



COMMANDER RIVER ASSAULT FLOTILLA ONE
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

Reg # 58352

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From: Commander River Assault Flotilla ONE
To: Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam

Subj: Command History for October 1967 (NAVFORV 5750-1); forwarding of

Ref: (a) COMNAVFORVINST 5750.1A

Encl: (1) Command History for October 1967

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded in accordance with the provisions of reference (a).

W.C. Wells
W. C. WELLS

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HISTORICAL FILES

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A - Action
I - Information
F - File

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COMRIVFLOT ONE/COMRIVSUPPRON SEVEN

COMMAND HISTORY - OCTOBER 1967

The second shipment of ASPB's arrived in Vung Tau on 30 September. Due to the lack of cranes with required capacity in the Vung Tau area, and the failure to achieve relocation of a crane from Saigon, the SS AMERICAN HAWK was required to wait in Vung Tau until pier space and crane services were available in Saigon. On the morning of 3 October, the AMERICAN HAWK finally got under way for Saigon. After arriving in Saigon for offloading, it was necessary to wait until 2200 hours for the Army BD crane to offload the ASPB. Since the boat outfitting kits were stowed beneath a hatch on which rested an ASPB, offloading of ASPB and associated boat kits consumed most of the night. On the morning of 4 October, the ASPB, towed by a commercial tug, in company with two LCM's loaded with boat kits, got underway for Cat Lo. At 1630 local time, the ASPB were finally located at Cat Lo, where outfitting could begin and an inventory of the boat kits could be started. A total of four days had elapsed since the S.S. AMERICAN HAWK had arrived at the POD, Vung Tau.

On 4 October, the Mobile Riverine Force marked another first. The first test in-country of an ATC mounted flame thrower. An M-132-A1 flame configured armored personnel carrier was shoe-horned into an ATC of RIVDIV 92. With winds of four knots and gusting higher, the flame thrower was tested on the hostile KIEN HOA shore south of the MRB's present location. No difficulties were experienced with blowback of flame onto the ATC, even when firing directly into the wind. With the results excellent. The decision was made to employ the riverine flame weapon on operations scheduled for 5 and 6 October. It was felt that the psychological effects of a flame weapon against prepared positions along hostile waterways would be a valuable asset to the riverine assault forces, and indeed, even if not employed against manned positions, the demonstration on waterways known to be hostile would provide the enemy with an added consideration when planning to oppose the interdiction of his routes and secret zones. On 5 October, the M132A1 was amply demonstrated in a known VC area, sufficiently, it is hoped, to alert his intelligence system to the new capability within the Mobile Riverine Force. The Commanding General, 9th Infantry Division, has been requested to attach up to four M132A1 and associated service units to the MRF for an indefinite period. If approved, this will add a new dimension to the capabilities of the Mobile Riverine Force.

On 9 October a Flotilla Parade was held at the RIVFLOT Detachment Dong Tam. Boat crews being relieved (10 ATC, 1 Monitor) were lauded for their superb performance and relieving boat crews were welcomed. Decorations were presented to the following Flotilla personnel:

Silver Star

EN3 Melvin D. JOSEPH, USN

Bronze Star with "V"

LT A. C. MARANO, USN
BMC G. T. OSGOOD, USN

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ENCLOSURE (1)

Navy Commendation Medal With "V"

BMC F. B. BANKS, USN
BM1 R. E. TAUNT, USN
BM1 J. T. GARRISON, USN

Purple Heart

BM1 H. C. STATES, USN

Commencing at 100400H the Mobile Riverine Base relocated from Dong Tam to Vung Tau in preparation for MRF Operation Coronado VI (11-18 Oct) in the Rung Sat Special Zone. The major portion of the move was made along the Song My Tho and Song Qua Tieu under the cover of darkness. Even though merchant shipping was anchored along the route, no problems were encountered. This relocation marked the first time that the major ships of the Mobile Riverine Force have transited the Mekong River complex at night. The ability of the entire force to move under cover of darkness in the rivers of the Mekong Delta in order to conceal and vary the pattern of movement into an area of operations will increase the surprise factor of MRF operations against the enemy. Minesweeping was conducted in advance of the force, and each major ship was accompanied by four river assault craft which acted as a moving escort/screen. This moving screen appears to be the most satisfactory method for protection of the major units of the Mobile Riverine Force during transit, not only because it affords continuous coordinated defense for each ship but also because it allows for variance in speed of each of the major ships without any loss of protection.

Plans are now underway for employment of a VNMC Battalion with the Mobile Riverine Force about 15 November. Due to limited shipboard accommodations, this battalion will be based ashore in the vicinity of the Mobile Riverine Base within walking distance of the boat staging area. This battalion, using a 60-90 day rotation cycle, will stage out of Vung Tau when the MRF operates in the Rung Sat and from an ARVN base near My Tho when the MRB is in the vicinity of Dong Tam. Previous joint operations of the MRF and VNMC have been successful, and the permanent assignment of a VNMC Battalion should be mutually rewarding. Present plans indicate that the VNMC Battalion will be utilized in the same manner as the U.S. Battalions already operating with the MRF. Although U.S. policy precludes actual OPCON of Vietnamese troops, the aim is to fully integrate the VNMC battalion into MRF operations.

The CAROLINE COUNTY was relieved as the Mobile Riverine Base resupply LST on 10 October 1967, by the USS BLANCO COUNTY (LST-344). The BLANCO COUNTY commenced her first loadout at Vung Tau on 11 October and resupplied the MRB on 12 and 13 October 1967.

USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY (LST-1167) arrived in Vung Tau 24 October and relieved USS WHITFIELD COUNTY (LST-1169) as Mobile Riverine Force support LST on 27 October.

The Mobile Riverine Force conducted MRF Operation CORONADO VII 21-23 October in Can Giouc District of Long An Province to provide security for the District during RVN Lower House elections conducted 22 October.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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Commanding Officer, 46th Infantry Regiment (ARVN), in charge of security of the District during the election, expressed his appreciation to the Mobile Riverine Force for its efforts and presence in the District. The security provided by the MRF and the 46th Infantry Regiment (ARVN) allowed 83.2 percent of all registered voters to move to the polls without significant incident. He mentioned that numerous civilians reported that the presence of U.S. boats on the waterways of the District was a significant factor in providing reassurance to the voters. The only VC attempt in the entire District to disrupt the election consisted of three craters blown in Highway 5A early on 22 October. Damage to the Highway was repaired by 221100H. The Mobile Riverine Force was involved in a similar security role in the same District during the RVN Presidential elections. During that election, over 92 percent of the District's registered voters took part in the election. In both elections, the percentage of participation in Can Giouc District was considerably higher than the national average. This indicates that extensive operations conducted by the MRF in the District during June and July were very successful in undermining the VC influence in the area.