



COMMANDER RIVER ASSAULT FLOTILLA ONE  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

*Perm*

*117 - August*

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

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

Ref: (a) COMNAVFORVINST 5750.1A

Encl: (1) Command History for August 1967

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

*W. C. Wells*

W. C. WELLS

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A - Action  
I - Information  
E - File

# NAVFORV HISTORICAL FILES

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COMRIVFLOT ONE/COMRIVSUPPRON SEVEN

COMMAND HISTORY - AUGUST 1967

On 1 August, one thousand dollars was collected within the MRF from both Navy/Army units for presentation to the widows and orphans of those Vietnamese Marines who lost their lives on 29-30 July in the intensive fighting against the Viet Cong. The Vietnamese Marines were a part of our overall Operation Coronado and when they became heavily engaged with a strong Viet Cong unit, refused to withdraw, although taking heavy casualties. The fact that VNMC enjoy no veterans benefits similar to those available to U.S. Forces was somewhat of a surprise to those of us who are accustomed to taking such benefits for granted. The money was presented by COMRIVFLOT ONE/Executive Officer, 2nd Brigade at a ceremony in Saigon on 13 August.

On 4 August, the MRB relocated from Dong Tam to Vung Tau, a distance of 51 nautical miles. Riverine assault craft were pre-positioned along the route for minesweeping, fire support and escort. All units were underway from Dong Tam on time, with COLLETON upon arrival proceeding into Delong Pier for scheduled generator replacement. All other units of the MRB anchored on schedule in Vung Tau inner harbor.

On 6 August, BENEWAH and ASKARI moved from Vung Tau anchorage to Delong Pier Vung Tau Area Sub port (BENEWAH south side of the Delong Pier, ASKARI on the north side.) The move was assisted by YTB 785, one Alaska Barge and Transport tug and one Army tug. In addition, APL-26 shifted to a more sheltered anchorage at YS 267498. Frequent high winds and moderate seas in Vung Tau harbor during the southwest monsoon season do not permit ships to keep riverine assault craft alongside for staging of combat operations and/or necessary repair work. The berth and anchorage reassignments permitted these functions to be carried out without interference from the weather.

On 4 August while anchored in Vung Tau Harbor, ASKARI was struck on the starboard bow by an LST-type barge owned by Pacific Island Navigational Company. At the time of collision, the barge was under tow by Tug WILLIAM of Seattle. ASKARI received an indentation 11 feet long, 3 feet wide and 4 inches deep and a 21 inch long split 12 inches from the stem. Repairs are being conducted by ship's force. There were no personnel injuries. ASKARI was showing all required anchor lights plus perimeter floodlights and was in assigned anchorage at the time of the collision. MSTC Office, Vung Tau indicated that they would conduct a Maritime Claims Investigation of the incident.

The Mobile Riverine Force conducted its first night MEDEVAC from an ATC(H) on 8 August in the Rung Sat Special Zone. Three WIA were evacuated, two of which were stretcher cases. Flight deck lights were employed on the ATC(H), and the MEDEVAC helicopter was directed into the flight deck by the Landing Signal Officer using lighted wands. With this night landing, the ATC(H) has now been used under all possible circumstances and continues to prove its value.

On 10 August, our first three ATC crews were relieved. They were the crews of ATCs T-91-2, T-91-7 and T-91-10. An appropriate ceremony was conducted giving recognition for their services.

On 19 August, Colonel W. B. FULTON, USA, the Commanding Officer of the Army element of the Mobile Riverine Force (2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division) was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General.

Two cases of dog bite were inflicted on 12 August by a stray dog retrieved from Vung Tau Harbor. The dog was found to have rabies. Treatment is currently underway with Duck Embryo Vaccine on the two boat crew members who were bitten.

During the period 20-21 August, the Mobile Riverine Force conducted extensive search and destroy operations in the Ben Luc District of Long An Province. The area of operations was 43 kilometers air distance from the MRB and 71 kilometers by water route. Even though no heavy contact was made by river assault craft, the operation was noteworthy in several respects:

(1) During the planning stages, problems were envisioned in the areas of communications and logistics. However, communications were excellent throughout the operation, both on HF(SSB) and VHF FM. Although a communications "retrans" station was established at Rach Kien, it was not necessary to utilize it at any time during the operation.

(2) To alleviate logistics problems, six ATC were loaded with all classes of supplies, and were positioned at Ben Luc within 10 kilometers of the AO, as a forward supply point for ground elements of the MRF. These supplies were fully utilized and effectively eliminated any supply problem which might otherwise have existed.

(3) During the second day of the operation, boats were refueled by a tanker truck. Due to soft mud, the truck could not approach close enough to the river to reach the boats. To counter this situation, the truck was positioned on the Route 4 bridge at Ben Luc, with fuel hoses extended over the side of the bridge to the waterline. In spite of heavy current, the boats were able to position themselves under the hose and conducted this unique refueling without incident.

(4) This is the greatest distance that river assault craft have conducted an operation from the Mobile Riverine Base. In spite of the transit distance involved, no major breakdowns occurred on any of the units. This operation demonstrated that the Mobile Riverine Force is capable of conducting operations up to 75 kilometers away from the MRB when the occasion demands.

During recent weeks river assault craft have employed a policy of selective use of H and I fires against possible ambush locations while transiting water routes in sparsely populated VC controlled areas.

Since the institution of this judicious use of fire power, there have been no attempts to ambush the craft either by automatic weapons, mining, or recoilless rifle/B-40 rocket attacks. These procedures will be continued in order to evaluate fully its apparent success in discouraging VC ambushes.

On 19 August, a test of the MDL chain link anti-swimmer net was conducted. The net consisted of two 25 foot sections and was placed in the water at 1200 hours. As the tide began to ebb, about 1500, the net dragged anchor and drifted rapidly down the river, becoming fouled in COLLETON's anchor chain and port accommodation ladder. The net was cut loose by divers from the EOD team and LLC-2, and held in position south of the MRB by an ATC until recovery could be made at the change of tide. Indications resulting from this test are that the strong currents present in the rivers of the Mekong Delta make modifications in the mooring of MDL chain link anti-swimmer net mandatory.

On 23 August, tests were conducted to determine the feasibility of using a 90mm RR, a LAW, and a back pack, short range flame thrower as anti-bunker weapons on a monitor:

(1) Three rounds of 90mm RR HEAT ammunition were fired at the beach with the recoilless rifle mounted on the bow of the boat. Test objectives were to evaluate fuze arming (time and distance), accuracy and back blast. Range to the river bank was 100 to 125 feet. All rounds exploded high order indicating full fuze functioning. Rounds were accurately placed in the target area. Back blast was not felt aboard the firing boat. The 90mm RR can safely be fired from a monitor and probably from an ATC. Investigation of suitable mounting and protection for the gunner and loader is underway.

(2) The Light Anti-Tank weapon can be fired from the position between the two .50 caliber mounts safely without excessive explosive reaction or exposure to the gunner. The small high explosive charge does not indicate enough power for "Bunker Busting". The use of this weapon will not be investigated further.

(3) The back pack flame thrower was fired from the bow of the monitor from ranges down to 40 feet. Results of this test were poor due to limited range achieved and the fact that this model flame thrower has limited fuel capacity. A flame thrower with 100 to 150 yards range and increased fuel capacity is considered necessary for application within the MRF as an anti-bunker weapon.

On 30 August, the 25th Infantry Division (U.S.) gained heavy contact with a battalion-sized VC force in the vicinity of XT 735192. Commanding General, II Field Forces, Vietnam visited CTF 117 to determine the feasibility of employing the Mobile Riverine Force in response to this contact. The operation envisioned was a two-day multi-battalion operation along the Saigon River from Nhi Binh (XT 8306) to Phu Cuong (XT 8013). CTF 117 determined that TF 117 could support the operation. Based on the above information CTF 117 began preliminary

preparations for relocating the Mobile Riverine Base to the vicinity of Cat Lai (XS 9589). In less than three hours, a major movement order for relocation of the MRB was ready for distribution. Unfortunately, low vertical clearance under the bridge in the Saigon River at XS 872969 would not permit passage of river assault craft to the desired area of operations, so the proposed operation was cancelled. The flexibility of the Mobile Riverine Force was amply demonstrated by its readiness to undertake a major relocation on short notice.

The RIVFLOT ONE Ordnance Officer conducted test firing of a 106MM recoilless rifle on 27 August 1967. The weapon was mounted on the bow of a monitor, firing towards the starboard beam. The 106MM recoilless rifle weighs 485 pounds and is crewed by two men. The larger 106MM round produced proportionately more damage than the smaller 90MM round tested during the last reporting period. The accuracy of the weapon was excellent and the destructive effect of the HEP round indicated a hard hitting "Bunker Buster". However, the large propulsive charge and resultant large back blast effects were much more pronounced than the 90MM recoilless rifle. Paint (non-skid) was peeled from the deck of the monitors and the shock of the back blast was apparent to those operating the weapon. It is felt that this weapon is too large for use on the monitor as configured. If mounted on the monitor for "Bunker Busting", a proper mount with some apparatus to deflect the back blast from the rest of the boat, (at all points of aim) and adequate protection for the gun crew, is necessary. The operational tests of the 90MM recoilless rifle are awaiting the receipt of HEP rounds from Army sources.