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FOREIGN NATIONALS

UNITED STATES
NAVAL FORCES, VIETNAM
MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

FEBRUARY 1968

NOTE: A description of the events of 29 February begins on page 3.

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassified after 12 years

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE (TASK FORCE 115)

During February units of Operation MARKET TIME and Operation STABLE DOOR detected 48,982 craft along South Vietnam's coastline and harbors. This figure represents a decrease of over 26,000 from January's total. A total of 11,462 detected craft were inspected and 7,780 were boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 416 persons and 40 craft.

OPERATION MARKET TIME

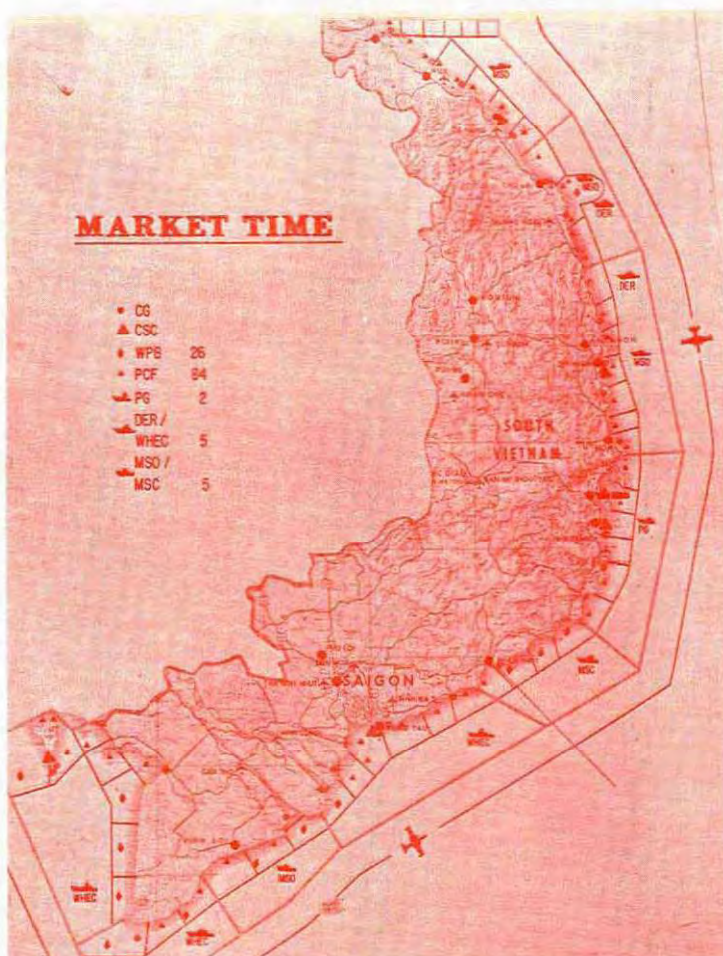
Although February proved to be a highly productive and successful month for MARKET TIME units, routine activity decreased sharply as the heavy fighting that erupted during the Lunar New Year (Tet) period prevented indigenous junk and sampan traffic from utilizing rivers and other inland waterways as access routes to the ocean. Adverse weather and the necessity for MARKET TIME surface units in the First, Second and Third Coastal Zones to be underway a high percentage of the time because of enemy activity in the vicinity of all support bases contributed to the decrease in the number of routine craft detections. The enforcement of strict curfew restrictions also drastically reduced waterway traffic. MARKET TIME units detected only 24,832 junks and sampans during the month, a decrease of over 24,000 from January's total.

Over 40 percent of the detected craft were inspected and approximately 20 percent were boarded. The boardings resulted in

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TF 115 areas with corresponding craft assignments

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the detention of 29 craft and 240 suspicious persons. In addition, 1,176 steel-hulled vessels were detected transiting MARKET TIME areas; 16 of the steel-hulled craft were boarded.

Although total routine detections were down from previous months, MARKET TIME units were kept extremely busy during February as they augmented harbor/anti-swimmer patrols, fired 201 naval gunfire support missions, engaged in 20 hostile fire incidents and provided numerous exfiltration/infiltration patrols in support of ground operations.

During the last two days of the month, MARKET TIME forces experienced one of the most significant naval victories of the Vietnamese campaign. In the boldest resupply effort to date, four enemy trawlers were detected attempting a simultaneous infiltration of supplies into South Vietnam. MARKET TIME air and surface units maintained covert surveillance of the infiltrators while additional coastal surveillance units were positioned to intercept the trawlers as they attempted to penetrate the territorial waters of South Vietnam. Of the four trawlers detected, three were ultimately destroyed and the fourth was turned back.

The southernmost trawler attempted to close the beach approximately 40 miles east-northeast of Ca Mau Point near the mouth of the Cau Bo De River. All challenges and warning shots were ignored by the trawler and a fire fight ensued between the infiltrator and

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the MARKET TIME units. Shortly after 0200 on 1 March, after repeated direct hits by 5-inch and .50 caliber fire, the trawler burst into flames and sank.



Enemy trawler burns after receiving five direct hits by 81-mm mortars, 10 miles northeast of Nha Trang. The trawler, one of four attempting to infiltrate supplies into South Vietnam on 1 March, was detected by MARKET TIME coastal surveillance units.

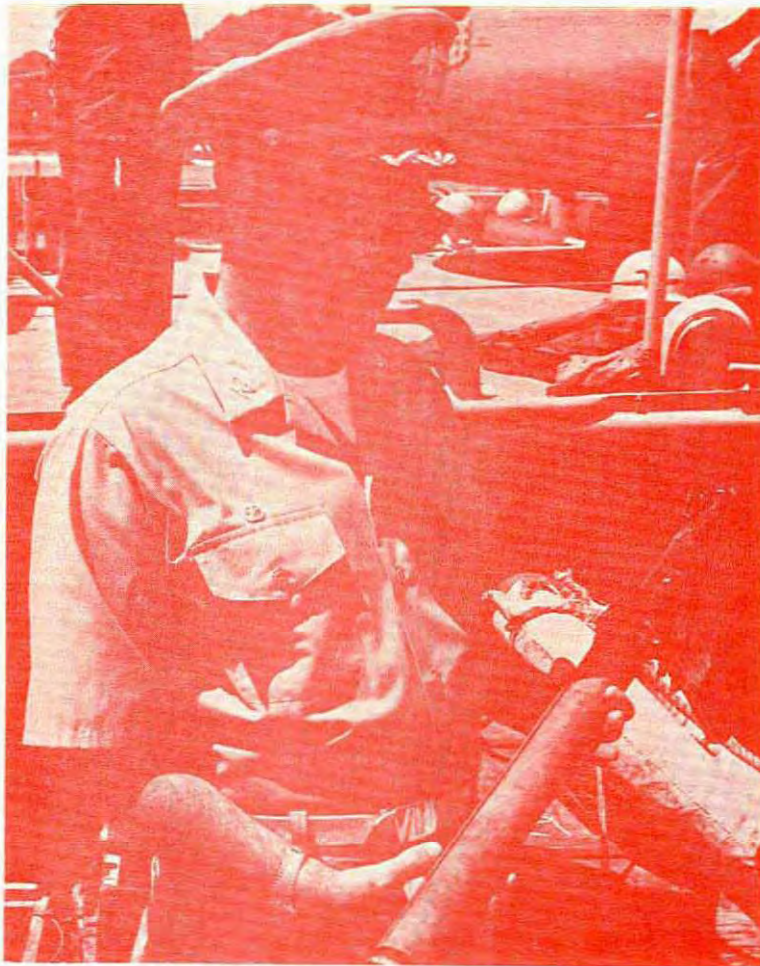
A second trawler beached itself in a cove approximately 10 miles northeast of Nha Trang at 0200 on 1 March. The trawler then opened fire on the MARKET TIME units. Continuous fire was returned by the MARKET TIME units and an attempt to capture the trawler was

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unsuccessful. At 0231 the trawler was completely destroyed after five direct hits by 81-mm mortars.



Captain Carl H. HERRICK, USN, CTF 115, examines rocket launcher which was among contraband salvaged from enemy trawler near Nha Trang on 1 March.

At 0214 on 1 March, a third trawler was driven aground approximately 40 miles southeast of Chu Lai on the north central coast. A fire fight ensued again and, at 0235, when capture appeared imminent,

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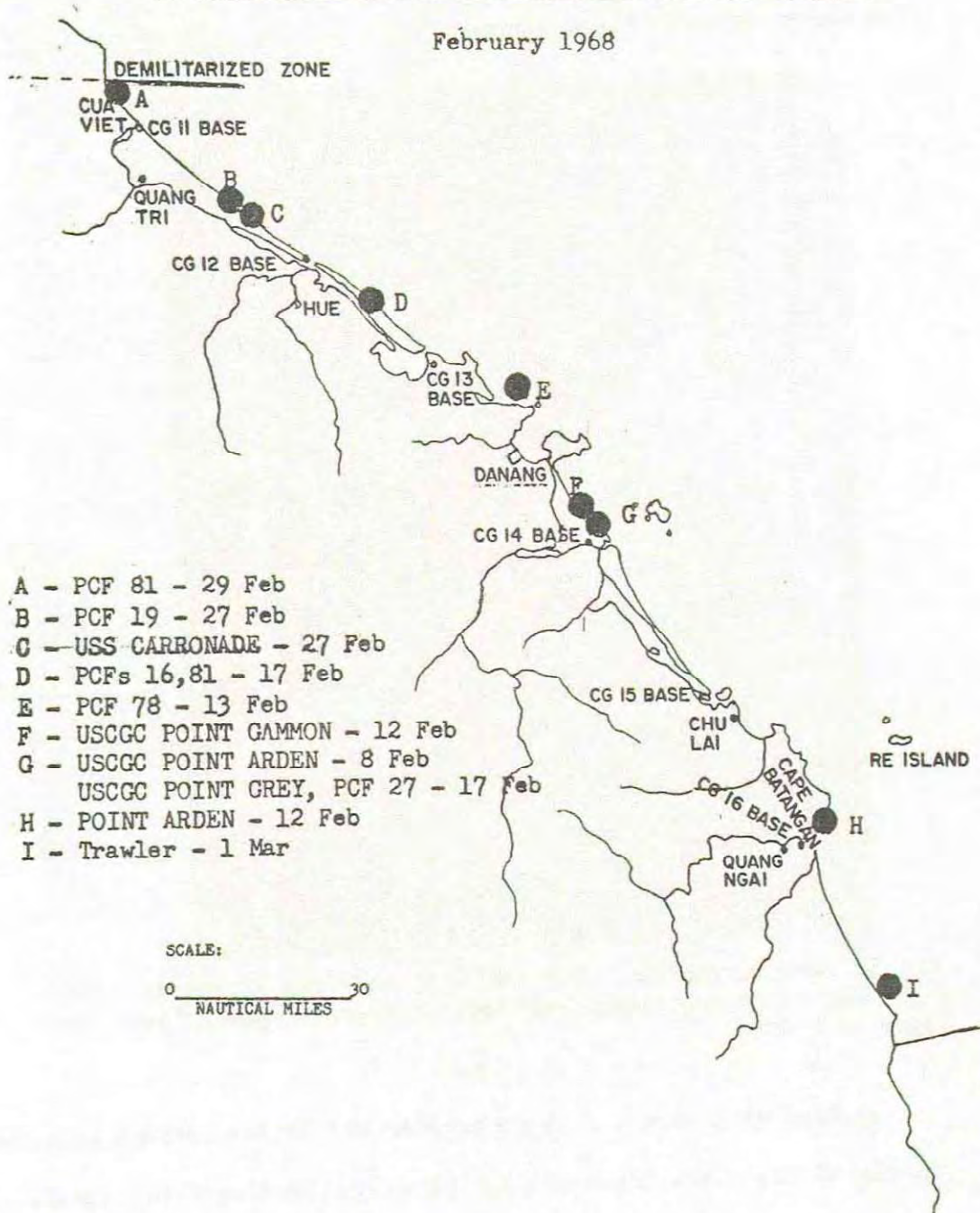
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OPERATIONS IN THE FIRST COASTAL ZONE

February 1968



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the trawler was completely destroyed by a pre-set charge.

The fourth trawler being tracked by MARKET TIME units did not enter the territorial waters of South Vietnam and reversed its course and headed for the open sea. Continuous surveillance of the trawler was maintained by coastal surveillance units until the ship approached Communist China's coastline.

First Coastal Zone

During February coastal junk and sampan traffic was very light in the First Coastal Zone. The enforcement of strict curfew restrictions and the heavy fighting throughout the First Coastal Zone held the aggregate junk and sampan detection totals to a very low figure. Only 6,581 detections were made by the zone's patrol units, a decrease of more than 9,000 from January's figure. Over 2,500 of the detected craft were inspected and more than 1,500 were boarded.

On 8 February the U. S. Coast Guard's POINT ARDEN responded to a request from the Vietnamese Navy's Coastal Group 14 and fired on a suspected enemy troop concentration approximately 12 miles southeast of Danang. One secondary explosion was observed and a land patrol confirmed that a land mine had been destroyed, but the extent of enemy personnel casualties was unknown.

On the 12th USCGC POINT GAMMON was requested by a USMC Combined Action Group (CAG) to provide harassment and interdiction fire on an area approximately 10 miles southeast of Danang in order to silence

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