

## **JIM MORGAN**

**USCGC POINT GAMMON (WPB-82328) – Jun68 to Feb69 - Relieved Newhoff**

**Presidential Unit Citation – 6 Dec 68 to 31 Mar 69**

**Navy Unit Commendation – 1 Jan 69 to 30 Jun 69**

**USCGC POINT WELCOME (WPB-82329) – Mar69 to May69**

**Presidential Unit Citation – 6 Dec 68 to 31 Mar 69**

**Navy Unit Commendation – 1 Jul 68 to 30 Jun 69**

### **March 24, 2021 – Jim Morgan E-mail to Bill Carr**

I wrote a letter about the incident at the time but so far I haven't been able to find it. My father kept all the letters I wrote home and I now have them but they cover many years. I'll keep looking and thinking about things regarding this matter.

I believe this incident took place in Division 12 patrol area 2D in 1968. The village of My Lai was not far from where this incident took place. I believe the massacre at My Lai took place a couple of months prior to this incident.

The night before, the USCGC PT GAMMON (WPB-82328) was contacted by radio by an U.S. Army unit and requested to act as a seaside blocking unit. An Army unit had been hit hard by the enemy and the Army was going to do a land and helicopter sweep of the area first thing in the morning. I agreed that we would participate.

The morning weather was hot, dry, sunny, clear and very calm. The seas were almost like a mill pond. The PT GAMMON patrolled the designated area approximately 500 yards off shore. The only activity that was seen or heard over the radio aboard PT GAMMON was when a very small wooden boat with no engine came out from the beach. There were two people on board paddling.

The boat was a typical Vietnamese small open boat about 10 feet in length. As the PT GAMMON closed on the boat, it appeared there was nothing in the boat but the two people who were lightly dressed. The PT GAMMON continued to close to intercept the boat. There was no threat perceived and PT GAMMON continued to close. Needless to say, we were ready for any hostilities, nevertheless.

As we closed and prepared to intercept the boat, the two people appeared to be an old man and a young boy. The PT GAMMON was in position to easily apprehend the boat and the two people. When we were approximately 100 feet away from the boat an Army helicopter appeared and hovered over the boat and immediately opened fire on the occupants.

While observed by PT GAMMON, the occupants had not showed any hostile intent nor were the occupants given any opportunity to stop or surrender. Both of the people were immediately hit by the fire from the helicopter and dropped to the bottom of the boat. The helicopter flew away.

The firing into the boat by the helicopter was so close that I was worried that we might get accidentally hit. The young boy in the boat was dead and the old man was shot in the head. We took the old man on board and administered first aid. His wound was not severe. We launched our small boat and towed the slowly sinking boat with the boy's body to the beach where there were Army troops. The Army took control of the boat and body.

There were no further incidents or action during the rest of the operation that morning. We turned the old man over to the Vietnamese forces back in Danang. Upon return to base I reported the incident in my post patrol report. I commented that I thought the firing on the boat was unjustified since PT GAMMON was obviously going to stop the boat and apprehend the two occupants and the occupants were obviously unarmed.

No weapons were found on the boat. During the time we observed the boat, the occupants were not given any chance to surrender before the helicopter opened fire. My comments resulted in the Division Commander scolding me that if I wasn't tough enough to handle such incidents that he would remove me from command.

Of course, the two could have been VC or maybe, they were frightened non-combatant villagers. We will never know.

That was not the issue. The issue is rather when two unknown, apparently defenseless, persons are about to be captured by friendly forces, is there a right under the rules of war for other friendly forces who are aware of the situation to shoot them.

### **Golden Journeys Booklet – 2015**

My next assignment was commanding Officer of USCGC POINT GAMMON (WPB-82328) and later CGC POINT WELCOME (WPB-82239) in Da Nang, Vietnam 1968-1969.

In Da Nang the first night getting from the air field to Camp Tien Sha, a Navy Seal who was with us from Saigon gave us a lift in a truck. While crossing a bridge over the Han River, gunfire broke out that was startling. No one told us that it was guards shooting at things floating in the river.

At a dark place in the road, the truck stopped and there was a signal from the darkness. The Seal signaled back, then jumped from the truck and disappeared into the darkness.

POINT GAMMON assisted a small Naval Coastal Group that was being attacked by the VC and in danger of being overrun. We kept up a steady mortar fire through the night to keep the enemy

at bay. By daybreak the VC had withdrawn and left one of their flags which the Navy Group presented/gifted to the POINT GAMMON and which I later donated at the 45<sup>th</sup> Reunion to the Coast Guard Academy museum.

There were times of comic relief, like being at China Beach PX and seeing a GI with his M-16 slung and carrying a fur coat that he had just purchased or sitting on the veranda at the O'Club sipping a frozen daiquiri and watching a helicopter strafing the beach line.

I was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V and Combat Action Ribbon.

**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 GAMMON – 20 Jun 68, 29 Jul 68, 3 Aug 68 and 23 Aug 68**

**POINT WELCOME – 22 Mar 69 and 28 Mar 69**

Morgan 68  
March 69

12 March 1969

Dear Captain and Mrs. High,

I just received your Christmas card and letter. I guess it must have really done some world traveling. I am glad you had the perseverance to keep after it. I certainly enjoyed hearing from you and checked over the class addresses with interest. I am sure Nancy will want to read your letter, so I intend to forward it to her.

Nancy, Charlie, our 18 month old son, and I had the great fortune to be able to spend 6 weeks together in Sasebo, Japan while the POINT GAMMON was under going overhaul. Things could not have worked out better as we spent Nancy's birthday, Christmas, and New Year together. We were certainly lucky and had a wonderful time.

We were back on patrol on the 24th of Jan., taking part in the huge Russel Beach/Bold Mariner Operation. Unfortunately very little action took place at sea, probably Charlie was terrified by the vast number of ships that were standing off the peninsula.

I have been on the POINT GAMMON for 10 months now and believe I will soon be relieved to take a staff job for the remaining time. I don't look forward to the change, but actually have been able to stay on the boat longer than a lot of the skippers. Right now we are on patrol about 125 miles south of Danang. So far this has been a fairly routine patrol. We have fired one 50 cal. and 81MM H&I for the army, conducted one NGFS destroying 6 sampans with our 81MM, and received hostile fire once while we were conducting small boat ops. We didn't take any hits, the closest round hitting about 15 yards away. The weather has turned pretty bad today so there are no sampans out. We get relieved tonight and head back to Danang for a 2½ day inport. I hope my orders will be in when I get back. I am hoping for a group or station as CO. If I can't get command I would like duty at a group or station. As you can probably assume from this

I am looking forward to a little shore duty for a change. Nancy and I would like to get the 12th district, but that is secondary to the job.

We are about to rendezvous with the POINT LOMAS so they can take our liaison into Qui Nhon as we are going north tonight.

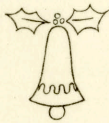
I will say so long now. I hope you and your family are all fine. If you see Pete Poulos please tell him hello for me. I forgot to mention that Nancy and Charlie are living in Needham, Mass., but certainly wish they were back in Ft. Lauderdale about now.

Best regards,

Jim Morgan

Morgan '69

WISHING YOU  
A VERY  
*Merry*  
*Christmas*  
AND AN  
ESPECIALLY HAPPY  
NEW YEAR



This is going to be  
much better than last years  
Christmas in Sasebo.

Best Wishes,  
Jim, Nancy, and Charlie

Dear Cdr + Mrs. High MORGAN  
67

We certainly enjoyed  
your letter and the class  
list has been very informative  
and helpful.

We have a son now,  
Charles Parker, who is 3 mon.  
old. Of course he was born  
in the C.D. tradition, while  
I was out on Key Patrol.

I am getting relieved  
in late Feb. and then I  
imagine going to Rome.

We have certainly enjoyed  
our time here in Fort Lauderdale.  
Nancy has become a little  
bit of a Southern at heart.  
Congradulation, Captain.

I am looking forward to a little shore duty  
Nancy and I would like to get the 12th district  
secondary to the job.  
We are about to rendezvous with the POINT IOM  
take our liaison into Qui Whon as we are going  
I will say so long now. I hope you and your family are all fine.  
If you see Pete Poulos please tell him hello for me. I forgot  
to mention that Nancy and Charlie are living in Needham, Mass.,  
but certainly wish they were back in Ft. Lauderdale about now.

Best regards,

*Jim Morgan*