

BOB BRUNETTE

USCGC INGHAM (WHEC-35) – Aug68 to Feb69

Presidential Unit Citation – 18 Oct 68 to 5 Dec 68

July 22, 2021 – Bob Brunette E-mail to Bill Carr

What did you do in the War, Daddy? Often asked by children but seldom answered.

Here is a short story about part of my 30-day visit to Hong Kong which occurred midway during my year-long Vietnam War tour in 1968-69. I vividly remember much of it to this day...and, still correspond with a memorable young teenage Chinese HK resident (Stephen Ho) that I became introduced to then...and, later was a HK City Councilman for 20 years, before the British returned HK to mainland China (but that is a story for a later day).

September 10, 2019 – Bob Brunette E-mail to Bill Carr

I helped (Pro Bono) my Chief Machinist's Mate (Merle Basso, E-10) on the claim he filed regarding his problems from the Agent Orange from our Air Force's bombings in Vietnam...even though our ship was out to sea most of the time. All we had to prove was that the claimant was in-country in Vietnam for one 24-hour period.

So, we consulted our Ingham's cruise book and we recalled that our large 327 foot ship was grounded on a sand bar for 24 hours and that my chief had participated in visiting local Vietnam villages to administer various inoculations to Vietnamese children.

Later I submitted a sworn Affidavit to that effect, and Chief Basso got his claim approved.

December 20, 2018 – Bill Carr E-mail to Bob Brunette

Bob – We did not visit the INGHAM...but let's spend some time on those stories and the cruise book you helped put together. I'm anxious to do that. Maybe we can do some of that in February.

December 20, 2018 – Bob Brunette E-mail to Bill Carr

Did you visit the 327' USCGC INGHAM AT Patriot's Point in Charleston's harbor? I was Assistant Engineering Officer on it from Norfolk to Vietnam and back to Norfolk in 1968-69 and Acting Engineering Officer an entire month while we were anchored in Hong Kong Harbor. I've got some great stories and I helped create our Cruise Book about that year. See you at CAPT High's in February 2019.

January/February 2017 – Alumni Bulletin

Bob Brunette has done a review (Attachment One) from his perspective of five major Prostate Cancer treatment methods available today along with some thoughts about treatments of the future. Read these three pages thoroughly as chances are very high you will be doing some high anxiety research on this topic for yourself someday. Might as well get a little knowledgeable now while you have plenty of options for successful treatment. Early detection and treatment has led to very positive results within our class. We now have eleven 65'ers and one from 67' in our PC Resource Group. As a result of other class efforts, the Alumni Association appears to be getting more proactive in spreading the word about PC issues and treatments in a positive and helpful way.

Golden Journeys Booklet - 2015

So, out of desperation, I volunteered to pass up a shore job in Portsmouth, VA in 1968 to go with my ship, INGHAM, to Vietnam (a younger married officer, Tom Robinson, took my place ashore). One of the best decisions I ever made.

Twelve months... Norfolk to Guantanamo Bay, to Los Angeles, to Honolulu, to Guam, to Subic Bay, Philippines, to Vietnam off-shore (four to five times), to Bangkok, to Hong Kong and back to Norfolk. 60,050 miles, 231 days at sea (134 in combat zone), 121 days in port then to an amazing CG engineering desk (and the beach) in Honolulu - thanks to a tip from Mike Meany - on my way out to Vietnam.

WIKIPEDIA

Ingham earned two Presidential Unit Citations for her service in Operation SEA LORDS and Operation SWIFT RAIDER during the Vietnam War on a deployment from 3 August 1968 to 28 February 1969.

RELATED ARTICLES ATTACHED

AFFIDAVIT

A TYPICAL DAY OF PATROL OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH VIETNAM

THE EMPEROR OF HONG KONG

PROSTATE CANCER RULES OF THE ROAD

MY PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT OPTION SELECTION

AFFIDAVIT

Robert A. Brunette

April 5, 2017

In 1968-1969 I was a Lieutenant (O-3 Grade) in the U.S. Coast Guard assigned as a First Assistant Engineering Officer aboard the U.S.C.G. Cutter Ingham (WHEC-35), a large 327' ship.

The USCG Ingham was regularly stationed in Norfolk, VA during the time I served on that ship, from about October 1966 through June 1969, except for a one-year tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam in 1968-1969 (explained below). During 1967 through June 1969, I served in the ship's Engineering Department.

I served during the Ingham's entire deployment to Market Time Patrol in and about the coastal waters, islands and ports of Vietnam in 1968-69. The Ingham left Norfolk, VA on May 15, 1968 and returned in May 1969, 352 days later. Part of my informal activities on board ship was to act as cruise book advisor to ten of the enlisted men who documented and photographed Ingham's year-long odyssey in and out of ports, combat situations, repairs and overhaul periods, etc. Their efforts culminated in a Ingham Cruise Book (of about 100 pages) that we later published when we returned to the U.S.

I have attached selected copies of pages from our Ingham Vietnam Cruise Book which detail our combat zones of operation (on Market Time Patrol). I've colored some pages (in yellow) to emphasize the close proximity the Ingham crew, including myself, had to the people of Vietnam and our ship's day-to-day, close-in operations within the coastal waters and ports of the Vietnam theater of war.

In particular, the Editor of that Cruise Book, Seaman Mike Hamrick, made detailed drawings of Ingham's fifty Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) missions up and down the coast of Vietnam -- from Da Nang south around the Mekong Delta to the Cambodian border. On each of those days the Ingham maneuvered close in to shore (about 1/2 to 1 mile offshore) to bombard Viet Cong targets - in all, 3,736 5" shells were expended over 134 days in the Combat Zone.

The Ingham anchored time and again off of Da Nang, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, Saigon, Con Son and Hon Khoai Islands, Song Ong Doc, Phu Quoc Island and Quan Long to perform MEDCAP (in-country medical assistance for Vietnam citizens), perform ship repairs on Ingham's exterior, and to replenish smaller 82' USCG and 50' Navy patrol vessels (146 of them) with food, water, fuel and overnight R&R on our ship.

Ingham even ran aground (during low tide) on Vietnam soil from time to time off of the Mekong Delta by the southernmost peninsula of Vietnam. During these periods Ingham was effectively a part of Vietnam's territory for the grounding periods (which in one case lasted over 24 hours).

Most of Ingham's crew, including myself, went ashore in Vietnam for MEDCAP duty and various ship maintenance needs. MEDCAP's took 8 to 10 crew members at a time. And, the Engineering Department wasn't exempt from these kind of tasks. Each time we were armed with side arms and/or M-16 rifles. I personally went ashore in Vietnam for these tasks a half dozen times.

In fact, I recall that once in early 1969 the Ingham was required to make two back-to-back 30-day Market Time Patrols (due to a break down in our USCG relief ship); and, our ship eventually became low on ammunition, food and other supplies. So, Captain Neal O. Westfall, our Commanding Officer, arranged for me to be transferred to a smaller 82' USCG patrol boat, and then transported to the huge U.S. Naval Supply Center at Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam. I spent three days and two nights "in-country" at that supply facility getting our supply orders expedited for shore-to-ship delivery to the Ingham. I remember that time well because I had to remove all indicators of my officer rank on my uniforms due to the ever present danger of Viet Cong snipers shooting over the perimeter fences at senior ranked soldiers and sailors. And, I'll never forget the long conversations that I had while there with a veteran Navy Seal who boasted that he spent his free time hunting Viet Cong at night with only his Ka-Bar Fighting Knife.

Both myself and the men of the USCGC Ingham physically served several days "in-country in the Republic of Vietnam during the 134 combat days of our 1968-1969 deployment period. And, we disembarked the Ingham within the coastal territory and/or waters of Vietnam many times during that period.

As a result, we were decorated by the USCG and/or the Republic of Vietnam with:

National Defense Service Medal
Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
Vietnam Service Medal

A TYPICAL DAY OF PATROL OFF THE COAST OF SOUTH VIETNAM

USCGC INGHAM (WHEC-35) Vietnam Tour Book Excerpts

0300H – General Quarters – A wake-up you'll never forget followed by a night-time NGFS mission of H&I.

1000H – MEDCAP – Once ashore, our Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) team, composed of Dr. Shideler or Chief Corpsman Thornton, their assistant, Seaman Schilling and seven or eight crew members, went to work administering treatment and drugs, pulling teeth and giving immunizations to civilian personnel. Painting a schoolhouse, repairing a swing set and other similar community services were part of INGHAM's chores.

Seeing the Vietnamese people live and work in such remote areas as the Mekong Delta was an experience not soon forgotten.

1600H – Swift boats return to INGHAM with the MEDCAP team and tie up alongside to receive fuel, food and change crews. We replenished 146 smaller vessels which included U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Thai and South Vietnamese Navy. We also offered the services of a floating repair facility. PCF-36 was hit by a Viet Cong grenade during a Sea Lords mission and is shown rigged out on our small boat falls to prevent it from taking on water through the hole in its port side. Our divers performed repairs and removed many nets from boats with fouled screws.

Christmas 1968 – Christmas Day aboard the INGHAM was a typical busy day on Market Time. Between two UNREPS we had church services and later in the day a barbecue on the fantail. An extra large load of mail and packages brought a big boost to the morale of all.

Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines – When we arrived in Subic Bay amid pouring rain in July, most of us thought we would never see the place again. Three Subic "in-ports" and seventy liberty days later it finally was March 1969. Time and time again our scheduled stops in fabulous ports like Japan and Singapore were cancelled in favor of the Ship Repair Facility and Olongapo City, the bustling town just outside the main gate of the U.S. Navy Base. While the ship underwent numerous drydocking and assorted repairs, we made the best of our shore time at night-clubs, movies and athletic facilities.

INTERESTING FACTS

GENERAL

Total Miles	60,050
Total Days at Sea	231
Total Days in Port	121
Total Days Official R&R	5
Total Days in Subic Bay, R.P.	70
Total Gallons Fuel Used	1,959,054
Per Cent Underway Time	65.4

MARKET TIME SUMMARY

Total Days in Combat Zone	134
Total UNREPS	58
Total VERTREPS	5
Total Small Boats Replenished	146
Total General Quarters	52
Contacts Identified (Wood and Steel)	2,155
Contacts Inspected (Wood and Steel)	994
Unidentified Contacts	1,161
Suspicious Contacts Boarded	8
Per Cent Contacts Identified	46.12

NGFS SUMMARY

Total Missions	50
Total Rounds Fired (5 inch)	3,736
Structures	Destroyed 46 Damaged 166
Sampan	Destroyed 2 Damaged 6
Bunkers	Destroyed 20 Damaged 13
Command Posts	Destroyed 1
Bridges	Damaged 2
Piers/Causeways	Damaged 2
Confirmed V.C. Killed	3
Confirmed Secondary Explosions	7
Supply Caches Damaged/Destroyed	3
Canals Blocked	2

THE EMPEROR OF HONG KONG

Robert A. Burnett

LOGISTICS

Dozen Eggs Consumed	3,900
Pounds Potatoes Consumed	15,900
Pounds Boneless Beef	13,900
Soft Drinks Consumed	96,000
Mixed Drinks Consumed	175,850
Worst Movies ---Fireball 500, Dr. Goldfoot and His Girl Bombs	
Best Movies -- For A Few Dollars More, Dr. Zhivago	
Total Advancements	60
Total Spent on Entertainment	\$114,840
Total Spent on Purchases	\$ 279,664
Cameras Purchased	118
Suits	461
Pieces of Jewelry	870
China Sets	134
Tape Recorders	176
Stereo Sets	104
Personal Letters Sent	30,625
Personal Letters Received	35,844
Most Expensive Phone Call (Nelson SO2)	\$208
Total Births of Crew's Dependents	6

THE EMPEROR OF HONG KONG

Robert A. Burnette

By mid-1969 I had put in three long years, including over fifteen 45-day patrols, on Atlantic Ocean Station Patrols out of Norfolk, VA (on the Cutters Chincoteague and Ingham), when we received notice that our ship was being deployed to Vietnam on Market Time Patrol for a year during 1968-69.

I was at the time a single, newly minted Lieutenant, and, I was finally being assigned ashore to the USCG District Engineering Office across the river in Portsmouth, VA. My intended replacement on the Ingham, LTJG Tom Robinson, was married, and I was told by Tom that his wife was not anxious to see him deploy. So, I immediately volunteered to stay on Ingham for the trip to the Orient...via The Panama Canal, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Guam, the Philippines and Vietnam (and, later Bangkok and Hong Kong).

Frankly, I was dying to escape the Atlantic, sail the Pacific, and to see the world...not to mention getting into action in the War. I was told later that my mother was very unhappy with me, her oldest son, for signing up for this fight. But, I calmed her down during the Ingham's initial port stop in Los Angeles when my family (all seven siblings, Mom and Dad) visited Ingham and saw my sumptuous cabin accommodations...yeah, right)...and, advising her that it was my duty to our country.

I'll skip my other amazing experiences in transit, and during my initial Market Time assignments (which may violate The National Security Act non-disclosure law), and, will retell you my tale of our ship's eventual 30-day visit to British Hong Kong...I suspect the plum USCG assignment during the Vietnam War.

As Ingham slowly cruised into HK harbor we passed quite close (around 30 yards) to our sister USCG ship which was leaving its month long assignment. Many of our men were standing up on the main deck in awe of the huge number of high-rise buildings both on Victoria Island and in Kowloon across the Bay. Many of the crew crowding the port side on the passing Coast Guard cutter that Ingham was relieving were shouting to us "Send home for more money!" We wondered what they meant. But, we figured out what they meant after first anchoring in HK Bay, and then taking a personnel launch on our first trip ashore.

Wow, was everything inexpensive...and, I mean everything. And, there was even a military exchange store (the Post Exchange-PX) on Victoria Island where the crew loaded up on top line Japanese stereos, speakers, Chinese green jade jewelry, etc. And, the many Chinese tailor shops were by then a legend to me (I had bought several excellent HK-made suits at a small

Chinese shop actually located on the U.S. Navy Base in Argentia, Newfoundland where my ship refueled on some of my earlier Atlantic Ocean Station patrols). So, I got fitted and bought almost everything. Never felt so rich.

But, the real jewel of HK was presented to us officers in the Ingham's Ward Room on the following day. We needed to pick twenty of the ship's enlisted crew for temporary shore patrol duty (monitoring visiting U.S. Navy sailors from big ships in the HK harbor who were going on shorter R&R leave ashore). Along with that came 29-day TDY, daily HK hotel money, and daily food allotments - not to mention free drinks at any bar in the area they were to patrol. Apparently, the USCG Shore Patrol had the power to shut down any hotel or bar in the notorious Wanchi Bar District on Victoria Island merely on the say of the USCG Shore Patrol Officer In Charge - which job I immediately volunteered for! But, it was gobbled up by a more senior officer on board Ingham.

We never saw that Shore Patrol Officer for the next 29 days...not on the ship, not in the Wahchi bars, not in the PX, nowhere in Hong Kong. He eventually returned to the Ingham the day we sailed out to resume our tedious 24/7 Market Time patrols off of Vietnam. He looked emaciated...had lost at least 30 pounds...and just plain tired to the bone. So, I asked him how he liked Shore Patrol, and where was he during the last month?

He actually beamed with a broad smile, and told me that during the second hour on the first day of his patrol he was scooped up by the #1 Senior Mama-San (i.e., supervising bar girl) of Hong Kong, and then whisked away up to her pent house on a HK high-rise building with a stunning view of all Hong Kong, and, one wall held one of every kind of liquor that he could imagine, another wall held every music record imaginable, and more gorgeous Chinese women than he could handle (but, I could only imagine that he tried). He exclaimed that he felt like the Emperor of China for a month. He also said that he never ventured out of her penthouse for the next 29 days. And, I couldn't imagine why he would. And, the bars of Wanchi stayed open as planned by that same Mama-San...which I didn't mind at all.

About half of Ingham was crewed by North Carolina born sailors, including our same Shore Patrol Officer. I believed he was from a close-nit, small town in the Outer Banks area... further South around Wilmington, NC. It wasn't long before other NC members of the crew wrote home to their wives about their stay in HK...including, I suspect, about the new Emperor's incredible experience. In any case, at the time our ship had sailed back to Norfolk and we actually were departing from the Ingham down the gangway, the Emperor was served with legal process (for a divorce).

A few weeks later while back on the Ingham I asked the Emperor... knowing what the consequences of his HK visit had been...would he, if asked, take the HK Shore Patrol job again? He responded "damn straight", or words to that effect. And, again, I couldn't imagine why he wouldn't!