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To: Commander in Chief U. S. Pacific Fleet (Code 12)
Subj: U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam Monthly Historical Summary,
February 1968; submission of
Ref: (a) CINCPACFLT ltr FF1-1 5750 ser 1/6925 of 2 October 1967
Encl: (1) Coastal Surveillance Force Summary
(2) River Patrol Force Summary
(3) Riverine Assault Force Summary
(4) Naval Advisory Group Summary
(5) Selected Psychological Operations
(6) USN Statistical Summary
(7) VNN/VNMC Statistical Summary
(8) USN Civic Action Statistical Summary

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are submitted.
2. The data contained in enclosures (6), (7) and (8) is based on information available this date and is subject to revisions as later information is received. Any adjustments to enclosures (6), (7) and (8) will be reflected in February's Historical Supplement.

S. T. ORME
Chief of Staff

Copy to:
COMUSMACV (Hist. Branch, SJS)
CNO (Op-0959LE)
Director of Naval History

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UNCLASSIFIED~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE SUMMARY
February 1968

Although February proved to be a highly productive and successful month for MARKET TIME units, routine activity decreased as the heavy fighting that erupted during the Lunar New Year (TET) period prevented indigenous junk and sampan traffic from utilizing rivers and other inland waterways as access routes to the ocean. Adverse weather and the necessity for MARKET TIME surface units in the First, Second, and Third Coastal Zones to be underway a high percentage of the time because of enemy activity in the vicinity of all support bases also contributed to the decrease in the number of routine craft detections. MARKET TIME units detected only 24,832 junks and sampans during the month, a decrease of 24,024 from January's total. Although total routine detections were down from previous months, MARKET TIME units were kept extremely busy during February as they augmented harbor/anti-swimmer patrols, fired 201 naval gunfire support missions, engaged in 20 hostile fire incidents, and provided numerous exfiltration/infiltration patrols in support of ground operations.

During the last two days of the month, MARKET TIME forces experienced one of the most significant naval victories of the Vietnamese campaign. In the boldest rescue effort to date, four enemy trawlers were detected attempting a simultaneous infiltration of

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supplies into South Vietnam (RVN). MARKET TIME air and surface units maintained covert surveillance of the infiltrators while additional coastal surveillance units were positioned to intercept the trawlers as they attempted to penetrate the territorial waters of RVN. Of the four trawlers detected, three were ultimately destroyed and the fourth was turned back.

The southern-most trawler attempted to close the beach approximately 40 miles east-northeast of Ca Mau Point near the mouth of the Cua Bo De River. All challenges and warning shots were ignored by the trawler and a fire fight ensued between the infiltrator and the MARKET TIME units. Shortly after 0200 on 1 March, after repeated direct hits by 5-inch and .50 caliber fire, the trawler burst into flames and sank.

A second trawler beached itself in a cove approximately 10 miles northeast of Nha Trang at 0200 on 1 March. The trawler then opened fire on the MARKET TIME units. Continuous fire was returned by the MARKET TIME units and an attempt to capture the trawler was unsuccessful. At 0231 the trawler was completely destroyed after five direct hits by 81-mm mortars.

At 0214 on 1 March, a third trawler was driven aground approximately 40 miles southeast of Chu Lai, on the north central coast. Again, a fire fight ensued, and at 0235, when capture appeared imminent, the trawler completely destroyed itself.

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The fourth trawler being tracked by MARKET TIME units did not enter the territorial waters of RVN and reversed its course and headed for the open sea. Continual surveillance of the trawler was being maintained by coastal surveillance units.

On 5 February MARKET TIME air surveillance forces suffered the loss of an aircraft and crew when a P-3B assigned to Patrol Squadron TWENTY-SIX crashed at sea from an as yet undetermined cause. The aircraft, which was operating from U Tapao, Thailand, was on a routine MARKET TIME patrol when it crashed approximately 25 miles south of Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Thailand. There were no survivors among the 12 crewmembers on board, and at month's end, salvage efforts were still in progress.

Also on the 5th, PCFs 90 and 100 were called upon to provide illumination for Vietnamese ground forces who were in contact with an unknown number of enemy troops approximately 10 miles north-northeast of Qui Nhon. After firing 20 illumination rounds, the Swift boats were ordered to commence firing upon the enemy troops who were spotted trying to evade by climbing over a mountain. As a result of the firing, five Viet Cong were killed and various documents were captured.

On the morning of the 12th, the Coast Guard's POINT ARDEN was called upon by Son Tinh subsector authorities to provide an exfiltration blockade in support of the 4th Regiment of the 2nd ARVN Division approximately six miles south of Cape Batangan. The WFB sighted five Viet Cong on the

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beach, and a few minutes later an additional six enemy troops were observed nearby. The WPB took the enemy personnel under fire with 81-mm mortar and .50 caliber machine-gun fire, and as a result of the firing, five enemy were killed (two possible) and two were wounded.

During the evening of 17 February, approximately 16 miles south of Danang, the Coast Guard cutter POINT GRAY and PCF 27 provided naval gunfire support for the Vietnamese Navy's Coastal Group 14 which was experiencing enemy activity around its perimeter. Later assessment by Coastal Group 14 personnel of the damage inflicted by the firing of the WPB and PCF revealed 19 enemy troops had been killed.

Captain Carl H. HERRICK, USN, relieved Captain Ralph DE CORI, USN, as CTF 115/COMCOSURVFOR on 21 February 1968.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE SUMMARY
February 1968

The opening days of February saw GAME WARDEN units continuing their aggressive counter-attacks against the Communist insurgents who had launched an all-out offensive against major cities and government and military installations throughout the Republic. The Viet Cong struck in a country-wide coordinated attack on the morning of 31 January, during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year holiday period of TET, with devastating fury in an attempt to gain a major victory. The active role played by all units of TF 116 in supporting friendly ground action substantially contributed to the failure of the enemy who suffered extremely high casualties.

In I Corps Tactical Zone, PBRs shifted from their role of river interdiction to that of escort of logistical transport along the Perfume River, to counter the numerous hostile incidents aimed at stopping the flow of much needed supplies into the battle-torn city of Hue.

In the Delta, "Seawolves" and PBRs played a major role in preventing the cities of Ben Tre and Mo Cay, in Kien Hoa province, from being completely overrun by the Viet Cong forces. During the first 48 hours the "Seawolves" of MA(1)-3, Dets 5 and 6 were practically the only air support the province had. They continued to provide around-the-clock airstrikes for four days against intense ground fire. PBR units from River Sections 531, 532 and 534 provided fire support, blocking forces

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and medical evacuation transportation for the city of Ben Tre. At Chau Doc, PBR and SEAL units operating on the upper Bassac River near the Cambodian border rallied their forces in support of friendly forces. SEALs were landed at Chau Doc and immediately engaged the enemy. Ten U. S. civilians and six Vietnamese civilians were medevaced by the PBRs during the two-day encounter. During the fierce fighting two PBRs and an LCM received major damage as the boats made repeated firing runs against the Viet Cong positions, aiding in driving the enemy from the city. At Vinh Long, River Sections 522 and 523 were actively engaged in the defense of the city. When it was overrun, Commander River Division 52 found it necessary, on the evening of the 1st, to evacuate naval personnel ashore to USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 786). The following morning the Navyson returned ashore as the enemy was forced to retreat. The PBRs also provided cover for the evacuation of U. S. and Vietnamese civilians to the LST which was standing off Vinh Long. Two PBRs were destroyed by misdirected friendly fire during the fierce fighting that heavily damaged the PBR facilities and the city.

On 4 February four PBRs on the upper Mekong River, one and one-half miles north of Hang Ngu, came under intense rocket and automatic-weapon fire while assisting a beleaguered Vietnamese Regional Force unit pinned down by an estimated company of Viet Cong. PBRs 727 and 728 received direct hits and one PBR sailor was killed and eight others

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were wounded during the incident. PBR 727 was later salvaged, however 728 was destroyed intentionally by friendly fire to avoid its capture.

During the first seven days of February, "Seawolves" killed 86 of the enemy, while the PBRs accounted for 19 more as they substantially contributed in reversing gains the Viet Cong achieved in their initial attacks. Throughout the remainder of the month the Viet Cong continued their harrasing mortar and rocket attacks against military installations throughout the Delta.

On 10 February Navy helicopters killed 15 Viet Cong and wounded 13 others while supporting a Vietnamese outpost located on the Ha Luong River, about three and a half miles north of Thanh Phu. "Seawolves" killed another 30 enemy troops on 17 February when they struck a large concentration of Viet Cong sampans detected in an area about 12 miles northeast of Go Cong. A PBR operating on the Bassac River, about 12 miles south of Can Tho, was severely damaged on the 10th when it struck a communist watermine. On 21 February, PBRs supported the Thai merchant ship SRI THAI after it was hit by two rounds of recoilless-rifle fire ten miles west of My Tho. Two merchant crewmen injured in the attack were medevaced by PBR after the patrol boats and "Seawolves" suppressed the enemy fire. This area had been the scene of three other similar incidents to shipping the past four days.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE SUMMARY
February 1968

Early on the morning of 31 January, the festive mood of the Lunar New Year (Tet) was violently disrupted when the Viet Cong launched their bold, aggressive offensive against the major provincial cities of South Vietnam. The Mobile Riverine Force, demonstrating its tremendous operational flexibility, immediately came to the defense of several beleaguered Delta cities. After eight days of continuous fighting in the My Tho, Dong Tam, Cai Lay and Vinh Long areas, the mud-encrusted soldiers and exhausted boat crews returned to the Mobile Riverine Base for a brief respite. Commencing in mid-February, the MRF uncovered several large caches of modern weapons and ammunition in the Can Tho area. Later in the month, the first U. S. Navy riverine craft of the MRF was lost to the enemy's guns, when an ASPB was destroyed on the Can Tho River.

On 1 February units of RAD 91, transitting the Quong Stream in the Chao Duc district of Dinh Tuong province seven miles northeast of Sa Dec, were ambushed with recoilless-rifle fire, instantly killing a monitor boat captain. Later the same morning, the MRF responded to an urgent request to reinforce the besieged Allied units at My Tho. The battle for My Tho raged for the next 21 hours, resulting in 115 Viet Cong killed by units of the MRF. Friendly casualties consisted of three soldiers killed and 67 wounded. On 2 February the remaining guerrillas exfiltrated the once quiet provincial town leaving large areas in smoldering ruin. In an

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attempt to entrap the fleeing Viet Cong, the combat elements of the MRF deployed upriver to Cai Lay, where they conducted patrols and set up ambushes until noon on the 4th. MRF actions on 3-4 February resulted in 27 Viet Cong killed, while friendly forces had seven personnel wounded (four of whom were Navy men). On 4 February riverine units of RABs 92 and 111 with their embarked troops, came to the defense of Vinh Long City, which was anticipating a three-battalion Viet Cong assault that evening. Heavy contact with the fiercely fighting enemy was established the next morning, and 31 Viet Cong were killed. On 6-7 February the battle intensified as several riverine units of RABs 92 and 111 were ambushed in two separate incidents along the Cai Cam Stream, two miles southwest of Vinh Long. The combined Army/Navy team killed 80 Viet Cong, detained 83 suspects, captured 28 weapons and destroyed 45 bunkers and 84 concussion grenades. During the three-day battle, Navy casualties consisted of one sailor killed and 14 wounded, while Army personnel suffered four killed and 62 wounded. On 9 February the MRF relocated to Dong Tam, where the MRF conducted strike operations in the area north of Dong Tam for the next three days, killing 69 Viet Cong and capturing 84 individual weapons and 199 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds. There were two soldiers killed and 40 wounded during the action; Navy losses amounted to two sailors wounded when the base at Dong Tam was mortared. On 14 February, after a 110-mile transit from Dong Tam to Can Tho, the MRF conducted

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Operation CORONADO XI, in the Cai Rang district southwest of Can Tho, in pursuit of the Viet Cong 303, 306, and 309 Main Force Battalions and the Tay Ho Battalion I and II. Later that day, the ground troops discovered one of the most lucrative weapons and ammunition caches ever found by the MRF. The cache contained 460 B-40 rounds, 166 B-40 charges, 249 fragmentation grenades, 112 mines, 30 cans of offensive grenades, five modern weapons, 200 pounds of explosives, a large amount of AK-47 ammunition in cans, and 166 mortar and recoilless-rifle rounds of which 89 were 120-mm mortar rounds. Fifty-two Viet Cong were killed and 273 bunkers and eight sampans were destroyed during the four-day operation. U. S. losses totaled eight soldiers killed and 38 wounded. On 19 February a monitor on a blocking station on the Can Tho River nine miles west of Can Tho was struck by two B-40 rockets, wounding seven sailors, four of whom required "med-evac". For the next eight days, the battle continued to rage in the Can Tho area as the ground force, supported by monitors, ASPBs, and ATCs, mauled the enemy. At the termination of operations on the 27th, the battlefield was strewn with 165 dead Viet Cong, and 123 destroyed bunkers. U. S. casualties totaled 24 soldiers and two sailors killed, and 106 soldiers and 20 Navy men wounded. On 27 February, an ASPB was ambushed on the Can Tho River six miles southwest of Can Tho. The boat sustained several B-40 rocket hits, wounding two sailors and causing the boat to sink. Later the same day, the MRF uncovered another cache in the Can Tho

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area containing 27 weapons, 125 grenades, 20 mines, over 14,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, and 285 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds.

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NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP SUMMARY
February 1968

During the month the Vietnamese Navy's River Assault Groups and the Vietnamese Marine Corps were heavily engaged in repulsing the Viet Cong attacks in the Mekong Delta, Saigon and Hue. Additionally, the Coastal Groups of the First and Third Naval Zones have aggressively patrolled and attacked the enemy and Fleet Command units in the Delta and along the coast conducted 93 gunfire support missions. In February the Fleet Command had a daily average of 27.8 ships available and a daily average of 25.7 employed. At the same time the Coastal Force employed a daily average of 171.8 junks of a daily average of 191.6 available and the RAGs employed a daily average of 125.9 of the 137.5 craft available. Meanwhile, the six infantry and one artillery battalions of the VNMC were committed to combat operations 100 percent of the time. In the first six days of February the two task forces and four deployed battalions of the VNMC were recalled from II and IV CTZ to assist in the defense of the Capital Military District. On the 10th, Task Force A, with the 1st and 5th Battalions, deployed to Phu Bai to participate in the liberation of Hue, while Task Force B, with the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Battalions, remained in the CMD. On the 16th, the 4th Battalion deployed to Hue to reinforce Task Force A, completing the movement of forces for the month.

The battles fought by RAGs 23 and 31 at Vinh Long, 21 and 33 at My

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The and 25 and 29 at Cao Tho were the major naval incidents of the month. At Vinh Long the Viet Cong infiltrated the city and, after a mortar barrage at 0250 on 31 January, attacked all the government installations. By dawn the city, except for the areas immediately surrounding the RAC base and the airfield, were under enemy control. Leaving 40 men to defend their base, the craft of the RACs got underway, were joined by LSSIs 226 and 229, forming one large task force to support the base and friendly ground units in the city and along the nearby major canals. During the following week the task force evacuated over 2,500 refugees from the city and surrounding villages to a mid-river island, resupplied the island and the troop units in and near the city and provided almost continuous gunfire support in the battle for the city. When the insurgents began fortifying the waterfront area of Vinh Long the heavily-gunned LSSIs and monitors destroyed every building within 300 yards of the river's edge; similarly, the base defense force was forced to destroy the dependent housing area when the Viet Cong attempted to overrun the base by passing troops in the sailor's homes. On 4 February two divisions of the Riverine Assault Force with two battalions of the U. S. NINTH Infantry Division supplemented the weary defenders; by the 8th the combined force had secured the city and the Vietnamese units turned to the major task of re-building. Five VNN sailors were wounded and an unknown number of ARVN and U. S. soldiers were killed and wounded in the week-long battle, while

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over 300 Viet Cong were killed in the same period. A similar attack in My Tho by 1,200 of the enemy was contained by units of the ARVN SEVENTH Division, supported by the craft of RAGs 21 and 33. By 3 February the enemy had been forced northward, out of the city, leaving 239 dead in the city, at the cost of two VNN sailors wounded and 25 ARVN soldiers killed and an unreported number wounded. Meanwhile at Can Tho, the craft of RAGs 25 and 29 patrolled the Bassac River and the Can Tho River south and west of the city, preventing additional enemy infiltration from the south and supporting units of the ARVN 21st Division defending the north bank of the river. On 1 February the Monitors of the task force laid down a 100-round barrage of 81-mm mortar fire, killing 40 Viet Cong and repulsing the attack on an ARVN compound. Recalled a few hours later, the craft killed 25 more of the enemy and repulsed a second attack. The same day, another river patrol attacked an enemy cargo junk, killing 40 enemy troops attempting to transit the Can Tho River two miles west of the city. On the 2nd, the river patrol team was ambushed by an enemy force three miles southwest of the city; the patrol team escaped without casualties while killing 25 of the enemy. In the Third Riverine Area on the 22nd, two barges were sunk and a third destroyed and four persons were killed when a two-tug and eight-ammunition barge convoy was attacked on the Dong Nai River, 10 miles east of Saigon. As part of a RAG 30 force, carrying a U. S. Army company, fired on the ambush site on the north shore and other

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units landed the soldiers and a BAG sailor reaction force on the southern shore, the remaining craft recovered personnel from the water and secured the drifting barges and tugs. The ground forces located a possible site for detonating mines, an RPG-7 rocket launcher, one dead Viet Cong and five unidentified bodies. Also, they evacuated 14 wounded personnel.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CIVIC ACTION OPERATIONS
February 1968

The extensive plans and preparations for Psyops made for the Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tet) holiday period and thereafter was nullified by the Viet Cong's simultaneous attack against cities and military installations throughout the Republic. The vicious attacks were launched in violation of the agreed truce and during the most revered holiday season. Immediate action was instituted to bring to the people of South Vietnam and to the enemy forces the true story of these actions. Some of the major themes stressed were:

1. The enemy's shameful violation of the spirit of Tet after deceiving everyone by their truce announcements.
2. The NVA/VC leadership misled and betrayed their soldiers.
3. The call for a general uprising has been emphatically rejected by the population of South Vietnam which has rallied around the GVN.
4. U. S. is giving full support to the GVN in the restoration of public services and the reconstruction of installations destroyed by barbaric enemy attacks.

The enemy's Tet offensive presented a fertile psychological opportunity to discredit the enemy and thereby gain and reinforce adherents to the Government of Vietnam, however, the first priority was the strengthening of the confidence of the civilian population in the ability of the elected officials to restore security and the orderly functioning of the

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government.

The President of Vietnam issued a decree establishing a high level committee, headed by the Vice President, to direct and coordinate the activities of all GVN agencies, both civilian and military, in expediting civil recovery from the enemy's treacherous Tet offensive. U. S. naval forces quickly responded and provided the following support to the GVN Project "Recovery":

1. Dollars value military supplies: \$51,560.00
2. Manpower: 4,735 mandays
3. Transportation services rendered: 20,372 ton miles.

Assistance rendered to the Vietnamese civilian population by the Vietnamese Navy and the U. S. Naval Advisory Group in the form of food, clothing, medical supplies, building materials and other miscellaneous items amounted to over \$54,663.00.

Individual naval units continued to display the humanistic spirit of the Navyman as they rendered support wherever possible to help the Vietnamese recover.

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USN STATISTICAL SUMMARY
February 1968

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	<u>MARKET TIME</u>	<u>GAME WARDEN</u>	<u>Mobile Riverine Force</u>
Detections	24,832	47,289	*
Inspections	9,772	11,823	*
Boardings	5,408	24,333	*
Craft detained	*	1	*
Persons detained	240	505	686
Viet Cong suspects	0	31	*
Hostile fire incidents	20	42	*
Enemy casualties:			
a. Killed	49 (20 prob.)	191	544
b. Wounded	14 (11 prob.)	20	3
c. Captured	0	18	14
USN casualties:			
a. Killed	0	1	4 Navy/42 Army
b. Wounded	3	60	39 Navy/310 Army
c. Captured	0	0	0
d. Missing	0	0	1 Army
Enemy material losses:			
a. Destroyed:			
(1) Junks or sampans	27	115	4
(2) Structures	38	330	552
b. Captured:			
(1) Junks or sampans	*	42	1
(2) Weapons	*	26	838#
(3) Ammunition (rounds)	*	88##	27,713##
(4) Rice (tons)	*	0	7.3
c. Damaged:			
(1) Junks or sampans	7	111	*
(2) Structures	43	224	*
USN material losses:			
a. Destroyed:			
(1) Surface craft	0	3	1
(2) Helicopters	*	0	0
b. Damaged:			
(1) Surface craft	3	53	7
(2) Helicopters	*	24	0
SAR missions	2	*	*

Remarks:

MARKET TIME units conducted 201 NGFS missions during February.

* Information not applicable or not available this date.

** 60 M-40 rounds, 28 hand grenades plus miscellaneous small-arms ammunition.

Includes 527 grenades and 138 mines.

Includes 1,077 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds.

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VNM/VNMC STATISTICAL SUMMARY
 February 1968

VICTNAMESE NAVY:

	<u>Searched</u>		<u>Detained</u>	
	<u>Junks</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Junks</u>	<u>People</u>
<u>COASTAL FORCE</u>				
I NZ	6,881	19,358	0	57
II NZ	6,062	20,260	55	277
III NZ	5,896	22,977	0	6
IV NZ	2,584	7,556	0	0
Sub-totals	21,423	70,151	55	340
<u>FLIGHT COMMAND</u>				
PATROL SHIPS	405	2,056	2	7
<u>RIVERINE AREA</u>				
CRAFT	2,396	7,090	0	1
<u>TOTALS</u>	24,224	79,297	57	348

VICTNAMESE MARINE CORPS:

VC/NVA: 911 KIA 89 CAPTURED 2,416 SUSPECTS DETAINED
 VNMC: 115 KIA 599 MIA

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USN CIVIC ACTION STATISTICAL SUMMARY
February 1968*

PROGRAMS:

	<u>Man Days</u>	<u>Expenditures(VN\$)</u>
Economic Development	3	66,790
Education	220	73,790
Social Welfare	1,758	2,160,146
Refugee Assistance Support	511	1,635,282
TOTALS	2,492	3,911,008

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

VN\$ 263,257

INSTITUTES ASSISTED:

	<u>Number</u>
Schools	5
Hospitals/dispensaries	16
Orphanages	4
Others	19

PERCENT OF U. S. CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS CONDUCTED JOINTLY WITH:

	<u>Percent</u>
Other PRCMF	3
RVMF	20
U. S. civilian voluntary agencies	16
Average percent of self-help by VN civilians	75

Remarks:

* Reporting period is 26 January - 25 February. This is the new format for the USN Civic Action Statistical Summary.

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