

DICK WALTON

USCGC POINT GREY (WPB-82324) – Feb68 to Feb69

Navy Unit Commendation – 1 Jun 68 to 31 Dec 68

April/May 2013 Alumni Bulletin

...engaged in the interdiction of a Communist insurgent resupply ship on 1 March 1968. He contributed very significantly to driving the enemy vessel ashore resulting in its subsequent self-destruction. His magnificent use of his vessel's weaponry resulted in numerous hits on the armed enemy ship, the suppression of return fire and interdiction of enemy attempts to off-load the cargo, which consisted of at least 650 small arms and large quantities of heavy caliber, automatic weapon and small arms ammunition.

The subsequent capture of this cargo deprived the Communist insurgents of sorely needed arms and ammunition. Lieutenant Junior Grade Walton's courage under fire, superb ship handling, and outstanding leadership were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

The induction program included a luncheon in the 'O' Club, a review of the Corps of Cadets and 3 volleys from the ceremonial canons outside Yeaton Hall.

Coast Guard Awards and Medals Board – List of CG Units Coming Under Hostile Fire

August 30, 2004

Encl. (16) to COMDTINST 650.25b MEDALS AND AWARDS MANUAL

POINT GREY – 29 Feb 68, 1 Mar68, 10 Oct 68 and 29 Jan 69

October 1968 – Coast Guard Division Thirteen Newsletter

The POINT GREY while patrolling north, supported a Vietnamese reconnaissance team by providing cover for insertion and extraction into enemy territory and possible NGFS. The sweep netted two VC WIA (wounded in action), five CIA (captured in action) and many documents. After extraction the GREY fired on other base camps in the area.

...on another patrol up north. POINT GREY received a call from the Army in the area for support. The Army had chased 6 to 10 VC into the hills near the coast. The POINT GREY, along with a Navy Swift boat took the area under fire. The results were 6 VC KIA, 2 probably VC KIA, 1 structure destroyed, 2 structures damaged, several pieces of equipment and many documents captured. The spotter aircraft told the POINT GREY their shooting was outstanding and the most accurate he had seen.

The POINT GREY, while patrolling on a calm night during her busy patrol, received an urgent call from the Army south of them stating they were under attack and needed emergency illumination. The GREY proceeded to their position and responded with illumination. Her illumination enabled the Army to see the enemy and break off the attacks - a result of more accurate fire power now that the enemy positions were visible.

Ship's Log – 29 Feb 68

1230H - Man Overboard drill.

1240H – Held General Quarters drill.

1245H – Held Abandon Ship drill.

Ship's Log – 1 Mar 68

0000H - ...unit in high alert status (in patrol area 2EM) for possible infiltration attempt of enemy trawler designated 29F2, taking station 4 miles from beach in blocking position. SDZ USCGC ANDROSCOGGIN designated OSC, PERMEATE OTC, for inner blockade units.

0130H – All ahead flank speed. Enemy trawler 29F2 closing beach.

0145H – Sounded General Quarters

0200H – Position RS 9233. 29F2 position RS 9237. Continued to close contact. SDR, SDE, SDEM, SDZ and this unit proceeding to surround 29F2. Enemy trawler closing beach at 12 knots.

0210H – 29F2 illuminated by M/T units and helicopter gunships.

0220H – 29F2 taken under destructive fire by M/T units. This unit unable to fire due to close proximity of friendly units.

0225H – 29F2 in position RS 8933 approximately 150 yards from beach. 29F2 returning heavy machine gun fire and laying smoke screen.

0226H – This unit approximately 1000 yards from enemy trawler. Commenced 81mm illuminations and 50cal machine gun fire in company with SDR, SDE, SDEM. Trawler

beached engulfed in smoke screen and appeared to be burning. 29F2 under heavy fire from all units in area. Hostile fire suppressed. Continued illumination of 29F2.

0300H – Large explosion erupted from 29F2 apparently from forward holds. Approximately 75% of trawler intact.

0320H – Second explosion believed to be self-destruct system ripped 29F2 completely apart. Explosion lifted 1000 feet and scattered heavy debris among M/T units lying 300 – 400 yards off. This unit suffered minor damage to deck and bridge from falling debris. No personnel casualties.

0330H – Continuing to standby to provide illumination for area unit shore units arrived to investigate.

0350H – PERMEATE secured this unit to resume normal patrol. Ceased illumination. Total ammunition expended 1950 rds 50cal, 35 rds 81mm illumination. No personnel or material casualties. This unit and other M/T and helicopter units commended by CTU 115.1 for outstanding performance in destroying 1 enemy trawler.

WIKIPEDIA

A steel-hulled trawler was interdicted and destroyed on 1 March 1968 attempting to smuggle supplies and ammunition ashore near Cu Lao Re Island. The trawler was destroyed by mortar fire from PT GREY assisted by PT WELCOME, USCGC ANDROSCOGGIN and two U.S. Navy Patrol Craft Fast, PCF-18 and PCF-20.

RELATED ARTICLES/WRITINGS

USCGC POINT GREY Supports SEALS

ENC Chinnis Red Cross Message

LST Docks – Cat Lo Incoming

Thanksgiving 1968

Old Habits Are Hard To Break

USCG LST Pilots

Vietnam – The First Month

In Service to Country and Humanity

Largely as a result of the work of Dick Walton, published in the last several bulletins, Gary Thornton '67 contacted him with his personal recollections as the Combat Information Center Officer while on the WINONA in the early morning hours of March 1, 1968. Gary was asked to put his story on paper and to relate what happened before, during and after that sinking of an enemy trawler on their very first patrol. Gary wrote an excellent account of that combat incident in three parts. **Attachment One** is entitled "Countdown to Combat," **Attachment Two** "Victory at Sea" and **Attachment Three** "Reflections on Returning Home." Gary is modeling my objective as Class Correspondent to encourage all those who served in Vietnam to tell their story before it is lost forever. Our children and their children and their children should have the gift of knowing that our families served their country – and how they did so.

USCGC POINT GREY SUPPORTS SEALS

Dick Walton

PT GREY was on patrol in area 7 when a classified message arrived midafternoon. The message directed the PT GREY to rendezvous with a Seal Team off the mouth of the Co Chien River at specific coordinates at 2200 local time to provide gunfire support as needed.

The crew went through general quarters drills to get ready for all possible requirements and then proceeded to the rendezvous point to arrive at 2200. About 2130 went to general quarters and proceeded the last distance to rendezvous with the Seal Team.

The night was the darkest of dark and visibility was very limited. At 2159 there was nothing on the radar scope, nothing visible, and no sounds heard. At 2200, an approximately 30-foot boat came along side our starboard (seaward side) and a Seal LT and two others came aboard PT GREY.

The Seal LT briefed that mission was a sweep scheduled to capture/kill some Viet Cong terrorists known to be in the area and would last about 4-6 hours. The Seal Team conducting the sweep was dropped off in the search area prior to the Seal boat coming to the PT GREY. The Seal members aboard the PT GREY had radio contact with the Seal Team on the beach and we listened as the search was conducted. At least 4 times we heard "There's one, let's check him out." Then, "No weapons, too old for VC, we won't kill/capture this one."

On board PT GREY we tracked where the Seals on the beach were in case we had to provide gunfire support with our 81mm mortar. After the first two hours, I (Dick Walton, CO) was getting nervous and started to light a cigarette to reduce the tension. The Seal LT stopped me before I could light up, reminding me that a match and a cigarette could be seen great distances at night over open water.

Passed the word around the boat re smoking and continued to stand by and receive reports from the beach. At approximately 0300, the Seals on the beach turned back for their pickup point. The Seal boat that had stayed alongside the PT GREY took the Seal LT and his team off at approximately 0330. Could not hear the Seal boat and lost sight of it shortly after it left.

PT GREY stood by to provide gunfire support until the seals on the beach had boarded their boat and was headed back to their headquarters. PT GREY then secured from General Quarters, moved off the shore area, and headed out to sea for a late reveille call for the crew.

ENC CHINNIS RED CROSS MESSAGE

Dick Walton

The Point Grey was on patrol three areas south of Cam Ranh Bay late Friday afternoon when a Red Cross message came in for ENC Chinnis. The Red Cross stated that his aunt (who had raised him from a young boy) was not expected to live very long and requested ENC Chinnis' presence before she passed away.

As CO, I (LTJG Dick Walton) talked to the chief about the request. Chief Chinnis requested that he be allowed to visit his aunt and I concurred with his request. At this point, I sent a "UNIDOR" (Unless Otherwise Directed) message to the Point Grey's Administrative/Operations Command Division 13 in CAT LO stating that unless I heard otherwise within one hour, I intended to authorize Chief Chinnis leave and send him to Cam Ranh Bay air field for a flight to the US.

While waiting for a response from Division 13, the chief and I discussed how and who could fill in for him in his absence. Then I took out a copy of the orders that I had sending me to Vietnam and typed a set of orders for Chief Chinnis to use to get to the US. About the same time, I set up what was called a "daisy chain" to get Chief Chinnis to Cam Ranh Bay and the airport. (A daisy chain is when the patrol boat from one patrol area goes to the edge of their patrol area to rendezvous with the patrol boat in an adjacent area to transfer personnel or goods.)

The patrol boats in the two areas between the Point Grey and Cam Ranh Bay were "Swift Boats" which had about twice the speed of the Point Grey. By the time Point Grey reached the rendezvous point with the Swift Boat, Chief Chinnis was packed and ready to go and his "orders" were typed and signed. Over an hour had passed and nothing was heard from Division 13, so Chief Chinnis with bags and orders in hand boarded the Swift Boat for the first part of his trip to Cam Ranh Bay. The Swift Boats got him to Cam Ranh Bay in about three hours and set up transportation to get the him from the boat docks to the airport which took about 40 minutes. Chief Chinnis boarded a plane to the US about one hour after arriving at the airport.

Early the next Monday morning, I received a message from Division 13 disapproving emergency leave for Chief Chinnis. I explained that I had waited over an hour after sending my UNIDOR message, received no response, and let the Chief go to the US on leave as I had indicated. I later learned that the Division 13 radio watch basically shut down on weekend evenings; however, after my UNIDOR message, the watch was maintained at all times.

Chief Chinnis returned in about two weeks. During his absence the senior engineman filled in and maintained the plant both inport and on patrol. Chief Chinnis said that while he was enroute back to Vietnam the Coast Guard Office he was in noticed that there were no funding documentation on the orders. It took an extra day for the funding for the document to be approved and Chief Chinnis traveling back to Vietnam.

LST DOCKS - CAT LO INCOMING

Dick Walton

WPB docks for Cat Lo, Division 13 headquarters, were located about 5-6 miles up a twisting channel from deep water in the Vung Tau area. For security reasons, patrols departing from Cat Lo usually departed at midnight. (I don't remember if that was true at all times or if it only applied to specific times.) Also, when heading out on patrol, it seemed that the majority of the crew (except CO/XO and duty section) visited clubs until shortly before sailing time.

One night as Point Grey was headed out on patrol,, we were at a point approximately one-half way down the channel to an area where LSTs were docked known as the LST Docks. As we entered the LST Dock area,, mortar splashes/explosions started occurring near a docked LST and both forward and astern of the Point Grey.

Several thoughts ran through my (LTJG Dick Walton, CO) mind: Speed up - increased speed to throw aim off. Should I go to general quarters?

Answer: No!

People were under the influence and would probably be worse off than staying in their bunks. Also, I didn't know where source of firing located; couldn't fire back..

Question: Should I send encrypted message to Navy control center?

Answer: No!

Would take too much time.

Sent voice message: incoming at LST Docks. Made minor course changes to go with speed change - splashes started to fall astern. After 5-10 minutes, came out of LST channel area and mortar shelling stopped.

Waited until we cleared the Vung Tau channel area and went to sleep - another underway day in Vietnam.

THANKSGIVING 1968

Dick Walton

On 24 November 1968, Point Grey pulled into Division 13 docks in Cat Lo in late afternoon after completing a Market Time patrol. Shortly after tying up, personnel from Division 13 offices came to the dock and told us that a typhoon was predicted to come ashore near Cat Lo in the next 8-12 hours.

The Division Commander made the decision that all patrol boats in port at Cat Lo would sortie to Con Son Island, about 120 miles to the south of Cat Lo, to negate potential damage. Point Grey didn't have time to refuel or resupply before departing Cat Lo; however, within 30 minutes of the notice to sortie, Point Grey was underway to Con Son.

As soon as Point Grey cleared Vung Tau and hit the South China Sea, the wind started to increase and seas were building. As we headed south the wind and seas built to the point that I had never seen higher winds or seas in my 10+ months in Vietnam. The boat was pitching, rolling, and turning every which way (fortunately not over).

Chief Engineman Chinnis, my senior engineer, said that he and his crew had been trying to sound the fuel tanks; however, due to the motion of the boat, the tanks could be either full or empty. His opinion was that we had less than 1/2 of a full tank. The good news was that we could refuel at Con Son Island or there were LSTs and DD's in the area that we could refuel from.

As the night became longer, the wind and seas became higher. I don't think anyone got much sleep, and as CO I (LTJG Walton) was on the bridge watching the action going on around me. About 0300 we got a recall message from Division 13 to come back to Cat Lo as the storm was now predicted to veer away from Cat Lo. Point Grey turned around and started back; the wind and seas were as strong and large as before we got the recall message.

Our Culinary Specialist, CS2 Diwa, was the best cook/chef in Vietnam, in my opinion. He cooked freshly baked pastries in the morning; warm food and sandwiches for lunch, and the dinners were to die for. (If I had been anywhere else other than Vietnam, I probably would have gained 30 pounds. Vietnam heat, worry about the boat, operational concerns, etc. kept the weight off of almost everyone.)

As 25 November - Thanksgiving was arriving - CS2 Diwa was ready. He had a turkey that was large enough to feed the entire crew, was ready to prepare dressing, veggies, rolls, etc. and had cranberry sauce to put on the table. At approximately 0500, CS2 DIWA was up and in the galley, getting the Thanksgiving meal ready to go, starting with the turkey. I came down from the bridge to the galley to get a cup of coffee and found DIWA in front of the stove, watching it closely.

I asked him what he was doing and he said that the turkey had come out of the oven and onto the deck and he was watching to make sure it didn't happen again.

To make a long story short, the turkey jumped out of the oven at least three more times and then the turkey caught on fire. The turkey fire was extinguished with a fire extinguisher. At this point I intervened with the cooking process and we buried the turkey at sea.

As the day got longer the winds and seas moderated; the engineers were able to determine that we had enough fuel to get back to Cat Lo and for CS2 Diwa to prepare sandwiches without them jumping off plates.

After we returned to Cat Lo, CS2 Diwa requisitioned another turkey and trimmings and Point Grey celebrated Thanksgiving on 26 November 1968.

OLD HABITS ARE HARD TO BREAK

Dick Walton

The crews on the Coast Guard 82 foot patrol boats in Vietnam largely came from units with duties that involved Search and Rescue. The crew on the Point Grey was no different. On 25 March 1968, the Point Grey was on patrol in area 1C that included the area where the Cua Viet River runs into the South China Sea as well as portions of the 17th parallel, the dividing line between North and South Vietnam.

According to intelligence reports, there was a possibility that North Vietnamese patrol boats could be encountered in area 10. (Note: North Vietnamese patrol boats were supposedly about twice as fast and more heavily armed than the 82 footers.)

About 1725, Point Grey was notified by units near the Cua Viet River that a barge with cranes, building material, 6 personnel aboard and an LCM broke away from a nearby mooring buoy.

The bar where the Cua Viet River runs into the South China Sea is too shallow at low tide for an 82 foot patrol boat to enter. At 1815 two LCMs pulled the barge (with 6 people aboard) and LCM off the beach and headed out to sea where the Point Grey was patrolling. The two LCMs didn't have enough fuel to maintain the tow for the length of time that a Navy ship could arrive on scene to take over towing duties and the six personnel were going to stay aboard to ensure no damage occurred to the equipment and to be able to start work as soon as the barge could be taken to the work site.

The Point Grey was contacted and requested to take the barge tow from the LCMs until the morning of 26 March when a navy Rescue and Salvage (ARS) vessel would arrive on scene to take over the tow. After determining (CO-LTJG Walton and BMC Shuttles) that we could in fact take the barge in tow, I (CO) confirmed Point Grey could accept the tow and took up towing duties about 1850.

Our Navy control center in Danang overheard the radio traffic and called Point Grey to remind us of the Vietnamese patrol boat threat and to suggest that we not take the tow. I advised the control center that we would drop the tow at the first hint of a Vietnam patrol boat threat but would maintain the tow.

The Point Grey and barge maintained a speed of approximately two knots until approximately 0710 on 26 March 1968 when the Navy ARS arrived on scene and relieved Point Grey of the tow. The people on the barge were most grateful for the Point Grey efforts on their behalf.

(Note: Have talked with many 82 foot WPBs who patrolled on the DMZ and no one ever ran into or saw a North Vietnamese patrol boat.)

USCG LST PILOTS

Dick Walton

It was a sunny September 1968 day at the mouth of the Bassac River while on Market Time patrol in Vietnam on the USCG Cutter Point Grey. The 400 foot Navy LST, Park County, steamed by going up the river to resupply navy bases. A short time later, the LST sent a voice message requesting Point Grey to come along side.

When alongside, the LST CO stated that the LST was aground and requested assistance. Several attempts were made to free the LST; however, all were unsuccessful. Fortunately, the LST had run aground at low tide and as time went by and the tide rose, the LST floated free.

The channel leading to the river was very narrow and irregular with shallow water on both sides. The LST CO requested that the PT Grey lead the LST into the river where the buoys were located. Unfortunately, the PT Grey's fathometer was out of commission.

After conferring with my Chief Bosun, Tom Shutters, the chief and I (LTJG Dick Walton) agreed to go aboard the LST to advise of problem areas and assist in conning the ship to the river mouth where the channel had buoys to keep vessels in the channel. The Point Grey XO, Warren Greenlaw, was left in charge to lead the LST - at least show where the PT Grey could go in the shallow waters. BMC Shutters and I piloted the LST from her current position to the start of the buoyed channel. BMC Shutters, LTJG Greenlaw and I were very familiar with the waters having patrolled the area many times on Market Time patrols.

Climbing up the side of the LST was like climbing up a mountain from the deck of the Point Grey. Got to the bridge, gripped and grinned, agreed to piloting process, and got underway.

It only took about a pack of cigarettes from start to the buoyed channel. (30-50 minutes in real time.) As BMC Shutters and I were leaving, the LST navigator mentioned that we went over the same place where the LST initially went aground. (Thank goodness for a rising tide!)

Received many thanks and goodies for the piloting duties. Still waiting for the pilot license.

VIETNAM – THE FIRST MONTH

Dick Walton

All Coast Guard personnel going to Vietnam were volunteers who went through approximately 6 weeks of pre-deployment training at Coast Guard Base Alameda (4 weeks), SERE training (HQ San Diego-1 week) and Marine weapons training (Camp Pendleton - 1 week). My (LTJG Richard Walton) training at Coast Guard Base Alameda was reduced to three weeks as replacement perspective commanding officers for the Market Time 82 foot patrol boats were needed sooner than anticipated.

After returning to Coast Guard Base Alameda from two weeks of SERE and Marine Corps weapons training, I was told my last week of training had been canceled and that I would be going to Los Angeles, CA. to catch a commercial flight to Danang, Vietnam. During the Vietnam Conflict, the Armed Forces contracted commercial aircraft to fly personnel into Vietnam.

Arrived in Los Angeles at zero dark hundred and boarded the commercial flight early morning Friday, 9 February 1968 (Los Angeles time). I was seated next to another Coast Guard LTJG who was going over as a perspective XO. He was talking about how he was formerly stationed in the Fourteenth District Headquarters (Honolulu, Hawaii) and how he planned to meet some of his friends when the plane landed in Honolulu.

After several hours flying, we landed in Honolulu. The flight attendants said that we should be on the ground for approximately one hour and should not go far beyond the gate where the plane was located. My seatmate told me he was going beyond the gate where his friends were located. I told him that he should check with the gate about every 15 minutes as it would be MOST embarrassing to miss the plane going to Vietnam.

After the hour was up, the plane was loaded (except for my Coast Guard seat mate). The stewardess asked where my seatmate was and I said that I expected him back shortly and could the plane wait for a few minutes. The stewardess said no, the doors closed, and the plane was backed away from the gate. As the plane was backing from the gate, my seatmate arrived at the loading platform and started waving. I told the stewardess, who spoke with the pilot who said that we could not go back to the gate that we were leaving. I felt sorry for my seatmate; however, I couldn't do anything and started wondering what his next steps would be.

Fortunately, air traffic was extremely heavy, there was an issue with one of the arriving aircraft, and after approximately 40 minutes of waiting for a takeoff slot the pilot stated that we would taxi back to our departure gate and top off fuel for our flight to Okinawa. We deplaned for fueling, reboarded with my seatmate rejoining the group and took off for Okinawa.

During the flight to Okinawa, the aircraft crossed the International Date Line, flying West to East. (When crossing the International Date Line from West to East, a day is lost so 9 February 1968 changed to 8 February 1968.) Landed at Okinawa in mid to late afternoon and we all deplaned while the aircraft was refueled. There was no terminal available, so we settled in beside one of the hangars. The day was hot, dry, and there was sand/dust everywhere. While we were waiting for the aircraft to be refueled, a Marine Corps C-130 aircraft taxied to the hangar and discharged a group of Marines returning from Vietnam.

These guys were covered in red dust/dirt, looked like they had been beat with the tired stick, and moved more slowly than one would expect Marines to move. I believe that all of us watching had the collective thought, "What have I gotten myself into?"

After over an hour enjoying the comforts of the Okinawa country side, we reboarded the aircraft for the final leg into Danang. Took off, had supper after an hour or so, and settled in to arrive in Danang about 11:30 PM local time on 8 February, 1968. About 30 minutes out, the pilot told everyone to close the window shades prior to landing. Before closing the window shade, I looked out our side of the aircraft and there was a fighter jet flying formation very close to the wingtip. Looked out the other side and there was a second fighter jet flying formation very close to that wingtip.

The pilot then notified us that the aircraft would be performing a combat landing which meant that we would descend at 2000-3000 feet per minute until slightly above the runway, flare the plane and then land. We did that and I think it took several minutes after we landed until my stomach caught up with my body.

We taxied to a specified location at the airport and stopped. After the engines spooled down, steps put alongside the aircraft, and the aircraft doors opened, two Marines came to the door, announced that the airport had just been mortared and more mortar fire was expected. The Marines further announced that there were fox holes beside the route to the airport "check-in" center.

My seatmate and I were the only Coast Guard personnel on the aircraft; seemed like we were also some of the last people to be checked in. It was approximately 0200 on 9 February 1968 (Danang time) before we finally completed our first "check in" and retrieved our baggage. After another 30 minutes we found two navy shore patrol personnel in a pickup truck that would take us to the Coast Guard piers.

The two navy personnel had flak jackets and helmets on, had pistols, rifles, and a shotgun; my Coast Guard buddy and I had on khaki short sleeve shirts with collar devices, khaki trousers, regular shoes, and combination hats with the spread winged eagle on the front. The shore patrol folks told us to hop into the bed of the pickup truck, secure our bags, sit on the bench, and suggested that we remove our hats and collar devices as snipers tended to aim on those things. (Not sure to this day if the shore patrol guys were pulling new guys legs or were serious, or maybe a little of both.)

Then the hunt began; a trip that should have taken approximately 30-45 minutes took about 2.5 hours as we toured the Danang waterfront. Sometime after 0500 we arrived at the Coast Guard docks. We bailed off the back of the pickup, put our hats and insignia on, grabbed our bags, (may have even said thank you to our tour guides) and headed to the galley for some coffee and breakfast.

We checked in at the Coast Guard office and stood by for the next step. My Coast Guard buddy was told that he would be assigned to a patrol boat that was on patrol and should put his bags, etc. in the transient area until his boat came in. I was told that I would be making indoctrination patrols on the Point Grey until such time that I would relieve the Commanding Officer of his duties. Additionally, I was told that the Point Grey was scheduled to get underway at 0900 so I should take my baggage to the boat. Another officer stationed at Coast Guard Division 12 escorted me to the boat and introduced me to the Commanding Officer. About one hour after going aboard, the Point Grey got underway for a patrol in area 1 near the 17th parallel that divides North and South Vietnam.

After clearing the harbor, I crashed and slept for about 6-7 hours. After being briefed on the different processes to follow in various scenarios, I stood my first watch with the XO during the midwatch of 10 February 1968. After relieving the 2000-2400 watch, the XO explained some on station guidelines and then left me to wander around the bridge to familiarize myself with the location of the various equipment.

When I got by the radio, I had the greatest urge to get on the radio and say "Bullwinkle has arrived!" (At the Coast Guard Academy all cadets get nicknames; you didn't select your nickname, it is chosen for you. Needless to say, my nickname was "Bullwinkle".) However, I resisted the urge and continued my familiarization. The urge lessened as time passed.

We spent 4 days stopping, boarding, and inspecting junks before returning to Danang. Coast Guard Division 12 had a morning meeting that all Division and in port WPB officers attended. At my first Division 12 meeting, the Division Commander, CDR Richard Bauman, started the meeting by saying that the Danang Coastal Surveillance Center (CSC) that controlled/oversaw the operation of Market Time operations and maintained radio contact with all underway Market Time vessels had heard a strange radio message: "Bullwinkle has arrived!"

He asked if anyone knew anything about it. I had to confess that my nickname was Bullwinkle; however, I had stifled all urges to make the announcement. After the meeting, CDR Bauman called me aside and told me that one of my classmates had told him what my nickname was. He also said that almost everyone had the urge to make the "I have arrived." radio call.

I made one more familiarization patrol as an extra watch stander/CO learnee and was told to take all actions necessary to assume command while on the patrol before I relieved as Commanding Officer. On this second patrol, I welcomed BMC Tom Shutters aboard the Point

Grey. BMC Shuttles was the senior Coast Guard enlisted person for the Coast Guard personnel taking the SERE/Weapons training I underwent where I was the senior Coast Guard officer.

The second patrol went by quickly and on 26 February 1968 I assumed duties as Commanding Officer of Point Grey. On the same day, LTJG Greenlaw assumed duties as Point Grey XO. (LTJG Greenlaw had been in-country approximately 5 months.)

On 28 February 1968 got underway at 0900 on my first war patrol as CO and my first patrol in area(s) south of Danang. At 1700 received report of suspicious sampans in position near broached barges. From 1745-2030 stood by broached barges and fired 5 rounds illumination to try to spot 10-15 sampans reported 300-500 yards off the beach. Nothing spotted with illumination and remained standing by for several hours for possible assistance to beach units.

Thursday, 29 February 1968, dawned bright and clear with many sampans in the area fishing. At 0630 received message concerning potential North Vietnamese Trawler infiltration. At 1345 rendezvoused with USCGC Androscoggin to give publications from the beach; departed at 1410 with nothing said about the trawler. Shortly thereafter, Androscoggin was assigned to track the trawler when it reached a specified point.

Conducted GQ drills aboard Point Grey to insure no issues if necessary to participate in trawler infiltration attempt. Checked on condition of equipment - all was good. Knowing infiltration would be at night; tracked a couple of large sampans by radar to simulate a night time trawler infiltration. Received multiple radio updates with trawler position showing moving south from North Vietnamese waters. Kept running track of trawler positions; kept crew informed.

Using message positions, I maneuvered PT Grey so we would be between the trawler and the beach. Received message traffic that DIVCOM 12, CDR Bauman, on board Point Welcome (commanded by Gerry McGill, a classmate) underway and headed south. Trawler reached a specified position and Androscoggin took over surveillance from A/C. Two swift boats (PCF-18 and PCF-20) assigned and rendezvoused in vicinity where trawler likely to infiltrate (There was a lot of "standby time" waiting for the trawler to make up its mind.)

In between drills, my concern was that I had not planned for all contingencies. Two thoughts were going through my mind: 1) What have I forgotten; 2) I can't screw this up.

At approximately midnight, went to general quarters. At this time, the Point Welcome and one swift boat were north, and the Point Grey and one swift boat were south of the track of the infiltrating trawler with the WPB's positioned furthest from shore. At 0122 on 1 March, the trawler (designated 29F2) crossed into the 12-mile contiguous zone 22 miles southeast of Cape Batangan. Androscoggin signaled the trawler to identify itself; there was no response and the Androscoggin fired 5 inch star shells to illuminate the trawler. After identifying the trawler as being North Vietnamese, the Androscoggin opened fire with 5 inch and .50 caliber guns. Point Grey arrived on scene approximately 0125 and witnessed the trawler returning fire with

machine guns that raked the white hulled Androscoggin's international orange Coast Guard stripe on the bow.

Point Grey was approximately 2500 - 3000 yards to the south of the trawler with Androscoggin approximately 2000 - 2500 yards to the northeast. Flares were floating in the air (believe provided by helicopters) and the scene looked like a TV show with the trawler and Androscoggin on the opposite diagonals of the screen. Two Army helicopters were over the trawler and opened fire (0129) with 7.62 mm machine gun fire. (Androscoggin had ceased fire - I assume due to the helicopters hovering over the trawler.)

Helicopters must have been using tracer rounds every third round because it looked like liquid fire pouring from the sky. Point Grey did not fire any weapons at this time as Point Welcome was north of the trawler and the helicopters hovered over the trawler. During approximately 0135 - 0145 a civilian junk passed through the battle area motoring from south to north. The junk sailed past Point Grey to its starboard about 1000 yards and the North Vietnamese trawler to its port about 1000 yards. Shortly after the junk passed the North Vietnamese trawler, the flares burned out and the night returned.

At this point the trawler appeared to have a reduced rate of fire and headed toward the beach. The helicopters stopped firing and the Androscoggin and the 4 small boats took up the chase. At approximately 0155, I observed 2-3 large splashes (appeared to be 5 inch rounds) that landed within my range of night vision, I guesstimated 2-300 yards off the Point Grey's bow. I turned the boat 90 degrees from the splashes, reduced speed, got on the radio to Androscoggin, and told them to cease fire. (Language was somewhat colorful and did not meet voice radio protocol.)

Shortly afterward, the small boats were ordered to take the trawler under fire with machine guns and 81 mm mortars. Having lost ground earlier, I relocated the trawler on the radar, joined the chase to the beach, and tried to make up time lost discussing 5 inch gunfire.

I heard CDR Bauman (I think) on the radio requesting illumination on the trawler. I commenced firing illumination where I thought the trawler was located. I did not fire HE rounds because of a fear of hitting friendlies. Opened fire with machine guns shortly before the trawler grounded 50 yards off of the mouth of the Tha Cau River 25 miles south of Cape Batangan on the coast of the South China Sea. Approximately 0215, closed in on the trawler when no return fire observed.

At 0220, PT Grey was approximately 200 yards from the trawler when a small scuttling charge went off. This explosion did minimum damage; however, disillusioned any thoughts of boarding the grounded vessel. Moved out to about 6-700 yards from the trawler and continued maneuvering. At 0235 another self-induced explosion occurred, resulting in the complete destruction of the trawler and her cargo that created a 500 foot fireball. Almost everything from the explosion blew up and over Point Grey. No personnel casualties and minimum structural damage was sustained.

When explosion occurred I was on wheel and throttles in the pilot house; I pulled one of the engine order telegraph handles off of the console at full speed astern in reaction to the light and sound. Fortunately, ENC Chinnis in the engine room saw the engine revving up and put the engine controls on manual.

After the explosion, checked with other small boats and learned there were no personnel casualties but some boats had structural damage (all was minor and no assistance was required). No bullet holes in Point Grey; several areas dented and scratched by explosion. (There was one piece of metal embedded in the pilot house just below the window I was standing behind...felt pretty lucky!)

Checked with classmate, Gerry McGill, CO on Point Welcome - raining bayonets and metal; some pilot house windows blown out. Point Grey remained on patrol until scheduled patrol ended and returned to Danang.

Point Welcome remained in the vicinity for the following two days providing security for VNN Junk Force and US Navy divers during recovery operations. Material was found scattered for 2000 yards in all directions from the blast. Remains of the following items were found:

1. Approximately 600 K-44 carbines,
2. One 12.7 heavy machine gun,
3. Eleven 7.62 light machine guns,
4. 41 sub-machine guns,
5. A 57mm recoilless rifle, plus
6. Multiple rounds of ammunition of all types and medical and personal gear.
- 7.

Lessons Learned

- A. Don't overthink the situation;
- B. Make plans; after the first shot training takes over-plans tend to go out the window;
- C. Double check plans with key personnel; and
- D. Get some rest when it is known that there is a long time before the action. (Was up over 36 hours straight - should have gotten some rest while the trawler was making its mind up to come in.)

Walton 68 30 Jan. 1969

Dear Captain & Mrs High,
your Christmas card reached me
by a most round about route, going
to every C.G. Division in Vietnam. It
finally reached me about the middle
of January and I'm finally getting
around to answering it.

First let me say "congratulations!"
even though it is somewhat belatedly.

To go back or to just go about,
I came into Danang on 8 February 1968
after completing in Alameda and
San Diego. (I said good bye to Mary Ann
and my little girl (Marlie) on 7 Jan
before going out for training)

After arriving in country, I had
a two hour stay on land before going
out on my first war patrol up to
the DMZ. I had three patrols to get
squares away and then I took
command of the PT. GREY.

I was fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time and on the night of 29 February while on my first patrol as CO I was involved in a trawler incident about 60 miles south of La Nang. Gerry McOill and I were the two WPS skippers that were there along with 2 PCF's and the andro scrogin. Fortunately everything went well and there were no friendly casualties. (Guess it's one way to break in a new CO.)

After that things were fairly quiet and with the change of monsoons, I brought the PT GREY down to Division 13 in Cat Lo on April 12th. It was quite a change from running in water that was at least 5 fathoms under the keel to water that was 5 feet under the keel. After the initial shock, one becomes used to it and

2

life proceeded as per usual.

On the first of July LCDR J. F. Smith took over as DIVCOM 13 and has been doing an excellent job ever since. Had a few incidents but nothing compared to the night of 29 February.

December brought promotion and patrol on Christmas & New Year's Eve. January brought R & R, which I took in Hong Kong, and the final month of my tour. As I write this, I am on the last day of my last war patrol (NO. 44). I am due to depart country on the 6th of February at 1340 and must admit that I am glad to see the time pass. I was fortunate enough to be CO of the GREY during my entire tour.

I have seen a lot of the class over here and at the present time the following people in '65 are in Division 13 in Cat 10: Walter Vignozzone - OPS officer, Carl Helman CO - AT MARONE

Roy Rufe - CO PT GARNET, Rod Wilbur

CO PT caution, Billy Norris - CO PT

League and John Swartz - Readiness
and training officer. I don't know

who is in the other divisions for sure
but I believe there are at least 7 or
8 of them, if not more.

Maryann and Marlei (2 on 23 Jan.)

lived in Oakdale, Conn. during my
stay here Vietnam. Three to six

wives whose husbands are on overseas
tours are living in the New London

area and they got together fairly
frequently to share each other's misery.

As you have probably already read,
I am going to CORP, Tampa, Fla.

I am most happy with my
assignment although I am not sure
what my duties are to be. as for

my future, I am not really sure
what I would like to specialize in.

I have applied for P.C. training in
business management and hope
to find out something in March
or April.

I do appreciate the class list, as I have lost track of a lot of the class.. Also, please tell Pete Soubous thanks for the effort that he put into it.

Best wishes to you and family during this coming year.

Sincerely,

Pick Walton

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES

Dick 's 95 was the Cape Helopen out of Port Angles (Juan Defar Islands?) of Washington State. I did not catch what his first duty assignment was.

After Vietnam he was assigned as Captain of the Port in Tampa, Florida after which he served as Operations Officer aboard the 311 Sherman out of Boston. Hthen went to Monterrey and graduated with a Masters in Financial Management (similar to an MBA) and then went to Governer's Island to head up the NAFA (Non-Appropriated Funds Agency) which was primarily all the Coast Guard Exchange facilities. He said he had requested anywhere in the world including isolated duty rather than New York. He just did not like the big cities and had enough of them with his tour in Boston.

Skip Ohnsted rescued him out of Governor's Island to headquarters where he was the financial specialist on various staffs such as Naval Engineering and Chief Engineering – the more formal types. After Washington, D.C., Dick was with aviation in Elizabeth City.

His first job was as director of maintenance for the North Carolina Ferry System which was a strict political job. He got that after his first year when he came within \$1000 of budget for a \$5 million operation. He left six months after his boss left. He said is was a very bad experience.

He and Maryann then decided to wanted to live in Charleston, S.C. which at the time had the Spaywar System which was hot at the time. He then spent the last 24 years with four different companies in the defense industry and is still at it on a consulting basis of about four days per week.

Dick said the Maryann knew nothing of this Vietnam incident until he and Gerry McGill got together ror two or three hours over a bottle of scotch and she listened in .

Dick said he didn't really know why, but he did not want to "get it all out there" regarding his career either in the Coast Guard or in civilian life. I told him I would respect that and promised I would not publish any of the above.

WALTON 07

3 January 1968

Dear Commander and Mrs High,

Thank you very much for your lovely Christmas cards and letters of the past 2-3 years. I must apologize for being so tardy but it seems that procrastination is my middle name. The list of the class is a great help also, and I certainly do appreciate that.

It has been a long time since I have written so please excuse the bad handwriting. As you know I went from the Academy to the Abasco, along with Dave Amos and Bob Stephan. I managed to stay a bachelor for 6 months and then I got married on 29 December 1965. (Perhaps I can use this as an excuse for not writing then) I married a New London girl, Maryann Golart, whom I had been dating 1st class year. Aboard the Abasco I made 5 patrols, a Gitzmo, and a Cadet Cruise from the Officer's standpoint. I also went to the yards once. While aboard I worked my way from assistant everything to Exchange, Comm, Gunner, and 1st lieutenant. (I held them all at once for a period of approximately one month while people were going to school, etc. I received orders about the middle of September 1966 for the Cape Henlopen, and left the ship towards the end of October enroute to Port Townsend and the Cape Henlopen.

TO LUTJAN

As Maryann and I had moved out of our apartment in Norfolk on the 30th of September and moved into one in the Curtis Bay Area the first week of October (with half of our belongings) we had quite a load to throw into our MGB sports car. I also forgot to mention that Maryann was about ~~6~~ 7 months pregnant at the time.

After a leisurely trip across country, we arrived in Port Townsend on 22 November. We had no problems, either with Maryann or the car during our entire trip. The first of December I relieved Ken Thompson ('64) as CO and took the brown bag in hand. There wasn't too much SAR work so HQ decided that it would be a good idea to move the Cape Henlopen to Port Angeles. This was done 29 December 1966.

At this point I must add that the SAR workload for a 95' WPB in the Port Angeles area was extremely light. I had 6 actual cases from January to June not counting the false alarms. But, I get ahead of myself.

Maryann's time was drawing near and so was the time to take the boat to the yard. Maryann won and we had a baby girl born 23 January 1967, who we named Marlee. One week later I left Mother and Daughter and took the boat to Seattle for annual availability.

I came home every weekend so it wasn't too terribly bad. I took a week's leave, but my XO.

got in a motorscooter accident and I got 3 days leave out of it. Out the yard in the middle of March and back to training and learning. Western Area came around in May, Yatch regattas, and the summer season and STD-3 in August. In August I came under Group Port Angeles, with Captain Johansen of the Air Station as my group commander. I learned a lot under the Captain, and got to see how aviators operate and got an insight as to how aviators think and work. Other aviators that perhaps you would know were CDR G.L. Smith, XO, and CDR Witzel OPS.

September brought orders and December 5 I was relieved by Ray Ross ('66).

To go back and digest a bit; I saw ^{Bob} Bob Stator, Mick Trammel, Walt Vigliozzo, Laurie Somers, Garry White, and Gene Johnson while out there. I left out Bill Schor who had the other 95' in the 13th. As you know Admiral Helmer became 13th District Commander in July. I was in the District Office in August and much to my surprise and pleasure he remembered me when I met him in one of the corridors. I almost left out LCDR Haggstrom who was in OPS and was my immediate supervisor before I came under the group.

December was most hectic with travel, looking for an apartment, etc. however we are now settled in Oakdale, Conn so Maryann could be near

parents while I am in Vietnam. I might add that Marlei made it across and was a very good baby. She's just starting to walk and is a little doll. Maryann and I loved the West Coast and the Washington scenery. The 7th of January I leave for Alameda and thence to Vietnam.

Congratulations on being nominated and probably having made Captain. I can't think of anyone who deserves it more. (I haven't seen a CG bulletin or a Navy Times for a month so I am not as informed as I should be.)

I enjoyed the 95' very much and was glad to be in a position to be in the "working CG." I must close for now, so Maryann, Marlei, and I would like to wish you all a belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you again for your letter, the class list, and the Christmas card.

Best wishes.

Dick, Maryann, and Marlei
Walton

Bill Carr

From: Bill Carr [bill@getrain.com]
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2015 11:41 AM
To: 'Bullwinkle65'
Subject: RE: Trawler Incidents

Dick - Have read your comments and suggestions and will make several changes as a result. Bill Riley and Darvy Cohan have given me feedback as well. You all three zeroed in on several changes that I will be making for sure. I've got to think awhile on the others.

Let's do have that conversation Sunday. Please call me on my cell phone (563-529-3982 cell) and 4PM your time will work for me.

Thank you very much for investing your time to read and comment on my presentation.....Bill

P.S. The idea to fully document and expand upon that Feb 29 and March 1 trawler infiltration has perked some initial interest at the Academy. Maybe you and I could work on that together - unless you would like to pick up on it and spearhead it yourself.....Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Bullwinkle65 [mailto:bullwinkle65@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2015 11:07 AM
To: 'Bill Carr'
Subject: RE: Trawler Incidents

Bill,

Will take the opportunity to add your presentation with my comments appended (using track changes-Word 2013). (See attached)

Overall I think that you have "hit the nail on the head". I have put in some thoughts, questions, and suggestions for you to consider. If you would like, we could discuss during our call.

I propose that I'll give you a call about 4PM (EDT), Sunday, 13 September. If that isn't good for you, please throw out a couple of times. (Note: I have you in the central time zone; Davenport, IA)

Talk with you later (Dick cell: 843-830-0088)

Dick

-----Original Message-----

From: Bill Carr [mailto:bill@getrain.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 9:42 AM
To: 'Bullwinkle65' <bullwinkle65@bellsouth.net>
Subject: RE: Trawler Incidents

Dick - I'd like to talk with you about this. What would be a polite time to call? Bill (563-529-3982 cell)

-----Original Message-----

From: Bullwinkle65 [mailto:bullwinkle65@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 7:19 AM
To: 'Bill Carr'

Subject: RE: Trawler Incidents

Bill,

Thanks!

Would be interesting to hear the stories. As I may have said earlier, Jerry McGill and I did a hash over at my home in Tampa Fl about 1970 over a bottle of liquid refreshment. It was the first time that Maryann had heard the 'unfurnished' story.

Dick

-----Original Message-----

From: Bill Carr [<mailto:bill@getrain.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 5:44 PM

To: 'Bullwinkle65' <bullwinkle65@bellsouth.net>

Subject: Trawler Incidents

Dick - Thought I would get this to you while the pages were at my fingertips.

I've been thinking for awhile that it might be kind of cool to get the stories from all Skippers who were directly, indirectly or remotely connected to any of the interceptions of trawlers during those Coast Guard years in Vietnam. I don't mean another book, but a binder of recollections of sorts.

More to talk about but have to run at the moment....Bill (563-529-3982 cell)