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U.S. NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM



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MONTHLY HISTORICAL
SUMMARY
FEBRUARY 1967

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NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM

MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 1967

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FOREWORD

In February, the lunar New Year (Tet) truce period (8-12 February) contributed to a marked decrease in the number of hostile fire incidents during the month.

Navy coastal and river patrols were maintained before, during and after Tet, with no change in operating procedures for interdicting water-borne enemy traffic.

On 15 February, the Viet Cong sank one U.S. minesweeper and damaged two others in a series of attacks in the Saigon channel.

In I Corps, considerably improved weather conditions permitted an accelerated pace in Seabee construction work, and also enabled the Naval Support Activity in Danang to increase its efforts in resupplying coastal facilities. On 5 February, Rear Admiral Paul L. LACY, Jr., USN, relieved Rear Admiral Thomas R. WECHSLER, USN, as Commander U. S. Naval Support Activity, Danang.

The Vietnamese Navy was active during the month, especially in carrying out gunfire support missions and small-scale raids along the coastline.

In the Delta, the long-range effectiveness of a large-scale, well-coordinated psychological operation was demonstrated during Tet when 19 former Viet Cong returned to the Government from a hamlet that had received civic action assistance in December.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE

RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE RIVER PATROL GROUP

On 15 February, the Viet Cong ended the post lunar New Year lull with a series of attacks in the Saigon channel, sinking one U.S. minesweeper and damaging two others. Two U.S. sailors were killed and 16 were wounded.

The first attack occurred at 0655, when the Viet Cong assaulted MSBs from well-prepared positions on both banks of the Long Tau River, five miles downstream from Nha Be. MSB 49 sustained extensive damage from recoilless rifle fire and was forced to beach on the east bank.

MSB 51 and PBRs in the area returned the fire and kept the enemy pinned down until air support arrived. A helicopter strike, delivered under heavy ground fire, was followed by a fixed-wing strike at 0750, and a ground reaction operation by four Vietnamese Regional Force companies. One American was killed during the engagement and seven others were wounded. Two Viet Cong were killed.

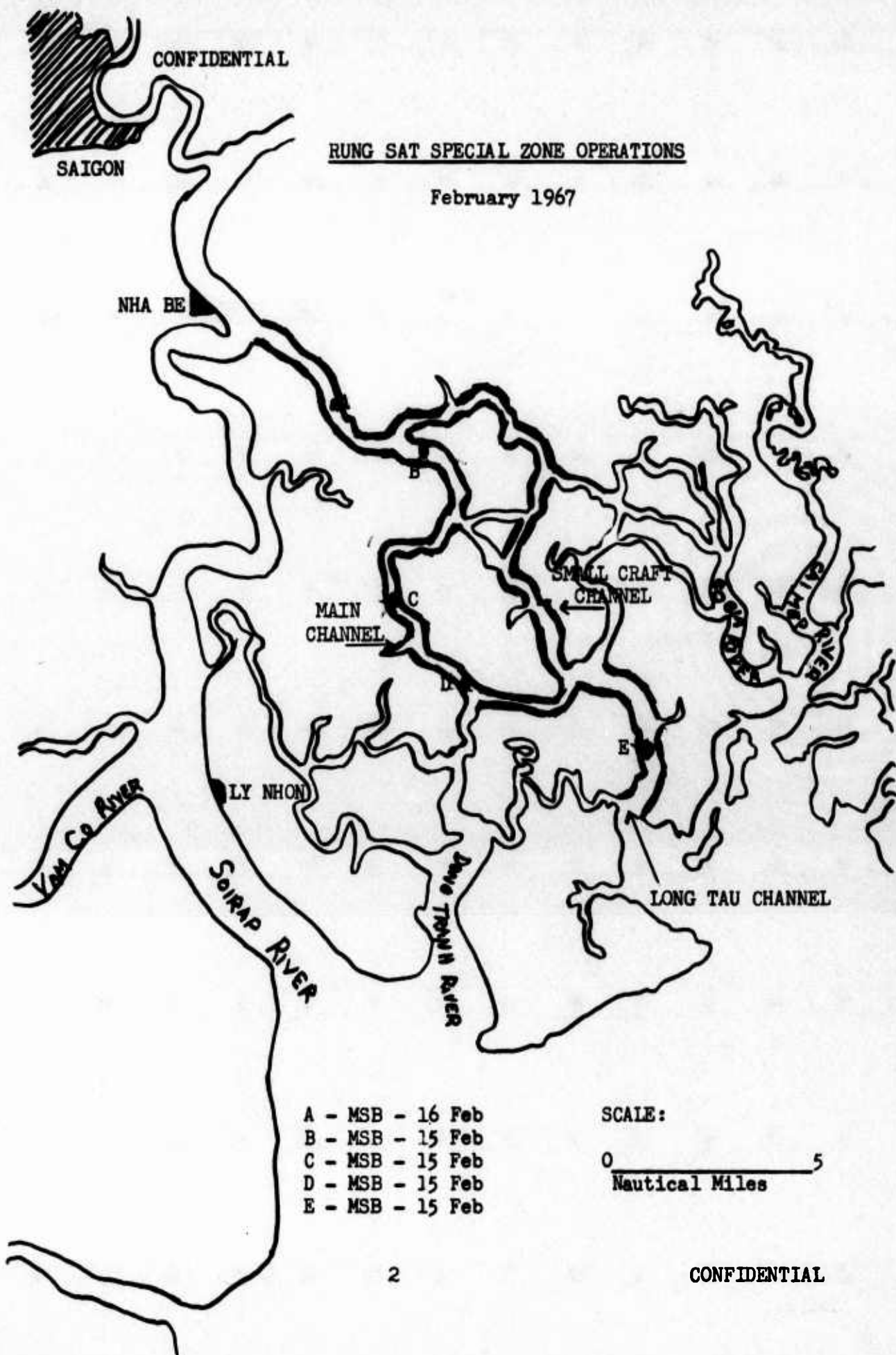
The enemy struck again at 1020 when a controlled mine sank MSB 45 near the west bank of the river, 15 miles southeast of Nha Be. A companion boat, MSB 22, picked up five survivors, four of whom were wounded. The sixth crewmember was lost.

At 1428, MSBs 32 and 51 were taken under heavy weapons fire 11 miles southeast of Nha Be. Two rounds struck MSB 51 in the stack and the sweep winch. The MSBs and their PBR escort then reversed course and headed upstream as four additional PBRs

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE OPERATIONS

February 1967



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were dispatched to the area.

At 1440, the enemy again opened fire on the MSBs with small arms and automatic weapons fire. The Long Tau light helicopter fire team then struck the ambush sites, suppressing the enemy fire.

At 0820 the following day, the enemy attacked MSBs 16 and 52 three and one-half miles downstream from Nha Be. Fire was returned and at 0900 a SEAL reaction team was landed in the area. The SEALs pursued three or four fleeing Viet Cong without success, and discovered one dead Viet Cong, two Chinese Communist carbines, an ammunition pouch and two bunkers.

On 16 February, elements of the U.S. Army NINTH Division were deployed to the Rung Sat Special Zone to help secure the river banks. In addition, Regional Force ambush and sweep operations were increased and augmented PBR support was provided by River Section 533, embarked in USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-846), stationed near the mouth of the Long Tau River. As a further measure, MSB armament was bolstered by the installation of M-18 grenade launchers. On 27 February, a B-52 strike was delivered in the suspected headquarters area of the Viet Cong commander of the Rung Sat Special Zone.

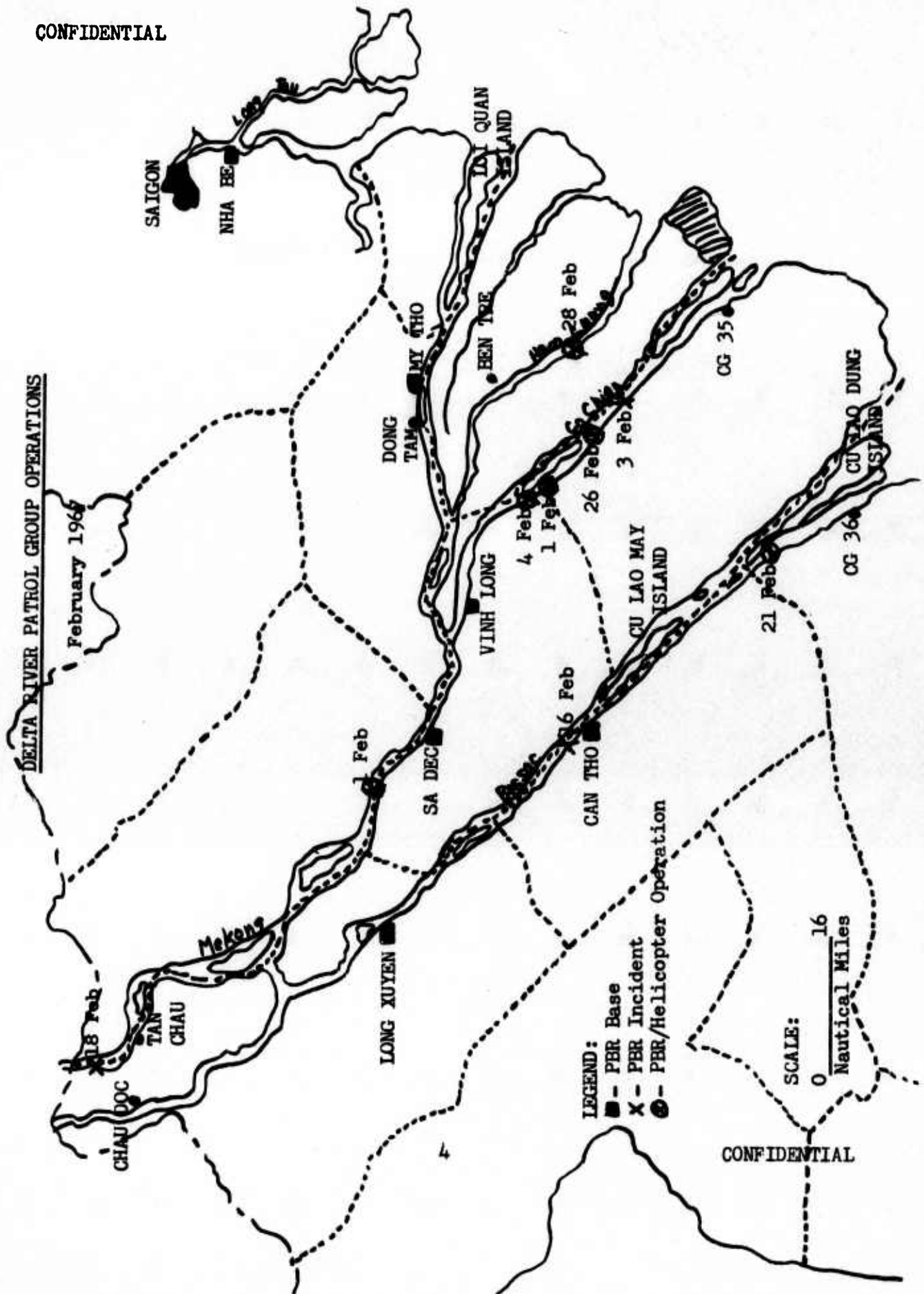
Following the incident on 16 February, enemy activity in the RSSZ subsided. The Viet Cong continued to harass outposts with small arms and mortar fire, but attacks on minesweepers ceased.

DELTA RIVER PATROL GROUP

Operations in the Mekong (My Tho) and Ham Luong Rivers

In February the Viet Cong made two sabotage attempts on the

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PBR pier at My Tho. In the first attempt, on 10 February, a U.S. Navy sentry was wounded slightly by the explosion of a grenade thrown over the fence by a terrorist. The incident occurred during late afternoon and the terrorist escaped in the large Vietnamese crowd celebrating Tet outside the base.

On the morning of 14 February a member of River Section 532's boat watch sighted a large box floating upstream on the tide about 80 feet off the PBR pier. The watchstander fired at the box, triggering an explosion whose shock wave was felt 100 yards from the pier.

On 26 February, CTF 116 redeployed certain units to meet a growing threat in Kien Hoa province, where elements of three Viet Cong battalions had been reported since the 23rd of February. JENNINGS COUNTY was moved from the mouth of the Long Tau channel to Dong Tam to support patrols in the Ham Luong River.

On 28 February, two PBR crewmen were wounded when the Viet Cong ambushed a PBR patrol in the Ham Luong with automatic weapons and recoilless rifle fire. PBR 107 received one recoilless rifle hit in the port bow, which wounded the forward gunner and the engineer. PBR 101 received 15 small arms hits in the hull. Two subsequent helicopter strikes silenced the enemy fire.

Operations in the Co Chien River

The first week of February was one of intense activity along the Co Chien River as the enemy launched a series of aggressive attacks on river patrols and outposts on the western side of the

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river. Between the first and the sixth of February, there were 11 attacks by the Viet Cong.

At 1705 on 1 February, a PBR patrol was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire from a position on the south bank of the river, in the vicinity of Cu Lao Giai Island. The PBRs cleared the kill zone and returned the fire, but were unable to suppress the enemy outburst. The HC-1 (Detachment 25) light helicopter fire team then delivered a strike in the area marked by the PBRs. The helicopter runs started two POL fires, triggered two secondary explosions, and destroyed two structures. There were no friendly casualties.

On the night of 3 February, PBR 113 became the first PBR to be lost to hostile fire since the inception of GAME WARDEN operations. At 2200, a PBR patrol intercepted a sampan in the lower river, near Phu Vinh. As the patrol closed, the sampan's three occupants dived into the water. PBR 113 approached one of the swimmers and threw him a life ring. As the man reached for the life ring, he threw a grenade into the after part of the boat. The grenade's explosion set fire to the engine and ammunition storage compartments, gutting the PBR's interior spaces. The PBR was subsequently towed to the Coastal Group 35 base where usable portions were stripped and the remainder of the boat destroyed.

One crewmember was lost in the engagement and another was wounded. The three Viet Cong were killed.

On 4 February GAME WARDEN units broke up a Viet Cong attempt

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to overrun a Vietnamese outpost at the mouth of the Song Mang Thit River, near the northern end of the strategic Kinh Lo Canal. PBRs and helicopter fire teams conducted a coordinated attack on the enemy, estimated to be two companies in strength. The Viet Cong were finally driven away after having advanced to within 100 yards of the outpost.

On 26 February, 50 Viet Cong attempted to overrun an outpost on the south bank of the Co Chien 25 miles from Vinh Long. Two PBRs and Army and Navy helicopters delivered heavy automatic weapons, grenade and rocket fire into the enemy positions, forcing the Viet Cong to withdraw.

Operations in the Lower Bassac River

In the lower Bassac River, there were no hostile fire or evasion incidents during the first 15 days of February. On 16 February, a PBR patrol received small arms harassment fire from both banks of the river near Binh Thuy. However, fire was not returned because of the large, predominantly friendly population in the area. On 21 February, PBRs 34 and 45 were taken under heavy automatic weapons fire from the northern tip of Cu Lao Dung Island. The patrol returned the fire and cleared the area while a helicopter fire team delivered a strike. The fire team suppressed all enemy fire. There were no friendly casualties. Viet Cong casualties were undetermined.

Operations in the Upper Mekong and Bassac Rivers

Four Sa Dec-based PBRs broke up a Viet Cong crossing attempt

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on the night of 1 February near the mouth of the Cao Lanh River. The PBR patrol intercepted two sampans and the occupants jumped into the water and swam for shore. When the PBRs attempted to pick up the swimmers, the boats came under automatic weapons fire from positions on both banks. The PBRs returned the fire and requested artillery and air support. The Cao Lanh battery then delivered ten rounds of 105mm howitzer fire into the bank positions, followed by a Navy helicopter strike. All enemy fire ceased and the area was considered neutralized.

There were no friendly casualties. Four Viet Cong were killed, two others were probably killed; one Viet Cong was captured, and two sampans were destroyed.

On 18 February, a two-boat blocking force killed three Viet Cong attempting to escape from a U.S. Special Forces/Civil Irregular Defense Group sweep in upper Kien Phong province, near the Cambodian border.

At 0740, PBRs 134 and 135 approached three sampans escaping from the operation area and came under heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from both banks of the river. The PBRs opened fire on the banks and the sampans with .50 caliber, M-79 and M-16 fire. Three occupants of one of the sampans were killed by a direct M-79 grenade hit. The PBRs then made firing runs on the west bank to which the remaining sampans evaded; final results were undetermined.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE

During February, MARKET TIME forces continued to interdict possible infiltrators from the sea with the detection of 38,229 junks and sampans. Of this number, 15,813 of the craft were inspected and 11,241 were boarded. Additionally, 1,488 steel-hulled vessels were detected, with 862 of these being inspected and 30 boarded. Other MARKET TIME operations during the month included five evading sampan incidents, ten naval gunfire support missions, seven assists to shore-based operations, one SAR incident, and medical evacuation assistance on two occasions.

STABLE DOOR units detected 26,776 junks and sampans, inspecting 5,273 of these and boarding 3,654. Five new Boston Whalers arrived in country increasing to 25 the number of patrol boats available to STABLE DOOR forces. The first fatalities among STABLE DOOR personnel occurred this month when two sailors were killed the night of 22 February as the patrol was approaching a suspect craft in Qui Nhon harbor.

MARKET TIME

MARKET TIME units acting as blocking forces for the FIRST Cavalry Division's Operation PERSHING, a search and destroy operation north of Qui Nhon, detained a total of 40 suspects over a five-day period beginning 20 February. In the evening of the 20th, PCF 63 rounded up three junks carrying 11 suspects. Six of the 11 were confirmed Viet Cong, according to Vietnamese Army intelligence officers. On the afternoon of 23 February, PCF 88 detained 13

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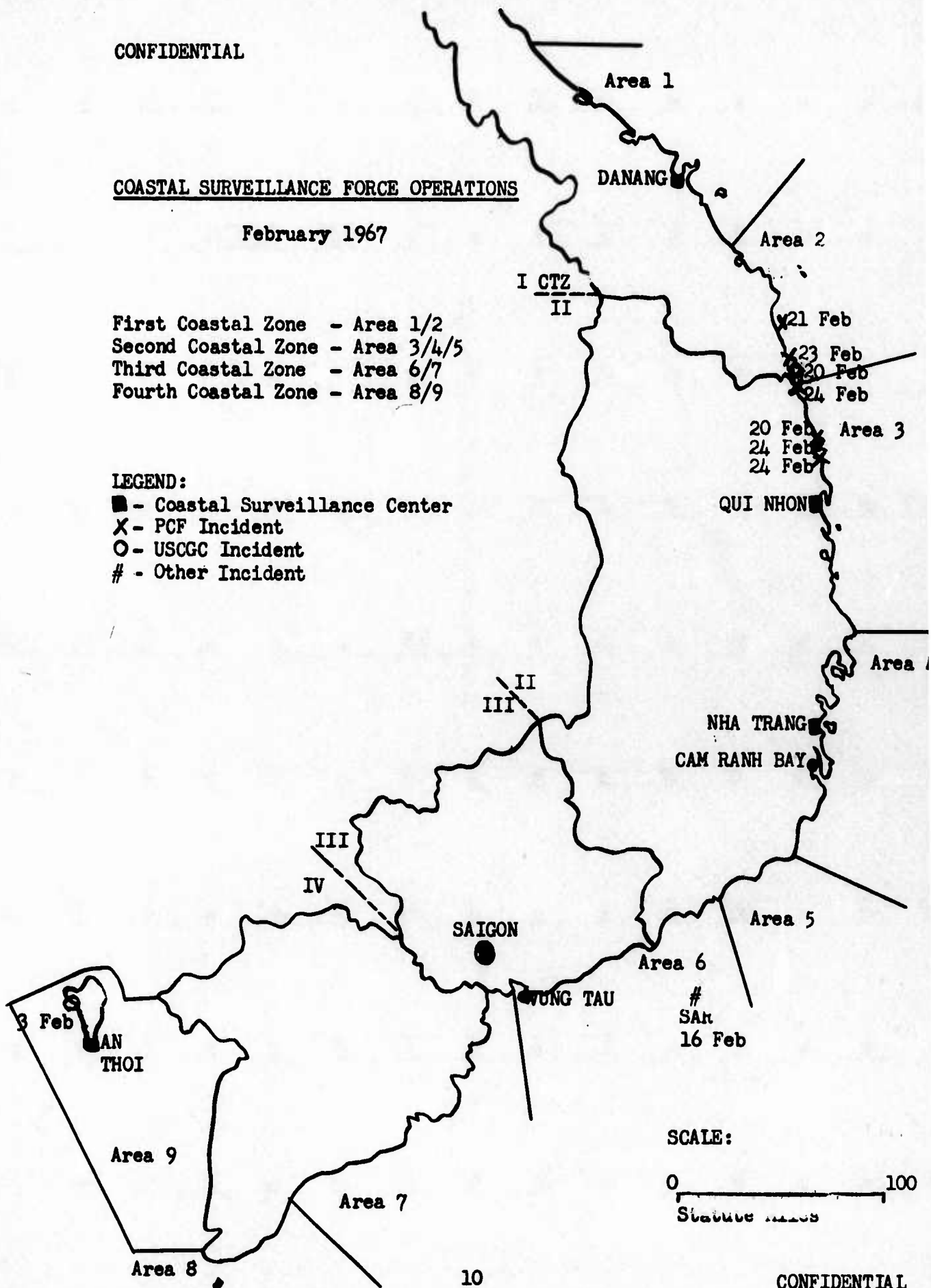
COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE OPERATIONS

February 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
O - USCGC Incident
- Other Incident



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suspects and on the following day 16 more Viet Cong suspects were detained by PCFs 87, 58 and 89. Eight of these suspects were on a fishing craft which was not outfitted with fishing gear. Six of the eight-man crew were found to be Viet Cong.

On 3 February, USCGC POINT CLEAR supported units of Vietnamese Navy Coastal Groups 42 and 46 as they landed 240 Civil Irregular Defense Group troops and their U.S. Special Forces advisors on Phu Quoc Island. This search and destroy operation, code-named Operation MUERTO DOS, was terminated two days later after having netted a total of 13 Viet Cong killed and one captured. A large number of documents and 22 individual weapons also were captured.

At 0400 on 20 February, USCGC POINT ARDEN detained five Viet Cong suspects exfiltrating the Operation DECKHOUSE VI area 60 miles north of Qui Nhon.

MARKET TIME units provided gunfire support on 10 occasions during the month. All missions were conducted in the 3rd and 4th Coastal Zones. The missions accounted for three Viet Cong killed and 17 structures and three junks destroyed. Direct gunfire from MARKET TIME craft destroyed an additional 12 structures, five junks and two bunkers.

The first incident involving medical evacuation assistance occurred on 16 February when a VP-16 aircraft on a MARKET TIME surveillance flight 110 miles south of Cam Ranh Bay assisted a Korean LSM crewmember, suffering acute appendicitis, to reach the hospital. The LSM radioed the aircraft for assistance and this

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request was relayed to Cam Ranh Bay. A helicopter was dispatched to evacuate the stricken man, with the patrol aircraft providing communications support.

On 17 February, PCF 75, patrolling in the 1st Coastal Zone, volunteered to assist in the medical evacuation of a petty officer aboard USS FIRM (MSO-444) who had suffered a severe electrical shock. The SWIFT transported the victim at maximum speed to USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6) for medical treatment.

On 21 February, PCF 14 personnel rescued a Marine aviator who had ejected from his A-4 aircraft after it had been hit by ground fire near Quang Ngai City. The SWIFT had sighted the parachute while it was still in the air and retrieved the pilot from the water unhurt.

STABLE DOOR

Operation STABLE DOOR suffered its first losses in action on the night of 22 February when a hand grenade, thrown from a suspect junk, killed two sailors in a skimmer in Qui Nhon harbor. The skimmer was approaching the junk when the grenade was thrown into the STABLE DOOR craft, blowing one man into the water and mortally wounding another crewman. The boat captain opened fire on the junk's occupants, but they successfully evaded to the beach.

A search was conducted for the missing crewman by LCPLs and skimmers as a PCF provided illumination fire with 81mm mortars. The search operations came under small arms harassing fire on several occasions. In one instance, the enemy fired six mortar

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rounds at units engaged in the search. The body of the missing man was found two days later.

Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 1 (IUWU 1) relieved Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance Unit 13 (MIUWS 13) at Vung Tau on 13 February. On 18 February, one officer and five ratings of Royal Australian Navy Clearance Diving Team 3 (EOD) reported to the Officer in Charge, IUWU 1 for duty.

During the month, IUWU 1 detained one junk and 11 persons in Vung Tau harbor. IUWU 4 at Nha Trang detained four junks and 23 persons, and IUWU 3 at Qui Nhon detained one junk and 43 persons during the month.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE

During February, units of River Assault Squadron NINE continued training operations off Vung Tau and supported small search and destroy missions by units of the U.S. Army NINTH Infantry Division in the lower portions of the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ).

On 16 February, River Assault Division 91 supported the Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, Second Brigade, in active riverine operations. The first landing occurred at 1900 when elements of the battalion were landed at the mouth of the Tac Ong Nghia stream.

The operation, code-named RIVER RAIDER, continued through the month, with U.S. troops conducting sweeps and ambushes in the RSSZ. Contact with the enemy was light, but the troops discovered and destroyed several Viet Cong base camps.

On 21 February, "A" Company, 3/47 Infantry was landed by units of R.A.D. 91 in the Rach Don creek area. The troops found an extensive base camp which included 20 huts. Two of the huts were work shops, one was a galley, and 17 were living quarters, each containing sleeping platforms for 12 persons. The facilities were destroyed by the troops.

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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, DANANG

On 5 February, Rear Admiral Paul L. LACY, Jr., USN, relieved Rear Admiral Thomas R. WESCHLER, USN, as Commander U.S. Naval Support Activity, Danang. Admiral WESCHLER had commanded the activity since 6 February 1966. During his tenure, NAVSUPACT was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for outstanding performance while providing logistic support for I Corps forces.

On 17 February, Captain Harry H. DINSMORE, MC, USN, was awarded the Navy Cross for the removal of a live mortar shell from the rib cage of a Vietnamese soldier. The successful operation was performed at the Danang hospital on 1 October, 1966.

During February improved weather conditions in I Corps enabled NAVSUPACT to increase considerably its coastal resupply efforts. The total tonnage delivered to Dong Ha, Hue and Chu Lai was 76,044 measurement tons, a 25,210 ton increase over the January figure.

Forty-four ships arrived at the port of Danang in February, 35 of which completed offloading. The average daily throughput for Danang was a record 8,614 measurement tons. The monthly throughput, 241,203 measurement tons, was slightly less than the record set in January. The total throughput for I Corps in February was 332,187 measurement tons.

The fuel line at Dong Ha continued to be inoperative, necessitating shuttling fuel in bladders by boat. At Chu Lai, the eight-inch POL line was repaired on 7 February, but the four-inch line remained inoperative during the month. At Phu Bai, refueling

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operations continued with the use of Marine refuelers supplemented by commercial truck deliveries from Danang.

In February the NAVSUPPACT small craft repair facility completed its first overhaul of a YFU. Major structural repairs, hull alterations, and the overhauling of electrical equipment and engines were completed in 53 days, thereby reducing by three to four weeks the usual YFU off-station time when the overhaul is performed out of country. The facility also completed its first overhaul of an LCM-8 during the month.

The port of Danang was visited 61 times by SEVENTH Fleet ships in February. The ships were provided with 491,580 gallons of diesel fuel and 791,749 gallons of potable water, in addition to mail, freight, courier, transient billeting and disbursing services.

On 27 February, the Viet Cong shelled Danang Air Base and an adjoining Vietnamese village with 51 rounds of 140mm Soviet-type rockets. Eleven U.S. Army, Air Force and Marine Corps military personnel were killed; 27 others were wounded. In addition, 70-90 military personnel were treated and returned to duty. The Air Base remained operational, but a number of aircraft were damaged and five signal vans were destroyed. Naval facilities received minor damage.

Thirty-two civilians were killed during the attack, and 40 others were injured. Approximately 200 civilian homes were destroyed.

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U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON

Support for naval forces in the II, III and IV Corps areas continued to improve during the month of February. Permanent construction at MARKET TIME bases neared completion, and satisfactory progress was made at the GAME WARDEN bases.

At Cam Ranh Bay, a Navy Post Office was established on 13 February. At Cat Lo, a newly-completed shallow well began producing 5,000 gallons of water daily. At Vung Tau, four hutches were completed at the Harbor Defense site, a recreation hut was 90 per cent complete, and construction of a water tower and storage tank was started.

At Qui Nhon, public works personnel completed construction of bunkers and began construction of a barbed-wire perimeter fence. The base power system project was completed except for shore power to the pier.

At Sa Dec in the Delta, a 500-barrel fuel tank and a fuel pump were installed, and work on a seawall and a shallow well of limited capacity was completed.

At Can Tho, an organic water purification system was installed to service the base and visiting ships. At Vinh Long an area adjacent to the present living compound was leased and work on habitability projects commenced.

In February, intensive efforts were directed toward construction of the new base at Dong Tam, which will support the Riverine Assault Force. A water barge and a water purification plant

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arrived, and additional galley equipment and sand bags were procured. The Dong Tam NAVSUPPACT Detachment will eventually comprise 150 personnel.

A significant problem experienced by NAVSUPPACT was the shortage of certain repair parts needed to overhaul PCF engines. The shortage has caused the overhaul cycle to fall behind schedule. Major efforts were underway to correct the problem.

During February, the availability level of boats continued to be generally excellent, ranging from a low of 70 per cent for LCMs to a high of 95 per cent for PERs.

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THIRD NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE

During February, the eight Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment completed over two and one-quarter million dollars worth of military construction and one-quarter of a million dollars worth of non-military construction.

Newly-arrived NMCB FOUR was deployed to the Danang area to relieve NMCB TEN. A 35-man detachment of NMCB FOUR was located at Khe Sanh airfield to support construction projects in that area, and a 70-man detachment was sent to An Hoa to improve the existing airfield.

On 6 February, the Viet Cong fired mortars on the Payne Compound at Tam Ky, 35 miles south of Danang, where a detachment of NMCB EIGHT was working. One Seabee was mortally wounded in the attack. NMCB EIGHT, deployed at Rosemary Point, Chu Lai, continued work on such projects as an Avionics building and control tower for Marine Air Group 36, aircraft revetments for Marine Air Group 12, and an Integrated Worldwide Communications System installation for the First Signal Brigade.

On 18 February, a 27-man detachment of NMCB NINE returned to the Battalion at Danang after completing a number of construction projects at the new base at Dong Tam, in the Mekong Delta. NMCB NINE was the first organized Seabee unit, other than Seabee Teams, to operate in the Delta. NMCB NINE's major projects in the Danang area included improving the Minh Long airfield, repairing the Naval

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Support Activity, Danang "T" pier, construction of a new seawall for NAVSUPACT Danang, and construction of buildings at Danang and Quang Ngai for the United States Agency for International Development.

NMCB SIX completed an eight-month tour in Vietnam, during which the battalion constructed cantonments for over 12,000 personnel. Other accomplishments included the construction of a helicopter landing pad and reviewing stand at the headquarters of the THIRD Marine Amphibious Force, and a television station at Danang.

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SALVAGE OPERATIONS

Salvage operations on the dredge, JAMAICA BAY, which was sunk by Viet Cong mines in January, continued throughout the month. On 7 February, the dredge was lifted, turned, and moved about 300 feet toward shore. However, on 9 February, one of the heavy lift craft (HLC-2) engaged in the salvage operations, sank while alongside JAMAICA BAY and the salvage attempt of the dredge was temporarily suspended.

An around-the-clock effort on the part of Harbor Clearance Team ONE personnel resulted in refloating HLC-2 on 13 February. On 16 February, JAMAICA BAY was refloated, and on 21 February, the dredge was moved to its final position for patching and dewatering operations, which continued through the end of the month.

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COMMUNICATIONS

The volume of message traffic handled by the COMNAVFORV communications center dropped from January's record high of 91,094 messages to 75,000 in February. The daily average number of messages handled dropped by 210 from the previous month's average. The February volume of traffic handled at Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Danang dropped by 9.5 per cent; however, the daily average remained the same as in January.

NAVSUPPACT Danang handled priority traffic for Marine and Army advisors in I Corps for three days after the interim tape relay facility at Danang was destroyed during a Viet Cong rocket attack on 27 February. The Danang communications center also helped reduce the backlog of low-precedence Marine message traffic by acting as a relay from the Defense Communications System station at Nha Trang.

Progress at Danang on Project SEA ANCHOR was satisfactory during the month. The percentage of construction completed at the communications center, receiver site and transmitter site was 57, 50 and 29 per cent, respectively. Delivery of electronic equipment to the building sites had begun.

At Cam Ranh Bay, construction work on the communications center and the transmitter and receiver sites (Project BOW LINE) was 90 per cent complete. Installation of electronic equipment at the various sites was in progress.

USS ANNAPOLIS (AGMR-1) returned to station on 16 February and

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reactivated the local area broadcast (ANNALAB). MARKET TIME DERs and MSOs shifted to the ANNALAB broadcast and reported excellent results. Also, a CW circuit was established for MSCs without an on-line crypto capability.

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ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

Effective 1 February, the Coastal Surveillance Force and the River Patrol Force were established as separate commands under the operational and administrative control of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam. The two task force commanders, CTF 115 and CTF 116, respectively, had exercised operational control of their assigned forces for COMNAVFORV since the spring of 1966.

On 3 February, a new command, Coast Guard Activities, Vietnam (COMCOGARDACTV) was established under the operational control of COMNAVFORV and the administrative control of the Coast Guard Commander, Western Area. Commander Coast Guard Squadron ONE assumed the additional duty of COMCOGARDACTV. Included in the new command are: Coast Guard Squadron ONE; the Port Security Detail; the Aids to Navigation Detail; and the Merchant Marine Advisory Detail.

On 5 February, Rear Admiral Paul L. LACY, Jr., USN, relieved Rear Admiral Thomas R. WESCHLER, USN, as Commander U. S. Naval Support Activity, Danang.

On 20 February, the Mekong Delta SEAL Element was activated as Task Element 116.1.9.2, based at Can Tho. The element will conduct reconnaissance and ambush operations in the IV Corps Tactical Zone.

On 28 February, the Riverine Assault Force was activated as Task Force 117 under the operational control of COMNAVFORV and the administrative control of Commander, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet.

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Results of JTD Review

In February, COMUSMACV deferred action on a January proposal by COMNAVFORV to modify the distribution of naval personnel vis-a-vis certain billets in the Joint Table of Distribution. Among other items, the proposal had recommended Navy representation in the Manpower Branch and the Intelligence Operations Division of the Joint Staff.

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MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

During February, military civic action and psychological operations revolved around the lunar New Year (Tet) period, the most important holiday in the Vietnamese calendar. Special leaflet and broadcast appeals were made to the Viet Cong, stressing the traditional family nature of the holiday.

In addition to coordinated Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) appeals, U.S. and Vietnamese naval personnel participated in numerous Tet activities in a variety of ways. At Danang, Naval Support Activity personnel provided food for the widows and orphans of 391 Vietnamese Army (ARVN) soldiers in ceremonies presided over by the wife of the Commanding General of I Corps. In the Second Coastal/Naval Zone, Coastal Group 26 hosted a Tet celebration for the village chief and the village elders of Binh Ba, an island near Cam Ranh.

In the Third Coastal/Naval Zone, the effectiveness of a large-scale civic action mission conducted in December (WHAMO 1-66) in the Viet Cong-controlled hamlet of Ap An Loi was demonstrated during the Tet season. A total of 16 Viet Cong returned to government control at the Coastal Group 34/37 base near Ap An Loi; three others, including a Viet Cong village chief, turned themselves in at the Ba Tri sub-sector headquarters. Additional WHAMOs (Winning Hearts and Minds Operations) were planned for Ap An Loi.

On the morning of 27 February, when the Viet Cong attacked the Danang Air Base with 140mm rockets, approximately ten rounds

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landed in Truyen Tin, a nearby hamlet. Thirty-nine civilians were killed, over forty others were injured, and about 65 per cent of the hamlet was razed by fire.

Naval Support Activity personnel joined ARVN and Danang city officials in providing immediate relief for the victims of the attack. Assistance included medical care, food, potable water, and clothing. In addition, naval personnel provided tents to accommodate about half of the persons rendered homeless.

Seabee Teams continued to play an important role in civic action programs. At Vinh Long, Team 1107 neared completion of the surgical suite for the Vinh Long Hospital. Seven Vietnamese construction trainees and 10 Vietnamese plasterers and brick layers are currently working with the Seabees on the project. The finished suite will have three operating rooms, a recovery room and two wards. The hospital is the largest of its kind constructed for civilians in the Mekong Delta.

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NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP

VIETNAMESE NAVY

At the end of February the personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy was 16,291, an increase of 69 men over last month's total. The Vietnamese Navy personnel strength has increased to a total of 215 men over the authorized allowance of 16,076.

The number of personnel discharged as deserters decreased by 19 to 43 in February. However, the number of unauthorized absences this month was 451, twice as many as January's total. The sharp rise in the number of personnel absent without leave was attributed to the Tet holiday season.

Operations

The Fleet Command maintained eleven patrol ships on station off the coast of South Vietnam, four ships on river patrol and one ship on convoy escort duty between Vung Tau and Tan Chau. Missions included anti-infiltration patrols, psychological warfare missions, and gunfire support missions. Although the number of ships engaged in patrolling was two less than the number assigned in January, 20 more gunfire missions were fired. Fleet Command minesweepers continued daily sweep operations in the Long Tau River.

Coastal Groups were active in small-scale raids along the coast of Vietnam in addition to their routine patrol operations. In the Fourth Coastal Zone, junks of Coastal Groups 42 and 46 landed 240 troops of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG)

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and their U.S. Special Forces advisors on Phu Quoc Island in Operation MUERTO DOS, a search and destroy operation which resulted in 13 Viet Cong killed, one captured, and 22 individual weapons seized.

On the afternoon of 4 February, Coastal Group 36 junks engaged the enemy near the mouth of the Bassac River in an action that resulted in two Viet Cong killed and one Viet Cong cadre captured. Also, one Russian rifle, 60 rounds of ammunition, and 20 pounds of documents were captured.

In the Second Coastal Zone, Coastal Group 24 provided a blocking force for operations ashore in Phu Yen province in which one Viet Cong was killed, eight were captured, and 270 suspects were detained.

River Assault Groups (RAGs) were active during the month in a number of operations, the most significant of which was Operation CUU LONG 55/67, in the Binh Dai area of Kien Hoa province. River Assault Groups 21, 27 and 33, and LCUs 534, 536 and 538 supported the large scale operation in which four Vietnamese Army (ARVN) battalions, a reconnaissance battalion, a section of tanks, a Regional Force battalion, two sections of artillery and two Ranger battalions swept the Binh Dai Secret Zone. Sixty Viet Cong were killed with an additional 40 probably killed, and 61 suspects were detained. Large amounts of material, including eight 75mm pack howitzers, 334 individual weapons, six 60mm mortars, and a large

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amount of ammunition and supplies were captured. USS MADDOX (DD-731), which provided gunfire support for the operation, destroyed a huge ammunition storage area, triggering an unknown number of secondary explosions.

In the Rung Sat Special Zone, RAGs 22, 26, 28 and 30 supported Operation FAIRFAX, a United States Army operation, in addition to numerous Regional Force search and destroy operations during the month.

The Vietnamese Navy conducted 22 logistic support missions during the month, in which 2,075 tons of cargo and 4,140 personnel were transported. A Naval Logistics Command is being formed to direct the overall logistic effort.

VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS

The Vietnamese Marine Brigade achieved a kill ratio of 1:13.7 during the month. Brigade Force BRAVO participated in Operation SONG THAN 1 in II Corps from 2 through 6 February, and in Operation PERSHING/SONG THANH 4 from 14 to 22 February. The former operation resulted in negative contact, while the latter resulted in 51 Viet Cong killed and 90 suspects detained, with three Vietnamese Marines killed and 27 wounded.

Brigade Force ALFA was not operational until 20 February, when the force headquarters engaged in planning for Operation JUNCTION CITY, a joint search and destroy operation in Tay Ninh province. On 23 February, the brigade force was lifted by

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helicopter to its landing zone, and had achieved its initial objectives by nightfall the next day. Only light contact was attained throughout the remainder of the month.

The First Marine battalion operated in the Rung Sat Special Zone from 2 to 8 February, under the operational control of the Vietnamese Navy Commander of the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). Small unit operations were conducted in the RSSZ, with only light contact with the enemy.

The Sixth Marine battalion continued training at its base camp in Thu Duc in preparation for advanced training at the National Training Center. Efforts were concentrated on platoon and company level tactical exercises, ambushes, and counter-ambush immediate action.

Morale and leadership were evaluated as excellent during the month.

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USN/VNN/VNMC STATISTICS FOR FEBRUARY 1967

U. S. NAVY:

	<u>MARKET TIME</u>	<u>GAME WARDEN</u>	<u>STABLE DOOR</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
DETECTIONS	38,229	48,214	26,776	113,219
INSPECTIONS	13,813	13,009	5,273	32,095
BOARDINGS	11,241	19,314	3,634	34,189
PERSONS DETAINED	247	555	77	879
JUNKS DETAINED	22	35	6	63

Total Steel Hulls Transiting MARKET TIME Areas 681

MARKET TIME Detections of Steel Hulls 1,502

Disposition of the 681 Steel Hulls:

Inspected or boarded	298
Identified as not suspicious	125
Arrived/departed RVN ports	224
Unknown, not suspicious	34

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	4,135	19,306	9	109
II CNZ	2,380	9,193	1	30
III CNZ	5,822	25,768	0	2
IV CNZ	2,251	6,452	0	0
Sub-Totals	14,588	60,719	10	141
<u>FLEET COMMAND</u>				
PATROL SHIPS	279	1,135	4	16
<u>RIVERINE AREA</u>				
CRAFT	2,414	6,094	1	21
<u>TOTALS</u>	17,281	67,948	15	178

VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS:

VC/PAVN: 55 KIA. 51 VC CAPTURED, 96 VC SUSPECTS DETAINED; 14 INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS AND 1 CREW-SERVED WEAPON CAPTURED.

VNMC: 4 KIA, 27 WIA.

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