

BUILDER FIGHTER --- Seabee Alva Persons has his weapon close at hand as he makes a survey somewhere in Vietnam. The Seabees frequently go into unsecured areas to do their work.

Seabees Mark 25 Years Of 'Can Do' Tradition

The admiral just dropped around to chat the other night. Said he, 'Now boys you're here to work, but you've been trained to fight. So if there's any trouble, don't stop to put on your jeans . . . Just drop your tools and grab your guns —and protect those poor Marines!' —Old Seabee Song

Not long ago, some grimy, shirtless Seabees were carving a road through dense jungle growth near the crest of Monkey Mountain, a sheer, 2,000-foot peak near Da Nang, South Vietnam, named for the out-sized baboons who prowl its flanks, along with Viet Cong probers. It was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the baking sun, and perspiration was streaming from the Seabees' backs.

Their weapons, as always, were close at hand. A crudely lettered sign, propped beside a rock crusher, read: "Your tax dollars at work. This road built by the Seabees for the convenience and comfort of the United States Marines."

Suddenly a shiny, clean Huey helicopter swooped down in their midst in a swirl of hot dust. Out stepped Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, commander of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, who had come to check on the road's progress.

After a quick briefing, the general singled out a young Seabee on the edge of the group and asked with a straight face: "How do you tell these Seabees from the baboons?"

The general looked around him. Every Seabee in sight was smoking a cigar. The general smiled, climbed into his Huey and was gone.

The young man's answer was in the best Seabee tradition. During the second World War, Rear Admiral O.O. "Scrappy" Kessing said of the Seabees: "They're a rough, tough, loyal, efficient bunch of men who don't give a damn for anything but doing the job and getting the war over."

The same can be said of the 5,000 Seabees in South Vietnam who have been quietly building a reputation as hard workers and hard fighters—for being, like their forerunners, masters of improvisation and "scroungers" of materials and equipment to get the job done.

In fact, the Seabees are too busy to do more than note in passing their 25th anniversary this month. Founded on March 5, 1942, the Seabees were baptized under fire less than six months later on Guadalcanal and established the "can do" tradition that they have been adding to ever since.

In Vietnam today the Seabees are members of the U.S. Navy's Com-ServPac Mobile Construction Battalions or "MCBs," of which there are seven in South Vietnam, four in Danang, two in Chu Lai, and one in Phu Bai. There are also a number of Seabee technical assistance teams — "the Navy's Peace Corps" — composed of one officer and 12 enlisted men, working in isolated hamlets, building bridges, digging wells, training the villagers in construction techniques and carrying out other civic action programs.

And still others are assigned to the Public Works Departments of the Naval Support Activities in Saigon and Da Nang where they maintain buildings and equipment belonging to the support commands.

These Mobile Construction Battalions are self-sufficient units geared to move at a moment's notice: They contain their own medics, paymasters, chaplains, and the like; they carry their own light construction equipment and weaponry.

Once the battalion reaches a job site, they dig and man their own bunkers, they patrol, and fight beside other U.S. troops when the occasion calls. Their primary mission, however, is to build: air strips, piers, cantonments, roads, field hospitals, covered storage areas.

But it is not all building, as one group of Seabees discovered in June 1965 at Dong Xoai, Vietnam. Sometimes it is defending what has been built. For his heroism in defense of the Army Special Forces Camp at Dong Xoai, Seabee Marvin Shields was posthumously awarded the nation's highest recognition for valor—the Congressional Medal of Honor—the first Navyman so honored in Vietnam.

General MacArthur said it in World War II: "The only trouble with the Seabees is that we don't have enough of them!"

Stable Door Personnel Take First Casualties

United States Navy Operation Stable Door forces suffered their first casualties Feb. 22 at 8:35 p.m. in Qui Nhon harbor when Viet Cong in a sampan being approached by a Stable Door patrol boat threw a grenade into the Navy craft.

Two Navymen died as a result of the grenade blast. The 16-foot fiber-glass "Boston Whaler" type boat was heavily damaged. One crewmember escaped injury.

An immediate reaction force was sent into the area north of merchant ships anchored in Qui Nhon harbor. The force hunting for the enemy sampan included four Stable Door patrol craft, one Market Time Swift boat, an Army helicopter gunship and an Air Force flare ship. Several reaction units reported receiving small arms fire.

No contact with the enemy sampan was reported.

The Operation Stable Door unit at Qui Nhon, Inshore Undersea Warfare Group One Unit Three, is responsible for protecting the unarmed merchant ships waiting to unload their cargoes. Stable Door harbor defense units are also located at the key ports of Vung Tau, Cam Ranh Bay and Nha Trang.

The incident was similar to one Feb. 3 in which three Viet Cong were killed, but not before heavily damaging an Operation Game Warden River Patrol Boat.

The action took place 65 miles south of Saigon on the Co Chien River as the VC attempted to ambush the PBR patrol.

The lead boat of a two-unit patrol approached a swamped

sampan as its occupants were swimming away toward the riverbank.

As the lead PBR's crew tried to coax one of the swimmers into their boat, he tossed a hand grenade into the after section, causing a fire.

The cover boat then opened up with automatic weapons fire on the VC, killing all three.

The cover boat's crew put out the fire aboard the lead boat and towed it to a nearby Vietnamese Navy Coastal Group base.

One sailor was killed and two wounded as a result of this action.

In other recent Game Warden action, United States Navy River Patrol Boat crewmen killed three Viet Cong while supporting U.S. Army and Vietnamese units during an operation on the Mekong River, Feb. 18.

At 7:45 a.m., the PBRs, acting as a blocking force for the Army units and Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) forces, were asked to stop three sampans attempting to escape from the operating area toward a river bank.

The PBRs made three firing passes, scoring a direct hit on one sampan, killing its three occupants and sinking the craft.

There were no friendly casualties.

The PBRs in the action, boats 134 and 135, were from River Patrol Section 522 based at Long Xuyen.

Qui Nhon's 'Big John' Presents Tall Problem

U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY DETACHMENT, QUI NHON,
COMMAND PROBLEM

Subj: Lieutenant (junior grade) John E. SNYDER, USNR, work potential;
concern for

PRIORITY ONE

PROBLEM. Provide solution for fitting Lieutenant (junior grade) SNYDER's 6' 3/4" frame onto a 6' bunk.

BACKGROUND. "Big John" is being forced to cramp his long frame onto/into a bunk designed for a man of less longitudinal measure.

DISCUSSION. The command is concerned that the physique of subject man may be impaired due to the fact he is still a growing boy. Further, the command is concerned lest this untenable situation might affect the health, personality and above all, the *potential* work capacity of the individual.

ACTION.

Medical—Study the situation to ensure no adverse conditions exist or develop.

Supply — If feasible, order material required to modify present facilities or to build new structure.

Repair/Maintenance— If required, effect repair of present facility or design and construct appropriate furniture and appurtenances.

R.B. PRELL

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

From: Medical Representative

To: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

F. When medical is in doubt — THEY OPERATE.

N.G. DOLLOFF

SECOND ENDORSEMENT

From: Supply Officer, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

To: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

1. Recommend that bed not be modified. In this way, it is hoped that by remaining coiled during his periods of sleep, upon waking he will burst forth not unlike a compressed coiled blue-steel spring suddenly released.

Recognition should be given to the fact that, by careful planning on his part, "Big John" has managed to spend approximately seven weeks in country and has as yet to use any of his vast stores of untapped potential.

2. If this plan is not feasible, I wish to go on record as being opposed to amputation. I would recommend that his trousers be shortened to bermuda length, his shoes modified and he be taught to walk on his knees. In fact, you might say that by joining the Navy he has made his bed—now let him lie, rather, coil, in it.

P.H. HARRINGTON

THIRD ENDORSEMENT

From: Repair/Maintenance Officer, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

To: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

1. It has been noted that subject individual is horizontal more than he is vertical. If these positions were reversed he would have more time to stretch, be able to extend his working capacity and increase his opportunity to expand on his personality and health program.

2. In the event the above prognosis does not prove satisfactory I am forced to concur with the Medical Department— OPERATE.

F.J. MINNOCK

From: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

To: Chief Staff Officer, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon

Subj: Lieutenant (junior grade) John E. SNYDER, USNR, Administrative Officer, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

Encl: (1) NAVSUPACTDET Qui Nhon Command Problem of 21 December 1966

1. During Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon's, indoctrination period in Saigon he was able to observe at first hand the Chief Staff Officer, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon, solve many deep problems in an extremely efficient and quick manner. It is realized, the Chief Staff Officer has much serious correspondence and many official problems to solve. However, the indulgence in this bit of levity may help ease mental strain and fatigue and enable him to put forth greater effort to break other bottlenecks.

2. The Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon, has not determined what action to take on the problem of subject man which is outlined in enclosure (1).

3. Your advice and time spent in this matter is appreciated.

R.B. PRELL

From: Chief Staff Officer, U. S. Naval Support Activity, Saigon

To: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Support Activity Detachment, Qui Nhon

Subj: SNYDER, John E., Lieutenant (junior grade), USNR; special problem of

1. We in Saigon rise to the challenge presented by the soporific Ltjg. John E. SNYDER. Certainly a situation of this nature, which reflects problems of adjustment universal within the command, deserves priority attention. Though only a three-quarter-inch question (roughly the size of the big toe, I'm told) exists in this case, it is safe to assume that a hangover of this nature will not, so to speak, sleep itself off.

2. Therefore I have caused a committee of experienced medical, legal, repair, and supply personnel to be formed. They seem to have an excellent background in posturepedics. The findings of this group, agreeing with my own determinations, are outlined below.

a. The four alternatives suggested by your command, though appearing to be cogent, are not without prohibitive flaws. Bed lengthening would set a dangerous precedent. The mind boggles at the prospect of lengthened forks for short-armed ensigns, and thickened pencils for thin-fingered yeomen.

Amputation, approved on two of your endorsements, seems the most obvious solution. However, this could not be attempted at the present time. You know that all Naval Operations require a multi-annexed and appendix Operational Order or Plan and we are advised that current administrative workloads would not allow preparation of such a plan until a much later, may we say, cut-off date.

The Bermuda short knee solution (dubbed the Toulouse Lautrec tack) is not without merit, and deserves study if only for its originality of approach. However, it must be noted that were this plan effected, special chairs, tables and bar stools would have to be devised to accommodate "Big John" and would, in fact, create a greater problem than currently exists. The final, or blue steel spring coil suggestion, is a pragmatic approach and seems the most morally defensible. However, there is no guarantee on the one hand that Ltjg. Snyder will not prove to be, shall we say, naturally curly, or on the other hand, that repeated springing from

it, therefore, a fresh approach was necessary. A solution that was so obvious as to be unapparent finally revealed itself. Order Ltjg. SNYDER to report to the local Hot Toc and have that hackhair take about three-quarters of an inch off the top. The simplicity of operation and the guarantee of success of this suggestion will unquestionably satisfy the command.

c. One member of the committee demurred, however, offering that perhaps the above suggestion would prove a poor one should Ltjg. SNYDER be bald. In that case the committee declared that since Ltjg. SNYDER has been in country for approximately three months, and has nine to go, he need only wait for 90 more days to elapse, which, by anyone's calendar, will make him a great deal shorter than he is today.

3. Warmest personal regards.

E.B. LEE

The Jackstaff News

Captain Herbert T. King, USN

Commander U.S. Naval Support Activity Saigon

Lieutenant (junior grade) D.E. Schon, USNR, Officer In Charge

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Helping Vietnamese SOP For Long Xuyen Sailors

By Bob Sullivan, JO1

Probably two of the most important words in Vietnam today are "Civic Action."

If you stand in one spot long enough you're bound to hear about it although probably not in just those words. It might be a young sailor telling about the Vietnamese boy to whom he is teaching English in exchange for lessons in Vietnamese, or a Seabee telling of the new road they just built through one of the small villages. It's happening more and more.

A good example of this is the work the men at the Naval Support Activity Detachment, Long Xuyen, are doing.

Under the direction of Lieutenant Ken Anderson, officer in charge of the detachment, Lieutenant Weldon J. Bowling, commander of PBR Section 522, and Lieutenant Robert J. Walsh, commander of PBR Section 523, the men are eagerly involved in many "Civic Action" programs.

At the present time they are teaching English to Long Xuyen citizens; making weekly MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) trips throughout their patrol area; rebuilding Xuyen that was destroyed by fire; and carrying out a MEDEVAC program.

The school program is run by twelve Navy instructors—from the Support Detachment and PBR crews—and eight Vietnamese translators who are working together to teach 180 Vietnamese students how to speak English.

Originally planned for 65 students, the class grew to its present size in just a few weeks. Classes, which were being held three nights a week, have been increased to six nights a week.

The students are split up in groups of beginners (100), intermediate (50), and advanced (30). Beginners attend classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while the intermediate and advanced go on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Students—who range in age from six to thirty—pay 130 piastres a month to attend the school which defrays the cost of books and pays the Vietnamese translators.

The program is being carried out at one of the local schools and follows the regular daytime classes.

The MEDEVAC (Medical Evacuation) program supplies money and cigarettes to the families of wounded Vietnamese picked up by the crews of the PBR's.

Past accomplishments by these "citizen sailors" are painting of all ward furniture at the Vietnamese Australian Hospital; putting the hospital's laboratory in commission and rewiring the X-ray room and emergency generator.

The Navymen also rebuilt five homes destroyed by flood waters, and donated 12 pints of blood to Vietnamese injured in a bus accident.

In addition, they delivered 108 tons of feed corn—supplied by USAID—for livestock in the Hue Duc district; two 50-kilo bags per family; and delivered 800 bags of seed rice—also from USAID—to farmers to reseed flooded paddies.

Planned for the future is the start of a local MEDCAP program in the Long Xuyen and Hue Duc districts, painting the wards at the Vietnamese-Australian Hospital, and starting adult classes in the technical school for which they will supply eight instructors.

They also plan to hire a Vietnamese nurse for their MEDCAP program. She will go out with the locally acquired—to treat people in the Long Xuyen and Hue Duc areas.

"Once we get rolling, we hope to put the ambulance on the mike boat and hold daily sick call up and down the rivers in our operating area," said Lieutenant Anderson.

According to Lieutenant Anderson, "These are all joint efforts of the Support Detachment and PBR personnel. We work together on everything we do here."

It's a big program they have going and planned at Long Xuyen, but to these men "Civic Action" is not just two words but a way of life.



FULL TIME SAILOR, PART TIME TEACHER . . . Donald B. Uber, YN3, is one of twelve Long Xuyen Navymen who are taking part in a program to teach English at a local school. This is only one of the many facets of the ambitious Civic Action program at Long Xuyen. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by B.S. Whitmarsh, PH2)

Coast Guard Reorganizes Command Structure Here

A continuing growth in the U.S. Coast Guard's involvement in the war effort here has resulted in reorganization of that service's Vietnam command structure.

Effective date of the change was February 1, 1967.

The new command will be known as Coast Guard Activities, Vietnam, and will be headed by Captain William N. Banks, who recently became commander of Coast Guard Squadron One.

Squadron One, with 26 patrol cutters and approximately 400 men, was the first Coast Guard unit to enter the Vietnam conflict and did so as a part of the Navy's Operation Market Time in July, 1965.

Since that time, Coast Guard personnel have been assigned in advisory and assistance capacities to such areas as port security, waterfront explosive handling, aids to navigation and merchant marine personnel at air. As the new groups were added they became a part of Squadron One, though their duties were only remotely related to the Market Time Operation.

Coast Guard Activities, Vietnam, will be a parent command to such subunits as Coast Guard Squadron One, Port Security Detail, Aids to Navigation

Advisory Detail, and Merchant Marine Advisory Detail.

Administratively the new command will report to Coast Guard Commander Western Area in San Francisco. Operationally, the command comes under Commander U.S.

Captain Banks will continue to be Commander, Coast Guard Squadron One, in addition to his new post as Commander, Coast Guard Activities, Vietnam.

Captain Banks is a veteran of 24 years' service in the Coast Guard and saw wartime duty during World War II aboard destroyer escorts on convoy duty in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. He comes to Vietnam from duties as Assistant Chief, Administrative Management Division, Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

He is a 1943 graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy; a graduate of the US Naval War College, and received his Master's Degree in International Affairs from George Washington University in 1964.

Bring Your Shot Record Up-to-Date Before that R&R Trip or Transfer

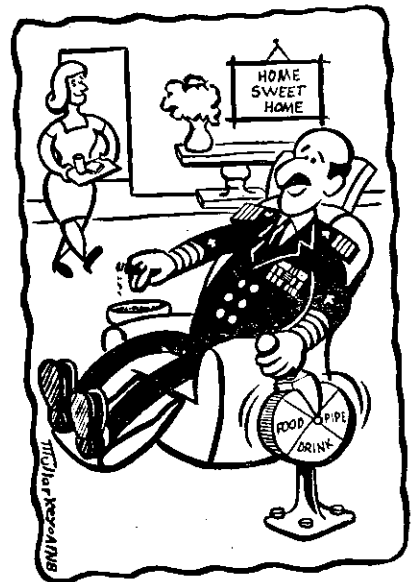
Are you a short-timer? Or are you due for an out-of-country R & R trip soon? If so, you'd better make sure your immunization record is up-to-date or you may not go anywhere—at least on the date you had planned!

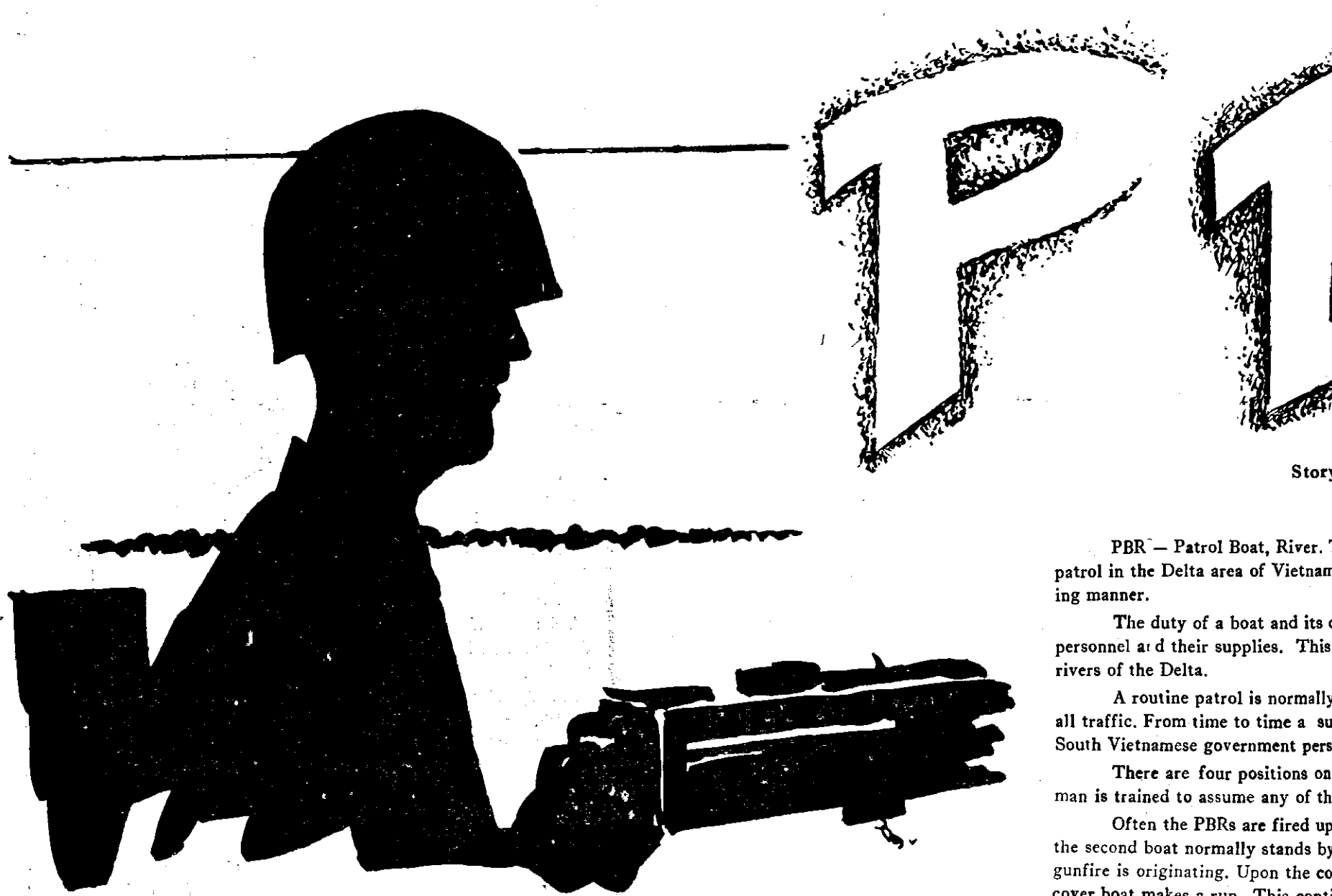
Personnel have been reporting to Saigon for R & R flights or flights to the States on PCS orders without up-to-date shot cards. In many cases it has resulted in cancellation of their flight.

Other persons have made it to Hawaii only to be stopped by U.S. Public Health officials there and placed in quarantine for their five-day stay, or as long as ten days if

they are en route to the States. Naturally, those who planned to meet their wives in Hawaii missed out.

All men should report to their dispensary two to four weeks prior to their departure from Vietnam and make certain their shot records are current according to immunization requirements.





Story

PBR — Patrol Boat, River. T patrol in the Delta area of Vietnam. ing manner.

The duty of a boat and its cr personnel and their supplies. This rivers of the Delta.

A routine patrol is normally all traffic. From time to time a sus South Vietnamese government perso.

There are four positions on e man is trained to assume any of the

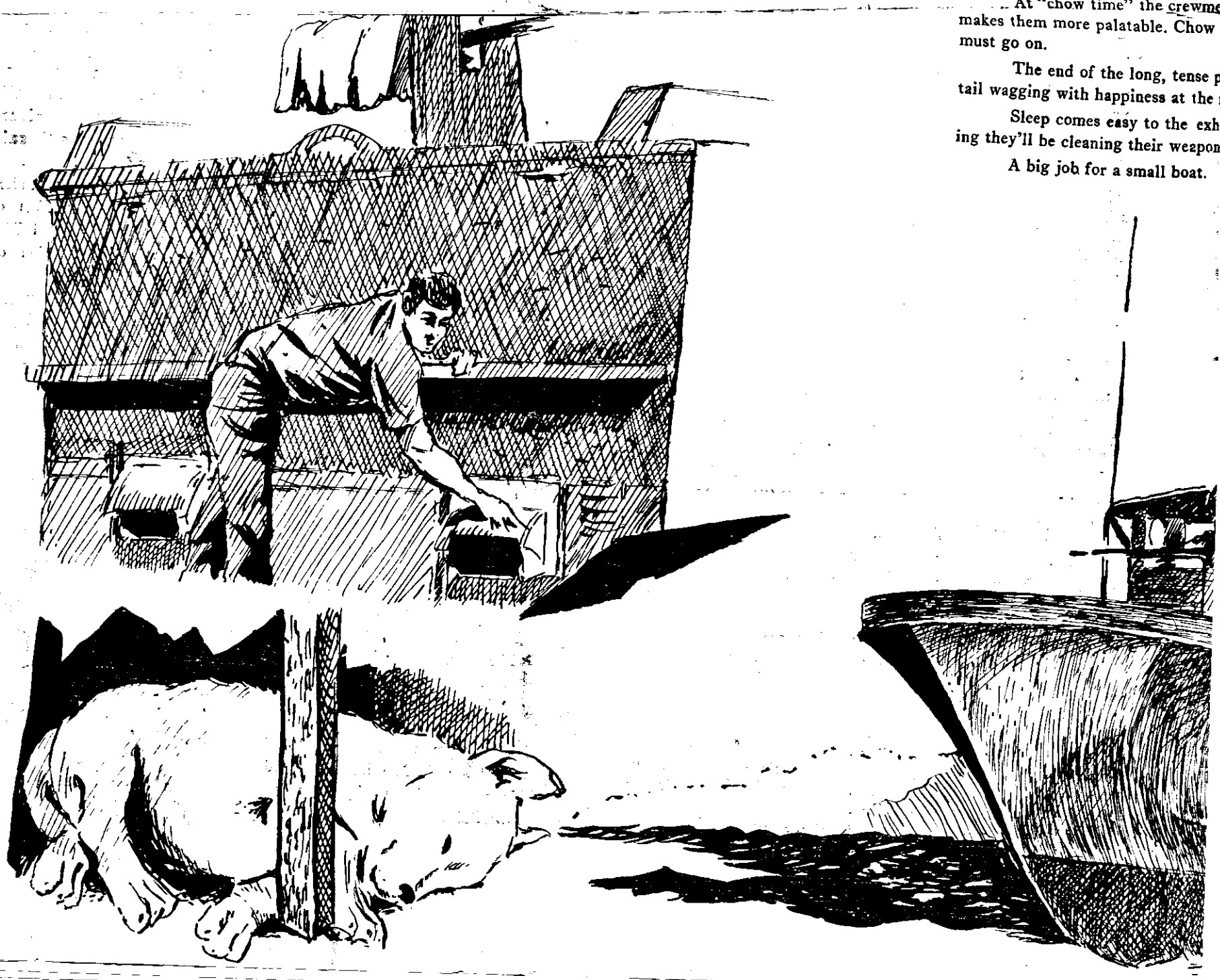
Often the PBRs are fired upo the second boat normally stands by: gunfire is originating. Upon the con cover boat makes a run. This contin

At "chow time" the crewmen makes them more palatable. Chow t must go on.

The end of the long, tense pa tail wagging with happiness at the re

Sleep comes easy to the exha ing they'll be cleaning their wezpons

A big job for a small boat.





& Sketches by Jim Hummel

he Mighty Mouse of the Mekong. This boat was designed to It has performed its function in an unheralded but outstand-

ew is to prevent the infiltration and movement of enemy requires constant watch of all boat movements on all the

twelve hours. The boat will go to its assigned area and check pected VC sampan and its occupants will be turned over to nel for interrogation and investigation.

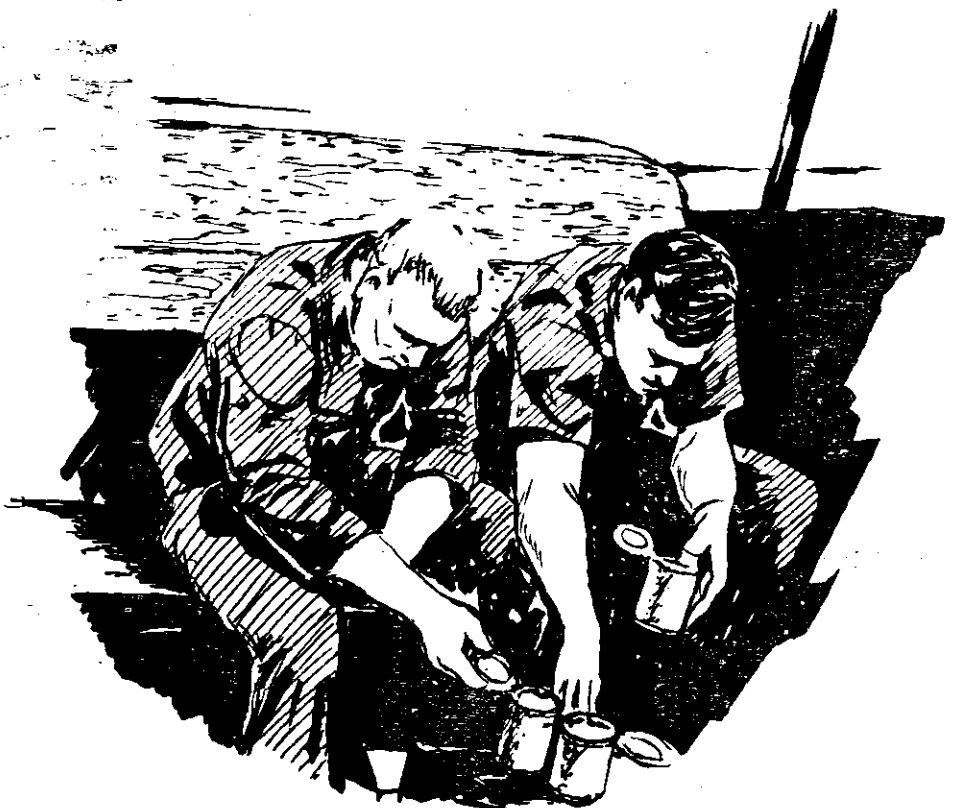
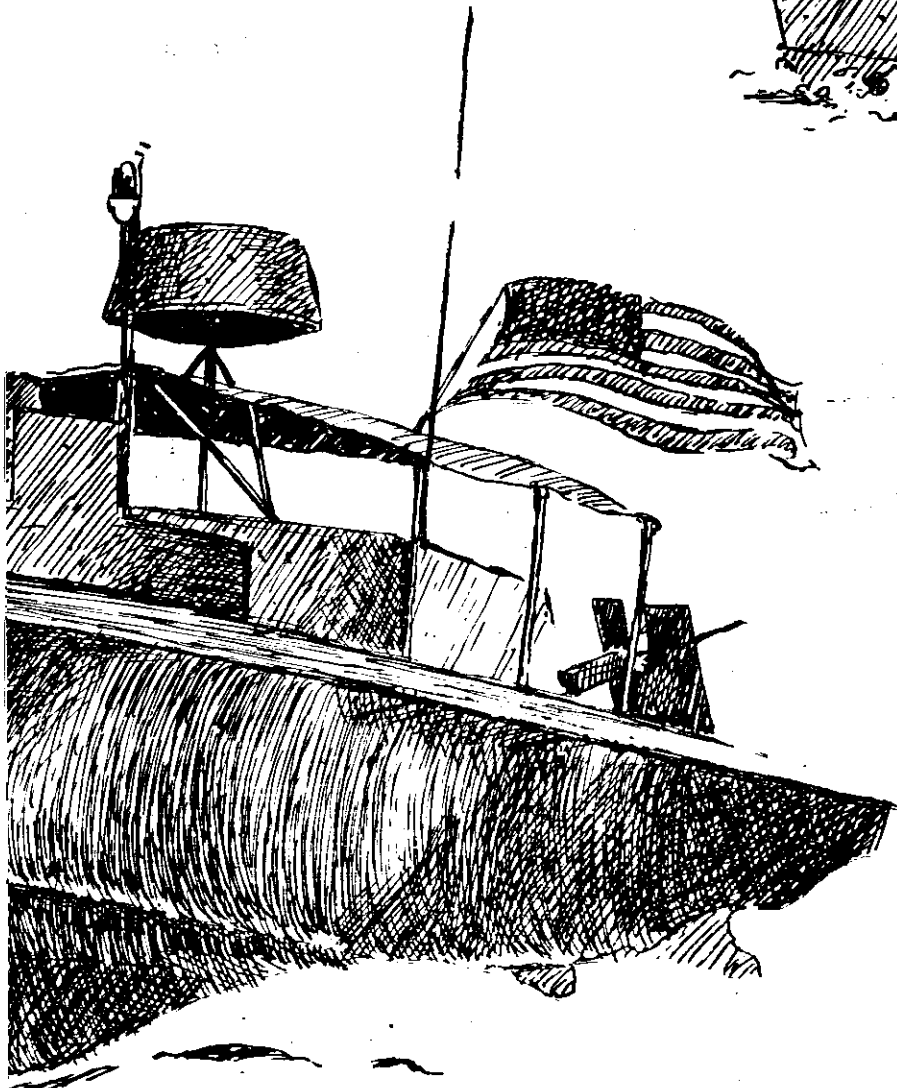
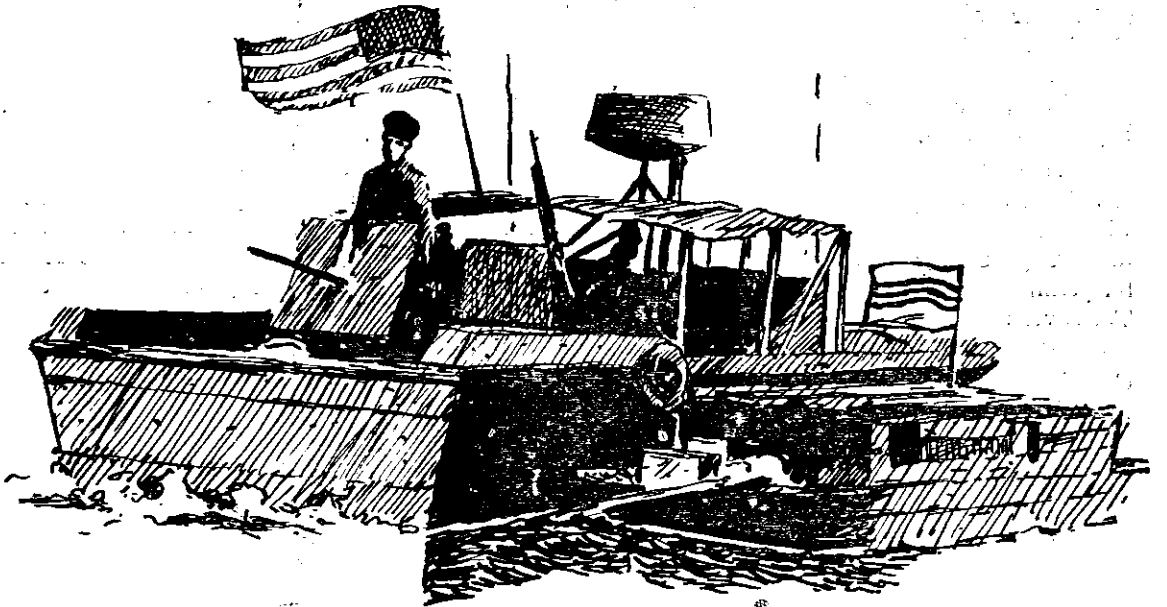
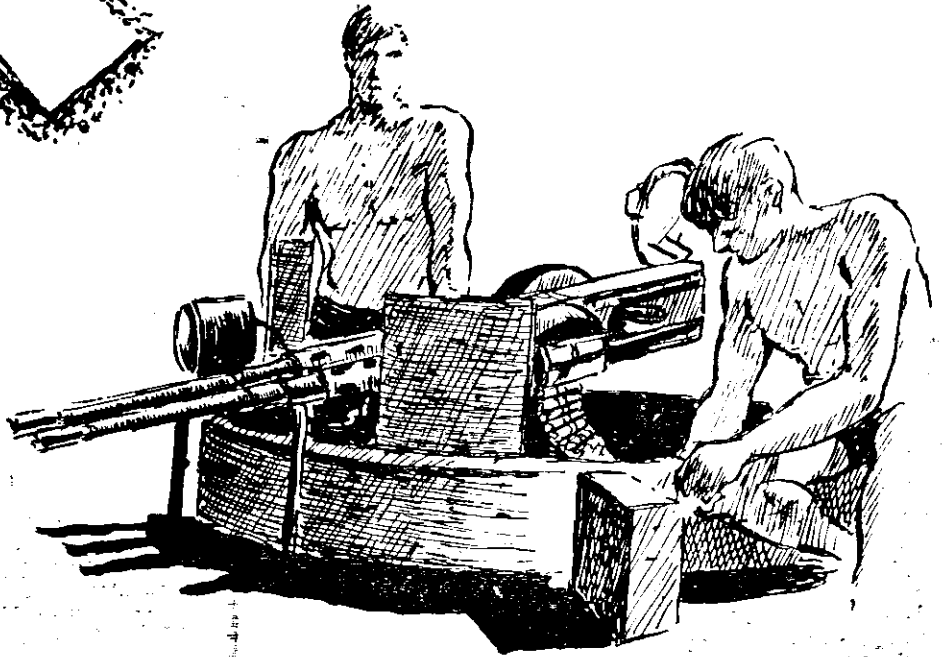
ach boat: two gunners, coxswain and engineer. Each crew- e four positions in an emergency.

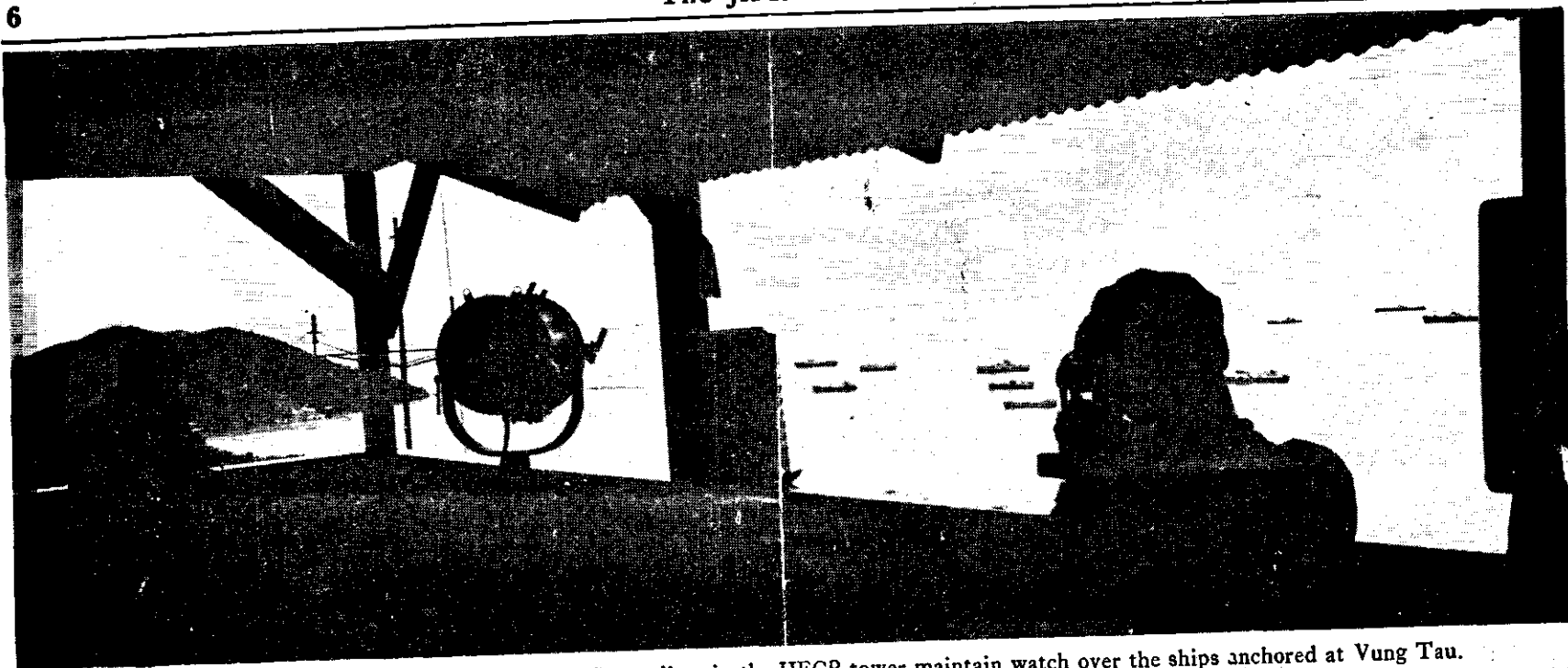
n from the heavily vegetated shoreline. When this happens is the lead boat makes a run on the position from which the pletion of its run the first boat will then standby as the ues until the shore fire is suppressed.

bers put their "C" rations on the engine. Warming the rations ime does not lessen their vigil on the river for the work

ontrol often finds a crew's mascot greeting them at the pier, his tturn of his masters.

usted crewmembers, even though they know the next morn- and boat for another patrol that night.





ON GUARD . . . As the sun sinks in the South China Sea, sailors in the HECP tower maintain watch over the ships anchored at Vung Tau. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by Ltjg. Dow Smith)

'Stable Door' Is Protecting Merchant Ships

By Ltjg. Dow Smith

In an operation termed "Stable Door," the U.S. Navy has formed a protective screen around the merchant ships waiting in Vietnam's harbors to unload their vital cargos.

To guard the merchant ships from Viet Cong attack by small boats, underwater swimmers or mines, the Navy's Coastal Surveillance Force (Task Force 115) has established and is operating harbor defense Bay and Qui Nhon.

At Vung Tau, 40 miles southeast of Saigon, the many merchant ships with cargo destined for Saigon wait in the Cape St. Jacques anchorage for permission to steam up the Long Tau River to Saigon.

On the hill overlooking the anchored ships, the men of the Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP) main-

tain a 24-hour radar and visual surveillance of all movements in the anchorage area.

The other half of Vung Tau's harbor defense team is the landing Craft Personnel, Large, (LCPL) De-

patrols around the anchored ships, inspecting or boarding and searching an average of 20 Vietnamese fishing and cargo junks a day.

With the patrol boats are the Navy divers of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams, which check the anchored ships for Viet Cong mines.

Similar "Operation Stable Door" harbor defense teams are located at

the other three South Vietnam ports.

Lieutenant John K. Batchellor is the Vung Tau Harbor Defense Officer and Officer-in-Charge of Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Surveillance (MIUWS) Unit 13, which mans the Vung Tau HECP.

This is the second Vietnam assignment for the five officers and 53 enlisted men of MIUWS Unit 13. The unit left the harbor defense system at the vitally important port of Danang.

In September 1966, the unit returned to Vietnam from its home base at Long Beach, California, to replace the MIUWS unit which had originally established the Vung Tau site.

LCPL Detachment One, with its four patrol boats and 68 enlisted

men, was created, as were the three other LCPL detachments, to provide defensive patrols around the unarmed merchantmen.

When Lieutenant (junior grade) Neil P. Quirk arrived at the Cat Lo Navy base, near Vung Tau, to become Officer-in-Charge of the new LCPL Detachment, he had one boat and a handful of men. Six months later he and his LCPL Detachment were nearing full strength.

"The LCPL crewmen were handpicked for this assignment," according to Ltjg. Quirk. They are unusually capable with three of the men being qualified tug masters."

The LCPL patrol boats are "seaworthy, good riding boats with pretty good living conditions for the men during their 12-hour patrols," says Ltjg. Quirk.

"Stable Door" forces are in a state of change. At several ports the MIUWS units have been replaced by permanently stationed personnel who are assigned to the Inshore Undersea Warfare Group's Western Pacific Detachment.

The MIUWS units will leave behind the specially outfitted mobile vans they used to establish the sites, when they return to their home bases at Long Beach and Norfolk.

Both the MIUWS and their replacement units, as well as the LCPL detachments, are part of the Pacific Fleet or Atlantic Fleet Mine Forces.

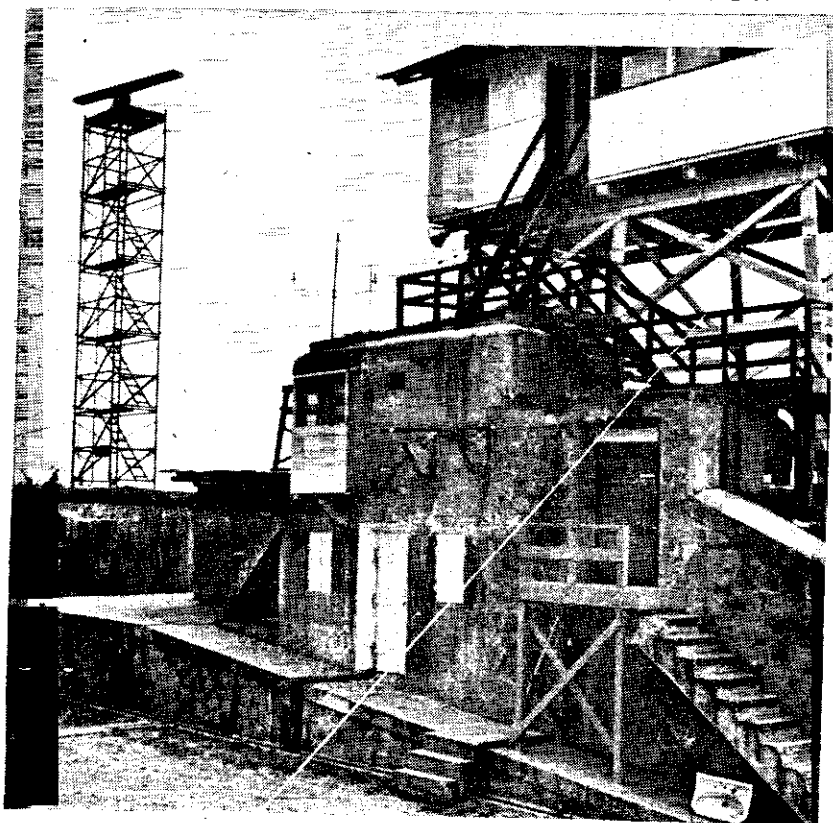
When asked how the merchantmen feel about this Navy force in their midst, Ltjg. Quirk replied, "The merchant ships' masters are cooperative and realize that the Navy is on the job to protect them from Charlie. Some of them even get insulted if the patrol boats don't stop by for fresh milk and fried chicken."

As long as vital supplies for U.S. and allied forces continue to reach Vietnam by ship, the Navy harbor defense team of "Stable Door" will continue to safeguard these ships once they reach Vietnam's ports.



TIGER . . . Operation Stable Door LCPLs investigate vessels in the anchorage. The design on the bow is reminiscent of the famed Flying Tigers of World War II.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by B.S. Whitmarsh, PH2)



OLD FORT SPROUTS MODERN ELECTRONIC GEAR... Perched on the mountain above the Vung Tau merchant ship anchorage, this 55-year-old French-built fort is now the Operation Stable Door Harbor Entrance Control Post.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by Ltjg. Dow Smith)

A Friendly VC or Two

The VC are commonly known throughout Vietnam by their phonetic nickname "Victor Charlies."

There is one VC in the Viet Cong-infested Rung Sat Special Zone who is on our side.

He is U.S. Navy Commander Victor Charles Wandres, Commander of the Rung Sat Special Zone River Patrol Force.

Commander Wandres' River Patrol Boats recently discovered an "almost" VC who decided that the life of a Viet Cong was not for him.

"My PBRs on patrol in the Soi Rap River saw a man standing on the western bank wildly waving his arms," the commander explained.

"A River Patrol Boat approached him with some trepidation because previously we've seen people standing on the banks and as we approached, have been met with enemy fire. This man, however, seemed very glad to get on board."

The PBRs returned their passenger to their base at Nha Be, south of Saigon, where he was questioned.

"We found that he was trying to avoid Viet Cong conscription in his home village and had taken this approach to get away from them," Commander Wandres said.

"We sent him back to his relatives in another area," he concluded.

Now there are two friendly VC in the Rung Sat Special Zone. The second is raising rice among friends where he can boast of dodging the Viet Cong draft board.

Bronze Star Is Authorized

Navy personnel who were on active duty prior to July 27, 1954 and who are still on active duty are entitled to wear a bronze star on their National Defense Service Medal ribbon.

The award was reissued effective Dec. 31, 1960 for personnel who have not yet received the award. The period has yet been set.

Foolish Swordfish Learns Biblical Truth

"All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." Alas, if the poor swordfish had only read her Bible she might not have met such a fate.

But, as it was, she was swimming in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam when she failed to come right according to proper nautical rules of the road.

As a result she plowed into the Operation Market Time Coastal Minesweeper USS Widgeon (MSC-208),

wedging her sword into the 144-foot-long, wooden-hulled sweeper.

As if to atone for her sin, she effectively stopped her own swordfish, venting flooding of the forward engine room space.

Minor Drama Is Played On The Co Chien River

By Paul Parker, JOz

Navy River Patrol Boats, forty miles downstream from their home base at Vinh Long, were patrolling the mouth of the Co Chien where the joint U.S./VN operation called Song Than/Deckhouse V was underway.

Thunderclaps of exploding bombs impacting near the invasion beach shattered the quiet dawn for the PBR crewmembers when the pre-invasion softening-up began.

River traffic of small sampans and junks soon dropped to a trickle.

First Class Petty Officer Glen Bradon guided his patrol boats west of the invasion area to where the Viet Cong were expected to attempt a crossing.

Their mission was to prevent the VC from using the river to escape from the invasion area.

The morning chill had lifted when Glen saw a small dark sampan with two occupants slipping along 20 yards off the north bank.

Glen ordered his coxswain to head it off. The twin diesels of the PBR rumbled, driving jets of water out

behind the thirty-one foot fiberglass boat in a turbulent rooster tail.

"Don't get too close," Glen shouted above the engine's noise.

Traveling at 20 knots, the PBR quickly closed distance with the sampan. Through his binoculars Glen could see an old man and woman at opposite ends of the small boat. At 200 yards the coxswain slowed his engines and brought the boat to a bobbing halt in its own wake.

"Lai day!.. come here!" Glen hollered in Vietnamese to call the old couple alongside. "Lai day!.. Lai day!" he repeated louder each time when they did not appear to notice the PBR.

The old woman motioned to her companion. He glanced at the PBR and nosed the sampan out away from the bank.

"We're checking them for proper ID cards and possible VC contraband," Glen exclaimed, "The Viet Cong sometimes hide weapons or ammunition on these small boats and force the people to haul them from place to place."

The sampan came alongside and the old couple smiled nervously at the four PBR crewmembers.

"Can Cuoc?" Glen asked for their ID cards.

The old man feathered the sampan's small outboard engine and pulled a plastic preserver bag from his shirt pocket. He took two plastic coated cards out and passed them to the woman.

"Look at this!" Glen said bitterly as he took the small yellow cards from her. "Look what the VC did to these ID cards!"

He held them up for his crew to see. They had been torn in two pieces, one half thrown away.

The old man noticed Glen's curt exclamations and began speaking animatedly in Vietnamese. He demonstrated with his hands how the VC took their cards and tore them, pointing to the north bank of the river frequently as he spoke.

"Toi biet...I understand," Glen answered sympathetically and returned the torn pieces.

"This is the way VC harass the

area. They know the people have to have proper papers to do their business. Now this old couple will have to go to the local officials and apply for new cards," he explained.

Glen stepped gingerly down into the delicately balanced sampan and gently shifted two bags of unchafed rice about, checking the sparsely loaded boat for contraband.

"They're OK," he sang out, smiling, and stepped up onto the gunwale of the PBR. "Cam on...thank you," Glen waved them on.

As the sampan pulled away from the PBR, the old couple looked back and waved a friendly goodbye. Down river near Red Beach another air strike began. The concussion of exploding bombs mixed with staccato machine gun fire alerted the PBR crewmen.

"OK, take her down to point foxtrot," Glen told the coxswain as the twin diesels rumbled into action. "It won't be like this next week," he remarked, thinking about his upcoming week of rest and recreation in Hawaii.

The Day They 'Threw The Armory' At The Helos

By Bill Rozier, JO2

For the past six months U.S. Navy pilots and crewmen have been flying armed "Huey" helicopters in Vietnam. Some patrols are quiet — at other times the action is fast-paced.

Their mission is to support the Navy's River Patrol Boats (PBRs) in preventing Viet Cong use of the waterways of the Mekong Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone.

Two Seawolf aircraft, led by Lieutenant Commander William A. Rockwell, received VC fire in small arms, .30- and .50-caliber machine gun, M-79 grenade, mortar and even, it was believed, 20mm cannon rounds one afternoon when the Viet Cong "threw the armory" at them.

The helos took the heavy fire while answering a call for assistance from Navy River Patrol Boats on the Bassac River.

Four PBRs were receiving heavy fire from both banks of the river. As the helicopters neared the PBRs, they too received heavy fire.

"They're all over the place!" said

Rockwell.

The helos approached the Bassac with their machine guns blazing. The PBRs came into view surrounded by sprays of water kicked up by enemy bullets.

From the PBRs came the urgent request, "There are a lot of them in the trees. Can you hold down their fire?"

The Seawolf fire team swooped down with twelve 7.62 machine guns and 2.75 rockets showering the enemy positions.

The "WHUMP" of mortar shells and the air-tearing sound of their passage near the helos could be heard over the chatter of machine guns as the Viet Cong ineffectively attempted to use their mortars as anti-aircraft weapons.

During the helos' second pass a voice from PBR control shouted, "They're firing M-79s [grenades] at you people!"

"Well, I doubt they'll hit us with those," Rockwell spoke casually.

"They're in that coconut grove where you put your last rockets," the PBRs reported. Again the helos swooped. Red tracer bullets reached down to rip through the grove.

As the helos came out of their pass, figures could be seen fleeing the VC positions.

The lead ship co-pilot, Lieutenant (jg) Stephen L. Oftedahl, picked up an M-16 automatic rifle and began slow, accurate fire at the fleeing VC. "There's more than .30-cal. coming up at us," he said.

"Yeah, they've got .50s in there too," Rockwell affirmed.

"We got at least one," the port door gunner, Donald F. Fee, said. "I see a body floating in the river."

"One more pass and we'll have to get home to refuel," Rockwell reported to the boats below.

"Roger," came the answer. "We're getting out of here too."

As the helos turned toward Soc Trang to rearm and refuel, the PBRs cleared the zone of heavy fire.

Sometime during the action a shrapnel hole opened in the lead helo's fuselage. It helped to firm up some suspicions.

"We think they've got a 20mm cannon in there," the now-safe PBRs reported.

"I don't doubt it," returned Rockwell as he took his Seawolfs off to refuel and rearm for another mission.

He's Thick-Skinned and Glad of It!

There is at least one U.S. Navyman in Vietnam who doesn't mind being called thick-skinned.

Storekeeper first Class Benjamin G. Foster, a passenger in an Air Cofat C-47, was shot in the buttocks, but the bullet never penetrated the skin.

This was the only hit the C-47 took while on a flight to Danang. The incident took place approximately 12 miles south of Chu Lai.

Foster, who is attached to the Military Sea Transportation Service in Saigon, said, "I heard a loud bang similar to a firecracker going off."

"I thought a CO2 bottle or something else like that exploded. I was darned surprised when I knew I was hit, but was extremely happy when the bullet fell through my pants leg when I stood up."

The bullet was fired from the ground and went through the bottom of the plane, up through the seat and was finally stopped when it hit his skin. The impact was still great enough to require medical attention.

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