

APPENDIX H  
MEKONG RIVER MERCHANT SHIP SMUGGLING

Free-world shipping on the Mekong River, its tributaries, and waterway accesses to Saigon were guaranteed by a tripartite agreement between Laos, Cambodia, and SVN in December 1954. But little was done to monitor or regulate commercial transit on the rivers. The U.S. recognized the potential for shipping contraband to the VC and encouraged SVN to impose strict regulations on commercial shipping.

MACV examination of cargo manifests revealed that war materials had been shipped into Cambodia as early as 1964. Many items were those the VC could use. Responding to U.S. pressure, the South Vietnamese tightened Mekong River shipping control procedures. Authorization was required to transit the Mekong and ships from communist countries and those flying flags of countries that did not recognize SVN were denied access to the river.

Special procedures were imposed on merchant ships in transit. They could travel only from sunrise to sunset; a Vietnamese pilot had to be aboard at all times; small craft were prohibited from coming alongside commercial freighters; and South Vietnamese officials were authorized to inspect cargo and customs papers.

During the first few months of tightened controls, South Vietnamese confiscated a Japanese ship bound for Phnom Penh with a consignment of cartridge belts, and prevented 6 other free-world ships (mostly Japanese) from entering the river. Four of these ships were carrying cement from the USSR and China, and 2 were carrying chemicals that potentially had military significance.

The possibility that supplies were smuggled aboard merchant ships using the Mekong River was proposed to account for weapons and munitions acquired by the VC in southern SVN. These supplies could not be accounted for by seaborne infiltration or by shipments through Cambodia. Early in the war, there were intelligence reports that arms and munitions had been smuggled into the Delta on some of the free-world merchant ships that sailed up the Mekong.

In December 1965, MACV and CinCPac studied alternatives to gain control of contraband shipping. Because of the complex ramifications of international law, they decided against blockade and interdiction and decided that SVN must strictly enforce its existing regulations for commercial shipping. The South Vietnamese were encouraged to conduct cargo inspections with the threat of a complete offload, and the U.S. promised help with men and facilities. It was also recommended that military personnel should help customs officers inspect cargo, crosscheck the performance of customs officials and pilots, and provide additional intelligence. Surface and air patrols were planned to increase controls on the Mekong. MACV requested U.S. Embassy assistance in convincing SVN to enforce the controls.

Infiltration continued, but by the end of 1966, the South Vietnamese had taken some encouraging preparatory actions. These suggested acceptance of some of the control measures offered by the U.S.

Beginning in 1968, all merchant ships traveling on the Mekong River had to be escorted. The convoys were formed at Vung Tau and ended at Tan Chau (near the Cambodian border.) The convoys were generally very lax, as were the South Vietnamese customs inspections at Vung Tau. In addition, complicity of South Vietnamese and Cambodian officials in these cursory inspections is strongly suspected. Cleverly concealed secret compartments were discovered on several of the ships suspected of smuggling, and smuggling of commercial goods has been proven conclusively.

According to the Naval Ocean Surveillance Information Center (NOSIC), most of the merchant ships traversing the Mekong were not seaworthy, nor were their goods insured. Therefore, the cargo had to be lucrative to entice them to make the trip from Singapore or Hong Kong to Phnom Penh. The bills of lading listed expensive consumer goods as cargo rather than staples that a country as poor as Cambodia might be expected to import. The cargo generally filled less than the full capacity of the ship. It would not have been profitable for the owner to send an unseaworthy, underloaded ship on such a long trip unless it carried some other kind of profitable cargo, such as war supplies.

The materials to be smuggled, whether consumer or war goods, were loaded on a ship together with a legally consigned cargo for Phnom Penh. The merchant ships could load the contraband left by Soviet or Chinese ships in Hong Kong or Singapore for trans-shipment. As the ships were convoyed up the Mekong, they might take advantage of a lax escort and offload while still in SVN, or they could offload across the border in Cambodia. Another possibility was that the smuggled cargo was taken to a warehouse in Phnom Penh by a communist and distributed from there.

APPENDIX I  
GAME WARDEN CHRONOLOGY

This chronology includes the arrival of Game Warden units in SVN and major task unit shifts.

The chronology is not intended to list every river patrol operation. It highlights major Game Warden, Mobile Riverine Force, and ground operations in the Mekong Delta and RSSZ to illustrate the type and scope of friendly and enemy action in the Game Warden areas of responsibility.

The major sources for this chronology are the NavForV Monthly Supplements and Summaries.

1965

- Fall 1965 U.S. Navy begins riverine operations; 4 LCPL-4s control VC cross-channel traffic in RSSZ (using VNN facilities in Saigon)
- 18 December Game Warden (River Patrol Force) is established as Task Force 116

1966

- 11 February First Game Warden operation order is promulgated
- February SEAL Team-1 group of 3 officers and 15 enlisted men assigned to Game Warden
- 10 March 4 U.S. MSOs arrive at Vung Tau. First U.S. minesweeping units assigned to sweep Long Tau channel
- 15 March River Squadron Five (RivRon Five) established to administer newly arriving Game Warden units
- 21 March First 11 PBRs arrive in-country; USS Belle Grove (LSD 2) acts as interim support ship at Cat Lo
- 25 March UH-1B moves aboard USS Belle Grove
- 26 March Combined forces search and clean operation, Jackstay, begins in RSSZ
- 30 March 9 PBRs arrive in SVN
- 1 April NavForV established under RAdm. Norvell G. Ward. He is also Commander, River Patrol Force (CTF 116)
- 12 April USS Floyd County (LST-762) arrives in-country as the second interim inshore support ship
- 15 April River Section 541 begins patrol operations. Initial operations are nighttime patrols on Long Tau River in RSSZ
- 19 April USS Tortuga (LSD-26) relieves Belle Grove as interim support ship.
- 26 April 12 PBRs arrive at Cat Lo and begin shakedown cruises from USS Floyd County
- 8 May Units from the Tortuga move to Nha Be. First Game Warden river patrol units (River Section 511) move into the Delta (Can Tho)
- 18 May Capt. Burton B. Witham, Jr., relieves RAdm. Ward as Commander, River Patrol Force (CTF 116)

21 May - U.S. Army operation Lexington III begins in RSSZ -- search and  
9 June destroy operation conducted by Second Brigade, U.S. Army First  
Infantry Division

23 May 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

28 May 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

2 June Game Warden River Section 543 moved to Cat Lo from Tortuga (LSD 26)

4 June 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

7 June River Section 531 moves to Cat Lo from Tortuga

8 June Daytime PBR patrols begin in RSSZ

9 June 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

10 June River Sections 512, 542 shift from Cat Lo to Nha Be

10 June Start of evaluation of patrol air cushion vehicles (PACVs) for Game  
Warden

13 June River Section 512 (and 2 PACVs) deploy aboard Tortuga near mouths of  
the Co Chien and Bassac Rivers in first test of offshore support ship  
concept in Delta

20 June River Section 531 transits from Cat Lo to My Tho

29 June PACVs judged not suited for operations in Game Warden

23 July First PBR use of a planned ambush at a possible river-crossing area

31 July 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

5 August River Section 513 begins operations at Vinh Long

15 August Start of 10-battalion SVN army operation Dan Chi 254, with 6 PBRs  
patrolling main channel of the Bassac River

16 August 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

17 August 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

19 August 8 PBRs arrive in SVN

20 August River Section 521 begins operations at Sa Dec

25-26 August River Sections 522 and 523 begin operations at Long Xuyen

29 August Tortuga transferred from mouth of Bassac River to mouth of Long Tau  
River to provide extra patrol section for increased security of the  
shipping channel

30 August Navy crews begin operation of Game Warden fireteam helicopters aboard Tortuga

10 September USS Comstock (LSD-19) relieves Tortuga as Game Warden support ship

19 September Manufacturers' technical representatives install modified pumps on 3 Game Warden PBRs

26 September River Section 532 activated at Cat Lo

27 September 5 PBRs arrive in SVN

27 September - Game Warden/SVN troops conduct major flood operation in Plain of  
17 October Reeds, resulting in many enemy killed

10 October CTF 116 shifts headquarters from Saigon to Can Tho

20 October My Tho-based PBRs begin random patrols on Ham Luong River, last of the major branches of the Mekong to be regularly patrolled by Game Warden forces

21 October Revised rules of engagement for river patrol forces go into effect (see appendix G)

1 November MSB 54 destroyed by VC mine on Long Tau River--first MSB destroyed

11 November USS Jennings County (LST-846), first specially configured LST, arrives at Vung Tau to relieve Comstock

14 November River Section 532 begins operations at My Tho

15 November Jennings County arrives on station at mouth of the Bassac River

18 November Jennings County is shifted to Can Tho because of difficulties in handling boats in heavy seas

22 November Sa Dec-based PBRs provide blocking force for operations of 13th SVN army battalion

23 November 6 PBRs arrive in SVN

12 December Jennings County returns to mouth of Bassac and again experiences difficulties in handling PBRs and helos because of monsoon winds and heavy seas.

29 December WHAMO 1-66, begins -- large-scale military civic action project in Kien Hoa province

31 December Discovery of a contact-detonated mine (500-pound charge) floating in Long Tau River; first of this type of mine discovered in inland waters



End December SEAL Team-1 RSSZ detachment has 3 platoons (7 officers and 30 enlisted men) at Nha Be

1967

6 January Operation Deckhouse V begins; Game Warden PBRs provide blocking force on the Co Chien and Ham Luong Rivers; first combined U.S./SVN amphibious landing in Delta; assault against Thanh Phu secret zone in Kien Hoa province

7 January First units of Riverine Assault Force arrive at Vung Tau (later renamed Mobile Riverine Force)

11 January Jennings County suffers severe damage to boat-handling equipment and PBR 30 is lost when high winds and material failure cause PBR to swamp

15 January PBRs from Long Xuyen augment forces at Vinh Long. Sa Dec-based River Section 521 concentrates patrols in lower portion of its area  
Long Xuyen-based River Section 522 deploys 8 PBRs to lower Bassac  
Long Xuyen-based River Section 523 stations 8 boats on Co Chien River

17 January Harnett County (LST-821), second Game Warden support ship, takes station off Dong Tam

20 January PBRs and VNN river patrol craft of Game Warden RSSZ patrol group support combined U.S./SVN operation that destroys VC quartermaster depot in Long An

26 January Game Warden units break up estimated 400-man enemy main force unit crossing attempt on lower Bassac

1 February River Patrol Force (TF 116) established as separate command under operational and administrative control of ComNavForV

15 February VC sink U.S. MSB and damage 2 others on Long Tau River in well-prepared series of attacks southeast of Nha Bex; MSB 45 sunk by controlled mine; MSB 49 hit by 3 rounds of 75mm. recoilless-rifle fire; MSB 51 damaged by heavy weapons fire

16 February Operation River Raider begins; series of sweeps and ambushes in the RSSZ by units of 9th Infantry Division (Riverine Assault Force)  
River Section 533 on Jennings County near mouth of the Long Tau River augments PBR patrols of Saigon channel

20-27 February VNN RAGs provide support for SVN army and regional force battalions during operation Cuu Long 55 in Binh Dai district of Kien Hoa Province

21 February Troops of 3/47 Infantry landed by River Assault Division 91 in RSSZ -- discover "extensive" VC base camp (Riverine Assault Force)

26 February Game Warden units deploy to meet growing enemy activity in Kien Hoa Province; River Section 523 moves from Long Xuyen to patrol Ham Luong; Jennings County shifted from mouth of Long Tau River to Dong Tam.

27 February B-52 strike at the suspected headquarters area of RSSZ VC commander

28 February Riverine Assault Force activated as Task Force 117 under operational control of ComNavForV

February 2 platoons from Seal Team-2 based at Can Tho, begin Delta operations

7 March C Company, 3/47 Infantry, supported by River Assault Squadron Nine, discovers VC munitions workshop area in lower RSSZ

PBRs provide blocking force for operation Overload II (U.S. 199th Infantry Brigade/25th SVN army division) on island south of Saigon, west of the Soi Rap River, in the RSSZ

17 March PBR patrol assists SVN outpost on Cu Lao May Island under attack by 200 VC

27 March USS Garrett County (LST-786), third specially configured support ship, is assigned to support Game Warden River Section 543 in RSSZ

28 March U.S. Naval support activity detachment set up at Tan Chau, 10 miles east of the Cambodian border, on the Mekong River; facilities to berth, mess, and provide necessary support for a 10-boat river patrol section

31 March Capt. Paul N. Gray, relieves Capt. Burton B. Witham, Jr. as Commander River Patrol Force (CTF 116)

USS Hunterdon County (LST-838), fourth specially configured Game Warden support ship, relieves Harnett County at mouth of the Co Chien River

1 April Helicopter-Attack (Light) Squadron Three (HA(L)-3) activated under the operational control of CTF 116. Squadron has 4 detachments composed of former detachments of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron One (HC-1):

- Detachment 1 based on Hunterdon County
- Detachment 2 based at Nha Be
- Detachment 3 based at Vinh Long
- Detachment 4 based on Jennings County

Hunterdon County relieves Harnett County in support of River Section 512 and HA(L)-3, Det. 1, in Co Chien River

3 April Jennings County, with River Section 523 and HA(L)-3, Det. 4, relieves Hunterdon County, which shifts to mouth of Bassac River

8 April River Section 511 (based at Binh Thuy) and River Section 12 (based on an LST in the Co Chien River) exchange patrol areas and bases<sup>1</sup>

12 April MSBs 33 and 46 are delivered to MINRON ELEVEN, Det. A at Nha Be, bringing the number of MSBs in-country to 13.

17 April Game Warden units begin operation Linebacker II in support of the SVN 9th Army Division's Operation Long Phi 999H, a search and destroy mission against the VC 306th Battalion in Vinh Long and Vinh Binh provinces

22 April Harnett County relieves Jennings County, which proceeds to Vung Tau for upkeep.

26 April River Section 512 (Based at Vinh Long) and River Section 523 (based on an LST on the Bassac River) exchange patrol areas and bases<sup>1</sup>

27 April RAdm. K.L. Veth relieves RAdm. Ward as ComNavForV and CHNAG, MACV

29 April Naval Support Activity detachment at Long Xuyen deactivated

30 April Game Warden sections and bases:

<u>River section</u>	<u>Base</u>
511	Hunterdon County
512	Binh Thuy <sup>1</sup>
513	Harnett County
521	Sa Dec
522	Tan Chau
523	Vinh Long <sup>1</sup>
531	My Tho
532	My Tho
533	Nha Be
541	Nha Be
542	Nha Be
543	Garrett County at mouth of Soi Rap

<sup>1</sup>There is a discrepancy in the source, NavForV Monthly Summary for April 1967. The April 1967 locations of River Sections 512 and 523 are not clear, since the text identifies their shore bases as both Binh Thuy and Vinh Long.

April PBRs begin new search procedure -- Operation Ferret

6 May Commander, Delta River Patrol Group (CTG 116.1) in Operation Overload, moves PBRs from upper rivers to increase patrol density in My Tho, Bassac, and Ham Luong Rivers

11 May Jennings County relieves Garrett County in support of River Section 543 at mouth of the Soi Rap River

Hunterdon County blows up VC ammunition cache in Long Toan Secret Zone, using night observation device

15 May Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) experiences first major contact with VC when elements of TF 117.2 engage enemy west of My Tho along Tra Tan Creek while supporting Operation Hop Tac XVIII

25 May Harnett County with River Section 513 and HA (L)-3, Det. 4 embarked, shifts to mouth of Ham Luong River from mouth of Co Chien

1 June Operational control of units patrolling Co Chien River shifted from CTU 116.1.3 (My Tho) to CTU 116.1.2 (Vinh Long)

3 July Naval Support Activity detachment at Tan Chau abandoned and YRBM-16 moved to Binh Thuy to provide interim support until facilities at that Game Warden base are operational

5 July CTF 116 and staff move from Can Tho to Binh Thuy, west of Can Tho

7 July PBRs act as blocking force for SVN army search and destroy operation in Long Toan Secret Zone in lower Vinh Binh province

25 July Navy helo fire team disrupts movement of 3 enemy companies along Ba Lai River, north of Ben Tre

29 July Sixth detachment of HA(L)-3 activated at Dong Tam

23 August Harnett County, with River Section 531 and HA(L)-3 Det. 5 embarked, relieves Jennings County as Game Warden support ship at mouth of Co Chien River

24 August River Section 533, which had been embarked on Jennings County, begins operations out of My Tho

August Third platoon from SEAL Team-1 platoons involved in special operations

5 September River Section 522, embarked on YRBM-16, moves from Bassac to the Ham Luong River

11 September River Section 534 activated at Nha Be

15 September Game Warden and RAG forces conduct search and destroy operation Crimson Tide against heavily fortified VC area along Bassac River opposite Culao Tan Dinh Island

18 September Hunterdon County with River Section 521 embarked leaves station on Ham Luong for trip to I Corps Tactical Zone to conduct river patrol operations

22 September Operation Bon Huu II (Friendship II), large-scale combined civic action program, begins on Thoi Son Island in My Tho River, adjacent to My Tho

25 September Garrett County with River Section 511 embarked shifts operations from lower to central Bassac River

28 September Hunterdon County shifts anchorage to mouth of Cua Dai River southeast of Danang for second phase of Operation Green Wave  
HA(L)-3 Det. 7 activated at Binh Thuy

30 September Boundary lines between Market Time and Game Warden operating areas shifted inland at the major Delta river mouths an average of 5 miles to take advantage of greater seaworthiness of Market Time craft.

7 October Termination of Game Warden I Corps Operation, Green Wave

13 October Hunterdon County with River Section 521 and HA(L)-3, Det. 4 embarked, resumed operations on lower Ham Luong River

15 October Jennings County with River Section 512 and HA(L)-3, Det. 1 embarked, relieves Garrett County at mouth of Bassac River  
River Section 511 relocates to Binh Thuy.

18 October Game Warden and SVN forces involved in blockade and clear operation of northern half of Cu Lao Nai Island on the Bassac downstream from Can Tho

November MRF engages in search and destroy Operation Coronado IX in area north  
December of Mekong/My Tho River from Plain of Reeds east to the Soi Rap River.

9 November During Coronado IX, for the first time the Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) is used as the third maneuver battalion of the MRF

11 November River Section 534 relocates from Cat Lo to Nha Be and receives first MK II PBRs

14 November MRF conducts one day saturation patrol and search operation as part of Coronado IX in Dinh Tuong province "to enhance the security on Highway 4 and the Dong Tam base"

18-20 November MRF relocates to a position on the Mekong River near Sa Dec to continue Coronado IX in western Dinh Tuong and eastern Kien Phong provinces. This part of Coronado IX took the MRF to its deepest penetration of the Mekong Delta. The operation was coordinated with SVN Seventh and Ninth Divisions

26 November River Section 522 relocates from damaged YRBM-16 to My Tho

27 November MRF, continuing Coronado IX, begins a 4-day operation in the Cai Lay and Long Dinh districts of Dinh Tuong Province, primarily to clear 19 miles of the Xang Canal starting at Dong Tam to allow waterborne operations in northern Dinh Tuong province as far west as My Phouc Tay. The VC had kept the canal closed since 1964

1 December Harnett County with River Section 531 and HA(L)-3 Det. 5, embarked, shifts station from the Co Chien to the Ham Luong River  
Hunterdon County with River Section 521 embarked departs Ham Luong enroute to Danang

7 December Garrett County takes station on Co Chien River

11 December River Section 534 arrives at My Tho to begin first Mk II PBR patrols

14 December River Section 535 arrives at Binh Thuy with 5 Mk II PBRs  
MRF conducts operations in Cam Son Secret Zone. Penetration of Ba Rai stream sees first use of MRF Riverine Armored Reconnaissance Element (RARE). A RARE consisted of heavily armored MRF craft that protected troop carriers. The RARE preceded the troop carriers into an operational area to forestall attacks on the carriers.

18 December Game Warden units conduct Operation Preakness II along Ba Lai River, using units from River Sections 531, 532, 534, and helos from HA(L)-3 detachments 5 and 6 for collecting intelligence and destroying targets of opportunity

20 December MRF conducts operation in the Cai Lay district of northern Dinh Tuong Province in search of VC 514th provincial mobile battalion

21-23 December Game Warden PBRs conduct exfiltration blockade as part of operation Bold Carousel in support of SVN army sweep of Tan Dinh Island on lower Bassac  
River Section 524 activated at Nha Be

24-26 December MRF conducts Coronado IX in Long Dinh district of Dinh Tuong Province and the Giang Thom district of Kien Hoa Province to deny enemy forces their resupply routes during the Christmas truce

28 December MRF conducts operations in the Cam Son/BanLong Secret Zones, with saturation patrolling in the Ham Tuong district of western Kien Hoa Province and the Cai Be, Coi Lay, and Long Dinh districts of western Dinh Tuong Province

1968

3 January TF 116 reorganized (see appendix C)

9 January Game Warden forces begin operations in I Corps with River Section 521 operating from PBR Mobile Support Base I

River Section 534 begins operations from APL-55 near Dong Tam on the My Tho River

10-12 January MRF begins Operation Coronado IX in Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province, and engages VC

261st Main Force Battalion.

The River Patrol Group begins evaluating suitability of Assault Support Patrol Boats (ASPB) for Game Warden. (ASPB on loan from MRF)

PBRs and 6 ASPBs from MRF begin operation Preakness III on Ba Lai River, concentrating on Thu Ba Lai village

17 January River Section 524 begins operations on My Tho River

18 January MRF begins Operation Coronado X, search-and-destroy operation in Giong Trom district of Kien Hoa Province

25 January ComRivDiv 52 conducts operation Windsong I against VC along the Thon and Mo Cay canals in Kien Hoa Province, using a combined force of Game Warden and MRF assets: 2 helo fire teams, 2 SEAL platoons, 8 PBRs, 2 monitors, and 4 ASPBs. This canal, linking the Co Chien and Ham Luong Rivers, furnished the sole route of commerce to Mo Cay district town

28 January 4 PBRs from River Section 535 at Binh Thuy extend Game Warden patrols to upper Bassac River during Tet holiday to prevent expected influx of enemy supplies from Cambodia. PBRs were based at the U.S. Special Forces camp at Chau Doc

29 January Start of Tet truce period

River Section 535 PBRs begin patrols of upper Bassac River from Chau Doc to the Cambodian border (Operation Bold Dragon I)

5 PBRs from Sa Dec's River Section 513 begin patrols of upper Mekong to guard against infiltration of supplies during Tet. The PBRs operate from the U.S. Special Forces camp at Thuong Thoi during this operation

30 January ComUSMacV rescinds truce directive because of repeated VC truce violations

31 January Game Warden activity during Tet Offensive  
 SEALS, PBRs, and Helos support My Tho. PBRs and helos support Ben Tre and Vinh Long. PBRs provide a blocking force at Sa Dec. SEALS and PBRs engage in intense combat at Chau Doc. Helos support defense of the U.S. embassy in Saigon and Tan Son Nhut Air Base, and I Corps PBRs support defense of LCU ramp at Hue  
 River Section 531 shifts from Harnett County (LST 821) to My Tho. River Section 532 shifts from My Tho to Harnett County

1 February Game Warden forces aid in driving VC from Chau Doc  
 Navy personnel evacuate from Vinh Long to Garrett County

2 February 4 PBRs from Sa Dec rout 150 VC from the Cao Lanh ferry landing

3 February PBRs make repeated firing runs at about 200 VC along Sa Dec canal

4 February MRF relocates to Vinh Long  
 Game Warden forces interdict VC crossing attempt on Bassac south-east of Can Tho; capture 60 B-40 rockets  
 River Section 535 Mk II PBRs, operating from U.S. Special Forces camp at Thuong Thoi, heavily engaged with enemy on the Hong Ngu Canal just south of Cambodian border

7 February PBRs on the Ham Luong River east of Mo Cay sink a VC troop-laden sampan. Intelligence reports indicate 50 VC killed or wounded

9 February MRF forces begin Coronado X, search-and-destroy operation in Dong Tam

14 February Game Warden PBRs engage VC on Cu Lao May and Cu Lao Tan Dinh Islands in Bassac River

15 February CTF 116 directs TGs 116.1, 116.2, 116.3 to implement a proposal providing for a "ready-for-action" package force combining assets of USN/VNN and RF/PF for small-unit operations

19 February Hunterdon County embarks River Section 532 and HA(L)-3, Det. 5, and relieves Harnett County on station on the Ham Luong River .

20 February 3 PACVs of Coastal Division 17 transferred to operational control of CTF 116 to determine suitability for Game Warden patrols on major rivers (after about a week, they were judged unsuitable and returned to CTF 117).



22 February MRF, with SVN 21st division, begins operation in Phung Hiep district of Phong Dinh Province aimed against the VC MR III headquarters  
Harnett County changes to operational control of CTG 76.8.

24 February Task Force Clearwater becomes operational in I Corps

25 February River Section 521 becomes element of Clearwater

2 March MRF forms riverine armored reconnaissance element to transit Mang Thit/Nicholai canal between Bassac and Co Chien rivers, and proceeds to Dong Tam to await main body of MRF  
For the first time, 90mm. recoilless rifle used on a PBR.

7 March MRF begins Coronado XII, a search-and-destroy operation in the Cho Gao district, Kinh Tuong Province.

22 March River Section 514 activated at Nha Be

25 March PBRs of River Section 513 relocate from Sa Dec to Binh Thuy. River Section 522 debarks Garrett County at Vinh Long

26 March CTF 116 conducts combined GW/RAG operation Bold Dragon III against Cu Los/Tan Dinh Island in lower Bassac using RAG craft, 14 PBRs, armored LCPL and LCM-6, the Jennings County, 2 light helo fire teams, SEAL platoon, and RF/PF troops

3 April Capt. Arthur W. Price relieves Capt. Gray as Commander, River Patrol Force (CTF 116)  
River Section 535 relocates from Binh Thuy to APL 55; River Section 514 relocates from Nha Be to Binh Thuy

4 April MRF launches 3-day reconnaissance in Truc Giang and Giang Trom districts of Kien Hoa Province. MRB relocates from Dong Tam near My Tho to be near operations. Heavy contact with enemy around Ba Lai River northeast of Ben Tre  
U.S. and SVN forces conduct 4-day series of sweeps of Oc Island in Ham Luong River using PBRs and RAG craft as blocking and gunfire support forces.

8 April Through the 14th, 4 PBRs of River Section 511 conduct patrols on upper Bassac near Chau Doc to extend the U.S./SVN naval presence, collect intelligence, conduct psyops, and enforce curfews.

11 April Harnett County embarks River Section 513 and HA(L)-3, Det. 1, and relieves Jennings County on the Bassac. Jennings County changes to operational control of CTF 76 and sails to Subic Bay for upkeep

12 April ComRivDiv 51 conducts combined PBR/PF operation on Vong and Cu canals, southeast of Can Tho, near VC concentration. PF troops overrun VC prison camp and free 24 prisoners

16 April APL 55 shifts location to the Ham Luong River near mouth of Ben Tre River

17 April CTF 116 activates new task group (TG 116.9) of 18 PBRs to conduct incursion of the Cho Gao canal (connecting Vam Co and My Tho Rivers) to extend U.S./SVN presence into an area of VC influence. No hostile incidents

24 April River Section 525 activated at Nha Be

25 April One of 3 SEAL Team-1 platoons in RSSZ moved to Delta

29 April Jennings County returns to operational control of CTF 116, embarks River Section 523 and HA(L)-3, Det. 4, and relieves Garrett County on station in Co Chien River

1 May 5 more PBRs assigned to CTF Clearwater for Cua Viet River operations  
River Section 544 activated at Nha Be

3 May APL 55 with embarked river sections shifts location to the Ham Luong/My Tho River junction  
PBRs from River Section 511 transit to Chau Doc and begin operations on upper Bassac

5 May PBRs from River Section 524 transit to Thuong Thoi Special Forces Camp and begin operations on upper Mekong near Tan Chau

15 May River Sections 551 and 552 activated at Nha Be

1 June CTF 116 realigns task organizations; see appendix D. APL-55 reclassified as LYRBM 18  
Hunterdon County leaves station on Ham Luong, debarks River Section 532 at My Tho, embarks River Section 533, and sails to station on the lower Ham Luong

5 June Garrett County changed to operational control of CTF 116 and stationed on lower Co Chien River, embarks River Section 523 and HA(L) 3 Det. 4 and relieves Jennings County

18 June Silent outboard motor used for the first time in Game Warden

10 June VNN takes command of 14 U.S. Navy river craft--6 LCM(M)s and 8 PBRs. With these craft, VNN assumes complete responsibility for minesweeping operations along the Long Tau river shipping channel to Saigon

11 July	6 PBRs provide blocking force in support of 400-man RF/PF sweep of the Cu Lao May Island in the Bassac
22 July	PBR Mobile Base II, with ComRivDiv 55 and River Section 551 embarked, leaves Nha Be enroute to Thoung Thoi to begin operations as the Upper Mekong Patrol Group. Operations begin 28 July
29 July	VNN receives first shipment of M-16 rifles from the USN
30 July	HA(L)-3, Det. 5, relocates from Hunterdon County to PBR Mobile Base II
1 August	VNN assumes partial responsibility for Dong Nai River patrol
26 September	PBRs on upper Mekong take heavy automatic weapons fire from sampans retreating into Cambodia
September	VAdm. E.R. Zumwalt, Jr., relieves RAdm. Veth as ComNavForV
8 October	River Division 515 activated at Nha Be
19 October	PBRs, MRF, and PF sweep northern half of Cu Lao May Island in the Bassac
22 October	River Division 594 activated at Nha Be
end-October	Operation Sea Lords begins, combining assets of CTF 115, CTF 116, and CTF 117 into single task force, TF 194. Initial operations would interdict flow of enemy supplies on the Rach Gia-Long Xuyen canal from Gulf of Thailand to the Mekong River
1 November	River Squadron 51's PBRs begin intensified patrols on Can Tho crossing corridor
4 November	VNN assumes full responsibility for the Dong Nai River patrols
10 November	River Division 554 activated at Nha Be
15 November	River Division 553 activated at Nha Be
end November	Extension of Sea Lords to Vinh Te Canal area to close the Cambodian border
6 December	Operation Giant Slingshot launched on Vam Co Tay and Cam Co Dong Rivers on either side of the "Parrots Beak" east into Saigon and south into the Delta