



OFFICER IN CHARGE  
RIVER SECTION FIVE FOUR FOUR  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

26 JULY 1968

LT STRAIGHT - Officer in Charge  
LT PEENEY - Operations Officer  
LT HAMILTON - Sen Patrol Officer  
LTJG SINCLAIR - Patrol Officer  
WO-3 RISHEN - Logistics Officer  
QM3 SMITH - Leading Chief

Patrol Schedule:  
Boats:

Patrol Officers:

Base Defense Condition: **YELLOW**

THE PLAN OF THE DAY CONTAINS BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL INFORMATION  
ALL HANDS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF ITS CONTENTS

From: Officer in Charge, River Section 544  
To: All River Section 544 Personnel

Subj: Commander, River Squadron FIVE Command Inspection

1. Comments on Admin/Operations portion: <sup>as thought</sup> 544 to be best in this area of inspection by Commodore until now. He now thinks we are outstanding and best in country. He says we could do more intelleginee gathering as a section. As shown by Opsums and Spotreps we have shown ourself to be a highly motivated group which keeps him informed of problems areas as he desires.
2. Personnel/Barracks Inspection: The Commodore added that both 544 and 525 were outstanding but we were better than 525. He was impressed by good hair cuts, shoe shines, neat uniforms and no goatees. Some pockets were unbuttoned, name and U.S. Navy tags slanted, mixture of black, green, white, and no skivvie shirts was noted Tropical green shirts with sleeves cut off are not authorized contrary to the word I received and put out before inspection. The Commodore commented twice that MONTGOMERY ABHL was the most outstanding in appearance that he had inspected. Too much gear adrift in the barracks. Some topside people still live like slob!
3. Boat Inspection: The Commodore rated our boats fifth of the six M&I sections he has inspected. He was favorably impressed as to the way weapons were clean and laid out for inspection. All boats had oil in bilges, too much extra gear on the deck in radio compartment, not all battery lockers were opened as previously promulgated. Some paint jobs were obviously a fast job as you and I well know. I personally thought engine compartments looked very good except for oil in bilges. This could have possibly been eliminated by pumping bilges dry after washing down engines and then wiping out deck of engine space with a rag and again flushing out the bilges with water. We are trying to get some liquid bilge cleaner (Gamlin) for this purpose. I desire boat engineers to paint engine compartments piping (to be completed by 09 August) using standard color coding system. This aids in quick identification for all hands for damage control purposes and for non-engineers in learning the systems. Paint is available at Paint Locker.

SALT WATER PIPING - GREEN  
FUEL OIL PIPING - RED  
LUBE OIL PIPING - ORANGE  
FRESH WATER PIPING - BLUE

4. I sincerely wish to congratulate and thank each and everyone for the fine effort you put out for me for this command inspection. We now have an outstanding reputation with the Comedore, and I might say we deserve it. We are the BEST and getting better all the time. Keep up the good work. Again my personal thanks and a Well Done - Bravo Zulu to all.

LT W. D. STRAIGHT  
OFFICER IN CHARGE  
RIVER SECTION 544

#### NOTES FROM OPERATIONS OFFICER

On the night of 24/25 July we had an experience which could easily have been the worst disaster in the history of PBRs, and was averted only by the steady thinking and cool reactions of one of our patrol officers. A boat on river patrol picked up a radar contact near the middle of the lower Soi Rap. As the 544 PBR raced over to investigate it illuminated the area with a pop flare. It then allowed time to slow to afford better view-ing with starlite. Another pop flare was fired and the man on the starlite saw a craft which "looked like a large sampan." Almost at the same time sprits of water resembling bullets began appearing - advancing toward the 544 PBR, with this the 544 patrol officer fired three warning shots with his .38 caliber immediately the contact illuminated the 544 boat with a pop flare and only then was it known that the contact was a U.S. PBR (525), transiting 544's station without warning or having informed the 544 patrol of intended movement. No signal lights or challenges were used and only a miracle prevented the 544 patrol from opening up with everything.

In the future, when in doubt - challenge! It's far better to be safe than sorry. Any sampan, unless grounded, or friendly would have long since "DI DI MAUED." This time we were lucky. Let's NEVER have an next time!

Earlier the same evening the same patrol was shot at by ~~the~~ VN PGM on the Soi Rap, and charged by a VN Junk and forced to an emergency "EXIT" from anchorage. An electronic device being used, and the anchor, though marked with a floatable buoy, were overrun by the junk and lost.

Both these incidents would most likely never happened had proper challenge procedures been executed. On the river "Charlie" may well be the only "real" enemy, but he is far from being the only danger. Stay alert and save lives.

Our section is a good one, infact, considered the best, in certain areas of operations, in the entire country. Let's not let this reputation fall because of inconsiderate acts toward other people, especially those performing official acts. Yesterday, one of our men was returning from "Nha Be' liberty" and had had several beers, was told by the gate guard to put on his hat. He gave the gate guard a hard time and this caused unnecessary problems. Think two times before sounding off to some one and life will be much smoother.

An increased effort in intelligence gathering is encouraged. Any time the opportunity presents itself insure you take full advantage of it and exploit the source to the maximum make sure your interpreters are constantly asking all woodcutters and personnel from Long An and T-10 and Van Co areas, questions concerning contact with V.C. we need this intelligence