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COMMANDER RIVER ASSAULT FLOTILLA ONE  
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Encl: (1) Command History for June 1967

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

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COMRIVFLOT ONE/COMRIVSUPPRON SEVEN

COMMAND HISTORY - JUNE 1967

The MRB moved on 1 June from Vung Tau to Dong Tam, Vietnam and on 2 June, two battalions of 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division embarked on ships of the Mobile Riverine Force at Dong Tam. The 2nd Brigade Staff embarked on USS BENEWAH (APB-35). River Assault Divisions of RIVFLOT ONE embarked as follows:

RIVDIV 91	APL-26
RIVDIV 92/COMRIVRON 9	COLLETON
RIVDIV 111	BENEWAH
RIVDIV 112/COMRIVRON 11	DONG TAM

Additionally, RIVFLOT ONE Detachment Dong Tam, consisting of two officers and four enlisted, debarked from BENEWAH.

The RIVFLOT ONE boat overhaul commenced on 2 June when the first two boats commenced their overhaul at Dong Tam. The crews departed on R&R and the overhaul work was completed in their absence.

On 6 June, T-112-3, while minesweeping in the Xang Canal, was subjected to a command detonated mine explosion on the starboard side in the vicinity of the engine compartment. The starboard engine was lifted off its foundation and dropped into the bilge. Both engine foundations were broken. Further, both sea strainers were ruptured, fans were sheared off the bulkhead and the reduction gear housing on the starboard engine was broken with parts being scattered over the engine room. Vertical stiffeners on the starboard side were buckled. Starboard shell plating was also buckled and split in several places. The forward bulkhead of the engine room was buckled on the starboard side near the overhead. All four batteries were broken and power was lost completely. The dead batteries also immobilized the 20MM gun previously fitted for electric fire. Fuel lines were broken close to the tanks and damage control plugs had to be used to prevent further fuel leakage into the bilges. The port 50 CAL. turret mount was blown over the side shearing off at the top of the pedestal where the turret bearing support connects. The armored turret, the 50 caliber gun and the M 18 grenade launcher were lost. Both the remaining turrets are distorted around the same connection points. A salvage search in the area of the mining was conducted by EOD personnel, with assault boat escort and Army bank security on 7 and 8 June. Only one plastic turret top and a wye-gate for the salvage equipment was found. On 10 June, COMNAVFORV provided a salvage unit from Harbor Clearance Unit ONE Team Five to continue the search for the missing ordnance.

One ATC has been fitted out as a casualty and clearing boat and the two Battalion Aid Station boats have received whole blood refrigerators to improve their capability. The medical casualty and clearing boat

in addition to the whole blood refrigerator, has received surgical lighting and fittings for a surgical table. The boats participated in their first operation on 10 June.

On 17 June Visitors Information Bureau (VIB) was set up by the Army and Navy Administration and Public Affairs Offices. With a high-level visitor coming almost daily and press people coming at least three times a week, the VIB will make the visits more profitable through advanced planning.

In addition to troop carrying, the ATC has demonstrated its versatility in many areas. They have been used as 81MM mortar boats, afloat battalion medical aid stations, medical clearing stations, hydrographic survey boats, tugs for AMMI pontoons, and as support for barge-mounted artillery fire support bases.

The Riverine Survey Team has begun to provide significant services in collecting riverine hydrographic data. They are not only fulfilling many immediate requirements, but are simultaneously collecting considerable additional data valuable for COMUSMACV, COMNAVFORV, NAVOCEANO, and other requirements. They are an important organic asset for current operational commitments.

The first resupply of the MRB, by the USS HOLMES COUNTY took place on 16-17 June. No particular difficulties were encountered. The cargo handling on the APB's is extremely slow due to the limited deck space although the 542 class LST matches very well with the base ships.

The move of MRF/MRB from Dong Tam to Nha Be on 10 June was uneventful as far as the Navy was concerned, though the Army had difficulties with the artillery barges. Originally 5 LCM-8's and four barges were to make the trip. Upon sortie from Dong Tam, two of the LCM-8's had casualties and returned to Dong Tam with one barge. As the remainder turned to go up the Soi Rap, two LCM-8's received holes at the water line, and one of these became inoperative due to contaminated fuel. The barges were anchored, RAS boats were ordered to stand by, and an Army Tug was ordered out to provide assistance. The remaining LCM-8 and barge were sent to Vung Tau. As this LCM-8 was passing through the anchorage area, her tow line parted and the barge drifted out to sea. The Army tug was diverted to pick up the drifting barge and tow it to Vung Tau. It then towed the remaining units to Vung Tau, where ASKARI repaired the LCM-8's. The barges were finally towed up to Nha Be with the RIVFLOT ONE, YTB on 13 June.

Bridges with restrictive underbridge clearances are a troublesome operational problem in the Delta. Established CTF 117 underbridge clearance requirements are 15 feet of vertical underbridge clearance and 25 feet of horizontal underbridge clearance--both under conditions of wet season high tide. According to a recent MACV policy, bridges will henceforth either be built high and wide enough underneath, or a specific COMNAVFORV waiver will first have to be obtained for all permanent or

semi-permanent bridges built (or rebuilt) over ATC-navigable waterways.

When the MRB moved to the Soi Rap on 18 June, the artillery fire support base was located close to the MRB and a 155mm battery was attached to the organic Second Brigade artillery. To provide them with services, some new methods of support were developed. Ammunition for the 155mm guns was brought up from Vung Tau by LCU while the 105mm battery was supplied from the Support LST using LCM-8's. Hot meals were prepared on the APB's and carried to the Fire Support Base in thermos cans. The mess runs were made to coincide with requirements to replenish ammunition and potable water. Limited laundry and shower services were also provided. Repairs to LCM-8's are accomplished at ASKARI with the army providing the repair parts. Gasoline to operate the artillery battery's generators was supplied by the refueler.

Present MRF operations utilize barges as floating platforms for artillery. Army LCM-8's are assigned the tasks of towing and positioning the barges. Although these functions fall within the general Navy support tasks, they are a recent development and were not included in the original concept. Thus, no Navy LCM-8's or similar craft have been programmed for this mission. Since present in-country LCM and other boat assets are fully committed it has been determined by COMNAVFORV that it is not feasible for the Navy to assume this mission for 6-12 months due to personnel lead time required. Present COMNAVFORV plans are to request nineteen LCM-8's with crews to provide prime movers for artillery barges in the MRF. The Army will continue to meet LCM-8 requirements for 6-12 months until arrival of Navy units.

The Riverine Survey Team (RST) of 10 marines and NAVOCEANO civilians has performed yeoman service. In one recent 3-day period, for example, they obtained over 260 miles of river soundings while accompanying TF-117 ATCs on combat operations. These soundings not only met urgent CTF-117 requirements but also requirements from COMUSMACV/COMNAVFORV's listing of number one priority hydrographic needs for SVN as well.

Two of four DECCA Track Plotters have arrived for installation in the CCB's. Technical assistance from the DECCA Navigator unit in-country has been requested to supervise the installation. Also, the first copies of a chart with DECCA grid lines on a 1/25,000 scale map have been received. If these are found to be useful, a production printing will be requested.

The APL-26 and VERNON COUNTY, with maximum personnel loading and operating in a salt water area, have experienced a short fall of about 15-20 thousand gallons of potable water per week. Once in fresh river water, the APL-26 can use its filtration system and will have no difficulties. The present plan is to install a potable water filtration plant on the Support LST. This will provide a fresh water source when in the river environment and give increased efficiency to the evaporators by removing suspended solids before processing in salt water.

Enclosure (1)

The procedures for the receipt and transfer of sensitive chill produce have smoothed out very well. The material arrives by CHINOOK sling load three times weekly direct to the LST. The Supply Officer of the Support LST has been designated as the receiving officer. The ships provide a small working party to break down the load, transfer it to the boats, and deliver it to the ships. The rapidity of handling has increased and spoilage from exposure has been reduced to a minimum.

For the first time at the MRB, the Army has initiated air resupply directly from the support LST. Previously, the material was transferred from the LST by boat to a landing zone ashore, for helicopter transfer to the field. This required four separate transfer operations and consumed most of the day with just resupply. With the new operation, loads are broken down to unit size on the LST. Each helicopter is loaded directly from the LST deck and the material was provided to the troop landing zone. To resupply two battalions required only one hour and ten minutes. This time can be bettered as the crew team work and landing cycle on the LST's smooth out. The Army is quite happy with the LST resupply arrangement now that they have tried it.