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VIETNAM

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VIETNAM



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"You came swooping out of the sky like an angel of death.... You could see the enemy... you could even make out their faces."

ABOVE: Moving out on patrol near the Demilitarized Zone, U.S. Marines board a Boeing-Vertol CH-46A Sea Knight of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 164 at Khe Sanh in October 1966 (stories, P. 18 and P. 42).

COVER: Coming under ambush from Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta, American and South Vietnamese crewmen of a PBR (patrol boat, river) return fire during a typical action in the course of Operation Market Time (stories, P. 12 and P. 34).

Cover art: U.S. Navy

Interview

SWIFT BOATS IN OPERATION M

Before 1965, 70 percent of enemy supplies were being infiltrated by sea. But a coastal surveillance and patrol force cut that flow to a trickle.

As told by Raul Herrera

During the Vietnam War it was well known that the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong were supplied first by porters and bearers, and then by trucks and oil pipelines, via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Throughout the conflict, various unsuccessful attempts were made to cut this flow of men and materiel coming from the North.

Initially, another important source of supply was the coastal inlets and inland waterways of South Vietnam. An array of vessels, including sampans and junks, delivered much-needed supplies to the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC). The meandering 1,200-mile coastline of South Vietnam was perfect for Communist vessels trying to slip past allied patrol craft monitoring the coastal areas.

To interrupt the stream of supplies arriving in South Vietnam via the South China Sea, the United States initiated Operation Market Time in March 1965. A task group—comprised of radar picket destroyers, ocean and coastal minesweepers, U.S. and South Viet-



MARKET TIME



After resupplying from the tender Bering Strait, a PCF (patrol craft, fast) and a PBR (patrol boat, river) move out on patrol in Market Time Sunset, by Thomas Opilla (courtesy of Thomas Opilla). INSET: Raul Herrera behind twin .50-caliber guns aboard a Swift boat near Cape Batangan (courtesy of Raul Herrera).





Herrera and his fellow crewmen rotated duty between destroyer escort Newell and their PCF, or Swift boat. Coastal Division 12's Echo patrol was too far south for daily transit, so crews assigned to that patrol carried out their mission from the destroyer.

namese Coast Guard cutters and patrol planes—was formed. Included in this amalgam of ships and planes was a smaller patrol craft known as a “Swift boat.” Coastal surveillance was divided into three barriers to block the Communists from entering the ports to offload their contraband. On the outer ring, 100–150 miles offshore, were the patrol planes. Next, on the outer surface barrier, were the destroyer escorts, minesweepers, and Coast Guard cutters. Last, the inshore barrier was manned by the fast-moving Swifts.

General William C. Westmoreland estimated that prior to 1965 the Viet Cong had received about 70 percent of its supplies

by sea. By the end of 1967, thanks to Operation Market Time, that flow had been cut to a trickle.

Raul Herrera was a radio-radarman assigned to patrol the waters off the coast of South Vietnam, and he participated in Operation Market Time. Today he is a design technician for Dannenbaum Engineering Corporation in Houston. He also is a member of the literary group Manuscriptors Guild, vice president of the Houston Council of Writers, and a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 4010 in Missouri City, Texas. Currently, he is writing a book titled *Skunk Alpha*, which deals with his time aboard the Swift boats. He recently discussed his experiences with *Vietnam Magazine's* contributing editor, Al Hemingway.

Vietnam: When did you enlist in the Navy?

Herrera: I grew up in one of the barrios in San Antonio's west side. My parents struggled financially but succeeded in providing 12 years of Catholic-school education for me and my two older sisters. However, college was beyond my parents' means. I realized that in order to have a successful future, I needed to further my education. I graduated from Holy Cross High School in 1965. During that summer I visited the various military recruiting stations to see what they had to offer in the way of schooling. My primary interest lay in drafting and engineering. The Navy had the best to offer in this field, and I was promised Draftsman Class “A” School. Well, I signed on the dotted line and dropped the bombshell on my parents later. I left for boot camp on September 16, 1965.

Vietnam: What happened after you arrived at camp?

Herrera: At boot camp in San Diego, California, I learned that the drafting billet was being phased out. But I managed to persevere and, ultimately, I was offered two years' on-the-job training at the base public works department, or drafting school. I chose to stay in sunny California. However, my two-year assignment was cut short when I received orders to PCF—or Swift boat—crew training across the bay from San Diego, at Coronado.

Vietnam: Describe the Swift boats and tell us how they were used.



Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Robert J. Middleton, who maintained the weapons aboard Herrera's Swift boat, PCF-79.

Herrera: PCF stood for "patrol craft, fast." Because of their maneuverability, they were referred to as Swift boats, or just Swifts. The crew consisted of a skipper—usually a lieutenant junior grade—a boatswain's mate, an engineman, a gunner's mate, a radio-radarman and a seaman, or deckhand. Swifts resembled miniature tugboats. The Navy got the idea from companies operating offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. They would transport supplies, equipment and personnel to and from shore. Sewart Seacraft of Berwick, Louisiana, was chosen to build the boats at an estimated cost of \$75,000 per boat. The Swifts had twin V-12 Detroit diesel engines and were capable of a top speed of 28 knots. They were constructed from an aluminum alloy and could easily operate in less than 5 feet of water. The shallow draft is one of the main reasons the Navy selected these vessels, because they wanted to use them in the shallow waterways along South Vietnam's coastline. But don't let their small size fool you—the Swifts were heavily armed. A gun tub was placed above and behind the pilothouse and equipped with twin .50-caliber machine guns. In the afterdeck, on the fantail, there was an 81mm mortar with a single .50 caliber attached to it in piggyback fashion.

Vietnam: That's quite an impressive array of armament.

Herrera: In addition to those weapons, we had M-79 grenade launchers; fragmentation, incendiary and concussion grenades; AR-15s, shotguns, .38- and .45-caliber pistols. Also, we were equipped with radar, sea-to-shore radio and a PRC-25 field radio.

Vietnam: What Swift boat were you assigned to, and what type of training did you have to complete?

Herrera: PCF-79 was my boat. I had to go through SERE training. SERE is an acronym for survival, evasion, resistance and escape. My training started on February 6, 1967, at the Fleet Airborne Electronics Training Unit, Pacific Detachment, Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, Washington. It was a two-part program. The first phase was in the classroom. This included moral aspects and code of conduct, survival psychology, area survival (tropics, desert, etc.), sea and seashore survival, edible foods, survival medicine, land travel, camouflage and evasion, Geneva Convention, Communist indoctrination, and resistance and escape for prisoners of war. The second phase consisted of land navigation, day evasion, compound exercise and interrogation.

Vietnam: Describe the duties of the crew on a Swift boat.

Herrera: Everyone in our crew had a nickname, and they were all real good at what they did. First, the skipper, Lt. j.g. Edward J. Bergin, was responsible for the boat and crew. Also, he was ordered to carry out the duties involved in Operation Market Time. Bobby Don Carver, or "Boats," was a boatswain's mate second class. He was responsible for the operational maintenance and upkeep of our Swift. Carver was a true salt of the sea. He had tattoos of a naked, long-legged beauty on one bicep, two sparrows on his upper

chest, and an anchor chain on his right wrist. And he was tough! We scraped and painted from stem to stern. Also, we stripped, shellacked and varnished every inch of that boat until she shone. We had intricate rope weaving on the support posts and handrails inside the cabin as well. She looked real nice. So nice, in fact, she could have served as flagship quarters.

Vietnam: Who else was in your crew?

Herrera: Our engineman was Seaman 2nd Class Ronald J. Rinehart. "Porky," as he was called, worked long hours in the "snipe locker" (engine compartment), maintaining the twin V-12 diesel engines and the generator after our patrols. And he never asked for any assistance. Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Robert J. Middleton, nicknamed "Gunner," cleaned and oiled all the weapons. Extra special care was given them due to the salt and ocean spray, for



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COURTESY OF RAUL HERRERA

TOP: As part of a Chieu Hoi ("open arms") mission, a Communist defector on board a Navy river patrol vessel broadcasts an entreaty to his comrades to surrender. ABOVE: Herrera beside PCF-79, while she undergoes routine maintenance at Da Nang. The crew kept PCF-79 maintained so well that "she could have served as flagship quarters."



COURTESY OF PAUL HERRERA

After a running fight with PCF-79, a blockade-running Viet Cong trawler runs aground at the mouth of the Sa Ky River, on the tip of Cape Batangan, south of Chu Lai.

obvious reasons. The deckhand was picked up in-country. He was Seaman E-3 Robert J. MacNamara. He would assist Carver or Middleton. Finally, there was me! I was also a seaman. My job as radio-radarman entailed operating the sea-to-shore radio, the FM portable radio, and maintaining an accurate deck log. Once we were underway, I advised radio control in Da Nang, established coded identification and advised them of our status. Also, I plotted our boat's position or radar contacts on oceanographic charts. When our patrolling was over, MacNamara and I would square away the boat. Oh, I almost forgot: somehow I was selected to be the boat's cook. So I had to gather stores.

Vietnam: What was your nickname?

Herrera: "Bean"! It was given to me by Carver the first day I met him. He argued that all my compadres went by that nickname aboard ship.

Vietnam: Did you ever swap duties?

Herrera: We didn't swap duties at all. But we all took turns at the helm from time to time. Even at general quarters we had specific stations to man. Mine was in the pilothouse, next to the skipper. I kept him informed of our position, the contact's position and water depth. We had certain tasks to perform in damage control and emergency steering as well. Operational readiness inspections were conducted on all crews to ensure proper procedures were being followed.

Vietnam: It must have been tight quarters aboard a Swift boat?

Herrera: Yes, but there was enough room for six crewmen. The only restricted areas were the pilothouse, cabin and the sleeping compartment at the bow of the vessel.

Vietnam: Did everyone get along?

Herrera: The tight quarters didn't cause any strain. For the most part, we considered ourselves a family. However, we were still individuals, each with our own idiosyncrasies, and sometimes our personalities clashed. For example, Carver was old Navy; he had been in 15 years already. He

didn't particularly care for the music of the younger generation. I, on the other hand, was not only into groups like the Four Tops and the Rolling Stones but also listened to the Mexican bands. Well, I had to practice my "flashing light" (Morse code) as often as possible when we were in port. One day I was doing just that, but listening to my music at the same time. Carver got real angry. But instead of writing me up, he ordered me into the lazarette compartment (the space below the decks) to clean the bilges (the bottom-most interior of the ship). I came out an hour later drenched in diesel fuel. I was so angry, I'm surprised I didn't burst into flames from spontaneous combustion. However, after a few days' cooling-off period, everything was back to normal.

Vietnam: What area did your Swift boat patrol off the coast of South Vietnam?

Herrera: The Navy divided the areas into four coastal zones. Coastal Zone I ran south from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to just past Duc Pho; Coastal Zone II extended from Duc Pho south to the Mui Ke Ga peninsula; Coastal Zone III went from there past the mouth of the Mekong to Vinh Loi on the Ca Mau peninsula; and

Coastal Zone IV wrapped around the remainder of the Ca Mau into the Gulf of Thailand to Phu Quoc Island and Ha Tien on the border with Cambodia.

Vietnam: Where was your crew operating?

Herrera: We were attached to Coastal Division 12, headquartered in Da Nang, in I Corps. Chu Lai was a detachment of Da Nang. The patrol areas included Two Charlie, Two Delta, Two Delta/November and Two Echo. The Echo patrol was too far south for daily transit, so they operated from a destroyer out there. Two boat crews rotated duty from the "tin can." Our crew was aboard USS *Newell* (DER-322) when we ran the Echo patrol.

Vietnam: What would you consider the advantages of serving aboard a Swift boat?

Herrera: That's a good question, because at the time I didn't think there were any advantages to being assigned to a Swift boat. However, there were some: not being in the bush with the grunts or patrolling the inland waterways on the PBRs (patrol boats, river) with the Brown Water Navy; it was considerably cooler in the South China Sea than it was on land; better food—

THE DEATH OF 'BOATS'

On December 6, 1967, almost five months after the Sa Ky River incident, PCF-79 was on station in the Two Delta/November patrol area, just south of Cape Batangan. The Swift boat had been directed to conduct a psychological operations mission, and the crew was at general quarters. Loudspeakers were blaring a pre-recorded message requesting VC to drop their weapons and surrender under the auspices of the *Chieu Hoi* program.

As the tiny boat made its way north along the beach from the river mouth entrance to Quang Ngai, three enemy

bunkers let loose a fusillade of fire on the unsuspecting Swift. The vessel immediately returned fire, and as PCF-79 was attempting to maneuver itself out of danger, she stalled. The engines had taken in more fuel than they could handle and had shut down.

As the engineman tried to get the twin diesels started again, bullets ripped into the small craft. Fifty- and .30-caliber rounds from PCF-79 that hit the beach sent sprays of white sand skyward, forming clouds that obscured everyone's vision. As the firefight continued, the engines

for example, we'd occasionally receive some steaks from a friend of mine aboard a reefer ship and have a barbecue in port, and once we were even invited aboard an Australian ship, the HMS *Perth*, for some champagne; there was no complicated chain of command, and it was a more relaxed atmosphere; and the adventure of it all. Just like riding a speed boat in the ocean or lake can be exhilarating, so can skimming along in the South China Sea. Because of its speed, we had to hold on to our hats as we sped along to check out an unidentified contact or to assist another Swift in trouble.

Vietnam: What dangers did you encounter operating a Swift boat?

Herrera: We were easy targets when we did psychological operations. It was part of the *Chieu Hoi* ("open arms") program. We would broadcast messages in Vietnamese, trying to get NVA or VC to change sides. They would be granted amnesty, money, clothes and food if they did so. Also, every junk or sampan we inspected could be dangerous. A hand grenade could easily be tossed, or a hidden VC with an AK-47 could produce tragic results. There was always the possibility of running aground. That's why the skipper was concerned about the depth of the water. Another potentially dangerous situation occurred at night, when we ran as a darkened ship. We were targets not only for the enemy but also for our own forces, who might have mistaken us for an enemy vessel trying to run the blockade and deliver its contraband.

Vietnam: Was there anything you could do to avoid being hit by friendly fire?

Herrera: A huge blue star was painted in the middle of a large white circle atop the pilothouse, and the top of our ammo box on the fantail was painted white, with "PCF-79" in large black letters. It was hoped that any friendly aircraft would spot this and not think we were the enemy. There was one other thing we had to contend with: Mother Nature. The sea could get pretty rough at times. On one occasion we tried to outrun an angry sea. A storm kicked up, and we headed to Chu Lai at four bells (all ahead, full speed) before the seas picked up. By the grace of God, and thanks to Lieutenant Bergin's admirable boat handling, we escaped being buried at sea by 25- to 30-foot waves.



Ninety tons of contraband are unloaded from the enemy trawler, designated "Skunk Alpha" by its U.S. Navy captors, after being refloated and brought to Chu Lai.

kicked in and the Swift boat quickly began to maneuver itself out of harm's way. Suddenly, Bobby Don "Boats" Carver fell with a bullet in his head. Raul Herrera recalls the tragedy: "He died instantly. The skipper, Lt. j.g. Edward J. Bergin, ordered me to send a flash traffic message requesting a medevac and a rendezvous with the destroyer on station. Carver was hoisted up to the destroyer by a basket and put aboard the medevac chopper from there. Things just weren't the same after that. Patrolling around Cape Batangan became more difficult."

Shortly after Carver's death, Herrera began experiencing nightmares. After finishing his 13-month tour, the young Mexican-American returned to the United

States to resume his education and get on with his life like most other returning Vietnam veterans. However, thoughts of Carver remained with him.

"I developed a fear of showering," Herrera recalls. "I just knew that upon opening my eyes after rinsing the shampoo from my hair, I'd be staring into Carver's bloodied face. Then one day a thought struck me: Maybe Carver wants me to write about our efforts on PCF-79. I decided to do it. I began research on Operation Market Time, the trawler incident, etc. Once I began writing my book, the nightmares ceased."

The nightmares are gone, but the memories will always be there of "Boats" Carver, a true salt of the sea. **A.H.**

Vietnam: Did any Swift boats capsize while you were there?

Herrera: I recall PCF-76, skippered by Lt. j.g. Dan Daly, going down at the mouth of the Cua Viet River in November 1967. Miraculously, the entire crew was saved. A year before, another Swift had gone down in the same area but, unfortunately, some of that crew were lost.

Vietnam: Did you ever provide support for any land operations?

Herrera: I remember acting as a blocking force once near Quang Ngai. Some ground troops had been making a push toward the coast one night. Just before daybreak, a large number of junks and sampans had made their way to sea and congregated in a small fleet approximately 1,000 yards from the beach. We began checking boats for passenger IDs and had detained 18 individuals by the end of the day. Later, back in port, we were told that five of the 18 were draft evaders and eight were confirmed Viet Cong. Our South Vietnamese naval liaison officer was instrumental in picking out suspicious individuals.

Vietnam: What were boarding operations like?

Herrera: There was always cause for concern. You had to be careful. The fishing junks and sampans were scattered in certain locations of each patrol area. We would conduct inspections of these boats on a random basis. Most of the junks and sampans were occupied by older fishermen, trying to catch enough fish so their families could survive, or to sell at the village market. Also, weapons were often sealed in tubular canisters and secured to the junks' undersides. So we would drag a rope along the bottom of the junk's keel to check for contraband. The transiting cargo vessels, on the other hand, always required on-board inspection. They were capable of carrying large containers, which they usually filled with rice. We used a metal detector rod to probe the containers and check for weapons. Once Operation Market Time was in full swing, though, the enemy reduced its use of those larger boats because the odds of being

stopped were considerably greater than with a smaller vessel.

Vietnam: Did your Swift boat ever go into the inland waterways to conduct any operations?

Herrera: Yes. *PCF-79* was part of a three-boat team that was on orders to conduct a psychological operations campaign along the Cua Dai River, south of Da Nang. For that mission, we stacked sandbags about 2 feet high from the pilothouse to the fantail. We weren't taking any chances; a Swift upriver is to the enemy what a red cape is to a raging bull. Sure enough, we took a hit in the rear of the cabin on the starboard side. I looked down into the boat cabin from my position in the pilothouse, after hearing what sounded like a recoilless rifle hit, and saw our South Vietnamese liaison officer covering his face with his hands and screaming wildly. The round had shattered all our milk-glass coffee cups, which had peppered his face. Fortunately, his wounds were minor. We immediately returned fire, but were ordered to cease because our line of fire was in the direction of a so-called friendly village. So we weren't able to bag the enemy sniper. We were lucky. We only took one round, and he was gone.

Vietnam: Your vessel, *PCF-79*, helped capture a Communist trawler filled with supplies and ammunition. Tell us about that.

Herrera: The "Sa Ky River Victory" is how the Battle at Cape Batangan, just north of Quang Ngai, was referred to by the South Vietnamese. On July 11, 1967, a Navy SP-2H Market Time surveillance aircraft on a routine patrol along the Quang Ngai coast spotted a steel-hulled vessel around 1930 hours running toward the coastline with no harbor nearby. I Corps Market Time Commander Charles R. Stephan ordered the destroyer USS *Wilhoite* to pursue the contact, which had quickly changed course to a south-southeasterly direction. Commander E. W. Hays, skipper of *Wilhoite*, maneuvered his ship to an intercept point with the enemy contact, now code-named Skunk Alpha.

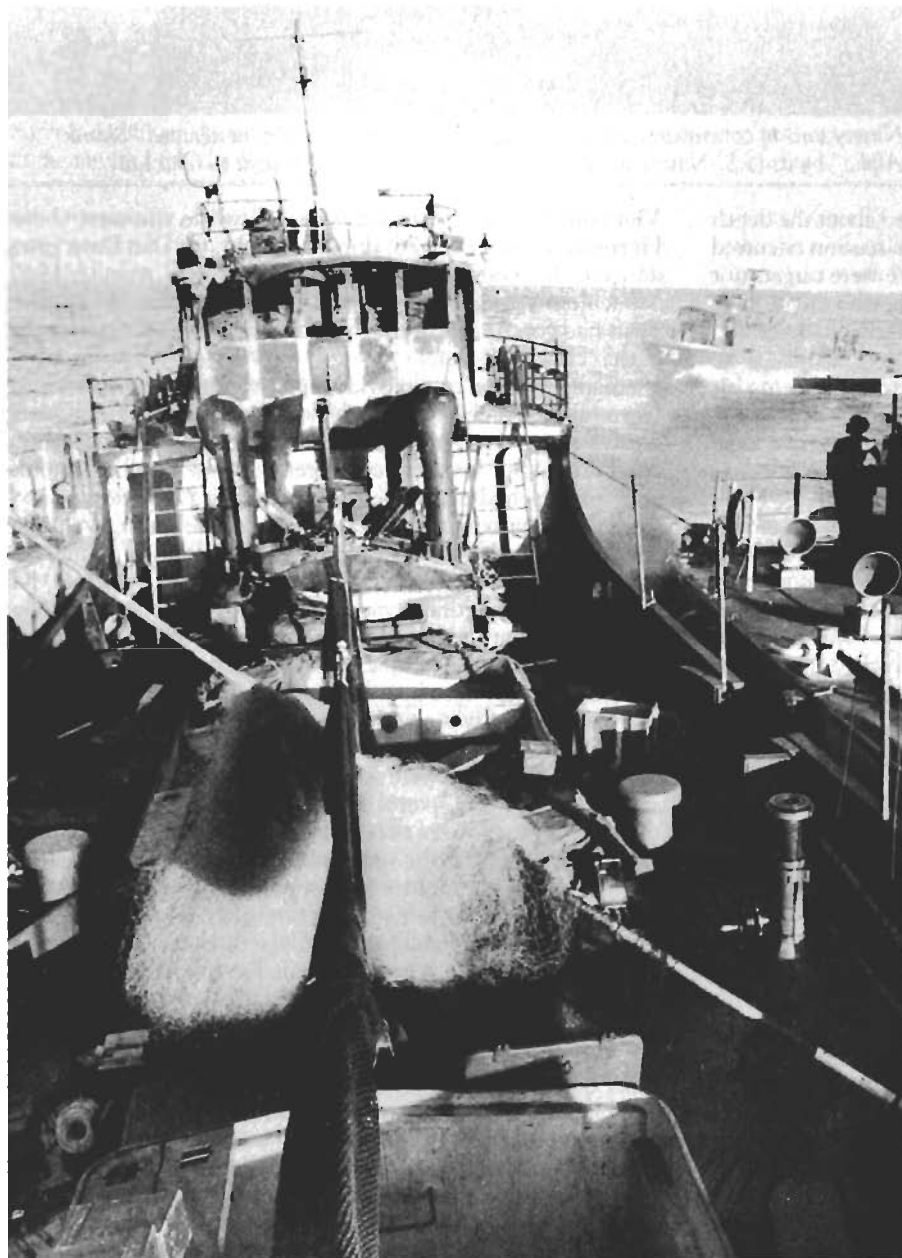
Vietnam: Skunk was Navy lingo for the enemy?

Herrera: Every branch of the service has its own "language," so to speak. For example, the Air Force has bogies at 10 o'clock. The Navy referred to an unidentified surface contact as a skunk. The first unidentified contact of the day was Alpha...the second, Bravo...the third, Charlie...and so on and so forth. Anyway... *Wilhoite* circled the trawler at daybreak, taking pictures, and then set course back to the coast. The destroyer kept radar surveillance from beyond the horizon. On Thursday, July 13, 1967, at 1300 hours, Skunk Alpha anchored 50 nautical miles east of the

Paracel Islands and about 200 nautical miles east-northeast of Chu Lai. By 1600, Skunk Alpha was back on the move. At 2300, she made a decisive change in course and turned in a southwesterly direction.

Vietnam: It definitely sounds like an enemy vessel trying to run the blockade.

Herrera: Without a doubt. An interception plan was drawn up in Da Nang by members of the Northern Surveillance Group, also headed by Commander Stephan. It was anticipated that the trawler would attempt landfall somewhere near Cape Batangan, south of Chu Lai. The plan called for a four-vessel formation, two on either side of the trawler, that would stay astern of the enemy ship as it continued toward its destination. Landfall was expected around midnight, when darkness of the moon would provide additional cover. Three ships were already picked for the interception: USS *Wilhoite*, USS *Gallop* (PG-85), and the Coast Guard cutter *Point Orient* (WPB-82319). The fourth vessel would be a Swift, but it would be selected at the last minute, when the skunk made its final dash for shore. Lieutenant Victor G. Reiling, Jr., First Coastal Zone psychological operations officer, and his South Vietnamese counterpart blasted a prerecorded message over a loudspeaker on *Point Orient* at Skunk Alpha. Now the trawler was well inside the territorial waters of the Republic of South Vietnam. *PCF-79* was tapped as the fourth vessel in the interception. Skunk Alpha disregarded the message, and our Swift and *Point Orient* fired warning shots across the trawler's bow. Closer to shore, the larger ships had temporarily lost radar contact. Bergin and I saw a huge radar contact on our scope, which he reported to Stephan aboard *Wilhoite*: "I've got one fast moving contact headed up the river mouth. Request permission to go in and get him." Stephan replied: "Per grau [permission granted]." Then the skipper on *Point Orient* broke in: "Affirmative, Delta/No-



An on-board view of Skunk Alpha, with *PCF-79* following in close attendance. Earlier, Skunk Alpha had run aground after *PCF-79* hit it with a round of white phosphorous.

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vember. That's our contact. Let's go get 'em." Bergin replied, "I'm on my way!"

Vietnam: And the chase was on.

Herrera: All hell broke loose. Red tracer rounds were coming and going in every direction. Helo gunships from Task Force Oregon dropped flares. Suddenly, Skunk Alpha seemed to rise like a giant from beneath the sea. When we were within 200 yards of the ship, Carver's first high explosive 81mm mortar round missed its mark. Then we got so close that Rinehart had to hand load the mortar shell while Carver leveled it off. He took aim and let go a round of "Willie-Pete" (white phosphorus) directly into the starboard side of the trawler's pilothouse. Skunk Alpha's pilothouse erupted into a blinding-white, glowing ball of fire. Within minutes, she ran aground at the mouth of the Sa Ky River, on the tip of Cape Batangan.

Vietnam: Did your crew receive any special recognition for capturing the Communist trawler?

Herrera: Premier Nguyen Cao Ky and Vice President Nguyen Van Thieu personally decorated our crew and the others involved in the capture of the Communist gunrunner with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and awards ceremony was held in Da Nang next to the "White Elephant" (headquarters of the Naval Support Activity commander).

Vietnam: How much contraband was Skunk Alpha transporting?

Herrera: More than 90 tons of supplies: nearly 400,000 rounds of 7.62 incendiary-type ammo, more than 300,000 rounds of 7.62 ball type, 5,753 rounds of 12.7mm ball type, nearly 1,000 82mm mortar rounds, recoilless rifle rounds, B-40 rockets, anti-per-



HENRY HANSEN, PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES

ABOVE: Skunk Alpha lies at dockside in Da Nang, where an awards ceremony was held for the naval personnel involved in her capture. **LEFT:** South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky awards the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry to one of the U.S. Navy participants.

sonnel grenades, concussion grenades, C-4 explosives, TNT, electrical detonators, detonator cord and ignitors. Also 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons, .50-caliber machine guns, nearly 1,000 AK-44 rifles, more than 150 AK-56 rifles, 25 B-40 rocket launchers and 9 K-53 machine guns.

Vietnam: That's quite a haul.

Herrera: Skunk Alpha had been well suited for her mission. Her holds were lined with fiberglass between the hull and the sheathing. She was equipped with a high-

capacity pumping system. And her engine was muffled for silent running. Also, there were 2,000 pounds of TNT strategically located aboard the vessel, set to self-destruct if she were to fail. Luckily, Carver's round knocked out the detonating button. He saved thousands of allied lives, including those of our crew. Our Swift surely would have gone down in that explosion! The seizure of Skunk Alpha is proof that Operation Market Time was successful in cutting sea infiltration of supplies to the NVA and VC.

Vietnam veteran Al Hemingway lives in Connecticut. Suggested for further reading: Brown Water, Black Beret, by Thomas Cutler (Naval Institute Press); and Riverine: Brown Water War in Vietnam, by Jim Mesk (Squadron/Signal Publications).