

JOHN SCHWARTZ

USCGC POINT CAUTION (WPB-82301) – Mar68 to Jul 68 – Relieved by Wilburn

Presidential Unit Citation – 18 Oct 68 to 5 Dec 68

Navy Unit Commendation – 1 Jun 68 to 31 Dec 68

October 24, 2018 – John Schwartz E-mail to Bill Carr

I just made a photo book with my photos of my tour plus some general CG archive photos and will bring that. I'll bring the photos I've scanned for the book on a thumb drive because there are too many to mail... Of course, there's the National Archive effort to scan/digitize all USCG cutter log books from Vietnam. Some are on line now. Tom Pennington and I have recently scanned another batch of logs and Carl is going to the Archives this Friday. If worthy, I could obtain another copy of my photo book and give it to the Academy Museum.

April 2, 2018 – Walt Viglienzzone E-mail

...Dec 68/Jan 69, Carl Helman relieved me on PT MARONE and I took DIV 13 OPS and Dave Faurot was DIV 13 READINESS – followed by John Schwartz.

June 30, 2016 – Walt Viglienzzone E-mail

John Schwartz relieved Dave Faurot on DIV 13 staff in Cat Lo.

Golden Journeys Booklet – 2015

USCGC POINT CAUTION (WPB-82301CO Vietnam 68-69 LTJG/LT

Coast Guard Conducting Market Time Boardings in Vietnam



As soon as the Coast Guard Squadron One 82' WPBs arrived in Vietnam they began the often tedious and boring, yet important, inspection of all boats in the close-in waters of the South China Sea. Pictured at the left are typical fishing sampans and a typical Vietnamese "freighter" carrying cargo coastwise. The majority of boardings involved these two types of vessels.

The purpose of boarding every vessel encountered was to prevent the Viet Cong from using small vessels to smuggle weapons, ammunition, supplies, or personnel to Viet Cong troops throughout South Vietnam. To facilitate the boardings each WPB carried one Vietnam naval officer or petty officer who served as a liaison. They served as translators and, more importantly, could inspect the documents required to be carried by all Vietnamese.



Most of the time WPB crews did not have to leave the boat. Documents were simply handed up to the Vietnamese navy liaison for inspection. Coast Guard crews were always armed for inspections and boardings. Most of the fishermen or Vietnamese vessel crews

were familiar with boarding protocols and opened hatches or moved fishing nets to show that they were not hiding contraband.

The most common discrepancy found during a boarding concerned identity documents. If a fisherman or crew member lacked identification or had a discrepancy in their documents the naval liaison would order them to be detained. Detainees were taken on board the WPB and taken to a location where their identity could be verified. Sometime detainees were "daisy-chained" from one WBP to another, or to a navy swift boat for further transfer to shore.

Boardings and vessel inspections lacked the intensity or naval gunfire support missions, or the firefights some WPBs encountered, but nevertheless were a vital part of the Market Time mission.

THE PIPELINE TO VIETNAM

John Schwartz

The two-month long journey from command of a stateside patrol boat to command of an 82-foot WPB in Vietnam was unlike any other change-of-station experience. The pipeline to Vietnam began once I was detached from the CAPE FAIRWEATHER (a 95-foot WPB in New London, CT) and flew across the country to the Coast Guard Training Center in Alameda, CA to join other Coasties headed for duty in the combat zone.

Alameda processed all Coast Guard personnel headed for in-country deployment to Vietnam. Alameda training included small arms, in-theater communications, Vietnamese history and culture, and I believe refresher training in firefighting and damage control. I remember vividly the administration processing session led by a staff attorney on preparing a will—as a 25-year-old the thought of writing a will had previously never crossed my mind!

By far, the most memorable part of our pre-deployment training was the survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) training. SERE for our group was conducted by the command at Navy Base Coronado, CA. The training lasted six long days. The impact of having no meals and sleeping—actually, mostly not sleeping—in the open with nothing but half of a parachute can be seen in the photo of me just after arriving back at the base after completing the training.

The first two days were spent in a classroom learning survival techniques, such as when foraging for food what is safe to eat and what is not. After spending the first night on the beach at Coronado (where the SEALs train), the afternoon of the second day we were bused about 50 miles east to a Marine Corps training area in the mountains. Because today's SERE training details are classified, as was our training, I won't describe in detail the last four days other than to say that the training provides an opportunity to experience each of the activities covered by the acronym SERE.

I remember one humorous incident during the training (the only humorous thing that happened during our training). The morning of the fourth day of our SERE class—a mix of Coast Guard and Navy personnel—we were divided into several small groups. Each group was given a contour map and compass. The map was marked with an "X" showing a rendezvous point. I don't recall the distance we needed to hike, but the terrain was mountainous and rugged.

There were no trails or paths. Each group was on its own to determine how to reach the rendezvous point. After several hours of hiking and picking a route using only the contour map and compass, our group rounded an outcropping of rock only to meet another group going in the opposite direction. After comparing chosen routes and disagreeing on where we were on the contour map our groups passed each other and continued their same tracks. Our group arrived at the rendezvous point well before the group we met in the mountains. While there isn't much use for contour map reading skills at sea, we at least earned bragging rights among our SERE classmates.

After receiving all necessary shots and medical clearance I received final deployment orders. I was given my specific assignment to Squadron One (RONONE), Division Twelve in Danang (in the northern part of South Vietnam). The flight to Vietnam was a commercial chartered Boeing 707. Every seat was filled with a mix of officers and enlisted personnel. We left California in the early evening; made fuel stops in Anchorage and Okinawa. Because we left at night, and traveled westward, it made for one long, dark flight. Finally, as we neared Vietnam the sun rose and we landed in Danang. It was March 1968 at the height of the Viet Cong's Tet offensive.

While waiting for my duffle bag to be tossed off the plane, I watched jets take off and bomb Monkey Mountain where the Viet Cong were trying to launch an attack on the Danang air base. The several Coasties on the flight were met by a Division Twelve staff member and driven to the personnel barge—a two story floating office and barracks combination—that served as the Division Headquarters. Despite the long flight I was soon on one of the 82-footers in Squadron One and underway for a familiarization patrol. Four days later I took command of the POINT CAUTION. The pipeline to Vietnam was finally over and the real work of supporting Operation Market Time began.

29 January 1969

SUMMARY OF TOUR ACTIVITY: LT. John E. SCHWARTZ 7591 USCG

- 8 Mar '68 - Arrived in-country. Reported to Division 12, Danang and went immediately by PCF to the Point Welcome to ride for three days for WPB familiarization.
- 12 Mar - Transferred at sea from PT. WELCOME to PT. CAUTION as PCO of the CAUTION.
- 13-14 Mar - Assisted in trawler salvage operation of enemy trawler sunk on 1 Mar.
- 15 Mar - Visited Coastal Group 16 three days after it was attacked to deliver supplies and for familiarization.
- 17 Mar - Received LT T.J. McKEAN and assumed command of POINT CAUTION. (LT McKEAN was Acting CO for 10 days after LT Leo BLACK rotated).
- 2 Apr - Conducted gunex on "Turtle Rock" due to length of time since vessel had fired.
- 9 Apr - 0540H overtook navy LCU 1484 after it strayed 10 miles north of the DMZ. LCU CINC had no idea of his position due to limited (200 yards) visibility. PT. CAUTION detected the LCU on radar as it went across the DMZ and gave chase while requesting NGFS ships stand-by for cover fire.
- 13 Apr - PT. CAUTION departed for Division 13.
- 15 Apr - Arrived at Cat Lo.
- 19 Apr - Joint operation with UDT team making a survey of possible infiltration routes. Provided transportation on close coverage (200 yards) along the beach.
- 12 May - Approximately 10 minutes after PCF was shot in the mouth of the Bo De river conducted H & I mission on VC positions.
- 17-19 May - Manned "Black Cat" dispersal areas during hours of darkness.
- 21 May - Discovered people fishing on beach in Loan Toan Secret Zone at 0200H and expended 500 rds .50 cal / 15 rds HE / 4 rds ILL. Results unknown.
 - Received call from Spotter A/C and working with him destroyed 2 sampans and damaged 8, expended 82 rds HE.
- 23 May - Fired on structures and fish nets in Loan Toan Secret Zone, destroyed 2 large nets and 1 building; expended 15 rds HE / 16 rds WP
- 15 Jun - Fired H & I at sector request.
- 17 Jun - Fired H & I at sector request.
- 18 Jun - Fired H & I at sector request.

2 Jul - LTJG WILBURN relieved me of Command.
Assumed the duties of Supply Officer, CG Div 13.

While Supply Officer the following was accomplished:

Made a complete report on fresh water situation at Cat Lo and completed the project by having fresh water piped to all barracks.

Obtained JET SPRAY COOLER for Division through private channels in Alameda

Implemented and coordinated with Army Special Services to establish an account for the Division. In doing so we obtained \$2,000 worth of recreational equipment in the first 6 months of operation. These items included: shuffle board table; pool table, TV, and all furnishings for crew's lounge; games, cards, etc for boats and clubs; and approximately 200 pr. tennis shoes.

Assisted in writing and editing the first three issues of the Div. Newsletter.

1 Oct - Relieved LTJG FAURCT of duties as Readiness Officer.
LTJG FRANKS relieved me as Supply Officer.

While Readiness Officer:

Revised and up-dated all Administrative ORI sheets.

Administered approximately 18 ORI's.

Wrote new Unit Gunnery Doctrine for all Division WPBs.

Maintained graphs of Division Activities

Wrote several Division instructions and notices.

Misc. -

Made four PSYCOPS visits.

Rode two patrols as relief XO

Acted as Operations Officer during his absence on R & R and special ops.

amplifying information on my tour:

After coming up to the Division Staff in July I established liaison between the Division and the NSA Det Cat Lo Supply Officer following a three month period during which the Division was without the services of a Supply Officer. I promulgated several supply instructions and coordinated a requisition system between the WPB's and the Supply Office.

In addition to my duties as supply officer I was tasked with a project to evaluate the status of the NSA Det Cat Lo water system and determine what would be necessary to provide adequate fresh water to the base. To answer these questions I worked on my own in an area where little or no information had previously been compiled and rumor had to be separated from fact. The situation at the start of the project was that the only potable water on base was piped to the galley and available in water coolers. The remainder of outlets (showers, sinks, and toilets) were non-potable. The water was pumped from several shallow wells contaminated with bacteria and oil. I diagramed water lines, filtration plant capacity, and the present base water consumption. In order to quickly alleviate the health hazard caused by the non-potable water I suggested to the Base Commander that an additional pipe be connected to the present filtration system, and to have the system geared up for 100% capacity. This made enough potable water to run through existing pipes throughout the base.

Once potable water was running through the base system the hot water heaters could be hooked up (previously the iron, salt, and oil concentration made boiler operation impossible) and both hot and cold potable water was available for all.

More specific information on the project is contained in:

Commander, Coast Guard Division Thirteen ltr 11330 of 19 July 1968

Commander, Coast Guard Division Thirteen ltr 11330 of 29 July 1968

Another project I was assigned was to establish some mean of obtaining much needed recreational gear. Before we started receiving the support of the Army Special Services the only thing available for morale use was the money received from Activities. LCDR SMITH asked me to try and come up with more in the line of morale items. My inquires led to the Special Services in Vung Tau and after obtaining authorization I opened an account with them. As previously covered in the summary, I furnished the crew's lounge, and obtained morale gear for all the WPBs desiring the same and the O-club.

My third large project was the writing and publication of a 27 page Unit Gunnery Doctrine for all the Division WPBs. The Doctrine was written using CG-272-1 as a guide along with an old gunnery doctrine. Many changes were necessary to reflect Division policies; new methods of operation, and to cover the new weapons recently added to the WPB allowance (M-60, M-79).

As for my four months on the POINT CAUTION, it is rather difficult to reflect in facts and figures those changes involving the up-grading of operational readiness, appearance, and ability to carry out the mission of Market Time as defined in the OPORDER. When I relieved in Danang the CAUTION was, in my opinion, in terrible shape. Over 50% of the hull and super structure was exposed red lead or rust. The hull number was not even readable on one side. One URC-58 was inoperable along with the fathometer. Accountability of pubs and classified material was lax. Within a month all discrepancies upon relief had been corrected to my satisfaction. In my opinion, the CAUTION progressed to the point of being one of the better boats per-

forming the Market Time Mission exactly as directed by the time I was relieved four months later. I would like to think that some of my efforts carried over into the months after my relief when the CAUTION received the boat of the quarter award.

Schwartz 68

Christmas 1968

Dear CAPT. & Mrs HIGH-

This year my Christmas cards are going out very early since you may not have my present address here in Vietnam.

After spending last Christmas at home I went out to San Francisco in late January for six weeks of training prior to flying to Vietnam on March 6th. I arrived in Danang, which is about 70 miles south of the DMZ, and within one day I was aboard an 82 foot Coast Guard Cutter underway in the South China Sea on a Market Time patrol. Two days later I took command of the USCGC POINT CAUTION with a crew of nine and an Executive Officer. Market Time is the name given to the naval operation to prevent the VC from using the sea as an infiltration or transportation route. Our patrols consist of four to six days in an assigned patrol area cruising anywhere from a few hundred yards from the beach to ten miles or so off the coast keeping on the lookout for any suspicious vessels or sampans and boarding all of the various boats in our area. Some of our patrols out of Danang took us right up to the DMZ with North Vietnam's shore clearly visible.

Easter Day we left Danang for a new home base with CG Division 13 near Vung Tau. Vung Tau is a Vietnamese coastal resort 35 miles southeast of Saigon. For the next three months the POINT CAUTION patrolled in the river mouths of the Mekong Delta area down to the very southern tip of the country. During the patrols we fired on many VC positions with our 81mm mortar and five .50 caliber machine guns. On the other hand we gave medical treatment to many fishermen and their families, and handed out candy and fruit--usually from the crew's own supply--to the hundreds of children we met during our daily boardings.

Early in July I was lucky enough to move up to the job of Readiness Officer for the Division--a staff job. I can't really say I miss the long patrols. Although my job now isn't quite so glamorous, the hours are regular and there is plenty of time for relaxation on the base and in town where there are several very good restaurants.

I will most likely be here for Christmas, but since I am still riding boats as a substitute captain there is always the possibility of being underway for the holiday. Thanksgiving will be quite another matter--I will be in Hawaii on six days of R&R with my fiancée, Carolyn Gaskell. After almost nine months here the six days in Hawaii will be quite a wonderful change. In case you didn't know, I will be getting married in March at the Coast Guard Academy Chapel. Carolyn, who is presently working for the General Dynamics Corporation, and I dated for a year while I was stationed in New London. We don't know where we'll be after we're married since I don't know where I'll be stationed next.

...and that brings us up to Christmas! I hope yours is merry and you have the best year possible in 1969.

LTJG John L. Schwartz (7591) USCG
Coast Guard Division 13
FPO San Francisco 96622

John Schwartz

P.S.- My final application for CG aviation was turned down for my 20/30 vision - so I hope to take my Commercial and Instrument Ratings and see if anything turns up in civilian aviation. In other words "I want to fly." I do plan on staying in the CG unless something really promising does turn up.

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Dear Cdr. & Mrs High —

I really appreciated your personal note on my Christmas card again this year. Since I am here in New hondon the "good old Cadet Days" and the Class of '65 seem closer.

My tour on the Cape Fairweather was very interesting and rewarding — I wouldn't trade it for anything. Many of our more interesting cases were covered well by the "New hondon Day" and many Cadet who I didn't even know knew that I was the skipper of the 95' in New hondon.

At the time of this letter writing I am only 10 HRS of flight time away from my Instrument and Commercial Pilot Ratings. I am very serious about my flying and I should have passed my instrument test

before Christmas while on leave prior to leaving for Alameda and Viet Nam.

Upon returning from overseas I hope to investigate flying with the airlines — and possibly my academy training will help balance my lack of flying experience. I don't really know if I would be successful in finding a position, but if I don't at least try I'll never know. Unless something would turn up there I plan in staying in the CG.

I hear I'm about the only bachelor on the East Coast — but I don't know how long that will last either — I've been spending a lot of time in Mystic lately.

On Viet Nam, I'll just say I'll try and do my best for our country — but I'd like to see someone come up with the answer to this mess.

Thank you again for the card and interesting letter.

John