



River Currents

PCF boats after being turned over to SVN laid up beyond repair

Riverine Infantry wading across canal in Mekong Delta

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Al Moore

From the Galley

Hope this finds everyone well and getting geared up for the holiday season and hoping everyone is having good health and looking for some cooler weather. Not much going on this time of the year, the association is up and running strong as ever due to the great Officers and Board members we have and especially you the members. So I'll wish each and every one of you a happy holiday season. Take care of one another and have a great Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas to one and all. PS More from the Galley in the spring issue. Albert



Vietnam Women's Memorial



Donut Dolly Nancy Smoyer



Peggy Michel

Veterans Day '16 – Washington, DC

Veterans of the Mobile Riverine Force and the 9th Infantry Division along with family members anfflyd friends gathered in Washington, DC over several days to honor those we lost in Vietnam many years ago, those we lost since the war's end, and our Brother and Sister Veterans on Veterans Day 2016.

On November 10, we gathered at the Vietnam Women's Memorial and The Wall to honor and remember Emily Strange, beloved Donut Dolly of the 9th Infantry Division and Mobile Riverine Force, who passed away in July. We were joined by Emily's sister, Peggy

Michel, and Donut Dolly Nancy Smoyer and a few other Donut Dollies. It was an honor and privilege to meet Emily's sister Peggy and to participate in this wonderful, heartfelt remembrance. Emily wishes to have her ashes sprinkled at five panels with the names of 'her guys' were fulfilled. (There may be a bit of her at the Three Soldiers statue too, but that is top secret.) Emily was one of a kind and will be missed by many.

Four wreaths were presented this year in honor of our Brothers on The Wall. We were once again

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On a beautiful Veterans Day, approximately 60 MRFA-9th Infantry Division Vets and some friends and family members gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and then proceeded to The Wall to lay wreaths.



Commissioning of the USS Zumwalt

by Harry Hahn, River Squadron 13 and MRFA Board Member

It was an honor to attend and represent the MRFA at the commissioning of the new *USS Zumwalt* DDG 1000. The cutting-edge technologies of the DDG 1000 class create versatility and allow for sustained operations in the littorals and land attack, as well as support special operations forces, and operate as an integral part of joint and combined expeditionary forces. Its multi-mission design and littoral capabilities make it a globally deployable asset to the Fleet and any Combatant Command. The

Zumwalt has Tech Optimized for Aviation . . . improved survivability and new innovative technologies. The DDG 1000 Class Features Eighty Advanced Vertical Launch System (AVLS) cells, two 155 millimeter (mm) Advanced Gun System (AGS), and two 30-mm Close In Guns (CIGS). Eventually, the *Zumwalt* will be the deployment platform for the new Navy Rail Gun. What is incredible is that this very large guided missile destroyer, the first of its class, is built with Stealth technology. There is no significant

radar signature. The ship must deploy radar reflecting panels when navigating in shipping channels and amongst friendly ships.

On Friday, prior to the Saturday October 15 Commissioning, I attended a private tour of the ship along with other Brown Water sailors.

What an incredible ship. Its two guns can launch the 155-mm rounds that are GPS guided, at a rate of 20 rounds per minute. Each round can have its own set of GPS

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VETERANS DAY

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reminded that our Brothers and Sisters on The Wall are forever young.

"War drew us from our homeland in the sunlight springtime of our youth. Those that did not come home alive remain in perpetual springtime—forever young—and a part of them is with us always."

It was an honor for all present to participate in the MRFA-9th Infantry Division's annual honoring our Brothers and Sisters on The Wall and our fellow Veterans.

In brotherhood, Doc Pries ★



9th Infantry Division Wreath presented by Dave Lull and Tim O'Brien at 48W



47th Infantry Regiment Wreath presented by Walter Rakaczewski, Wes Bickel, and Kurt Ruhnu at 27 W



Mobile Riverine Force Wreath presented by Curtis Greer and John Brown at the apex of The Wall



5th/60th Infantry Wreath presented by Bob Patrone and Philip E. Shober at 36E—For Kenny Sundberg who purchased the wreath but was unable to attend due to illness. Get well soon, Brother Kenny.



USS ZUMWALT

Continued from page 1

coordinates. The ship is highly automated with a crew of 137. Underway, on the bridge, only three people are necessary to stand watch. Rather than a CIC, the ship has a SMC, which stands for Ship's Main Control. This compartment has over 40 positions for all of the ship's control functions, including control of the advanced weaponry. The ship's helicopter landing platform is the largest in the fleet. The ship's first mission was accomplished during sea trials when the ship was contacted by the Coast Guard. There was a fisherman that had suffered a heart attack off the coast of Maine. The Coast Guard was unable to retrieve the man from the fishing boat because of rough seas and the fishing boats superstructure represented a hazard for basket recovery. The *USS Zumwalt* launched one of its RIB boats, brought the man back to the ship, and the Coast Guard lifted the man from the Zumwalt's helo deck, all accomplished in 13 minutes.

Friday evening was a "Friends and Family" dinner. There, I presented the family and the ship with two framed pictures—one of the MRF, depicting TF-115, TF-116, TF-117 and TF-194 and the painting "Ambush." These two gifts will permanently hang on the bulkhead of the *USS Zumwalt*.

Saturday afternoon commissioning was at 1700. This was abnormally late for a



commissioning, but offered the 10,000 people attending a view of the Fort McHenry airshow. The Blue Angel flybys were terrific! Aside from the political attendees, there were 58 Flag Admirals plus the Secretary of the Navy, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, CNO, and ComNavPacFlt.

The order to man your ship came from Admiral Zumwalt's two daughters, Ann and Mouzetta. Captain Kirk, CO of *USS Zumwalt*, took command of the ship. In his first address to the group Capt. James Kirk said, "OK, let's just get this over with. Live long and prosper" as he made the famous hand signal from Captain Kirk, of the *Spaceship Enterprise*. The ship's motto, "PAX PROPTER VIM", Peace Through Power, is a fitting statement of the ship's incredibly powerful presence in the fleet! ★



Two framed pictures



Harry Hahn with Jim Zumwalt, son of Elmo "Bud" Zumwalt



Capt. James Kirk, CO USS Zumwalt



MRFA Reunion at the Indianapolis Marriott East Aug. 31 to Sept. 3, 2017

Start planning for the 2017 MRFA reunion. The dates are August 31 through September 3, 2017. We will be at the Marriott East in Indianapolis again. The hotel and staff treated us fantastic and I know it will be even better this time. You will be able to start making reservations on September 16, 2016. The hotels we want to fill up first are listed below with room charges. Make sure to reference the MRFA when making your reservation so you get the MRFA rate. These rooms went very quickly last reunion, so make your reservations early.

Indianapolis Marriott East, 1-317-352-1231, 1-800-991-3346 (No pets allowed)

Standard Room \$82.00/night, Patio Room \$97.00/night, One Bedroom Suite \$112.00/night, and Presidential Suite \$132.00/night

Florence Garden, formerly *La Quinta* \$69.00/night, 1-317-359-1021 (Pets allowed with \$50 deposit)

Fairfield Inn & Suites \$74.00/night, 1-317-322-0101 (No pets allowed)

Service dogs are allowed at all three hotels.

Hospitality rooms are available for \$125 per day. Contact Kellie Quinn after September 16, 2016, at kquinn@indymarriotteast.com or 1-317-322-3716, ext. 1113. These rooms are to be contracted by each individual group.

Frank Jones (frank@rlgstl.com or popsaroni@sbc-global.net)

MRFA Secretary / Reunion Coordinator

Home: 1-314-822-1230, Cell: 1-314-303-2730,

Work: 1-314-918-8144, ext. 528

Reunion Book Sales

All book sales will be restricted to Liberty Hall (main Hospitality Room). There will be no book sales in the hallways or Atrium areas. There will be another group using the Grand Ballroom from Wednesday until Friday while we are there. No exceptions to this rule!!

Thanks.

Frank Jones, MRFA Secretary/Reunion Coordinator

In March of this year, after discussions with the Officers and Board of Directors, the MRFA signed a contract with the Acira Group to totally revamp the website. Microsoft ceased supporting the old software and our WebHost stopped providing a key feature that kept the old software working. Acira Group was tasked with converting over 12,000 files to the new WordPress software. It was estimated to take 6 months for the conversion, but it was more than expected so it took around 8 months. The end result turned out very nice. There is still some fine tuning to take care of. I will do so as I learn the new software.

It is nice to have a fresh new look after almost two decades and three Webmasters. Thanks to the Officers and Board for seeing the project through! Acira Group did a mighty fine job. - Mike Harris/Webmaster

Visit the Revamp MRFA website
www.mrfa.org

MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form August 31-September 3, 2017

Name _____

Unit in Vietnam _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ or Cell _____

E-mail _____

Name(s): Spouse/Guest(s) _____ City _____ State _____

Send my registration form by email?
☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ No guests
☐ First Reunion

Registration fee • Cost includes member and spouse/girlfriend **\$70.00**
(Does not cover lodging, food, bus trips, or shuttles)

Total number of other guest(s) (___ x \$25.00 each) _____

Guests under 16 are free.

Registration fee for Nonmember (\$80.00) _____

Late registration fee (\$75.00) _____

Grand total enclosed \$ _____

Please send this form with your check or money order (payable to the MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) to MRFA 2017 Reunion, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah, IA 52101 before August 16, 2017. Returned checks and cancellations prior to the reunion will be charged a \$25 processing fee.

When filling out the form, please use one unit and one date, even if you have served in more than one unit.

To provide the complimentary transportation to and from the airport on a prearranged scheduled basis, fill out the 2017 MRFA Reunion Flight Information Form and send to Kellie Quinn as indicated on the form.

If you do not send the form to Kellie, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel.

Note: You will still have to check in at the registration desk to receive your name tag.

If you wait and pay your registration fee at the reunion, the late registration fee will be \$75. Register early and help the MRFA as we use your fees to purchase food, beverages, and other items.

2017 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Flight Information August 31 to September 3, 2017

Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

If you are bringing wheelchairs or scooters, you need to designate which and how many on this form. Also need to specify if riders are ambulatory or not. This will let the hotel know so they can get the right style of shuttle.

Arrival Date	Airline	Flight Number INTO Indy Airport	Arrival time INTO Indy Airport	# of People Needing Ride	# of Non-Ambulatory People	Are you traveling w/ wheelchair/scooter, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Departure Date	Airline	Flight Number FROM Indy Airport	Departure Time FROM Indy Airport	# of People Needing Ride	# of Non-Ambulatory People	Are you traveling w/ wheelchair/scooter, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

NOTE: Flight info due no later than August 14, 2017 to get on the hotel shuttle. **No exceptions to this rule.** If you do not sign up, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel. Send this completed form back to Kellie Quinn by e-mail kquinn@indymarriotteast.com; or fax to Kellie Quinn at 1-317-352-9775; or mail to Kellie Quinn, Event Coordinator, Indianapolis Marriott East, 7202 E 21st St, Indianapolis, IN 46219, ATTN: 2017 MRFA Reunion Flight Info.

If you e-mail this form, you will receive a confirmation e-mail back within 3 days of arrival as to what your pick-up times will be. If flights are delayed, call 1-317-322-3716, Ext 1113, when you get into the Indianapolis airport and they will get you on the next shuttle. **Guests may be responsible for their own airport transportation if the hotel is given incorrect flight information or if flight changes and hotel was not notified.**

Riverine Warfare Advisors of River Assault & Interdiction Divisions (RAIDs)

By EN2 Ron Linville, Riverine Warfare Advisor RAID-75 USN, and LTJG. Ron Boller, Senior Riverine Warfare Advisor RAID-75 USNR

After the heavy river boats of the Mobile Riverine Force were turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy (SVN), they were reorganized and some formed into units called RAIDs. Each of these divisions typically consisted of four (4) ASPBs, a monitor, a zippo and six (6) to eight (8) ATCs. Altogether, six (6) RAIDs were established (70, 71, 72, 73, 74 & 75). Each RAID had approximately 200 SVN sailors and was commanded by a SVN Lieutenant.

US Navy advisors were an integral part of each RAID. The US advisors consisted of approximately 20 men under Naval Advisory Group Vietnam (NAVAG). A RAID advisory unit usually consisted of a Senior Advisor with rank of Lieutenant, a Junior Advisor, Lieutenant JG and a mixture of petty officers. Typical enlisted rates were Gunners Mates, Machinist Mates, Radioman, Engineer, and similar ratings necessary for small boat operations. One advisor was assigned to each SVN boat. The advisors were to train the SVN to the extent that the advisor's job could be eliminated for boat and combat operations. Advisors trained SVN sailors on boat operations and maintenance, weapons care and use, radio communications, first aid, psychological operations, and provided tactical aspects for canal and river campaigns against Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltrators. Perhaps, most importantly, US advisors were essential as

and canons. Claymores, LAWs, 105 and 155 howitzers rounded out weapons training. Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training at Whidbey Island (WA) lasted 2 weeks. The first week of SERE was primarily classroom and food deprivation. The second week involved food deprivation and trying to escape until a horn indicated time to "surrender" to "enemy forces." At the end of this second hellish week of abuse by our "captors," every advisor and pilot in the mock POW camp teared up as the Stars and Stripes were raised while our National Anthem blared over crackling loudspeakers. The last 6 weeks of training were spent learning Vietnamese language—5 days a week and 8 hours a day. A foreign language was boring, but essential.

Once training was complete, we had a week or two of leave before flying into Tan Son Nhut Airport. Within a few days of arrival at the Annapolis Hotel, advisors received orders to various SVN units. RAID 75's home base was Dong Tam; however, it was rare that RAID 75 boats were there because of operations in Cambodia, Ca Mau Province and the U Minh Forest. RAID 74 and RAID 75 boats transited a very long and straight canal on the way to Ca Mau city. The tide went out during this transit which forced both RAIDs to shut down mid-channel for about 3 hours until the tide changed enough



Minh. These had 105 and 155 Howitzers plus a detachment of ARVN troops.

Transiting rivers and canals kept us on edge because of the potential for ambushes and mines. It was always assuring to have a couple of Seawolves or Black Ponies (OV-10 Broncos) providing air cover. Life at the ARVN fire bases consisted of checking our boats and equipment, interacting with SVN crewman, trying to avoid heat and sunburn, catching dinner with concussion grenades, rearranging waterborne guard posts, and trying to stay alert despite 99% boredom from living on a small boat and little except rice to eat and water to drink. Some SVN crewmen could speak enough English to understand and translate. At other times, advisors had to rely on Vietnamese or French. Alternately, gestures and drawings helped.

Although nights were particularly advantageous for NVA sappers and VC mortars, periodic daytime sniping at advisors was an ever-present danger. The VC offered rewards for capture or death of advisors as evidenced by "wanted"

In addition to defending and supporting ARVN firebases, the RAIDs inserted troops, escorted refuges and patrolled other areas...



RAID ASPB



RAID Naval Advisors rode these boats as well

English-speaking contacts for US artillery, US air support, US medivacs and coordination for any and all repairs needed to maintain effectiveness with repair ships like the *USS Askari* (ARL-30) and *USS Krishna* (ARL-38). Advisors were counterparts to the SVN boat captain so technically non-combatants; however, advisors responded to enemy fire the same as all boat crew members. Advisor numbers were reduced as SVN gained enough experience to be proficient.

Before going to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), US Navy advisors trained at Coronado or Mare Island in California. Training lasted about 16 weeks. Advisory training included all boats utilized in SVN since advisor's assignments weren't made until arrival in-country. Classroom training consisted of Vietnamese history and culture, tactical warfare operations, equipment specifications, boat operations, small boat maintenance, simulated combat, radio usage and map reading/reconnoitering. And of course, there was the 3-mile run and the "British Commando" course each day before breakfast. Advisors from Mare Island received weapons training at Hawthorne (NV) Marine Corps Range where they qualified with the M16A1 and .38 pistols. They practiced with grenades, grenade launchers, machine guns

that our propellers cleared the canal bottom. Once at the Area of Operations (AO), advisors tried to relieve fellow advisors on a 30-45 day rotation depending on staffing levels, illnesses, etc. Typically, when a replacement advisor arrived at the AO via Army helicopter, arrangements would be made for returning the relieved sailor to Dong Tam. With permanent travel orders, naval advisors used US Army choppers, Air America, transport planes, taxis, jeeps, "cyclos" and even sampans. Whatever was available and going in your direction generally still didn't guarantee arrival within a day or two. Overnight billeting at some outpost or base was routine.

When transiting to Ca Mau, advisors often had to stay at a small US Army facility that apparently had been a French outpost. Although small, the Army post had great food with both sweet and chocolate milk. It also had a library, a small bar, crummy bunks and several mongooses running the ramps. When boat or air transportation became available, advisors switched off and proceeded to their respective AOs or Dong Tam. Boats carried fresh supplies of ammunition, fuel, fresh water and other essentials, including US Mail. These two RAIDs primarily supported ARVN 32nd and 33rd CPs/Fire bases in the U

posters along canal banks. As we were "guests" on SVN boats, we couldn't give orders. We could only make recommendations to the boat captain. US military standards were much lacking as SVN crewman would routinely fall asleep or smoke some sort of mojo while on watch. It was rare that the boats would come together so advisors could talk to another American. But, when we did, each advisor had similar issues with various boat crews. Some boat crews were better than others. We were pretty much in the hands of the SVN crews although, by this time, they were able to operate the boats and weapons. Many SVN crewmen were physically unable to cock weapons like 20-mm cannons so ongoing limitations persisted. Advisors had to step in during critical events.

In addition to defending and supporting ARVN firebases, the RAIDs inserted troops, escorted refuges and patrolled other areas like Nam Can and Soc Trang. Some boats ventured out into the Gulf of Thailand to rendezvous with repair ships. Other boats went to Binh Thuy for refurbishment and maintenance. Repair activities were primarily American efforts that the advisors

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Ron cleaning up



Working on engines



**EN2 Ron Linville, Riverine Warfare Advisor
RAID-75 USN**



RAIDs

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coordinated. The boats and equipment needed a lot of repair work.

The toughest parts of being an advisor were not having the close camaraderie of an all American unit, the fact that advisors had almost no control over SVN operations and the reality of coming home individually. We were the few remaining US sailors on the canals and rivers. As the Vietnamese gained experience, they decided how they wanted things done. Although we served with excellent and brave naval advisors, each of us served mostly as individuals assigned to a SVN boat. We rarely had the luxury of spending time with our American counterparts. Navy historians have little knowledge of us since record keeping dwindled off as Vietnamization accelerated. Thus, our riverine legacy has been stolen to some degree as monthly reports were minimized during these last years of the war or sometimes not done or simply lost. Even our Mare Island training records were destroyed. In the end, US Naval Riverine Warfare Advisors returned stateside alone, much the same as they had served in-country. ★

Riverine Warfare: The US Navy's Operations on Inland Waters

By Edward J. Marolda, Senior Historian, Naval Historical Center

Naval Advisory Group and the Vietnamese RAGs

The modern origins of the river war in Vietnam have their roots in the French-Indo-Chinese War, 1946-54. Building on French naval experience, and in most cases using the same river craft, the South Vietnamese developed River Assault Groups (RAGs). US Naval Advisors, who had served in Vietnam since 1957 with wisdom and dedication, were first assigned to the RAGs in 1962. The RAGs comprise groups of World War II amphibious vessels—LCMs and LCVPs—altered to support as much armor and armament as their structures will allow. Each RAG consists of some 200 officers and men and is capable of transporting a landing force of Vietnamese battalion size—about 500 men. Their primary mission is to conduct offensive operations along the inland waterways.

A search-and-destroy operation conducted by the South Vietnamese in March 1967 illustrates the close coordination between them and the United States forces. Designated OVERLORD II, the mission sought to clean out a Viet Cong stronghold on an island 15 miles south of Saigon. Afloat, Vietnamese River Assault Groups 24 and 28 joined by US Navy craft, supported elements of the 199th Infantry Brigade, US Army, and the 25th ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Division. The river assault groups transported the troops to the objective area, then furnished gunfire support and blockaded the surrounding waterways to prevent escape. Six US Navy river patrol boats and two SEAL team boats joined them. (The SEAL acronym is derived from the words, Sea, Air and Land. SEAL teams are Navy guerrilla units comparable to the US Army's Special Forces or the Air Force's Commandos). This typical operation secured the island, captured much material, and resulted in 15 Viet Cong killed, 16 captured, 101 suspects detained.

RAG advisors, such as Lieutenant Harold D. Meyerkord, USNR, who received a posthumous Navy Cross, have performed heroically in this arduous type of riverine warfare. They participated in the same



**Seals on Ambush, Mekong Delta, Marbury Brown, #33,
Acrylic on canvas, 1967, NHHC Navy Art Collection Branch #
88-161-EU.**

types of daring operations as those carried out by the US Navy's Mobile Riverine Force. They have also served with all other parts of the Vietnamese Navy afloat and ashore. Teaching and assisting with dedication, they have seen their efforts rewarded by the development of an effective Navy with high esprit de corps.

Operation SEA LORDS

By October 1968, TF-115 had greatly expanded its naval gunfire support operations and had begun raids into IV Corps Tactical Zone rivers and canals while continuing to maintain effective coastal surveillance.

into previously secure enemy strongholds along the network of rivers and canals south of the Bassac River. The initial SEA LORDS campaign in the area northeast of Rach Gia and along the lower Bassac River, as well as intensified river raids by Swift boats, made great strides at

1. Interdicting enemy lines of communication from the Gulf of Thailand to the Bassac River.

2. Opening the trans-Delta waterways and pacification of the adjacent areas.

3. Clearing the Bassac islands and pacification of these areas.

4. Harassing the enemy to



**Ready, Willing and Able, Binh Thuy, Mekong Delta, R. G. Smith,
1970.95, Oil on canvas board, 1969, NHHC Navy Art Collection
Branch # 88-160-FG.**

The River Patrol Force had increased its strength sufficiently to maintain patrols on all the major rivers of the Mekong Delta. Operations of the Mobile Riverine Force had been expanded following the arrival of a second task group. These developments made it feasible to commence coordinated operations of the three task forces for the first time.

Operation SEA LORDS was initiated in late October 1968 for the conduct of joint operations involving units of all three task forces striking deep

keep him off balance.

Primary emphasis was placed on the interdiction of Viet Cong infiltration and liaison routes. Riverine strike operations cleared enemy fortifications and base camps from these routes on the canal system south of the Bassac River. These strike operations were followed closely by stepped up operations by local Vietnamese Regional Force and Popular Force units to hold and pacify these areas and to maintain patrols on the waterways.

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INLAND WATERS

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Obstructions were cleared from the canals, opening them to commercial traffic, which had previously been either heavily taxed or blocked by the Viet Cong. The campaign around Rach Gia was given the code name Operation SEARCH TURN. Following the initial success, a number of US Navy river patrol craft have continued in 1969 to operate from Rach Gia supporting expanded probes into Viet Cong base areas to the northwest and southeast. Patrols on the Rach Gia-Long Xuyen canal system have effectively countered enemy use of this waterway and enhanced civilian resettlement progress.

Concurrent with the strike and pacification efforts, the seaward approaches were secured by a tight surveillance net provided by TF-115 units. A second interdiction line was established on the Rach-Giang Thanh running northeast from Ha Tien using Swift boats on river patrol duties. In addition, units of TF-115 have kept the enemy off balance with raids deep into his base areas up rivers and canals off the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea. These waterways are not normally accessible to the operations of the river patrol and mobile riverine forces. However, coastal surveillance and mobile riverine forces have twice teamed up to strike at enemy concentrations in southern Ca Mau Peninsula with Operations SILVER MACE I and II.

River patrol craft of TF-116 established tight blockades on the Bassac River at known Viet Cong crossing points at the onset of Operation SEA LORDS. Additional PBRs were made available by using TF-115 Swift boats to take over PBR stations in the lower portions of the major Delta rivers. At the same time, aggressive pacification efforts on the largely Viet Cong dominated islands of the lower Bassac were carried out.

Operations SEA LORDS penetrated into areas where the Viet Cong had operated relatively unchallenged for years. Using the unique mobility inherent in riverine forces, the Navy took command of primary lines of communication, the waterways, in these enemy "sanctuaries." The combined efforts of TF-115, TF-116 and TF-117 units along with Vietnamese Armed Forces units provided an important start to the IV Corps Tactical Zone dry season campaign to keep pressure on the enemy. The initial success of the interdiction strategy prompted the expansion of SEA LORDS in late 1968-early 1969. Operations GIANT SLINGSHOT, BARRIER REEF, and TRAN HUNG DAO formed an infiltration line extending from just south of Tay Ninh over 50 miles



USN PBR on Patrol, Long Tau River, Rung Sat Special Zone, Charles Waterhouse, #12, Acrylic on board, March 1, 1967, NHHC Art Collection Branch # 88-162-YK.

northwest of Saigon to Ha Tien on the Gulf of Thailand, 140 miles east of Saigon.

Operating from austere tactical support bases and support vessels at six locations along the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay rivers, some 150 US Navy and Vietnamese Navy river patrol and assault craft have achieved notable success on the longest segment of the interdiction barrier, Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT. Begun in December 1968, GIANT SLINGSHOT has severely disrupted Viet Cong supply lines into the vital area west of Saigon and undoubtedly blunted the enemy offensives of 1969. Many tons of weapons, ammunition, and other supplies have been discovered by the interdiction patrols and troops carried into action by river assault craft.

With increasing effect through 1969, hundreds of intense battles have been fought at close range between the valiant Navy men in their small boats and heavily armed enemy units attempting to crack the barrier. Rapid reaction by Seawolves, Broncos, artillery, and troops has cost the Viet Cong large numbers of dead and wounded. The patrol boats have also taken a heavy toll from the enemy by lying in wait in night ambush positions at likely crossing points on the rivers. Open fire ranges in some of these latter encounters have been reported at less than 10 feet at times.

A typical night ambush incident took place on the night of 29 March 1969 approximately 5 miles northwest of Tuyen Nhon on the Vam Co Tay River. The crewmen of two silently waiting PBRs sighted five men with packs and weapons walking toward them on the dike along the north bank. When the Viet Cong had approached to about 10 yards away, the PBRs opened fire, killing all five of the Viet Cong. The PBRs then moved 800 yards downstream and began to wait in silence once more. A short time later, two men were seen trying to sneak up on the boats with grenades. They were fired on and killed just 15 yards off. Then a group of about 20 enemy

troops on the south bank set off flares to illuminate the PBRs and started firing. A heavy return fire was given in response by the boat crews, which definitely killed seven of the Viet Cong and probably killed or wounded nine others. No friendly casualties were received.

The next segment of the interdiction barrier began in early January 1969 with Operation BARRIER REEF. Extending from Tuyen Nhon on the Vam Co Tay River to An Long on the upper Mekong River, BARRIER REEF cuts enemy south bound supply lines to the delta. Units from TF-116 and TF-117 patrol and sweep for mines along the Lagrange, Ong Lon, and Dong Tien canals through the sparsely populated "Plain of Reeds." Working closely with local Regional Force and Popular Force troops, BARRIER REEF forces have done much to firmly reestablish government authority along these waterways. Although the number of arms captured and contacts with the enemy have not matched the results of GIANT SLINGSHOT, this vital link in the interdiction barrier has in 1969 turned back several significant enemy infiltration attempts. In one case, a Viet Cong heavy weapons company ran into patrol craft twice while trying to head south for operations west of Sa Dec. A spotter aircraft sighted the enemy force shortly after it had turned back the second time. Air strikes and a group sweep killed nearly the entire Viet Cong unit and captured most of its weapons.

The final portion of the interdiction barrier grew out of the PCF operations on the Rach Gian Thanh and probes into the Vinh Te Canal in late 1968. As the PCF patrols became routine, PBRs were introduced to patrol the Vinh Te Canal from a base at Chau Doc.

Early in 1969 a number of Vietnamese Navy coastal and river craft, along with reaction troops, were added to the force and the code name TRAN HUNG DAO was established. Operations in 1969 were limited at times by low waters on the canal; however, the Viet Cong

have lost the complete freedom of movement they once enjoyed in this area. Civilian traffic, which was once heavily taxed by Viet Cong extortionists, now moves freely under the protection of the river and canal forces. Enemy opposition, which was initially very heavy, was countered by employment of mobile riverine craft and reaction troops.

Thus, in Vietnam today, in concert with allies, the world's most powerful Navy is using small boats, small arms, and light weapons as its "big guns." Joined with naval air and gunfire support, this small-craft navy carries the war to an elusive foe in restricted waters. The battleground is half-way around the globe from the old pirate lairs of the Caribbean. But the ever-present multitude of devilish dangers, natural and man-made, demand the same courage, purpose, and ingenuity demanded of the Navy since the earliest days of this nation's history. Captain Wells, first commanding officer of River Assault Flotilla ONE, stated a truth repeatedly demonstrated, that all Americans "can be extremely proud of our young officers, our fine petty officers, and our young seamen and firemen in this age-old Navy tradition of close combat."

Just as American Sailors successfully met the riverine challenge of the past, so do they meet those today in the Delta, swamps, and rivers of South Vietnam. They demonstrate anew the flexibility, reach, and effectiveness of sea power projected inland by courageous men defending freedom. Truly, those who control the sea control the destiny of the world.

An Imposing Riverine Environment

Riverine warfare may take on as many different shapes and forms as there are different inland waterways and varying reasons for employing combat forces on them. In South Vietnam, the near-bewildering maze of inland waterways imposes both an extraordinary riverine challenge and an unequalled opportunity for the employment

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INLAND WATERS

Continued from previous page

of naval forces. Thus, American sea power has had to assume a wide variety of shapes and forms in order to effectively combat guerrilla forces in the unique combat environment represented by the inland waterways of Vietnam.

This challenge is centered within, but not limited to, the vast Mekong Delta. This steaming, low-lying area, together with the dense forests and rice lands of the Ca Mau Peninsula, comprises about one-fourth of South Vietnam's total area and contains more than one-third of the 16 million population. The area has sheltered tens of thousands of veteran Viet Cong guerrillas and has been the scene of 28 years of continuous warfare that has torn and weakened the fabric of normal government. In 1968, with the stepped-up fighting and infiltration of North Vietnamese Army forces into the northern regions of the Republic, a number of inland waterways in this area have taken on new significance. In addition to serving as major logistic arteries for Free World defenders of this area, these rivers and interconnecting bays and lagoons have been the scene of numerous combined operations by riverine craft and ground forces seeking to clear the enemy from the northern coastal region.

The Delta's unique nature favors guerrilla operations. The swampy rice lands and contrasting dense jungles severely restrict mobility of conventional military forces. However, the many navigable waterways provide an alternative means of mobility that has long been enjoyed by the Delta's inhabitants. The area is not only rich in natural waterways, but is also crisscrossed with a web of large and small canals serving as "roads." Begun over 1,000 years

ago, they have been developed into one of the world's outstanding navigational and drainage systems. This labyrinth of interconnecting inland waterways totals more than 4,000 miles. These consist of meandering streams with steep banks and low natural levees; canals varying from 130 feet wide with depths of 6 to 16 feet, to those 60 feet wide and 4 to 8 feet deep; and flooded plains or dense mangrove swamps.

The dense vegetation along many of the waterways limits visibility and provides excellent cover for guerrillas lying in ambush positions along the banks. Floating vegetation and heavily silted waters serve to conceal floating or sunken water mines, increasing the threat from the river and canal banks. It is not uncommon for an engagement with the guerrillas to begin with a command detonated mine explosion followed by an exchange of fire with 75 mm and sometimes larger weapons—at ranges of 50 feet! The character of the major waterways will vary twice daily with the changing tide, a phenomena whose effect is felt throughout the Delta to the Cambodian border and beyond.

The Mekong Delta divides into three rather distinct regions:

1. The Plain of Reeds, located west by north of Saigon, is a vast area of reeds and grass, which during flood season lies under 1 to 6 feet of water and looks like an immense shallow lake from the air.

2. The lower Mekong Delta with its great rice growing areas extends from northwest of Saigon to the dense forests of the southern and western Ca Mau Peninsula. The rice producing area holds most of the Delta population and until late

1968 was the scene of most US Navy riverine operations. The forests of the Ca Mau Peninsula provided secure base areas for the Viet Cong until coastal surveillance and river assault craft with ground and air forces began to reestablish government authority.

3. The third and possibly most forbidding area is in the mangrove and nipa palm swamps at the mouths of the Mekong and in the adjacent Rung Sat (Forest of Assassins) Special Zone surrounding the main ship channel to Saigon. Like the Florida Everglades, the area consists of many meandering wa-

ter and mud. Frequent transshipments aboard LCVPs to cross river channels became exhausting; in fact, owing to the absence of roads, it was necessary to carry on one's back, not only a regular kit, but also all the ammunition and weapons, such as machine guns and mortars . . . and finally, for these drenched men, veritable hunks of ambulating mud, the leaden sun added to their torment.

It is clear that projection of sea power into such an imposing riverine environment requires a major naval effort. On 1 April 1966, US Naval Forces, Vietnam, Rear Admiral N.G. Ward, commanding, was established to consolidate the several US Navy efforts already underway in Vietnam under a single service component of the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. In addition to the support commands at Saigon and Danang, and Seabee construction efforts, the Naval Advisory Group, the Coastal Surveillance Force (TF-115), and the River Patrol Force (TF-116) were placed under the operational control of Commander US Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) at this time. Approximately

a year later, the first units of the Mobile Riverine Force (TF-117) were added to the resources of COMNAVFORV for the specific purpose of conducting combined riverine operations. In October 1968, Operation SEA LORDS (South East Asia Lake, Ocean, River, Delta Strategy) was initiated with the activation of the TF-194 designator in order to facilitate the coordinated and integrated employment of units from all three US Navy task forces in riverine interdiction, strike, and pacification campaigns. ★



River Assault Group (RAG) patrol boats used by Da Nang Harbor Patrol to protect the inner harbor, March 1966. Each boat carries an American advisor. NHHHC Photographic Section # K-31530.

terways through entangled trees, vines, exposed, roots, and heavy undergrowth. Tides in these waterways are so extreme that river flow often changes direction, and the foliage is commonly so thick that troops 3 feet apart lose sight of one another.

A French naval surgeon who participated in Delta operations in 1945-46 described its environmental rigors:

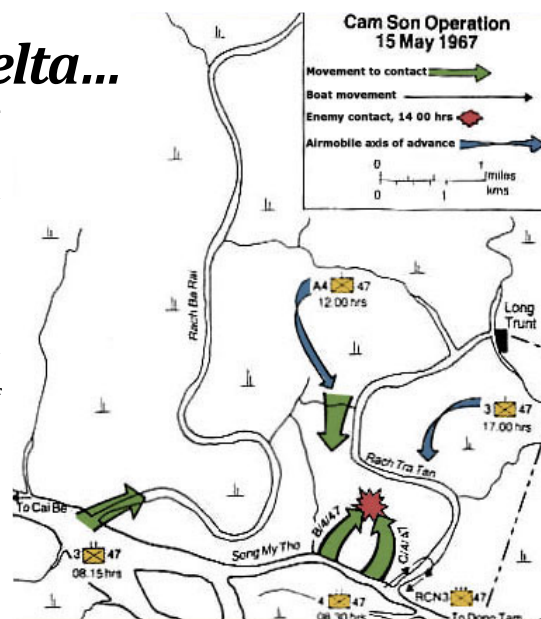
Progress across rice paddies and mangrove thickets forced the men most of the time to struggle through

May 15, 1967—Dinh Tuong Province 4th/47th's First Battle in the Mekong Delta...

In May 1967, Vietnamese Army Intelligence reported four major Viet Cong bases in the Cam Son area of Dinh Tuong Province. The US 2nd Brigade planned search-and-destroy operations to eliminate these bases using two battalions of infantry supported by twenty-two ATCs, two monitors and two CCBs of River Flotilla ONE. A brigade command post and barge-mounted artillery were prepositioned near the operational area. At 0815 hours on 15 May, the 3rd Battalion landed at the mouth of the Rach Ba Rai. Thirty minutes later Companies B and C 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry landed just west of the Rach Tra Tan. The troops moved inland and the boats took station to interdict possible enemy moves. At 1200 hours, Company A of the 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry was airlifted from Dong Tam base to a position 5 km north of the My Tho River and west of the Rach Tra Tan. At 1400 hours, the two landing companies of the 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry—Companies B and C—made

contact with a strong Viet Cong force and further progress became very difficult. Company A was ordered to move south while the reconnaissance platoon of the 3rd/47th, held afloat, attempted to penetrate into the Rach Tra Tan to land on the enemy flank; it was driven by heavy fire. By 1630 hour, the enemy was observed to be moving to the northeast. One company of the 3rd/47th was airlifted into blocking positions at 1700 hours but no contact was made. By 2000 hours, all firing had ceased and the action was broken off.

This operation emphasized the difficulties of maneuvering boats in restricted waterways, particularly in periods of low water. It was also revealed the vulnerability of troops in assault boats to rocket fragments. Lastly, it vividly demonstrated the elusiveness of the enemy and his ability to break off an engagement and disappear into the countryside. These problems became regular features of MRF operations. ★



Life on the Boats

By Howard Kramer B Co. 3rd/60th



Some Alpha Boats tied up alongside of our barracks ship, USS Whitfield County. What a rust bucket... but warm and safe. God Bless Her!



Picture taken from the USS Whitfield County. Tango and Alpha boats polluting the air! Ugh, I wonder what this air index is. Looks like L.A.



"Hey, Jack, wake up..." Jack Bussard obviously very tired if one racks out on the fire hose! Guess it beats sleeping near a red ant mound. Anyone remember those red ants? They were as bad as the VC!



This would be me relaxing on the ship between ops out in the jungle. I wonder where I got the camo fatigue pants? Swapping VC junk to the Navy guys, perhaps!



Poker on deck! Hopefully someone can ID these guys. I can't! That's Miguel Ascar's head in the back, middle of the picture.



This would be Eddie Cox flashing the ever popular "give-me-two-of-whatever-you-have" sign. Oh, it's a "peace" sign. Yikes, what a novel idea...

Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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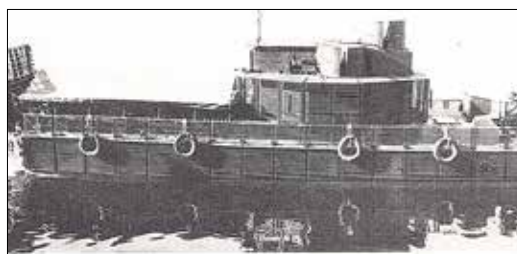
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To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable To MRFA) to Charlie Ardinger, MRFA Membership Chairman, 1857 County Road, A14, Decorah, IA 52101-7448.



Lukens Steel on the Mekong Delta

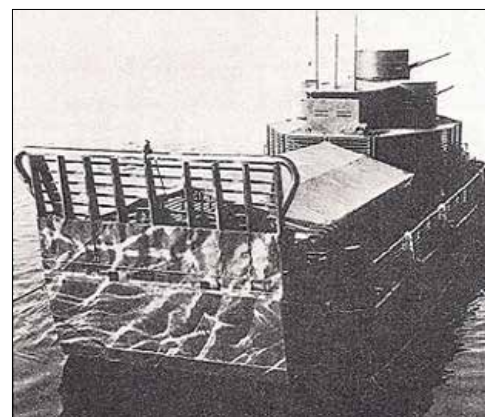
Page 6, Import Issue, Lukens Life

The unorthodox no-front, no-rear war in Vietnam has given birth to an unusual new floating arsenal. Lukens Steel Company employees supplied steel to protect the men who cruise these vessels through the tributaries and canals of the Mekong Delta.

The Navy had a problem. How do you move men and material through rivers, tributaries and canals—many no more than 24 feet wide—bordered by dense underbrush ideally suited for guerrilla ambush and located in hostile territory?

The Navy found its answer in modified landing craft and patrol boats. These were covered with steel armor and loaded to the gunwales with firepower. Lukens supplied some of the steel for the side armor and all of the cylindrical gun shields protecting the gunners that man the 20-millimeter cannons and 50-caliber machine guns that make up a part of the boat's firepower.

Crews taking these new boats into action know that when gunfire erupts from a nearby embankment they have point blank protection and the



Armored and armed this modified landing craft is taking up new duties in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. On it the men of the U.S. Navy will be protected by plates made at Lukens against point blank fire they may encounter in the narrow tributaries and canals of the delta area.

weapons to respond with a withering hail of bullets, shells and grenades.

Ordered by the Navy through the Duwamish Shipyard in Washington on the West Coast in November of last year, the first group of cylindrical gun shields was shipped out of Lukens at the end of January. They were completely fabricated, padded and painted ready for installation on the boats. In the following weeks, more than 200 of the gun turrets were turned out by Lukens men.

George L. Snyder, manager of Fabrication Sales, said, "Everyone knew the importance of the work and did a fine job in getting the material out." ★

UP001 MRF Mekong Delta
(white anchor)

UP002 MRFA Vietnam

UP003 MRF Mekong Delta
(yellow anchor)UP004 9th Inf Div
(no words)

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UP011 VCCC (silver)



UP012 Combat Boat Captain



UP013 Combat Boat Crewman



UP014 RivRon 9



UP015 RAD 91



UP016 RAD 92



UP017 RAD 111



UP018 RAD 112



UP019 River Squadron 13



UP020 RAD 131



UP021 RAD 132



UP022 RivRon XV



UP023 RAD 152



UP024 Riv Div 153



UP025 MRF 3/47



UP026 3rd/60th Inf



UP027 39th Inf



UP028 47th Inf



UP029 USS Benewah APB-35



UP030 USS Colleton APB-36



UP031 USS Mercer APB-39



UP032 USS Nueces APB-40



UP033 USS Benewah Logo



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UP042 RAS 13

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A Tribute to the Combat Medic

"DOC"

Most soldiers who have been in combat have the highest degree of respect for the Medics who are out there with the grunts, in harm's way, rendering aid to the wounded. They are not exempt from getting wounded by enemy bullets, mortars, mines, and booby traps or by friendly fire. Aside from tending to battle wounds, Combat Medics in Vietnam were also called to perform many other duties. They were also required to keep the health of the platoon in check by administering Malaria pills, salt tablets, applying various ointments, checking feet and crotches and in general an abundance of first aid for scratches, cuts, bites, abrasions and keeping diseases in check. They carried a medic's bag, which could weigh quite a bit. Most carried a rucksack also, with change of clothes, c rations, and extra water for the platoon and whatever else the average grunt needed in the bush. Sometimes they were called upon to perform out of the ordinary duties as Combat Medic. Aside from being called to perform out of the ordinary duties, Medics were also in harm's way, many times without shooting back

because they had to tend to the wounded. They went through the same hairy situations as a Combat Infantryman. There were 15 Medal of Honor Combat Medics in Vietnam. The average infantryman in the South Pacific during World War II saw about 40 days of combat in 4 years. The average infantryman in Vietnam saw about 240 days of combat in 1 year thanks to the mobility of the helicopter. One out of every 10 Americans who served in Vietnam was a casualty. Over 58,000 were killed and 304,000 wounded out of 2.59 million who served. MEDEVAC helicopters flew nearly 500,000 missions. **Over 900,000 patients were airlifted (nearly half were American). The average time lapse between wounding to hospitalization was**



Combat Medic Badge



Combat Medic Memorial at Army Medical Museum, Fort Sam Houston, Texas

less than 1 hour. Because of the courage of these combat medics and helicopter pilots, less than 1% of all Americans wounded who survived the first 24 hours died—An awesome record.

Tribute to all medical personnel on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKGBYxoURWw> ★

From The Other Side Thanks For Remembering

by Patrick Camunes, WS LM-05, ©1998

At first, there was no place for us to go until someone put up that Black Granite Wall. Now, every day and night, my Brothers and my Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this Wall. Many stopping briefly and many for hours and some that comes on a regular basis.

It was hard at first, not that it's gotten any easier, but it seems that many of the attitudes towards that war that we were involved in have changed. I can only pray that the ones on the other side have learned something and more Walls as this one needn't be built.

Several members of my unit and many that I did not recognize have called me to The Wall by touching my name that is engraved upon it. The tears aren't necessary but are hard even for me to hold back. Don't feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers. This was my destiny as it is yours, to be on that side of The Wall. Touch The Wall, my Brothers, so that we can share in the memories that we had. I have learned to put the bad memories aside and remember only the pleasant times that we had together. Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me, not to say Good Bye but to say Hello and be together again, even for a short time and to ease that pain of loss that we all share.

Today, an irresistible and loving call comes from The Wall. As I approach I can see an elderly lady and as I get closer I recognize her, it's Momma! As much as I have looked forward to this day, I have also regretted it because I didn't know what reaction I would have. Next to her, I suddenly see my wife and immediately think how hard it must have been for her to come to this place and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 40 years past. There's a young man in a military uniform standing with his arm around her . . . My God! . . . It has to be my son. Look at him trying to be the man without

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

MRF Operations in I Corps

(Info furnished by
Mike Harris

mekong152@99w.us)

On 3 March 1968, COMUSMACV directed that elements of one river assault division be deployed for a period of about 30 days to provide heavy escort services for waterborne logistic convoys of the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers. The deployment of these 14 riverine craft from RAD 112 decreased the MRF troop lift capability by about 25%. For the period of the deployment to I Corps, RAS 9 was tasked to support both infantry battalions while RAD 111 augmented by the RAD 112 boats that were left behind, provided base defense and close support for Task Force SIX GUN.

The riverine unit, under command of CTG 117.2 and comprised of 1 CCB, 3 monitors and 10 ATCs, arrived in I Corps on 9 March and commenced operations under the operational control of Commander Task Force CLEARWATER.

On 10 March, TG 117.2 commenced its first sweep and clear transit of the Cua Viet River from Cua Viet to Dong Ha. Four ATCs, one monitor and a CCB escorted two Landing Craft Utility (LCU) boats and six LCM8s up the 8-mile stretch of river and returned escorting a similar group of resupply boats without incident.

About 1345 the next day, a command-detonated mine was exploded astern of an LCM



minesweeper in an area that had been swept four or five times. The command wire and part of the detonator were recovered by ATC 112-2 on the south bank of the river near a resettlement village.

The following day the riverine assault craft detached was subjected to an enemy artillery attack that completely destroyed the maintenance, messing and berthing facilities at the Cua Viet Naval Support Activity Detachment loading ramp. There were no casualties to either the personnel or craft of TG 117.2; however, as a result of the attack, the assault boat crewmembers were required to berth on their craft.

On 14 March at 0719, ATC-112-7 was sweeping close to the west bank of the Cua Viet River 2 miles southeast of Dong Han in Quang Tri Province when the boat hit an estimated 900-pound water-mine. The force of the explosion was so tremendous that it flipped the 72-ton troop carrier upside down causing extensive damage to the bow and starboard side of the craft. There were six

crewmembers killed and one seriously wounded in the mining. Due to the extensive hull damage, the boat was deemed unsalvageable.

Task Group 117.2 assault craft continued to keep the Cua Viet River supply route to Dong Ha open and, on 18 March, commenced enforcing a 1630-0830 curfew against sampan traffic on the waterway. Sporadic enemy harassment continued throughout the following week as evidenced by one 60-mm mortar attack on the assault boats, which failed to cause any personnel or material damage. These continuous patrols were most instrumental in enabling the logistic craft from Naval Support Activity, Danang, to maintain their independent transits of the Cua Viet River.

On 28 March a monitor, M-112-1, on a routine sweep patrol operation on the Cua Viet River, experienced a near miss when an estimated 200-pound water-mine was command-detonated about 10 feet astern of the craft. The monitor lost steering control but did not suffer any personnel casualties. ★

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Gadsden

Member CWO4 **George Louis Gadsden** USN (Ret.) passed away July 10, 2016. George served in RivDiv 11 A-111-5 (05/67-05/68)—River Rat Forever. You may contact the family c/o Elizabeth Gadsden, 7133 Gabriel Dr., Fontana, CA 92336-5764, 619-972-8033, elizabethgad@aol.com.

Member **Jack L. Simmet** passed away November 7, 2015. Jack served with HHC 2nd Bde 9th Infantry (10/66-10/68). You may contact the family c/o Letitia Simmet, 4344 W Townline Rd, Standish, MI

48658-9130, lsimmet@yahoo.com.

Member SFC **Dale A. Englund**, USA (Ret) passed away February 16, 2016. Dale served with B Co. 3rd/47th Infantry (11/68-07/69). Dale was a resident of Menominee, Michigan, at the time of his passing.



Sorenson

Captain **Curtis Alvin Sorenson** USN (Ret.) passed away August 25, 2016. Captain Sorenson served as the Commander of the Riverine Assault Squadron 11 and Operations Officer for Task Force 117 (04/68-03/69). Memorial services were held

September 3, 2016. We have no family contact person at this time.



McCurdy

Member **John C. McCurdy** passed away from ALS (service connected) September 9, 2016. John served in RivRon 15 on Tango 152-5 (07/68-07/69). You may contact the family c/o Sharon McCurdy, 430 Gum Pl, Brea, CA 92821-3310, 714-529-6359, bigbear-ider@sbcglobal.net.

Priney Boucher wife of Rick Boucher passed away October 24, 2016. Rick served on A-91-3 (1968-69). Priney was a resident in the Philippines at the

time of her passing.



Mulligan

Jack Mulligan passed away September 18, 2016. Jack served with the A Co 3rd/47th (1968/69). You may contact the family c/o Janet Mulligan, 1401 Fergus Road, Grove City, OH 43123, Jack392@wowway.com.

To all my brothers of the 9th Inf Div and MRF: This past week one of our brothers passed away, Jack Mulligan. Jack was a good friend. He will be missed. Rest in Peace my Brother. You will never be forgotten. Info furnished by Vincent Jimmy Delli Paoli A Co 3rd/47th Riverine Infantry.

Your membership expiration date is printed on your River Currents just above your name and address.

THE WALL

Continued from previous page

a tear in his eye. I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him standing tall, straight and proud in his uniform.

Momma comes closer and touches The Wall and I feel the soft and gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad has crossed to this side of The Wall and through our touch; I try to convey to her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer suffering or feeling pain. I see my wife's courage building as she sees Momma touch The Wall and she approaches and lays her hand on my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings and memories of four decades past flash between our touch and I tell her that it's all right. Carry on with your life and don't worry about me. I can see as I look into her eyes that she hears and understands me and a big burden has been lifted from her. I watch as they lay flowers and other memories of my past. My lucky charm that was taken from me and sent to her by my CO, a tattered and worn teddy bear that I can barely remember having

as I grew up as a child and several medals that I had earned and were presented to my wife. One of them is the Combat Infantry Badge that I am very proud of and I notice that my son is also wearing this medal. I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam and he had probably earned his in the deserts of Iraq.

I can tell that they are preparing to leave and I try to take a mental picture of them together, because I don't know when I will see them again. I wouldn't blame them if they were not to return and can only thank them that I was not forgotten. My wife and Momma near The Wall for one final touch and so many years of indecision, fear and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave, I feel my tears that had not flowed for so many years form as if dew drops on the other side of The Wall. They slowly move away with only a glance over their shoulder. My son suddenly stops and slowly returns. He stands straight and proud in front of me and snaps a salute. Something makes him move to The Wall and he puts his hand upon The Wall and touches my tears that had

formed on the face of The Wall and I can tell that he senses my presence there and the pride and the love that I have for him. He falls to his knees and the tears flow from his eyes and I try my best to reassure him that it's all right and the tears do not make him any less of a man. As he moves back wiping the tears from his eyes, he silently mouths, God Bless you, Dad. God Bless you, Son. We WILL meet someday but in the meanwhile, go on your way. There is no hurry. There is no hurry at all. As I see them walk off in the distance, I yell out to THEM and EVERYONE there today, as loud as I can, THANKS FOR REMEMBERING and as others on this side of The Wall join in, I notice that the US Flag that so proudly flies in front of us every day, is flapping and standing proudly straight out in the wind today, THANK YOU ALL FOR REMEMBERING.

APVNV Pat (Beanie)
Camunes
(email: pat@war-stories.com)
D/4/31 196th Lt. Inf. Bde
Tay Ninh 12/66-4/67
Tam Ky 4/67-12/67

In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one of their fallen comrades. In some instances, the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam. It's \$25 for four issues.

- Wendell Affield for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69)
William Blausner for Thomas Gaudet, David Land, and Jose Campos our 151 Division brothers that were KIAs
Maj General Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler
Bravo Charlie A 10 (04/69-04/70) for Terry Mason and Gil Reyna (Class NIOTC 2-69)
Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs
Bill Buffie in memory of Lyle Parin USS Floyd County LST-762 (Vietnam)
John and Doris Chirzanowski in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)
Mike Clark in memory of Larry Welk and Lydes Gardner 4th/39th 9th Inf Div (1967)
Janice Dahike for son Cpl. Randy R. Mueller D Co. 2nd/47th KIA 03/03/69
Orville Daley for my good buddy Merle Haggard, one of the greatest names in country music, 1937-2016
Fran Divilbiss for Cdr. Dave Divilbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68)
Ron Easterday for Marco A. Serrano Jr. and Franklin D. Hite HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/13/67 and William B. Cronin (LTC) HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 04/27/67
Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Janssonius B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68
Sgt Robert Flaige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68
Nan Fulton for Lt Gen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)
Tony Garvey for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt. James Williams C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf
John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co. 4th/47th KIA 06/19/67
Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68
Mrs. Elizabeth M. Hayes for LTC Daniel P. Hayes HQ 3rd/47th Artillery (06/67-01/68)
Leo Haynes for my fellow plank owner and buddy Don Grier GM2 USS Benewah. He died in a car crash in 2003
James Henke and Dave Nelson for James Callan, Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province
Gordon Hillesland for Pat Lawson NSA Dong Tam (1967-68)
Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania
Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67
Dave Justin for Robert "Bobby" Scharpnick A Co 2nd Platoon 3rd/60th and Dennis McDougal A Co 3rd/60th
Allen Kawabata for Adrian Howell T-111-2 KIA 12/04/67
Bob Land, Rich Liernan, Jim Zervos, and Pete Oakander for Frank Dettmers, our boat captain on CCB-131-1 (May 69-May 70). We do this in his honor and remembrance.
Richard McCullagh for John (Doc) Phillips, HMC, USN (Ret) RivRon 15
Richard McCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Petit, LT, CHC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15
H. Bruce McIver for HM1 Zeph Lane who was severely wounded 03/31/69 and unfortunately killed in a private plane crash 05/20/85
Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69
A. R. "Monti" Montillo for William "Buildog" McLaughlin B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/03/68 and Barry "Butch" Copp B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/28/68
Albert Moore for Ralph Tresser CS3 USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-67)
Albert Moore for Tom Bityk CS3 IUWG-1 VC-Hill/Ha Tien (1969-70)
Albert and Sarah Moore for Capt Gerald Saucier CO USS Benewah APB-35 (09/66-02/68)
VP Roy Moesman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)
Herman Murphy EN2 for USS Benewah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2
William Nesmith for Thomas E. Huffines B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (03/69-07/69) and D Co. 2nd/60th (08/69-02/70)
Maj J. D. Nichols III CMDR C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (12/66-11/67) for Alfred Cornejo, Anthony Galeno, Richard Lasher, Rudolph Melendez, Sigfredo Pinto-Pinto, and Darrell Reid KIA 08/20/67
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Luis Peraza for SSG Michael K. Lewis KIA 06/13/69, SGT Harold H. Hunter KIA 01/27/69, and brothers of D Co 3rd/60th KIA during 1968-69
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