, units of the Riverine Assault Force supported the U.S. Army's Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, in Operation RIVER RAIDER I. Contact with the enemy was light and sporadic.

Meanwhile, in Danang and Saigon, the respective Naval Support Activities continued to extend previous levels in processing cargo. And, throughout the country, Seabee units commemorated their organization's silver anniversary in a business-as-usual manner, completing almost two million dollars worth of construction.

Among the month's military civic action projects was a pacification mission conducted south of Saigon by the Fifth Battalion of the Vietnamese Marine Corps. During the two-week mission, the battalion built a number of bridges and improved existing structures as requested by local inhabitants. In addition, battalion medical teams treated almost 1,500 Vietnamese villagers.

Two major command changes occurred during the month. On 4 March,

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Captain Ralph D. CORI, USN, relieved Captain Clifford L. STEWART, USN, as Commander Coastal Surveillance Force (CTF 115). On 31 March, Captain Paul N. GRAY, USN, relieved Captain Burton B. WITHAM, Jr., USN, as Commander River Patrol Force (CTF 116).

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RIVER PATROL FORCE

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

In March, the level of activity in the Rung Sat Special Zone increased as river patrols, SEAL teams, and aerial reconnaissance units engaged the enemy on numerous occasions.

On 1 March, PBRs killed four Viet Cong and captured a sampan and two individual weapons in a brief fire fight in the Long Tau River, eight miles downstream from Nha Be.

On 3 March, a helicopter fire team destroyed an enemy sampan and damaged three others during a "firefly" mission (night reconnaissance) in the Long Tau.

On the night of 15 March, a SEAL ambush team captured enemy equipment and killed three Viet Cong (probables) in an ambush on the south bank of the Soirap River, opposite the mouth of the Kinh Lo canal.

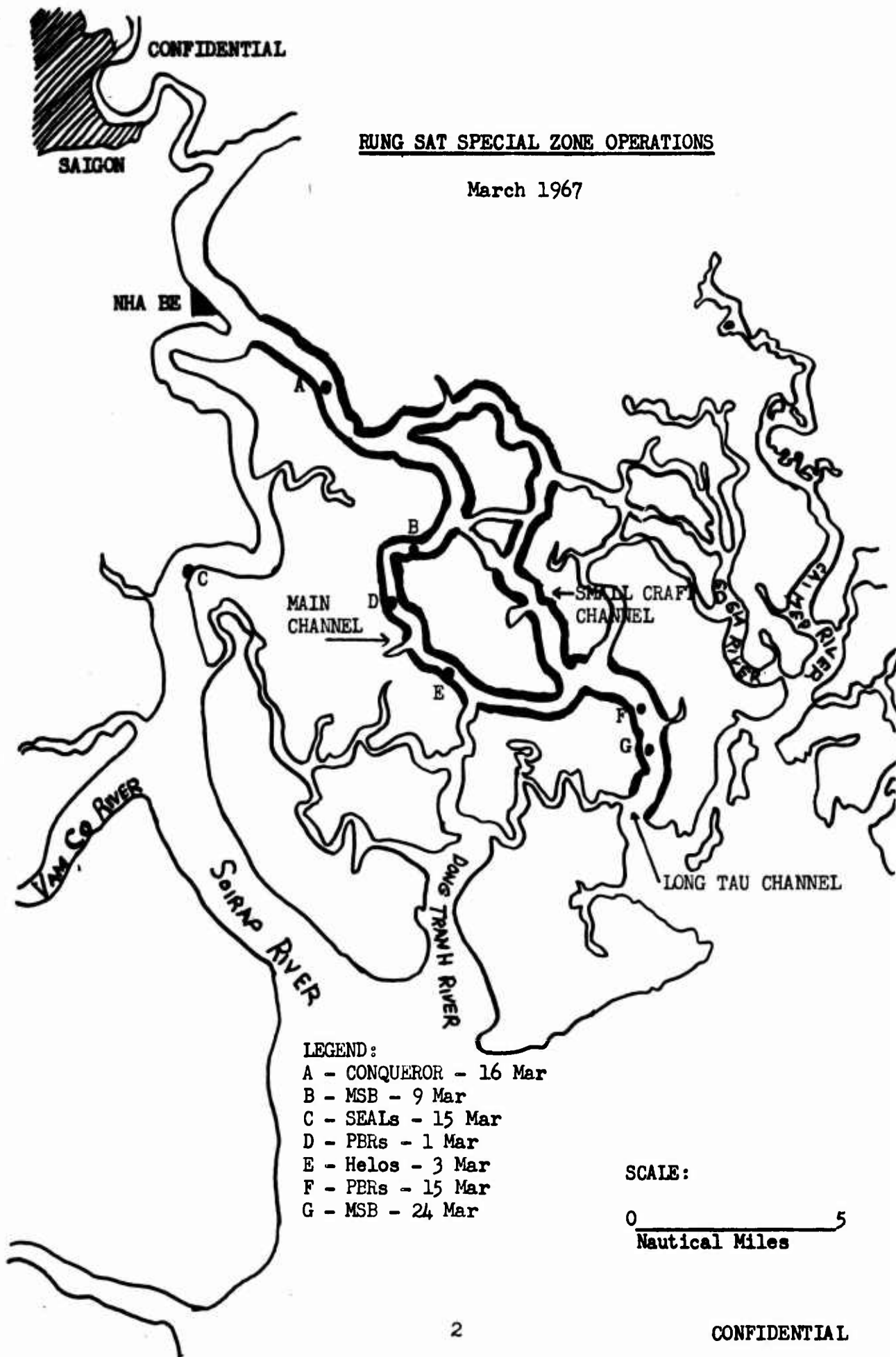
In the main channel to Saigon, the Viet Cong continued their attempts to harass and interdict patrols and merchant shipping. On 9 March, the enemy exploded a "claymore" mine at a U.S. mine-sweeper, seven miles southeast of Nha Be. The mine showered the MSB with shrapnel, but failed to inflict any damage. On 15 March, in the lower Long Tau, a large underwater explosion erupted between two patrol boats 200 feet apart. The explosion jarred the PBRs and spewed water, mud and dead fish 150 feet into the air; neither craft was damaged.

On the afternoon of 16 March a U.S. merchant ship, CONQUEROR,

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

March 1967



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was struck by recoilless rifle fire from Viet Cong positions on the east bank of the Long Tau, three miles downstream from Nha Be. A PBR patrol came to the ship's assistance and was taken under fire. The PBRs returned the fire. Then a spotter aircraft joined the PBRs and helped suppress the enemy fire with 2.75 inch rockets.

CONQUEROR sustained six hits during the engagement. One crew-member and two U.S. Army military policemen were wounded. The extent of Viet Cong casualties was undetermined.

On 24 March, the Viet Cong exploded a "claymore" mine at MSB 31 in the Long Tau channel. The minesweeper received several shrapnel hits from the mine, but suffered no serious damage and no personnel casualties. PBRs and a light helicopter fire team suppressed the automatic weapons and small arms fire which accompanied the mining attempt.

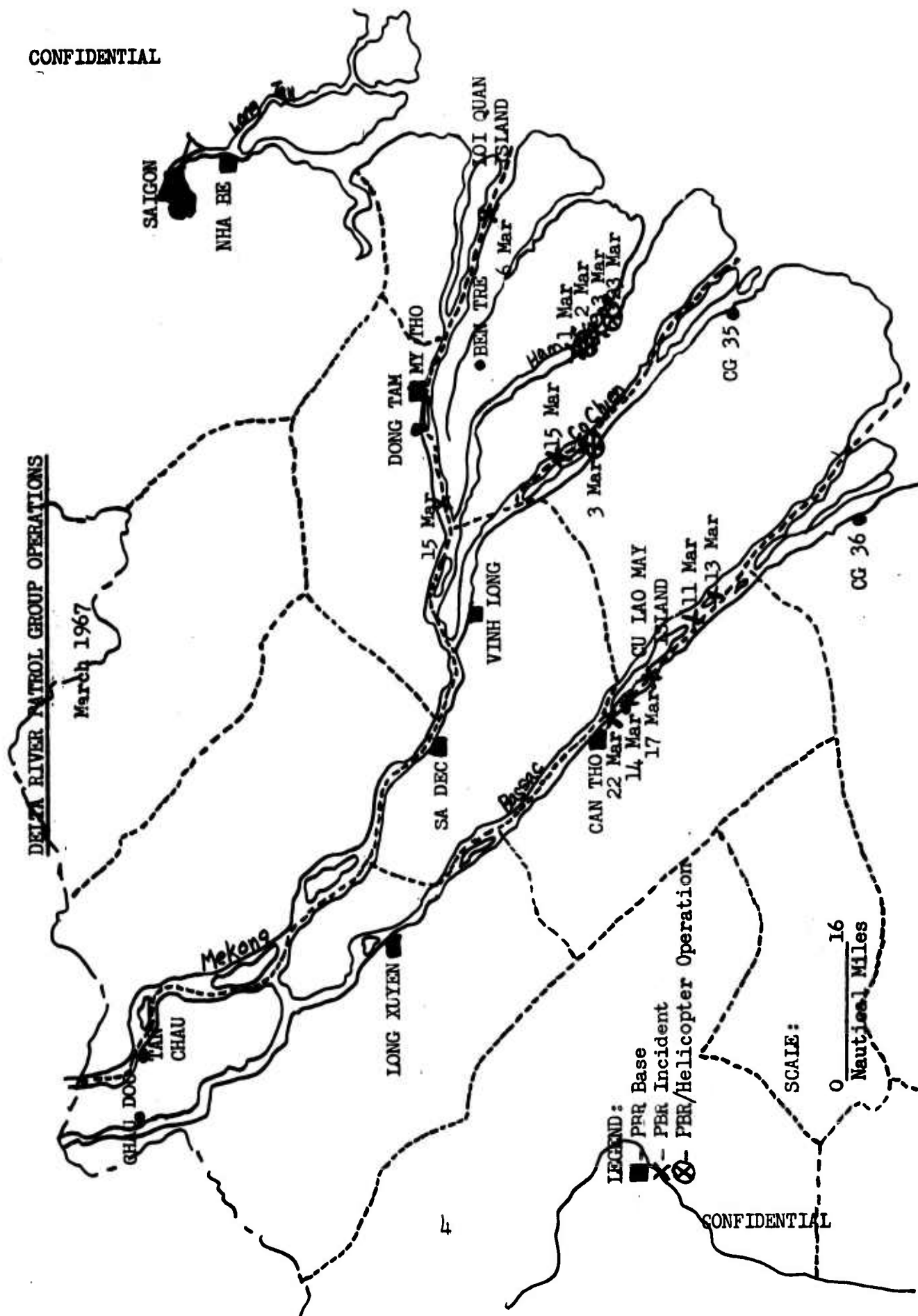
DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) River

On the evening of 6 March a member of the crew of PBR 124 gave his life to shield his shipmates from the effects of a grenade fired by the Viet Cong. The incident occurred in the Cua Dai channel of the Mekong River, 18 miles east of My Tho.

At the time, PBR 124 was making a high-speed run to check suspicious activity on a small island in the channel. As the PBR approached, the enemy launched a grenade from a position on the island. The forward gunner, Seaman David G. OUELLET, USN, spotted the grenade arching toward the PBR's stern. Shouting a warning to

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the other crewmembers, Seaman OUELLET bounded into the after section of the boat, pushed the boat captain to safety, and placed his body in front of the grenade just as it struck the main deck and exploded. Seaman OUELLET's body absorbed most of the impact of the blast and he was mortally wounded. As a result of Seaman OUELLET's selfless act, the boat captain was only slightly wounded and the other crewmen escaped injury. The PBR sustained relatively minor damage.

On the morning of 15 March, My Tho-based PBRs interdicted an enemy crossing near the eastern tip of Ngu Hiep Island. PBR 98 sighted a twin-engined sampan making a high-speed crossing from the south bank and closed to investigate. The Viet Cong commenced fire with automatic weapons and small arms from the north bank. Two additional PBRs joined the engagement and the patrol boats succeeded in suppressing the heavy fire. During the action PBRs 98 and 105 each received five hits and PBR 106 received one hit; there were no personnel casualties. The extent of Viet Cong casualties was undetermined. The captured sampan subsequently sank while being towed away from the bank by a PBR.

Operations in the Ham Luong River

In March, PBR patrols in the Ham Luong River engaged the Viet Cong on an almost daily basis. All together there were 36 hostile fire incidents during the month, concentrated in an area five to eight miles downstream from the Ben Tre canal.

On the night of 1 March, a PBR patrol illuminated a large, camouflaged water-taxi with two sampans in tow, seven miles

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southeast of the canal. As the PBRs closed, twelve uniformed, concealed Viet Cong took to the water. The PBRs opened fire, killing four; four more were seen to fall on the bank. The water-taxi and the sampans were then destroyed.

The next day, in the same area, PBRs severely damaged an evading, heavily-laden junk and came under intense automatic weapons fire from enemy positions on the river banks. During the ensuing four-hour engagement, which included assistance from a helicopter fire team, ten Viet Cong were killed and an estimated 20 more were wounded. There were no friendly casualties.

A number of incidents during the month resulted in the capture or destruction of enemy equipment and supplies. On 3 March, seven miles southeast of the Ben Tre canal, PBRs captured one sampan and destroyed another; the former contained uniforms, medical supplies, ammunition, and a large quantity of documents.

On 23 March, in the same area, PBRs and a Navy helicopter fire team came to the assistance of the Vietnamese LSSL 231 under recoilless rifle attack by the Viet Cong. The enemy fire was suppressed. eight Vietnamese were killed during the action and a U.S. advisor and 29 vietnamese were wounded. Later in the day, the Viet Cong attacked Vietnamese craft escorting the damaged LSSL. PBRs again rendered assistance and helped suppress the enemy fire.

Operations in the Co Chien River

On the morning of 3 March, the Viet Cong opened fire on PBRs 82 and 102 with small arms and automatic weapons while the PBRs

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were conducting routine search operations 22 miles southeast of Vinh Long.

The PBRs returned the fire with .50 caliber, M-60 and high-volume grenade fire, and units of River Assault Group 23 delivered 20-mm. cannon and 81-mm. mortar fire on targets marked by PBR tracers. Then a helicopter fire team delivered three strikes on the Viet Cong positions, suppressing all enemy fire. Two Viet Cong were killed in the action, seven structures were destroyed and five structures were damaged. The helicopter strikes triggered one secondary explosion and two POL fires. There were no friendly casualties.

On the night of 15 March, two members of a Viet Cong communications-liaison team were killed when PBRs 82 and 102 surprised two sampans standing out of a canal entrance near Cu Lao Gai Island. The PBRs illuminated the sampans and were immediately taken under fire from the bank. The patrol returned the fire and also opened up on the lead sampan. Two Viet Cong in the sampan were killed and a third occupant was seen to fall overboard. The second sampan successfully evaded up the canal. There were no friendly casualties.

Operations in the Bassac River

On 11 March, SEAL ambush teams of the newly-arrived Delta detachment interdicted a Viet Cong resupply attempt 15 miles downstream from Can Tho. Four Viet Cong were killed during the engagement. As the SEALs began to withdraw, the enemy opened fire

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with automatic and small arms weapons. The SEALs silenced one automatic weapon with hand grenades, while PBRs in the area suppressed the remaining enemy fire with their .50 caliber machine guns. There were no friendly casualties.

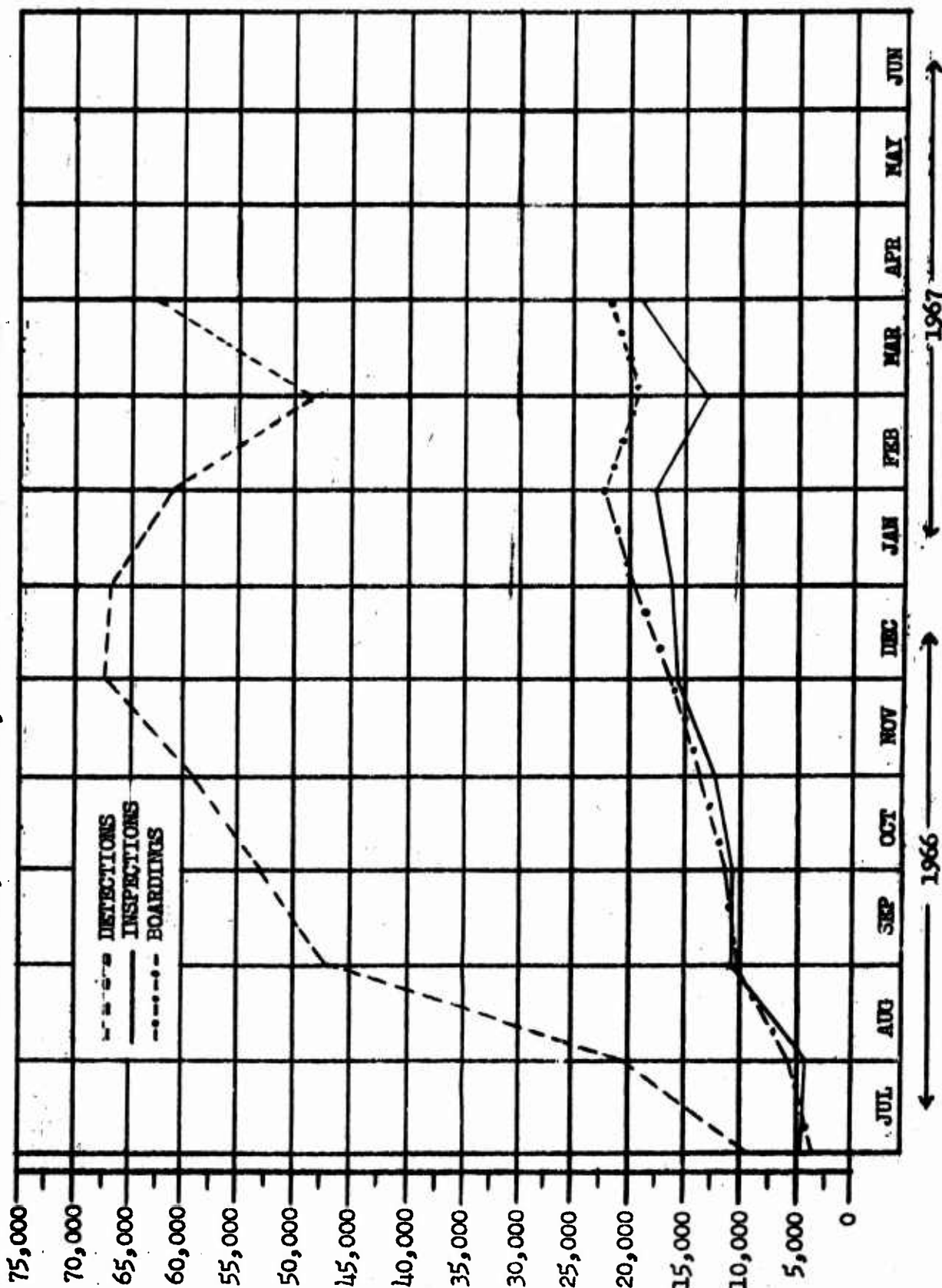
On 13 March, SEAL ambush teams killed two Viet Cong and destroyed one sampan on the southern tip of Cu Lao Dinh Island. An enemy counter-attack during the SEALs' withdrawal was suppressed by the SEALs' armored LCM and the Vietnamese LSSL 228. The next day, the LCM and the SEALs' trimaran* helped break up a Viet Cong attack on a Vietnamese outpost on Cu Lao May Island. There were no friendly casualties in either engagement.

On the afternoon of 17 March, a PBR patrol came to the assistance of a Vietnamese outpost on Cu Lao May Island under attack by 200 Viet Cong. The PBRs encountered automatic weapons and small arms fire on their first firing run and cleared the area to spot for artillery fire. Upon completion of the artillery fire from the Tra On sub-sector, the PBRs made two additional firing runs, initiating two large secondary explosions and disrupting the enemy attack. A subsequent sweep by Popular Force troops revealed that the PBRs had killed sixteen Viet Cong.

On 22 March, PBRs 31 and 32 interdicted a sampan crossing by a Viet Cong political indoctrination team near the northern tip of

* Trimaran - An armed, outboard runabout with three planing surfaces; used to land and recover SEALs.

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY GAME WARDEN UNITS



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Cu Lao May Island. Four Viet Cong were killed in the action. The captured sampan contained several grenades, assorted ammunition, uniforms and personal equipment, and a quantity of propaganda material.

Viet Cong Sniper Activity

During the month of March, two PBR personnel were killed and three were wounded by unusually accurate Viet Cong sniper fire. On 2 March, a crewman was hit in the leg by a round of sniper fire fired from the north bank of the Bassac River near Tra On. The estimated range was 200 yards. On 11 March, an officer was killed and an enlisted man was wounded by sniper fire while they were checking sampans near Cai Be in the Mekong River. The sniper fired from an estimated range of 150 yards. On the night of 18 March, a crewman was killed and another was wounded by a single round of sniper fire in the Long Tau channel, near the mouth of the Loi Giang River. The shot was fired from an estimated range of 500 yards on a dark night and struck the mortally wounded sailor in the head; a bullet fragment wounded the second crewman.

An enemy document captured on 21 February in the Rung Sat Special Zone had indicated that T-10, the Viet Cong's RSSZ command, had received five sniper rifles the previous week. On 25 March, in the northeastern portion of the RSSZ, Vietnamese Marines captured an M1891/30 sniper rifle* (see next page) with a 3.5 power telescopic sight. On 27 March, two more rifles, one with mounts for a telescopic sight, were captured in the same area.

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GAME WARDEN Support Ships

During the month, the final two of four GAME WARDEN LST support ships arrived--USS GARRET COUNTY (LST 786) and USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST 838). On 27 March, GARRET COUNTY was assigned to support River Patrol Section 543 in the Rung Sat Special Zone. On 31 March, HUNTERDON COUNTY relieved USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST 821) and took station at the mouth of the Co Chien River.

* * * * *

* The MACV-JGS handbook, War Material Used by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam or Presumably Available to North Vietnam (February 1966) terms this weapon "...very reliable in operation as well as being a very accurate weapon. The telescopic sight...is calibrated for distances up to 1,400 meters (1,530 yards)." The publication notes that while the basic M1891/30 rifle is no longer standard in the Russian Army, the sniper version is still in use. The weapon's effective range is 880 yards.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

On 14 March, MARKET TIME units frustrated a major Viet Cong resupply effort in the First Coastal Zone. Just before dawn USS BRISTER (DER 327), USCGC POINT ELLIS and PCF 78 closed a suspicious, steel-hulled trawler 80 miles southeast of Danang. The 100-ton capacity trawler opened fire on PCF 78 and the three U.S. units returned the fire. The trawler beached at Phuc Thien, 60 miles southeast of Danang, and exploded. Salvage personnel subsequently recovered pieces of weapons, ammunition, food and medicines. There were no friendly casualties during the engagement. The extent of the enemy casualties was undetermined.

On 10 March, two members of the Coastal Surveillance Force staff were killed in an aircraft accident. LCDR D. G. BROWN, USN, Plans Officer, and LT J. C. CRAWFORD, USN, Harbor Defense/Assistant Operations Officer, died when the Air Cofat (NAVSUPPACT, Saigon) C-47 crashed 42 miles south of Nha Trang. Twenty-six other persons aboard the aircraft were killed also.

MARKET TIME OPERATIONS

In March, MARKET TIME units detected 75,430 sampans and junks, inspected 26,871, boarded 23,096 and detained 32 junks and 582 persons. In addition, 1,686 steel-hulled craft were detected, of which 907 were inspected and 411 were boarded.

Other MARKET TIME activity included support for three major ground operations; 11 evasion incidents; 14 naval gunfire support (NFGS) missions and ten hostile fire incidents; and four search

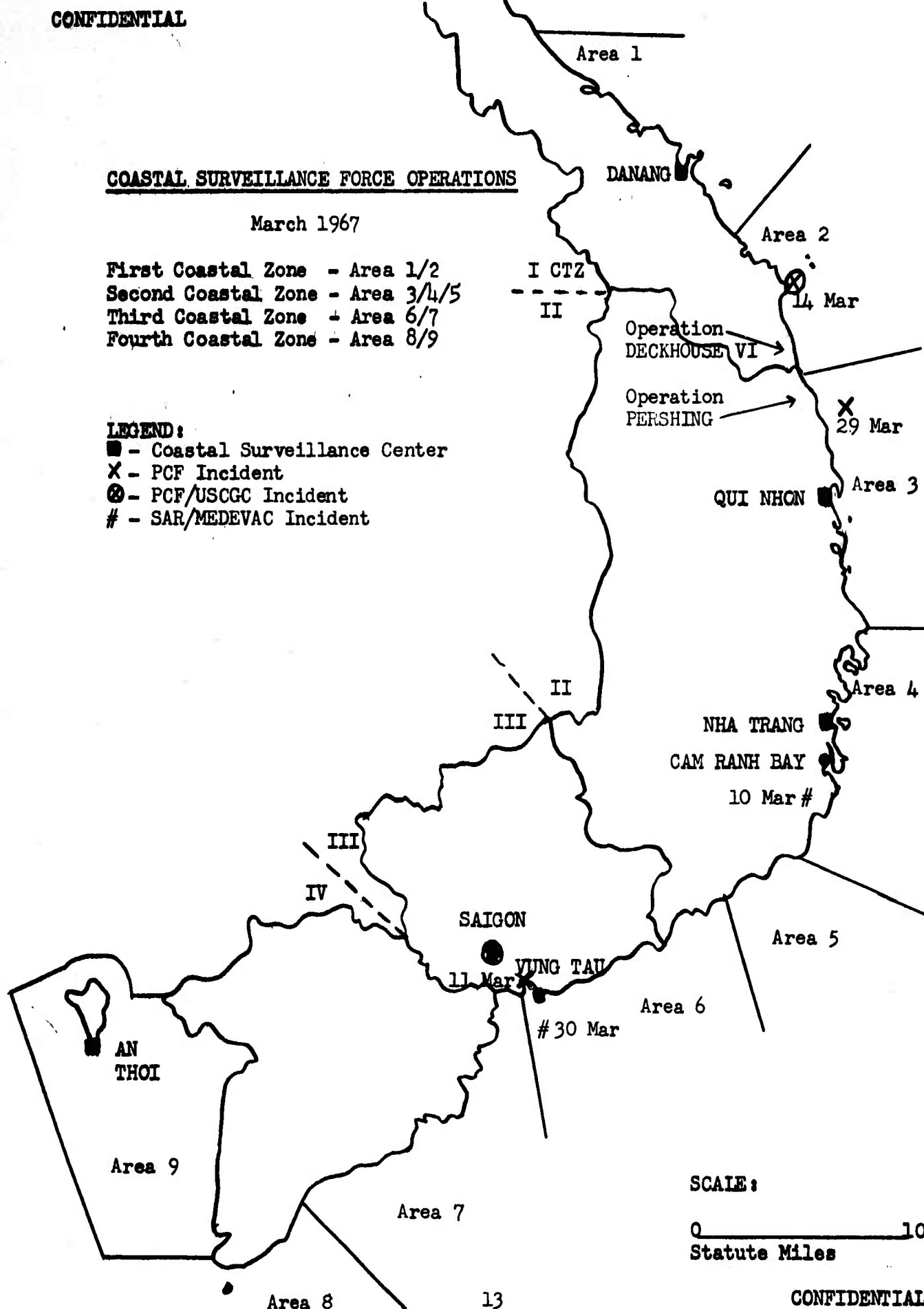
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE OPERATIONS

March 1967

First Coastal Zone - Area 1/2
 Second Coastal Zone - Area 3/4/5
 Third Coastal Zone - Area 6/7
 Fourth Coastal Zone - Area 8/9

LEGEND:

■ - Coastal Surveillance Center
 X - PCF Incident
 ⊗ - PCF/USCGC Incident
 # - SAR/MEDEVAC Incident



SCALE:

0 10
 Statute Miles

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and rescue (SAR) incidents and one medical evacuation (Medevac) mission.

MARKET TIME units suffered three casualties during the month. On 11 March, eight miles north of Vung Tau, the 81-mm. mortar aboard PCF 39 exploded during trigger-fire, killing one man and seriously injuring another. Until the cause of the explosion could be determined, MARKET TIME forces were directed to fire 81-mm. mortars only in the drop-fire mode.

In a second mishap, on 29 March, a SWIFT boat sailor died from wounds received when he was struck by the screws of PCF 63 after he fell overboard.

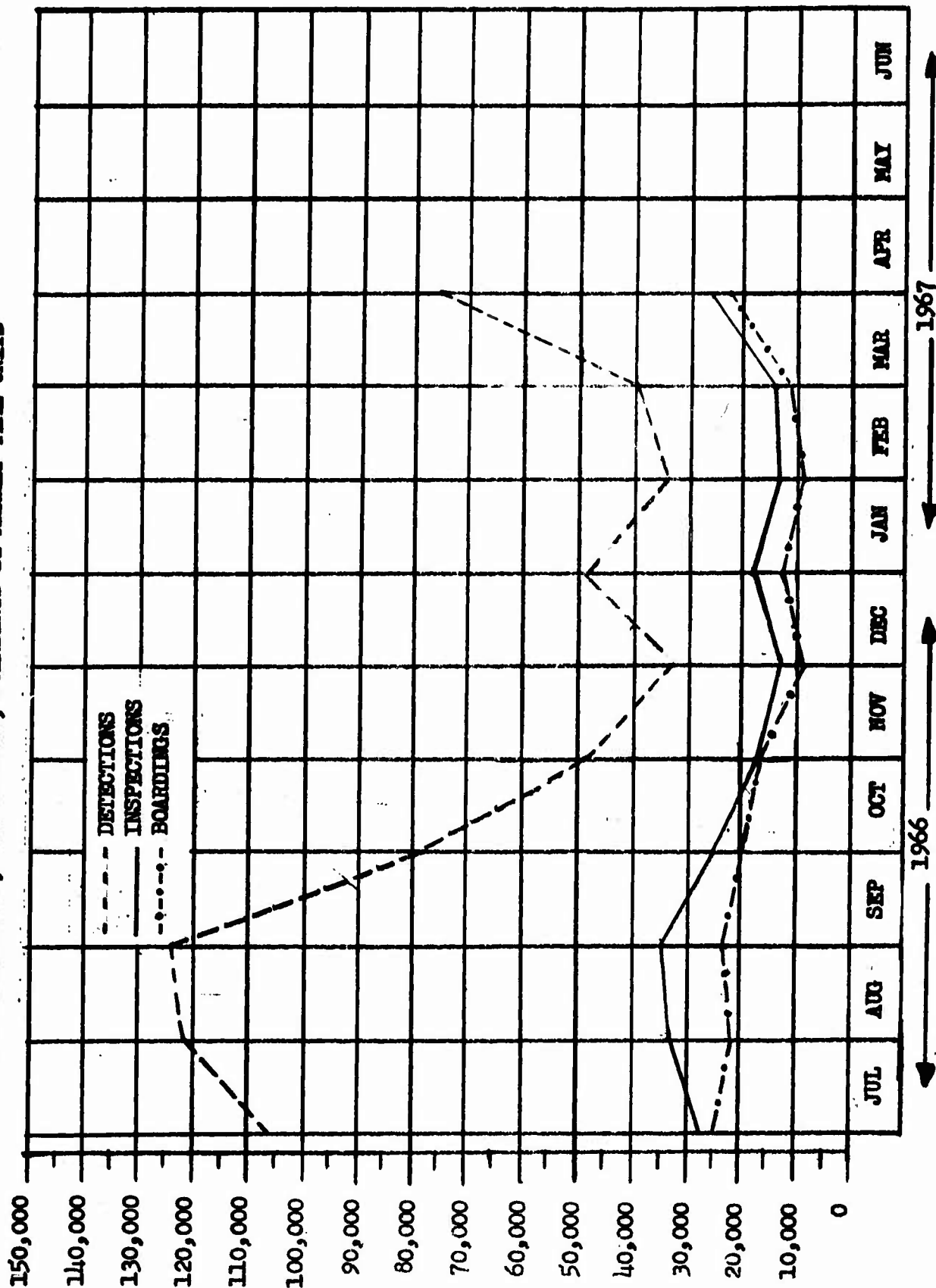
Of the 14 gunfire support missions conducted during March, 11 were conducted in the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones. In summary, 21 structures were destroyed and 22 were damaged; six bunkers were destroyed and two were damaged; four craft were destroyed and two were damaged; and one sampan was captured.

Of the month's ten hostile fire incidents six occurred in the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones. Results included one structure, four bunkers and one sampan destroyed, and three sampans damaged; and three Viet Cong killed with two more probably killed.

March's 11 evasion incidents resulted in one junk destroyed, one sampan destroyed and four captured, and two basket boats destroyed.

The support of ground operations--DECKHOUSE VI, PERSHING and FARRAGUT--was concentrated in the Second Coastal Zone and resulted

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY MARKET TIME UNITS



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in the detention of 284 persons by MARKET TIME units. Most of the detentions occurred during Operation PERSHING.

The four SAR missions included two unsuccessful attempts to rescue aircraft personnel, a successful recovery of two UDT personnel lost during a beach survey mission, and the rescue of four Vietnamese after their junk collided with the Vietnamese Navy's PGM 613.

On 30 March, PCF 36 rendered Medevac assistance to a crew member of the USS MADDOX (DD 731), taking him from the ship, ten miles south of Vung Tau, to the 36th Evacuation Hospital at Vung Tau.

On 31 March the number of minesweepers in Operation MARKET TIME was reduced from seven to six with the permanent return of an MSC to the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet. The reduction did not affect MARKET TIME operations because additional radar surveillance in the Fourth Coastal Zone is provided by the LSTs supporting Operation GAME WARDEN.

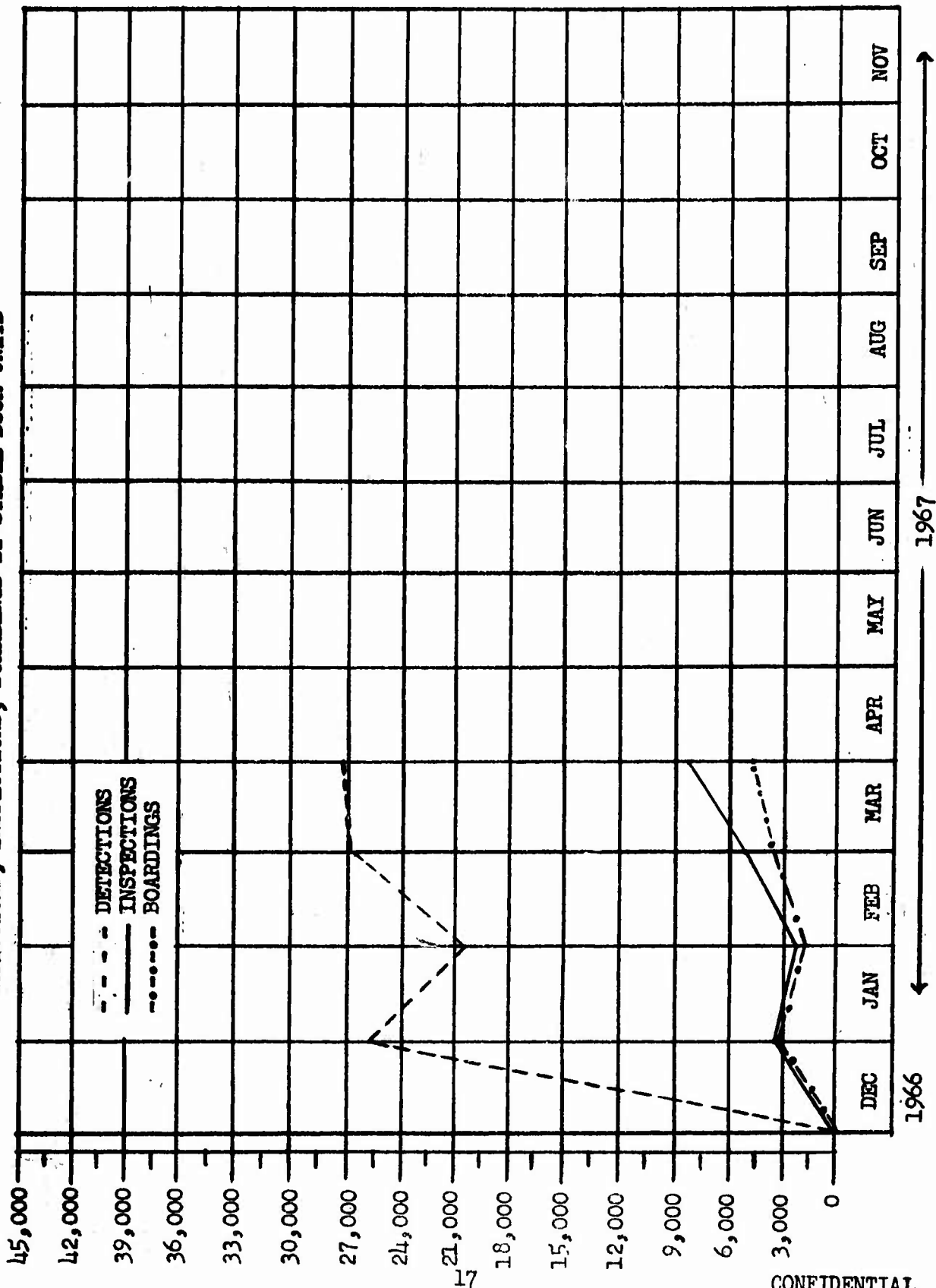
STABLE DOOR OPERATIONS

In March, STABLE DOOR units detected 27,018 junks and sampans, inspected 7,547, boarded 4,048, and detained 22 junks and 254 persons.

The firepower of STABLE DOOR Skimmers was improved during the month with the installation of M-60 machine guns.

During the month, Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit (IUWU) 1 at Vung Tau detained six junks and 58 persons, IUWU 2 at Cam Ranh Bay detained one junk and eight persons, IUWU 3 at Qui Nhon detained

DETECTIONS, INSPECTIONS, BOARDINGS BY STABLE DOOR UNITS



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seven junks and 32 persons, and IUWU 4 at Nha Trang detained eight junks and 156 persons.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE

In March, River Assault Squadron NINE continued to support the U.S. Army's Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, in Operation RIVER RAIDER I, in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). There was no contact with large enemy units, but in several brief skirmishes ground forces killed 12 Viet Cong; 17 more were probably killed. Eight U.S. soldiers were wounded during the operation, which was terminated on 18 March.

In addition to the casualties inflicted on the Viet Cong, numerous enemy camps, bunker complexes, and weapons and supply caches were discovered and destroyed. On 7 March, "C" Company, 3/47 Infantry, found a large supply of mines, mortar rounds, ammunition and rice in a camp area in Ly Nhon village, in the lower RSSZ. On 10 March, "C" Company found a workshop area containing mortar rounds, steel bars, rocket duds and explosives.

On 20 March, R.A.S. NINE units landed a platoon of the Fourth Battalion, 47th Infantry, at Quang Xuyen to provide security for artillery units, and then landed elements of the 4/47 Infantry to commence Operation SPEARHEAD I. By the end of the month, SPEARHEAD I units had killed five Viet Cong and destroyed a number of enemy camp, bunker and supply sites.

During the month, an advance detachment of the River Flotilla ONE staff was sent to Dong Tam to prepare for the deployment of River Assault Squadron NINE to the Mekong Delta in April. River Assault Squadron ELEVEN, which is scheduled to relieve R.A.S. NINE

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in support of operations in the RSSZ, arrived in country during the month and commenced training operations.

On 23 March, USS MONTROSE (APA 212) arrived at Vung Tau and relieved USS HENRICO (APA 45) as support ship for riverine operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone.

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U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, DANANG

During March, cargo handling operations in I Corps were highlighted by new tonnage records. At Danang, records were set for cargo backloaded in short (54,773) and measurement (89,256) tons. A new monthly throughput record--157,091 short tons--exceeded the previous high, set in August 1966, by 2,931 short tons.

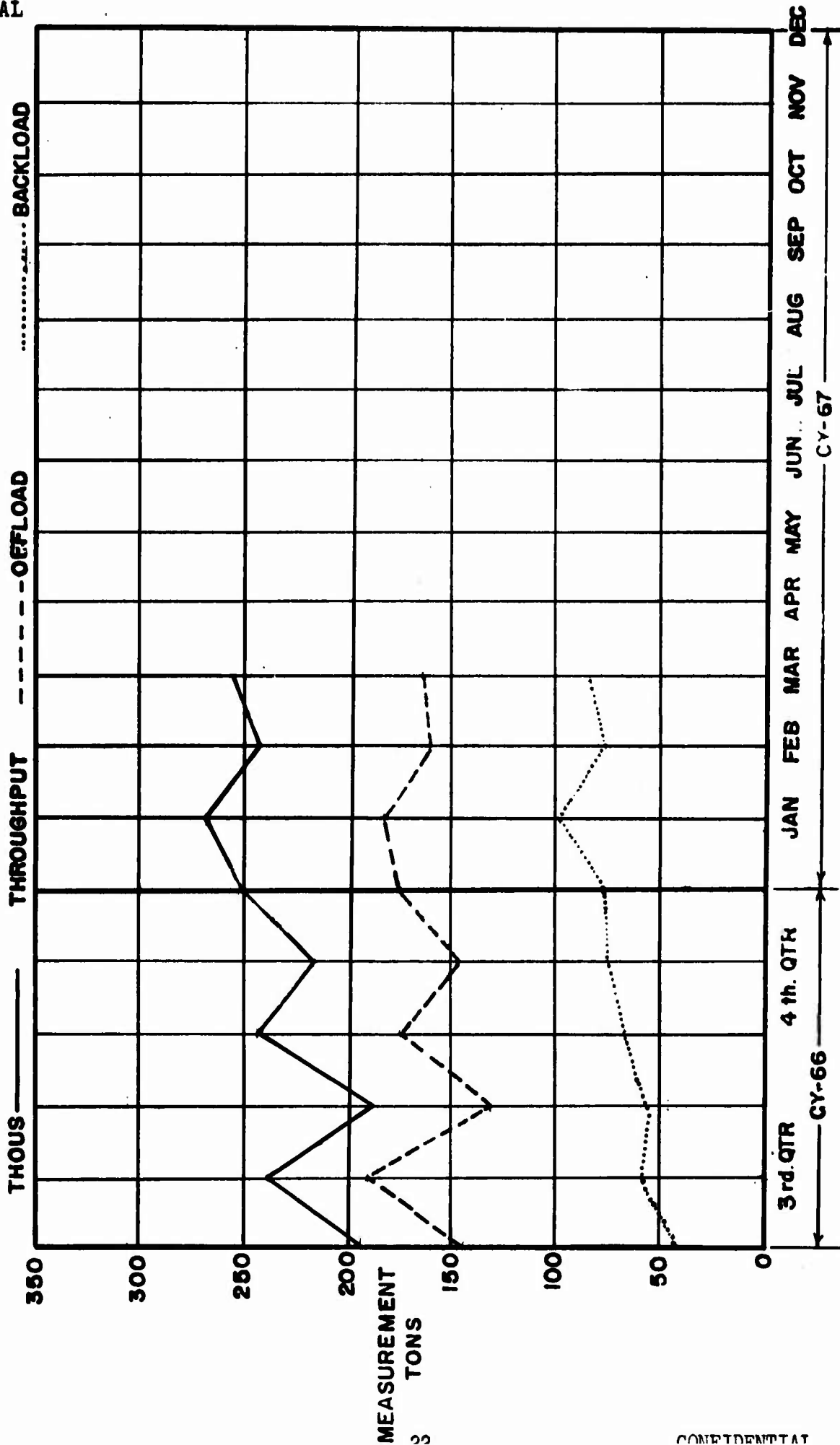
Thirty-six ships arrived at the port of Danang in March, and 42 ships completed offloading for a net decrease in backlog of 5,086 measurement tons.

The coastal resupply situation improved considerably. On 15 March, USS CAROLINE COUNTY (IST 525) and USS SNOHOMISH COUNTY (IST 1126) transited the Cua Viet channel and beached at the newly-constructed LST ramps on the south bank of the Thach Han River. The opening of the Cua Viet to LSTs initiated a new LST supply route and provided Dong Ha with a significant resupply capability.

Tank landing ships made 12 trips from Danang to the Cua Viet during March. In addition, LCU/YFU/LCM-8s completed 135 round trips to Dong Ha with cargo backloaded from Danang. The tonnage transshipped to Dong Ha from Danang totaled 27,532 measurement tons. The total tonnage delivered to all outlying I Corps sites from Danang was 65,919 measurement tons.

Continued good weather during March facilitated POL replenishment at all sites. Chu Lai was replenished by T-2 tankers through the 12-inch seaload line throughout the month. At Danang replenishment was effected by T-1 tankers at Red Beach and T-2 tankers at

PORT OF DANANG CARGO HANDLING



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China Beach. Phu Bai was replenished through the 4-inch bottom-lay line to Tan My. Supplementary POL deliveries by commercial truck from Danang were suspended on 29 March because of the suspected mining of Highway 1.

Replenishment at Dong Ha was accomplished by using LCM-8s with fuel bladders to shuttle fuel from an AOG. On 17 March, a new 4-inch bottom-lay line was positioned by Amphibious Construction Battalion 1.

In Danang, significant progress was also made in covered storage construction. A new warehouse (the 17th to be constructed) was occupied on 23 March, increasing the total covered storage area to 554,000 square feet. An 18th warehouse was 95 per cent complete at month's end.

The port of Danang was visited 85 times by U.S. SEVENTH Fleet ships in March. The ships were provided with 566,460 gallons of diesel fuel and 1,063,478 gallons of potable water, in addition to mail, freight, courier, transient billeting and disbursing services.

On 14 March the Viet Cong sabotaged a track section of the Vietnamese National Railway System by exploding what was believed to be a controlled mine. The incident occurred outside the Esso Terminal at Lien Chieu, nine miles north of Danang. The explosion destroyed two tank cars used to transport aviation gasoline and damaged four others.

On 15 March the Viet Cong shelled the Danang Air Base with approximately 10 rounds of 140-mm. Russian-type rockets. Naval

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facilities received minor damage. There were no NAVSUPPACT personnel casualties.

Danang River wreck clearance operations were resumed during March by Team 5 of Harbor Clearance Unit 1. Several sections of the wreck (a Dutch freighter sunk during World War II) were lifted clear of the mud, and a 55-foot boom section and 45 feet of the boom drive shaft were located and recovered. In addition, two other sections of the wreck were readied for lift.

On 31 March, Naval Support Activity personnel strength (including APLs) totaled 8,221, an increase of 143 from the February on board count.

* * * * *

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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

During March, construction of interim and permanent facilities resulted in a number of important improvements at certain GAME WARDEN and MARKET TIME bases.

At Nha Be, construction of a 150 by 375-foot helicopter pad and runway was essentially complete at month's end. Construction of a post office was begun, and work on the 1,000-man messhall neared completion.

At Cam Ranh Bay, action was initiated to provide temporary lighting at the pier pending the arrival of the explosive-proof fixtures required for permanent shore power installation. At Qui Nhon, the installation of lighting and temporary shore power outlets at the PCF pier were completed.

At My Tho (which became a permanent base in March), an extension to the original pier was completed. The power plant, supply and repair buildings were placed in operation, and work on a POL tank neared completion.

New base construction at Can Tho continued to progress satisfactorily. The outer shells were completed on a number of major structures, including the administration building, the hull and machinery repair shops, and the dispensary. Additional new construction completed included the laying of a foundation slab for two POL tanks, and the installation of pilings and a pier section.

During March, NAVSUPPACT detachment personnel at Long Xuyen continued with their preparations for base disestablishment. By

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31 March operations had ceased, the inventory and reallocation of Long Xuyen assets had been completed, and the redistribution of equipment to other sites had started. In addition, action was begun to terminate property leases by 1 May.

On 28 March, a U.S. Naval Support Activity detachment was established at Tan Chou, located on the Mekong River ten miles east of the Cambodian border. The detachment became operational with the arrival on station of YFNB 21. The support craft is capable of providing repairs, supply support, and berthing and messing facilities for a river patrol boat section composed of ten PBRs and 225 personnel.

At Dong Tam, construction of the new Riverine Assault Force support base proceeded at an active pace. Work continued on living quarters and messing facilities, and the installation of a camp drainage system was begun. On 24 March, work on the entrance channel was completed. In addition, by the end of the month a Seabee construction team had commenced pile driving operations incident to the installation of Ammi pontoons.*

Supply requisition effectiveness continued to improve. Overall gross requisition effectiveness increased to 50 per cent,

*Ammi pontoon: A simple, lightweight (55-ton) barge, measuring 90x28x5 feet, with two ramped ends, six spud wells and a flat, open deck. Named for its designer, Dr. Arsham Amerikian, a structural design engineer for the U.S. Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

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and net requisition effectiveness rose to 65 per cent. The number of line items stocked by NAVSUPPACT at the end of March numbered 23,772.

On 10 March, a NAVSUPPACT C-47 aircraft crashed near Phan Rang, 170 miles northeast of Saigon. All 28 persons aboard were killed in the crash. Preliminary investigation indicated that the aircraft suffered in-flight separation of the port wing due to extreme wing structural overload. Subsequently, all C-47 aircraft assigned to NAVSUPPACT's aviation branch were grounded pending completion of flight safety inspections.

U.S. Air Force aircraft and Navy C-54 and US-2C aircraft were used to meet transportation requirements, delivering a total of 367.5 short tons of cargo during March.

The ships and craft of NAVSUPPACT transported over 1,120 short tons of cargo in March, the highest monthly total to date.

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THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

During March--the Seabees' silver anniversary--the eight Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (MCBs) of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment completed almost two million dollars worth of construction in the I Corps Tactical Zone.

A major project completed by MCB-4 in March was the upgrading of the An Hoa Airfield. A 450-square foot parking apron was constructed, and the runway was extended by approximately 1,500 feet to accommodate C-130 aircraft. Additional projects completed by MCB-4 included repairs to the Khe Sanh Airfield and the construction of 19 strongbacks (each one 16 by 32 feet) for the THIRD Marine Division at Khe Sanh.

At Dong Ha, a 149-man detachment from MCB-5 completed the installation of matting for the tank landing ship staging area at the mouth of the Cua Viet River. At the Dong Ha Airfield, 1,460 feet of the runway and turnaround areas were repaired.

Mobile Construction Battalion 8, located at Chu Lai, repaired approximately 50,000 square feet of the Marine Air Group 13 helicopter pad at Ky Ha. Work on the Chu Lai Dairy Plant also progressed satisfactorily. By month's end, the structural steel work had been completed and concrete decks had been poured for the five 40 by 40-foot Butler buildings comprising the complex.

Projects completed by detachments of MCB-9 included the construction of a 400-foot bridge and five 50-foot towers for U.S. Marine units at Dai Loc. An airstrip was built for U.S. Special

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Forces at Minh Long, and a complex of 12 Butler buildings was constructed for the FIRST Marine Division.

Mobile Construction Battalion 40, stationed at Chu Lai, completed the construction of five 16 by 64-foot galleys, a 24-foot water tower, and a 40 by 100-foot rigid frame building at the Republic of Korea cantonment at Camp Bi Bong. The battalion also finished work on a large infantry cantonment complex.

In the Hue/Phu Bai area, a 500-man galley and 6,000 square yards of open storage for the Force Logistics Support Unit were completed by MCB-62. The battalion also constructed 24 buildings, a 500 by 1,350-foot helicopter parking apron and a 100-man galley for a U.S. Marine cantonment.

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SALVAGE OPERATIONS

On 11 March the dredge JAMAICA BAY, sunk at Dong Tam by Viet Cong mines in January, was successfully refloated, culminating two months of intensive effort by the personnel of Harbor Clearance Unit 1.

However, on 12 March, while being towed from Dong Tam to Vung Tau, JAMAICA BAY suddenly encountered rapidly deteriorating weather. Twenty-five knot winds and eight-foot seas subjected the dredge to a series of lashing waves which cracked seams, submersed pumps, and loosened a door patch on the port side amidships. JAMAICA BAY began flooding and taking progressively greater rolls to port in the heavy seas. Eventually, she capsized and sank in 36 feet of water, ten miles southwest of Vung Tau. There were no personnel casualties.

Because of the damage incurred by the dredge prior to sinking and the additional damage likely to result from efforts to right and lift the sunken craft, further salvage efforts were deemed to be impractical. At month's end, final disposition of the JAMAICA BAY was under consideration by a marine survey board.

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COMMUNICATIONS

In March, the COMNAVFORV communications center processed 87,446 messages. The number of messages handled by the Naval Support Activity in Danang was 37,680.

The new communications center in Danang was 67 per cent complete by the end of the month, and the receiver and transmitter sites were 63 and 54 per cent complete, respectively. The power supply installation was 75 per cent complete in the communications center, 82 per cent at the receiver site, and 50 per cent at the transmitter site. In addition, the installation of electronic equipment had began.

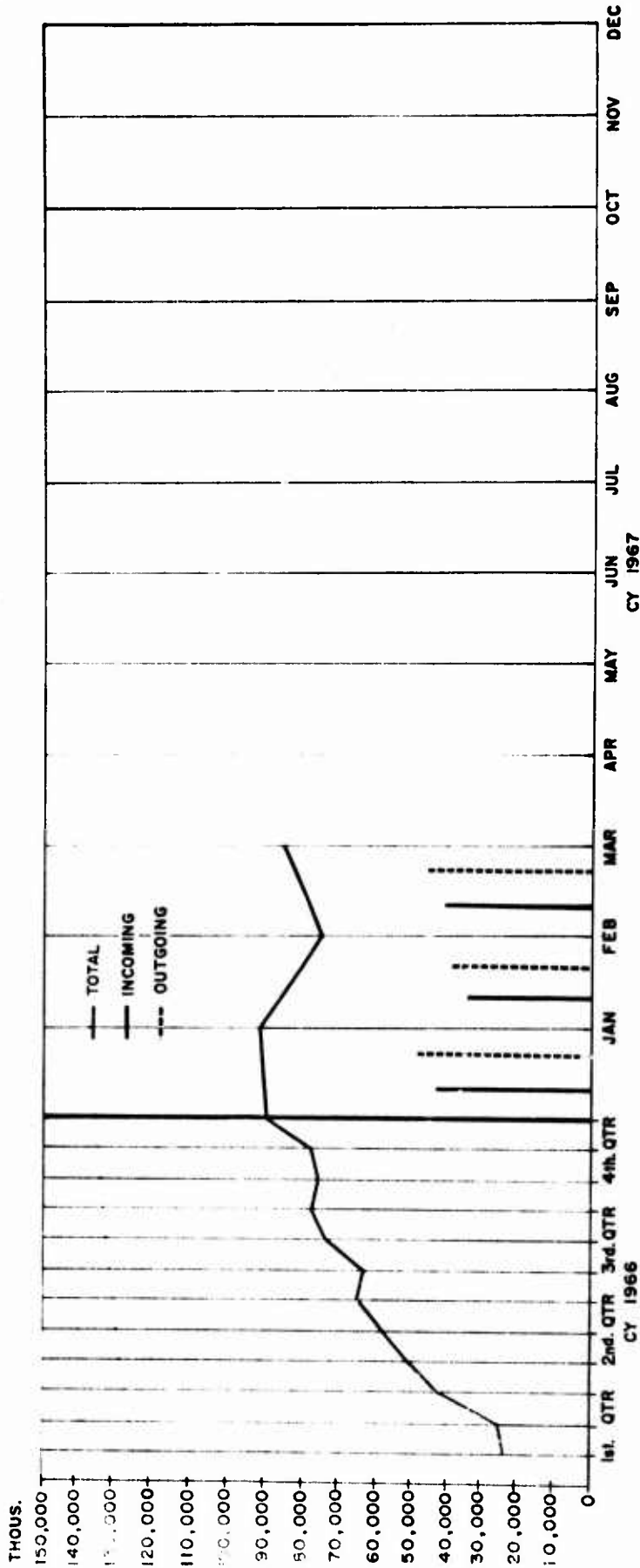
The reliability of Danang's data circuit with the major relay station at Phu Lam improved significantly during the month, increasing from 50 per cent in February to 77 per cent in March.

At Cam Ranh Bay, the installation of electronic equipment at the new receiver site was 80 per cent complete; at the communications center and the transmitter site the electronic installation was 35 and 40 per cent complete, respectively. At all three sites the power supply installation was about 50 per cent complete.

On 15 March, Cam Ranh Bay's Naval Communications Station instituted a local area broadcast, similar to the one operated by USS ANNAPOLIS (AGMR 1). The broadcast was intended to improve area coverage and to relieve the burden on the fleet broadcast and fleet broadcast overload circuits.

An Air Transportable Communications Unit was deployed to Cam

MONTHLY MESSAGE TRAFFIC



PERCENT OF TOTAL

FLASH	0.6	1	1																
IMMEDIATE	22	20	19																
PRIORITY	60	61	63																
ROUTINE	18	18	17																

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Ranh Bay on 21 March from the Naval Communications Station in the Philippines, to help satisfy the communications requirements of the Naval Air Facility, Cam Ranh Bay.

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ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

On 14 March, Rear Admiral Norvell G. WARD, USN, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, received the Republic of Korea's second highest military award, the Order of Military Merit Ul Chi. The presentation was made by Korea's Ambassador to South Vietnam, Ambassador Shin Sang CHUL, during ceremonies at the Korean Embassy in Saigon. The award was presented in recognition of Rear Admiral WARD's role in assisting the Korean Navy Transportation Group fulfill its mission in South Vietnam.

On 4 March, Captain Ralph Di CORI, USN, relieved Captain Clifford L. STEWART, USN, as Commander Coastal Surveillance Force (CTF 115) in ceremonies on board PCF 70 in Saigon harbor.

On 31 March, Captain Paul N. GRAY, USN, relieved Captain Burton B. WITHAM, Jr., USN, as Commander River Patrol Force (CTF 116) in ceremonies at Binh Thuy in the Mekong Delta. Captain GRAY had served as Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) on the staff of COMNAVFORV since August 1966.

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MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

In March, there was a notable increase in the tempo and scope of military civic action projects conducted by the Vietnamese Navy and the Vietnamese Marine Corps.

In the First Naval Zone, Coastal Group 16 assisted approximately 600 men, women and children who had fled from the seaport town of Sa Huynh when the Viet Cong overran the area on 18 March. The refugees were given food, medical care and other assistance. Later, after the town had been regained and secured by government forces, the refugees were addressed by psychological warfare personnel, and furnished health pamphlets and Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) leaflets and posters prior to their return to Sa Huynh.

Coastal Group 32 conducted two medical civic action projects (MEDCAPs) during the month, which were planned and executed entirely by Vietnamese naval personnel. In the Delta, personnel of Coastal Group 36 collected 4,000 plasters to assist in the rebuilding of three houses which had burned down in the village adjacent to their base.

In the Nha Be district, south of Saigon, the Vietnamese Marine Corps' Fifth Battalion actively engaged in a pacification mission during the second half of March. Battalion medical teams treated almost 1,500 people. In addition, the battalion built a number of bridges, improved existing structures as requested by local inhabitants, and trucked fresh water daily to as many hamlets as possible.

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On 4 March, a second WHAMO (Winning Hearts and Minds Operation) was conducted by Coastal Groups 34 and 37 in the village of Ap An Loi in Kien Hoa province. The operation was announced by leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts, and some people came from as far away as five miles. One man, in gratitude for care given his wife, led government personnel to three Viet Cong bunkers and also pointed out the village Viet Cong tax collector.

In Danang, U.S. Navy medical personnel of the Naval Support Activity continued to conduct diverse MEDCAP missions. Doctors and corpsmen from the dispensary held weekly sick call at the Stella Maris Convent, examining and treating over 2,100 patients during the month. Meanwhile, a voluntary medical team of two corpsmen treated 7,803 civilians in hamlets south of Danang, and members of the preventive medicine section of the Danang hospital performed laboratory work and conducted rodent and pest control operations in villages near Danang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai and Dong Ha.

During the second week of March, a widespread Chieu Hoi campaign was inaugurated by U.S. and Vietnamese naval personnel to inform the Viet Cong that they could rally to ships and craft of both navies. In addition to loudspeaker broadcasts, leaflets were distributed showing pictures of U.S. and Vietnamese craft and containing rallying instructions. By the end of the month, the new leaflets had accounted for two ralliers, one to a PBR, and one to a River Assault Group craft.

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Military Provincial Health Assistance Program

In March, the efforts of the six U.S. Navy medical teams assigned to the Military Provincial Health Assistance Program (MILPHAP) continued to display evidence of gradual progress.

In Quang Duc province, the assistance of a section of Navy Team 4 helped spur a more active malaria-control program during the month. A regular schedule of visits to outlying hamlets was begun; during the visits, DDT spraying, health education and medical prophylaxis were provided. In the districts of Kien Duc and Kiem Duc, attempts were being made to provide all citizens with malaria tablets at two-week intervals.

In Lam Dong province, where Navy Team 4 is located, recent increases in the supply of blood have made a significant difference in the ability of the province hospital to treat military and civilian casualties.

On 2 March, in Kien Phong province (the locale of Navy Team 5), South Vietnam's Minister of Health went to Cao Lanh and laid the cornerstone for a new surgical suite. The suite will be constructed in the present hospital compound area, at a cost of four million piasters.

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NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP

VIETNAMESE NAVY

The personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy was 16,156 on 31 March, a decrease of 135 men from February. The strength is now 80 over the authorized allowance of 16,076. The number of personnel discharged as deserters was 117, an increase of 74 over February, and the number of unauthorized absentees was 391, a decrease of 60 under February.

Operations

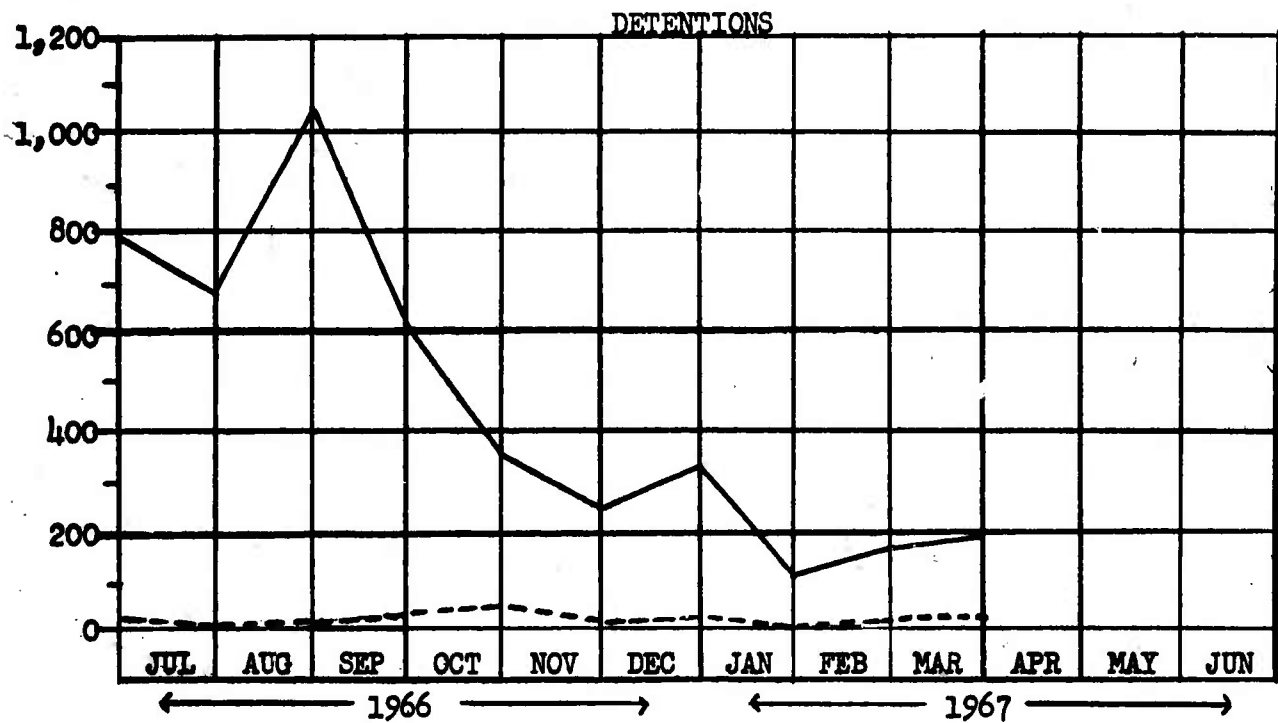
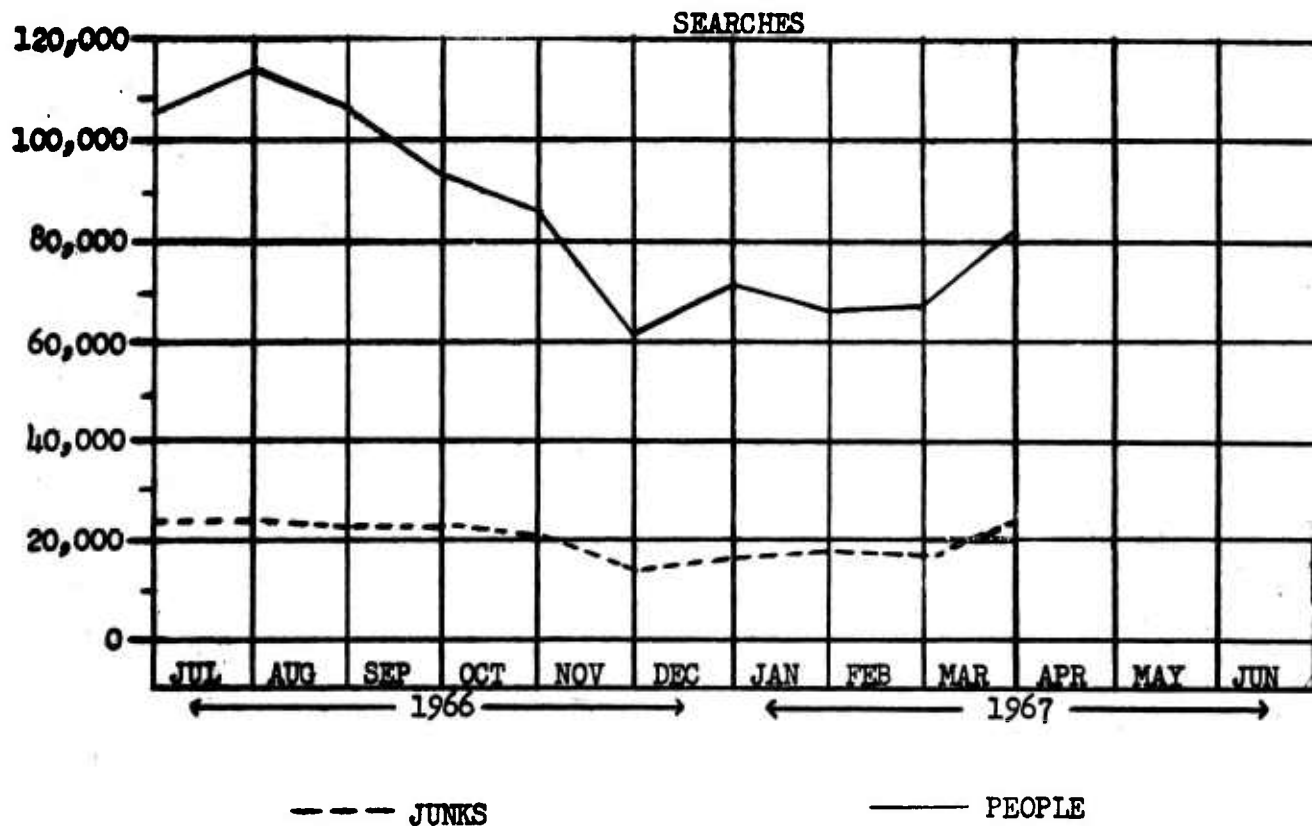
In March the Fleet Command maintained eleven ships on station on coastal patrol, four ships on river patrol, and one ship on convoy escort duty between Vung Tau and Tan Chau. Their missions included anti-infiltration patrols, psychological warfare visits, escort patrols, and gunfire support.

Between 1 and 5 March PCE 12 provided gunfire support for ground operations in Khanh Hoa province in the Second Naval Zone. The patrol craft's gunfire destroyed one bridge and numerous enemy structures.

On 23 March, while operating in the Ham Luong River, LSSL 231 was ambushed by Viet Cong using 57-mm. recoilless rifles. Eight Vietnamese sailors were killed and 29 were wounded; one U.S. advisor was wounded also. The craft received considerable topside damage but was able to return to Saigon for repairs under its own power.

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



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The Coastal Force searched 17,998 junks and 70,289 persons in March, detaining two junks and 111 persons. The force had a daily average of 249 junks available and 119 utilized.

Many small raids and operations were conducted by coastal groups in all four naval zones. On 2 March, Coastal Group 36 conducted a raid in Vinh Binh province, killing three Viet Cong and capturing two others. On 14 March a similar raid netted one Viet Cong killed and 11 suspects detained.

On 21 March, Coastal Groups 43, 44 and 45 conducted a raid at the mouth of the Cai Son River, north of the Cau Mau Peninsula, killing one Viet Cong and detaining six suspects.

On 27 March, the Coastal Group 14 base, 15 miles southeast of Danang, was attacked by Viet Cong with mortars and small arms. The coastal group casualties were one killed and five wounded; enemy losses were 24 killed and seven wounded.

On 29 March, Coastal Group 41 attacked seven Viet Cong junks near the tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula. Results of the attack were two Viet Cong killed, two junks destroyed, and three junks captured; two junks escaped.

In March, the River Assault Groups (RAGs) conducted eleven operations in the Fourth Riverine area and 22 operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). RAG units also conducted river patrols, escort duty, base defense, and psychological warfare

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missions. The units searched 3,543 junks and 8,759 persons, detaining ten junks and 64 persons. The daily average of available craft was 146; the average daily use was 109.

One of the riverine operations, CUU LONG 78/GC, was conducted near the mouth of the Soi Rap River on 12 March and involved Vietnamese Army (ARVN) units and RAGs 21 and 33. The operation accounted for 30 Viet Cong killed, and 21 weapons and over 200 rounds of ammunition captured.

Operation CUU LONG 57/SD, conducted ten miles southeast of My Tho 24-26 February, involved the SEVENTH ARVN Infantry Division and RAGs 21, 23, 27, 31 and 33. During the operation, 15 Viet Cong were killed, 171 were captured and 72 suspects were detained.

The major RSSZ operation, OVERLORD II, was conducted on 7 March against an island 15 miles south of Saigon, just west of the Soi Rap River. The operation included units of the U.S. 199th Infantry Brigade and the 25th ARVN Division. RAGs 24 and 28 transported the troops and then, together with six U.S. PBRs and two SEAL boats, blockaded the surrounding waterways to prevent exfiltration and provide support. The operation secured the island and resulted in 15 Viet Cong killed, 16 captured, and 101 suspects detained. In addition, 19 Viet Cong defected under the Chieu Hoi program.

During the month, the Vietnamese Navy conducted 21 logistical

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support missions, transporting 3,763 tons of cargo and 4,168 personnel. LSMs carried 66 per cent of the personnel and 46 per cent of the cargo; LSTs carried 23 per cent of the personnel and 45 per cent of the cargo; LCUs and other small craft carried the remaining personnel and cargo.

VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS

In March, Brigade Force Alpha, composed of a headquarters and the First and Fifth Marine Battalions, continued participation with the U.S. FIRST and 25th Infantry Divisions in Operation JUNCTION CITY in Tay Ninh province.

On 8 March, the First Battalion discovered and destroyed 216 Viet Cong underground fortifications and 23 enemy structures; in addition, 2,600 pounds of rice were seized. On the following two days, a number of additional Viet Cong structures were destroyed, and quantities of weapons, documents, medical supplies and rice were captured. On 11 March, the brigade force's participation in Operation JUNCTION CITY was terminated and the force returned to Saigon.

Brigade Force Bravo, consisting of a headquarters, the Third and Fourth Marine Battalions, and Battery "C" of the artillery battalion, continued to operate in the Bong Son/Duong Lieu areas of the II Corps Tactical Zone under the operational control of the 22nd Vietnamese Army Division. On 3 March, the force began a

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search and destroy operation, Operation SONG THANH 7, three miles west of Tam Quan. During the operation seven Viet Cong were killed, six were captured and eight suspects were detained. Seventeen Vietnamese marines were wounded.

Operation SONG THANH 8 on 12 March and SONG THANH 9 on 18 March, both search and destroy operations, ultimately resulted in relatively large-scale contact with the Viet Cong. On the 19th, a Viet Cong platoon firing from caves above the An Lao valley killed two marines of the Third Battalion and wounded 13. During the same day, the Second Battalion captured 19 Viet Cong and detained 16 suspects.

On 15 and 16 March, the First Battalion supported the National Police in the Saigon/Cholon area searching for and apprehending draft dodgers and deserters. On 31 March, the battalion was deployed in the Capital Military District to prevent Viet Cong activity during the promulgation, on 1 April, of the country's newly-written constitution.

The Fourth Battalion, with "A" Battery of the artillery battalion, was moved into the Rung Sat Special Zone on 11 March. RAG 22 supported the battalion as search and destroy operations were begun on 12 March and were continued through the end of the month. As of 31 March, the marines had suffered no casualties while killing eight Viet Cong and detaining 14 suspects. Also, a

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number of weapons had been seized and eight sampans had been destroyed.

The morale in the Vietnamese Marine Corps remained at a high level and leadership in all units was considered to be excellent throughout March. During the month, the Corps accounted for 39 enemy killed, 49 captured and 124 suspects detained. Six marines were killed and 68 were wounded.

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APPENDIX I

USN/VNN/VNMC STATISTICS FOR MARCH 1967

U. S. NAVY:

	<u>MARKET TIME</u>	<u>GAME WARDEN</u>	<u>STABLE DOOR</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
DETECTIONS	75,430	62,407	27,018	164,855
INSPECTIONS	26,871	18,741	7,547	53,159
BOARDINGS	23,096	21,729	4,048	48,873
PERSONS DETAINED	582	504	254	1,340
JUNKS DETAINED	32	58	22	112

MARKET TIME Detections of Steel Hulls 1,686

Total Steel Hulls Transiting MARKET TIME Areas 787

Disposition of the 787 Steel Hulls:

Inspected or boarded	330
Identified as not suspicious	133
Arrived/departed RVN ports	287
Unknown, not suspicious	37

VIETNAMESE NAVY:

	<u>SEARCHED</u>		<u>DETAINED</u>	
<u>COASTAL FORCE</u>	<u>JUNKS</u>	<u>PEOPLE</u>	<u>JUNKS</u>	<u>PEOPLE</u>
I CNZ	5,304	23,012	0	55
II CNZ	3,382	12,268	0	51
III CNZ	6,629	27,050	2	4
IV CNZ	2,683	7,959	0	1
Sub-Totals	17,998	70,289	2	111

FLEET COMMAND

PATROL SHIPS	197	983	1	24
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RIVERINE AREA

CRAFT	3,543	8,759	10	64
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<u>TOTALS</u>	21,738	80,031	13	199
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VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS:

VC/NVA: 39 KIA, 49 VC CAPTURED, 124 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED.

VNMC: 6 KIA, 68 WIA.

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