



COMMANDER RIVER ASSAULT FLOTILLA ONE  
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Ser: 0123

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(Unclassified upon removal of enclosure)

7 AUG 1967

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

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

Ref: (a) COMNAVFORVINST 5750.1A

Encl: (1) Command History for July 1967

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

*W. C. Wells*  
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# NAVFORV HISTORICAL FILES

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COMRIVFLOT ONE/COMRIVSUPPRON SEVEN

COMMAND HISTORY - JULY 1967

A significant new capability has been added to the ever-expanding horizons of the Mobile Riverine Force. On 4 July an H-23 helicopter landed and took off from the first ATC(H) - an ATC with a helo platform mounted over the well deck. The helo platform, designed by COMRIVFLOT ONE and Mr. SHEPPARD, NOL White Oak, constructed locally by USS ASKARI (ARL-30) is portable and can be mounted on any ATC of the MRF. On 5 July an HU-1D helo successfully completed 3 landings and takeoffs from the flight deck of the ATC(H). The ability of the ATC(H) to operate the HU-1D greatly expands the MRF capability for command and control, personnel transfer, reaction force lift, resupply, liaison in the field and MEDEVAC in areas where no landing zones are available.

Riverine Survey Team (RST) operations are blending in very well with riverine combat maneuvers. During Operation Coronado (CONCORDIA III), four units deployed on separate ATCs for the three day operation. This was the first data collected within Go Cong Province. The Rach Go Cong was well covered as far as the city of Go Cong. Many of its tributaries were also surveyed in the course of patrol actions and troop reinsertions. The RST used the staff's KE-28B 70mm aerial camera to obtain photographs of bridges in Go Gong Town, obstructions, and waterways. This camera was previously used by a staff member in Operation Coronado (CONCORDIA I), and it yielded excellent photographs.

The first increment of mine protective flooring and seating were installed in ATC 112-11. Thirty two seats are provided with standing room for eight more troops. Each seat has been equipped with a life preserver cushion and a seat belt. The final effect is similar to a well appointed air line. To make the installation, all but two of the bunks had to be removed. The remaining bunks will be relocated within the boat. The chairs and matting take up about 2/3 of the well deck of the ATC. The installation can be removed in about two hours. The present plan is to test the installation for a few operations to determine its suitability and make any rearrangements required before going into full scale installation in the remaining boats.

Disposal of waste from the ships of the Mobile Riverine Base is a problem when anchored near a port city or inland on the rivers. Loose boxes, released by ships upstream, are a source of concern to the ships downstream as possible explosive carriers. A suggestion has been forwarded that a machine (like an automobile scrapping press) be installed on each ship to compress this trash and make it dense enough to sink. This would eliminate the requirement for a trash incinerator and would be a cleaner way of disposing of waste. The recommendation will be examined for the feasibility and a formal request will be forwarded if the unit is desired.

Enclosure (1)

On 6 July, COLLETON suffered a serious casualty to number 1 A/C diesel generator. When the diesel exploded and a piston and rod were thrown through the crank case. Loss of the A/C generator reduced the COLLETON's power capacity to the point where her ability to support the MRB was marginal. A request to COMNAVFORV resulted in two portable 150 KW generators which were installed on the COLLETON as back up support. This is the third casualty of this type on the English made Fairbanks-Morse engine. A new type of generator or a modification to the present diesel is urgently required.

COMNAVFORV representatives visited the flagship on 15 July to discuss assignment of National Police to CTF-117. It was agreed at this meeting that COMNAVFORV would request the Chief of National Police to assign 12 personnel from the River Police Branch to CTF-117 on a permanent basis. Addition of National Police will measurably increase visit and search effectiveness of River Assault Craft both in the vicinity of the MRB and in the area of operations.

The following boats received VC fire on 11 July 1967 supporting Coronado Concordia (PHASE II) in Can Giouc District of Long An Province:

At 110945H, a claymore mine was triggered when T-112-4 dropped her ramp to land elements of "A" Company 4/47 (7 USN and 4 USA WIA).

At 110950H, M-112-1 and M-111-2 both hit by RR rounds, no personnel casualties. Both boats continued mission.

At 111620H, T-112-7 received a B-40 round on starboard side of bow ramp. No personnel casualty resulted.

At 111758H, M-112-1 took a B-40 round in the conning station killing the Boat Captain and claiming six USN wounded in action. The monitor returned to the MRB for repairs and was back in the area of operation (AO) at 121700H.

Also receiving fire (SA mostly) during the operation without personnel casualties were:

M-91-1

T-91-3

T-112-12

T-112-4

T-112-13

The MRF is rapidly developing a well-rounded psychological warfare program. While Army elements to the MRF have a greater portion of the assets and the program itself, Navy elements are increasing the Navy commitment to these operations. The concept receiving current emphasis is that of developing a Chieu Hoi leaflet featuring the ATCs as floating Chieu Hoi centers. The leaflet will give a standard Chieu Hoi appeal, will contain a picture of an ATC, and will urge the VC to

Chieu Hoi to the "green boats." These leaflets will be passed out to sampans which ATCs stop for search and will be air-dropped in riverine operation areas. Other concepts under development are taped broadcasts, additional materials for handing out to indigenous personnel during stop-and-search, and other leaflets.

The onset of the monsoon season with the resulting wet weather has made the boats much less habitable. Personal belongings are being damaged by the rain and dampness. In order to reduce the damage to personal gear, small water proof duffle bags have been ordered for each member of the boat crew.

The first helo barge for MRF use was delivered to Nha Be on 20 July 1967. YTB 784 towed the helo barge to the MRB on 22 July. This helo barge will further expand the growing capabilities of the MRF by providing an afloat landing area for two additional helicopters with an emergency refueling capability.

As additional defense against the RPG 2 (B-40) missile, bar armor has been extended up around the coxswain's platform on one ATC. The armor has been hinged so that the armored doors can be opened. A slot has been left in the side to permit firing the 7.62MM guns from the pilot house. Minimum interference occurs with the .50 caliber mount while firing forward. Based upon this prototype installation, present plans are to install this on all boats.

To date we have suffered one killed (monitor boat captain) and seventy-six wounded in action, including a Squadron Commander and three Division Commanders (one permanently evacuated to the U.S.). The majority of casualties have been caused by shrapnel from recoilless heat rounds. The worth of helmets and body armor cannot be overstated. The majority of wounds have been in face, arms, and legs not so protected. The general reaction of the assault boat crews to this rather high percentage of wounded in a short period of time is that it is an inescapable part of the type of war we are fighting. One cannot detect any trace of apprehension other than a healthy regard for the danger involved and an appreciation of the VC will to fight and of his cleverness.

Vietnamese Marine Corps proposed participation in MRF operations on 20-21 July was delayed until 24-25 July. River Assault Division 91 provided close support to the 3rd Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps during the operation which was conducted in the northern Can Giouc District of Long An Province. The Marines were picked up in the vicinity of Nha Be by riverine assault craft and transported to the landing beaches in the AO. River Assault Division 91 remained in close support conducting numerous troop landings and pick ups on streams within the AO, providing fire support, command and control facilities, and resupply of water. CTF-117 and the VMC Brigade issued a joint movement and embarkation order for the initial phases of the operation - probably a first in U.S. Naval history in Vietnam.

Enclosure (1)

COMRIVDIV 91 was enthusiastic in his report of the excellent cooperation and coordination between his task unit and the Vietnamese Marines. He stated that the battalion was a well organized force and a pleasure to work with. Conversations with members of the VNMC Brigade staff subsequent to the operation indicated that they were equally pleased with this initial operation and are anxious to join the MRF on future operations.

CTF-117 received word at 1300H on 25 July that the MRB would relocate from the junction of the Soi Rap and Vam Co Rivers to the vicinity of Dong Tam on 27 July, a distance of 61 nautical miles. At this time the MRF was conducting a search and destroy operation in the Can Giouc District of Long An Province. In addition to the Army riverine ground forces, TF-117 was providing close support to the 3rd Battalion VNMC. During the afternoon of 25 July ground forces were picked up by the Mobile Riverine Force craft and returned to the MRB. Planning began immediately for relocation of the MRB and was promulgated on the morning of 26 July. Commencing at 0200H on 27 July riverine assault craft began departing the MRB to proceed to minesweeping and patrol stations along the track of the MRB. At 0550H the last ship of the force was underway and proceeding toward the entrance of the Soi Rap. Because of the relatively slow speed of the APL tow and the fact that the ships were steaming against a flooding tide while proceeding out of the Soi Rap River and an ebbing tide while proceeding up the Mekong River, the move required eleven and a half hours to complete. This did not delay, however, the commencement of the strike operation in Dinh Tuong Province on 28 July. The first units of TF-117 were underway escorting 3/34th Artillery Barges at 0030H. Thus in just a little over 48 hours the Mobile Riverine Force was able to relocate a base supporting 3900 personnel over a distance of 61 nautical miles and to shift its combat area of operations a total of 85 nautical miles. This relocation proved the ability of the MRF to react rapidly to a changing situation and through its great mobility to effectively redirect its combat power over substantial distances. This mobility enables the MRF to apply assault forces in the Delta very rapidly, and this capability permits a fast reaction to intelligence of VC locations. Our experience with regard to the available intelligence on VC locations upon which to react with assault forces is that such intelligence is for the most part one to two and sometimes three days old. Our ability to react to this less than timely intelligence has resulted in the MRF having contact with the VC in every one of our CORONADO operations. Each VC contact has been company size or larger. The sad part is that this one to three day old agent intelligence is the most reliable available. Heretofore, the VC have been able to maneuver away from the reported position within the intelligence time lag coupled by slower reaction forces. We could do even better with a reconnaissance capability assigned to the Force. Contrary to the belief of many, the Army does not have covert or for that matter overt reconnaissance capability in any way comparable to the Navy SEALs or Marine Corps RECON companies.

Enclosure (1)

During the action on 29 July, several boats were hit with small arms fire, rocket and recoilless fire. The most seriously damaged was Monitor 91-3, which was hit by a possible claymore, one 56mm recoilless rifle, and four B-40 missiles. Shrapnel was received through the 40mm sight port, damaged the 81mm mortar to the point where it had to be replaced, destroyed the 20mm ammunition box and loader, and damaged the .50 caliber barrels. No major structural damage to the boat was sustained. Hits and minor damage were received in M-91-1, M-91-2, T-91-6, T-91-8, and T-91-10. Once again the ability of the boat to absorb punishment and remain in operation was demonstrated.

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Enclosure (1)