

EPILOGUE

ADVANTAGE SWIFT VETS

John Kerry never saw them coming: not the book, the ads, or the 250 veterans of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. When the DRUDGE REPORT broke the story, an enraged spokesperson who was traveling with Kerry told DRUDGE, “They hired a goddamn private investigator to dig up trash!”¹ The next day, Senator John McCain, without having ever studied the charges, called the Swifties “dishonest and dishonorable.”² Several days later, the *New York Times* declared the group to be a “shadow party” of the GOP.³

None of these unjustified attacks mattered to the Swifties. They knew these attacks were not true. But more important, none of it mattered to the American people who wanted to find out the truth for themselves. In a few weeks, *Unfit for Command* was #1 on Amazon’s bestseller list, #1 on BarnesandNoble.com, and then #1 on the *New York Times* list for four weeks in a row. And even though in those

early days when the Swift Boat vets could only afford to buy airtime in a handful of markets, polls showed that roughly half of Americans already saw or knew of the ads.

The truth was out.

From Minor Annoyance to Full-Scale Attack

At first, the Kerry campaign tried to treat the book and the ads as an irritation. They ignored the charges; dodged questions. It didn't work.

The Kerry camp then launched an orchestrated plan to discredit the Swift Boat vets. Television stations that aired the ads were threatened with lawsuits. The Swift Boat Veterans for Truth was accused of being run and funded by Republicans. The Kerry camp "googled" co-author Jerry Corsi and used his statements in an Internet discussion forum to attack his character. They accused co-author John O'Neill of holding a thirty-year-plus vendetta against John Kerry. They demanded that Regnery, the book's publisher, pull the book off the shelves.

None of it worked.

Now the Kerry campaign is engaged in an all-out effort to brand the vets as liars, even though they do not have any evidence that the vets lied about the charges. The Kerry camp is hoping that if they repeat it often enough, Americans will come to accept it. But so far, this strategy hasn't worked either. Indeed, it may already be too late. We believe that truth has won.

The Liberal Media Falls in Step

The liberal mainstream media employed a parallel strategy. First, they ignored the Swift Boat vets, and then dismissed the charges. All the while, they gave tremendous play to those attacking President Bush.

The NBC *Today Show*, for example, gave Kitty Kelley's anti-Bush book three straight mornings of airtime, but refused to interview the authors of *Unfit for Command* even once. NBC was more than willing to provide a forum for an author whose chief source denied the book's account, but they ignored *Unfit for Command* even though the latter relied on documented evidence and multiple eyewitness accounts from veterans who had signed affidavits.

Then Dan Rather and CBS enjoyed a holiday from the truth. They proclaimed that they had documents criticizing President Bush's National Guard service, charges that were accepted as fact by the mainstream media and widely reported. Even when it was quickly and universally concluded that the documents were forgeries, CBS stuck by their story for weeks. While CBS dismissed the meticulously documented Swift Boat charges, they continued to defend their fraudulent documents until poor ratings made it impossible to do so.

Perhaps the most telling example of the liberal media's bias was the condescending manner in which they treated the Swift Boat veterans. Pat Oliphant's cartoon depicting them as illiterate drunks⁴ was an insult to veterans old and young. And yet, there was virtually no media outcry. On the *NewsHour*, Tom Oliphant declared that *Unfit for Command* was not up to journalistic standards.⁵ From what we've seen in the press, we believe the book's standards are *higher*.

In this epilogue, our goal is to review the key arguments of the book that have been under attack and the statements the Kerry camp has made in response to the charges. There are still many unanswered questions. We are confident that after reviewing the summary and documentation, as well as Kerry's statements, readers will conclude that the charges in the book are not a "pack of lies" as Kerry claimed.

Unfit for Command presents serious charges backed up with serious research. We intend for this epilogue to reinforce that conclusion.

The Purple Heart Hunter

Unfit for Command charged that John Kerry's first Purple Heart involved an accidentally self-inflicted superficial wound suffered on a training mission—the “Boston Whaler Incident.” The book asserts that Kerry launched an M-79 grenade too close to some rocks along the shore, causing a tiny piece of shrapnel to lodge loosely in his arm.

The Kerry camp's first salvo was to charge that the physician quoted in *Unfit for Command*, Dr. Louis Letson, was not the physician who treated John Kerry. In the letter written by Marc Elias, general counsel of the Kerry campaign, to various television stations planning to air the first Swift Boat Veterans for Truth commercials, Mr. Elias placed Dr. Letson's name in quotation marks, subtly raising doubt about Louis Letson's qualifications. Mr. Elias also charged that Dr. Letson did not attend Kerry's wound because Dr. Letson's name did not appear on Kerry's sick call sheet. Instead, Mr. Elias noted, the person who signed the medical report was J.C. Carreon, since deceased. The Kerry camp contended that Dr. Letson was lying in his affidavit when he claimed that Kerry's wound was superficial and that the shrapnel was removed with tweezers, the injury requiring no more medical treatment than the application of topical antiseptic and a band-aid.⁶

Dr. Letson quickly replied that J.C. Carreon was a lower-ranking corpsman who regularly assisted him at the sickbay and affirmed his initial report. Many vets who served at Cam Ranh Bay came forward to confirm that Dr. Letson was indeed the division's physician. Furthermore, Dr. Letson had approached his local Democratic Party chairman about Kerry's self-inflicted wound even before the controversy began. As for the hostile fire, those on the mission with Kerry, including Retired Rear Admiral William L. Schachte, the officer who commanded the Boston Whaler that evening, all maintained there had been no enemy fire.

Kerry's surrogates next claimed that Schachte was lying, and that he was not on the boat. But Schachte in an in-depth interview with reporter Robert Novak, proved his credibility:⁷

"Kerry nicked himself with a M-79 [grenade launcher]." Schachte said in a telephone interview from his home in Charleston, S.C. He said, "Kerry requested a Purple Heart."

Schachte, also a lieutenant junior grade, said he was in command of the small boat called a Boston whaler or skimmer, with Kerry aboard in his first combat mission in the Vietnam War. The third crew member was an enlisted man, whose name Schachte did not remember.

Two enlisted men who appeared at the podium with Kerry at the Democratic National Convention in Boston have asserted that they were alone in the small boat with Kerry, with no other officer present. Schachte said it "was not possible" for Kerry to have gone out alone so soon after joining the swift boat command in late November 1968.

Kerry supporters said no critics of the Democratic presidential nominee ever were aboard a boat with him in combat. *Washington lawyer Lanny Davis has contended that Schachte was not aboard the Boston whaler and says the statement that Schachte was aboard in Unfit for Command undermines that critical book's credibility.*⁸ (emphasis added)

Novak also interviewed Swift Boat veterans Patrick Runyon and William Zaladonis, two Kerry supporters who claimed to be aboard the skimmer that night. But neither Zaladonis nor Runyon has ever

asserted that they saw enemy fire. Novak also interviewed Tedd Peck and Mike Voss who confirmed to him that Schachte was the originator of the technique to use the skimmer in missions designed to flush the Viet Cong out on the banks of the waterways along the Mekong River so larger boats could move in and destroy them; both men also confirmed to Novak that Schachte was always aboard the skimmer when it was used in such missions.

Unable to discredit the rear admiral's account, the Kerry camp then engaged in an *ad hominem* assault. The strongly pro-Kerry Media-Matters.org, for instance, noted that Admiral Schachte had contributed \$8,500 to federal candidates or national political organizations since 1997, of which \$6,750 went to Republican candidates or the Republican Party, including donations of \$1,000 to George Bush in each of his 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns.⁹ To leftist critics, Admiral Schachte's political contributions disqualified him from giving a truthful affidavit.

As the controversy over the first Purple Heart progressed, a previously overlooked passage from Douglas Brinkley's campaign biography came to light. The date of the skimmer incident was December 2, 1968. According to Brinkley, Kerry had written in his private journals that on December 11, 1968, just after he turned twenty-five, his crew had not yet come under enemy fire, even though the date was nine days after the skimmer incident, when Kerry had claimed he was wounded by enemy fire. Regarding the events of December 11, 1968, Kerry wrote the following journal entry:

They pulled away from the pier at Cat Lo with spirits high, feeling satisfied with the way things were going for them. They had no lust for battle, but they also were not afraid. Kerry wrote in his notebook, "A cocky feeling of invincibility accompanied us up the Long Tau shipping channel because we hadn't been shot at

yet, and Americans at war who haven't been shot at are allowed to be cocky.¹⁰

Taking at face value Kerry's description of December 11, 1968, he and his crew had not yet experienced enemy fire, a statement that sounds like an implicit admission that the injury for the first Purple Heart was not suffered under enemy fire.

The Final Admission

John Hurley, veterans coordinator for the Kerry campaign has now admitted that it is possible that Kerry's first Purple Heart was awarded for an unintentional self-inflicted wound.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. What really happened in that incident on December 2, 1968?
2. How did you end up getting this Purple Heart? From whom?
3. Why was a Purple Heart issued only after Hibbard and Schachte left?'

Purple Heart #3

We argued that the injury from Kerry's third Purple Heart was a wound to his buttocks resulting from a small grenade he threw at a rice pile earlier on March 13, 1969, the day in which a later separate action involved the Rassmann incident that resulted in Kerry's Bronze Star award. This account is consistent with the one told in Kerry's campaign biography, *Tour of Duty*.¹¹

In the appendix, we present the casualty report that led to Kerry's third Purple Heart. The report was dated 13 March 1969 and documents Kerry's wound as being to his buttocks. The report, however,

as we noted in *Unfit for Command*, is fraudulent in that it attempts to link the buttocks wound suffered earlier in the day with the Rassmann incident, suggesting the injury resulted from a mine explosion rather than a self-inflicted wound. Even Rassmann himself has said in numerous public occasions that Kerry had wounded himself. So too, has the special forces officer who was in charge of the mission.

We have maintained that only one mine exploded in the Rassmann incident, that under PCF-3 commanded by Dick Pees. As we shall discuss, the damage report for Kerry's PCF-94 does not show mine damage from that incident, so it is hard to understand how a mine exploding close to PCF-94 could have thrown up shrapnel through his boat to have injured his buttocks. The mine exploding under PCF-3 exploded at a considerable distance from Kerry's boat and none of the other injury reports from that day reflect any shrapnel wounds.

In summary, a key conclusion regarding Kerry's Purple Hearts remains undisputed in the controversy following publication of *Unfit for Command*: Kerry's injuries that "earned" him Purple Hearts #1 and #3 were from accidental self-inflicted minor injuries. After examining the particulars of the argument presented above, we maintain that that the controversy regarding Kerry's Purple Heart awards advances as follows: *Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth*.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. Why was the wound received from the grenade thrown at the rice reported to the Navy for a Purple Heart as coming from a water mine?
2. Were you lying when you claimed to have received the shrapnel wound during the ambush?
3. Why have you continued to lie about the nature of the wound you suffered to your arm—whether it was bleeding or was truly just a bruise.

The Bronze Star

The Bronze Star involved the March 13, 1969 incident in which a mine went off under PCF-3 and Jim Rassmann was thrown off Kerry's boat, PCF-94. Kerry returned to pull Rassmann from the water in what the Kerry camp has characterized as a heroic "no man left behind" effort. *Unfit for Command* charged that after the initial mine explosion under PCF-3, commanded by Dick Pees, there was no more hostile fire. We further maintained that of the five boats involved in the incident, three remained on the scene and went to the aid of PCF-3. Only Kerry fled for safety, accelerating so fast that he caused Rassmann to fall off the boat.

The Kerry camp noted that Larry Thurlow had also received a Bronze Star for the March 13 incident, a commendation which also listed enemy fire. This, the Kerry camp argued, proved the Rassmann incident was as Kerry had described. But Thurlow was surprised to receive the Bronze Star because he knew the incident did not involve hostile fire, with the exception of the single mine that exploded under PCF-3. What he did not realize was that his decoration derived from the fabricated description of small arms and automatic weapons fire that Kerry had invented to justify his own decorations.

All total, eleven men on the river that day have confirmed that there was no enemy fire other than the mine explosion. In fact, after Rassmann was retrieved from the water, the boats remained in the same area for more than ninety minutes to rescue the damaged boat. Throughout that time, they suffered no hostile fire. There was no report of any casualties, or serious damage to any of the other boats. As for Kerry's "bleeding arm," the military records show that it was a contusion—a bruise—and that a cold cloth was recommended as treatment.

As the debate over Kerry's Bronze Star progressed, a eulogy Kerry entered into the *Congressional Record* in 1998 gave support to the contention that Rassmann was thrown off his boat into the Bay Hap

River when Kerry accelerated out of danger in the March 13 incident.¹² The eulogy was for Kerry's crewmember, Thomas Belodeau, who incidentally had been on the record as having been the gunner who wounded the fleeing Viet Cong youngster in Kerry's Silver Star incident.¹³

There was the time we were carrying special forces up a river and a mine exploded under our boat sending it two feet into the air. We were receiving incoming rocket and small arms fire and Tommy was returning fire with his M-60 machine gun when it literally broke apart in his hands.

He was left holding the pieces unable to fire back while one of the Green Berets [Rassmann] walked along the edge of the boat to get Tommy another M-60. As he was doing so, the boat made a high speed turn to starboard and the Green Beret kept going—straight into the water.¹⁴

That this version differs from what Kerry told his campaign biographer Douglas Brinkley or what was related to the *Boston Globe* reporters writing their biography are not surprising. John Kerry frequently relates multiple versions of the same story when he discusses his experience in Vietnam.

The Kerry campaign has now changed its web site to reflect part of the truth. In an early version, the site said that the other boats fled while Kerry came back to rescue Rassmann. Now the site says that the other boats stayed, and it was Kerry's boat that "turned" back. It was the longest turn in Swift Boat history.

Reviewing this record, the evidence coming forward to date, including the analysis of the various March 13, 1969 after-action reports supports the version of the Bronze Star story as told in *Unfit*

for *Command*. The verdict here is as before: ***Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.***

UNANSWERED QUESTION FOR KERRY

1. How can you maintain that the incident occurred as you claimed when the testimony of others and the physical evidence undermines your version of the events?
2. You have two descriptions of how Rassmann fell off the boat, one is by a second mine, the other is that he fell off your boat when it sped away. Which is the truth? the lie?
3. When you came back, wasn't another boat also proceeding to rescue Rassmann, and not the situation in which you had earlier claimed in your January 17, 2004 press release that while the "other swift boats were evacuating the area, [your] boat chose to turn their boat toward the ambush to save Rassmann.
4. Why was no one and nothing hit in the 75-yard canal when you claimed that the boats were receiving 5,000 meters of fire from both banks.
5. Do you admit that the damage to the boats occurred the day before, as described on page 304 of *Tour of Dury*?
6. Did you prepare the after-action report of the incident?

The Sampan Incident

As described in *Unfit for Command*, PCF-44, under the command of John Kerry, was involved in an incident where a child and a father aboard a sampan were killed when the crew opened fire, thinking that Viet Cong were aboard the sampan. We further discussed an after-action report first discovered by reporters for the *Boston Globe* when writing their biography of John Kerry.¹⁵ This after-action report is material because it appears to be a fraudulent report, one written to

cover the sampan incident by changing it to reflect not the killing of a father and child, but the capturing of the mother and a second child, the killing of one Viet Cong (supposedly the father), and four additional occupants who either escaped or were killed in action. Based on eyewitness accounts, *Unfit for Command* charges that the after-action report was a fraud written to transform a tragedy into a heroic victory, the only casualty being the truth of what actually happened.

The after-action report, obtained from the Naval Archives at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., is printed in the appendix. The report describes that PCF-44 was under fire, something even John Kerry's own account of the incident never contended in *Tour of Duty*.¹⁶ The report lists one woman and one child as "CIA" or "captured in action," not "miraculously saved" as was the case. Further, the report clearly lists an estimate that four of the enemy were KIA, "killed in action," and one enemy believed killed in action, the father of the family on the small fishing boat.

Kerry's campaign has never responded to multiple requests to address this after-action report and resolve the discrepancy pointed out in *Unfit for Command*. Given the Kerry camp's lack of response, the conclusion on the sampan incident controversy is again clear: ***Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.***

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. Did you prepare and submit to the Navy a report saying that there were five Viet Cong probably killed on the boat, omitting the child and describing the mother and baby as captured in action?
2. Why is there a discrepancy among the eyewitness accounts, the after-action report, and the account written by the *Boston Globe* reporters?

The Silver Star

Following the publication of *Unfit for Command*, several distinct lines of controversy developed over John Kerry's Silver Star decoration.

On August 20, 2004, Henry Mark Holzer and Erika Holzer, experts on the authentication of military records and decorations, published on the Internet an article that disclosed that Kerry's military form DD 214 (a record of military separation or transfer prepared by the veteran) listed that Kerry's Silver Star award included a combat "V" for valor. This form, archived on Kerry's campaign website, was clearly in error. The Silver Star, the third highest medal bestowed by our nation's military, is by definition a combat award, hence the combat "V" is never issued with a Silver Star because to do so would be redundant. As the Holzers commented:

The presence of the combat "V" with Kerry's Silver Star on his DD 214 raises two extremely disquieting questions. How did the unauthorized "V" get there, and why has Kerry allowed it to remain?

The first question should not be taken lightly because we are talking about possible federal crimes. We are talking about the possibility of a forged official document. We are talking, as well, about Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, which states: "[W]hoever, in any manner within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the United States knowingly and willfully . . . makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 5 years or both."

Was the combat “V” added by a sloppy clerk or a yeoman’s typo thirty years ago? Was someone pressured or persuaded to add it? If Kerry had nothing to do with the gratuitously added combat “V,” why didn’t he have his DD 214 corrected when he was separated from the Navy?

Which gives rise to the second disturbing question: If Kerry was not a party to the unauthorized “V,” why, for all these years, has he allowed his DD 214 to remain uncorrected and to repose on his website?¹⁷

This observation became even more puzzling once Kerry’s DD 215 was examined. Kerry’s form DD 215, also on his website, was filed in 2001 to correct his DD 214, originally filed in 1970. In the corrected form, Kerry applied to add four bronze stars to his previously awarded Vietnam Service Medal, upgrading the award; however, the corrected form left unchanged the award mention of Kerry’s Silver Star with the unauthorized “V.”

On August 24, 2004, the Holzers published a second article revealing that John Kerry had not one citation for his Silver Star, but three different citations, “an unheard of number for a single award.”¹⁸ The first citation includes the familiar account where Kerry leaps from PCF-94, pursues a fleeing Viet Cong armed with a rocket launcher and kills him. Although the second citation is undated, the Holzers argue that it was most likely issued in 1970. The second citation is shorter than the first and is significantly different because it omits any mention of the Viet Cong springing up from a spider hole, carrying a rocket launcher, and being pursued by Kerry who shot him in the back. The third citation, also undated, is similarly sanitized, though this time it is signed by Secretary of the Navy John Lehman,

who held this position from February 1981 to April 1987. The Holz-ers speculate as to why John Kerry would have sought to have the second version of the citation issued:

Citation 2 raises two important and intriguing questions. First, why would Kerry bother to have a second citation issued? The obvious answer is that he wanted to expunge from the record that he had shot a fleeing enemy soldier in the back. Another possible explanation, speculative though plausible, is found in the relative ranks held by Admirals Zumwalt (who signed the first citation) and Hyland (who signed the second citation) at the time. Zumwalt had “only” three stars, Hyland four.¹⁹

Regarding the third version of the citation, the Holz-ers explain:

While it is not difficult to understand why Kerry apparently sought and obtained a sanitized second version of his Silver Star citation, at first glance it is not so easy to surmise why Kerry went after yet a third citation, this time from Lehman (especially because the third citation is word-for-word, in every important respect, the same as the second). One theory dovetails with what may well have motivated him, at least in part, to prefer Hyland’s imprimatur over Zumwalt’s. Kerry, now a senator, may have been trying to upgrade his award, issued by a couple of “mere” admirals to one issued by the Secretary of the Navy.²⁰

The controversy over the issuance of the Silver Star citations did not stop here. On August 28, 2004, reporter Thomas Lipscomb wrote an article revealing that he had contacted former Navy Secretary John Lehman and Lehman disclosed that he had no idea where the Silver

Star citation on John Kerry's website (the third version signed by Lehman) came from. According to Lipscomb, Lehman was at a loss to explain how his signature got on the award:

"It's a total mystery to me. I never saw it. I never signed it. I never approved it. And the additional language it contains was not written by me," he said.²¹

And again:

Asked how the citation could have been executed over his signature without his knowledge, Lehman said: "I have no idea. I can only imagine they were signed by an autopen." The autopen is a device often used in the routine execution of executive documents in government.²²

Kerry's campaign had no specific explanation for these oddities regarding the citation. At best, the campaign claimed the "V" designation on Kerry's DD 214 resulted from a clerical error, with no reason given for why Kerry never corrected the error. Regarding the three versions of the Silver Star, the Kerry campaign was similarly silent, noting only that the citations were all evidently legitimate since they were issued—an answer which avoided the basic questions regarding why and how the multiple versions of the citation came into existence.

On August 21, 2004, the Kerry campaign persuaded William Rood to make a public statement favorable to Kerry regarding the Silver Star incident. Rood, an editor for the *Chicago Tribune*, overcame his reluctance to speak out in order to make one statement attacking the Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth and supporting John Kerry. Specifically, Rood argued that the charges in *Unfit for Command* were

untrue, claiming that “What matters most to me is that this is hurting crewmen who are not public figures and who deserved to be honored for what they did.”²³

Still, Rood’s description of the Silver Star incident was fundamentally in agreement with that given in *Unfit for Command*. There we charged that the action to beach the boats and charge inland was pre-agreed among the three boat commanders involved in the action—a tactic thought likely to result in commendations. Rood’s account supported this point:

We agreed that if we were not crippled by the initial volley and had a clear fix on the location of the ambush, we would turn directly into it, focusing the boats’ twin .50-caliber machine guns on the attackers and beaching the boats. We told our crews about the plan.²⁴

Rood’s only significant point of difference was his contention that the Viet Cong killed was not a “young Viet Cong in a loincloth” as we had written in *Unfit for Command*. As Rood explained:

I have no idea how old the gunner Kerry chased that day was, but both Leeds and I recall that he was a grown man, dressed in the kind of garb the VC usually wore.

Still, mainstream press reporters touted Rood’s statement as confirmation that the account in *Unfit for Command* was discredited.²⁵ But in the Kerry biography written by the *Boston Globe* reporters (who claim to know him best) also noted that the Viet Cong was a teenager in a loincloth. The *Globe* reporters interviewed more than ten participants in the action that day.

The media bias of the mainstream liberal media was obvious:

Within hours of the *Chicago Tribune's* Saturday afternoon announcement that William Rood had decided to go public with his Kerry defense, more than 1,500 news outlets were touting the story on their web sites, with the Associated Press offering no fewer than 10 updates.²⁶

Had the story been supportive of the Swift Boat Veterans for the Truth, few if any of these news outlets would have considered the story worth covering.

Unfit for Command's major charge concerning Kerry's Silver Star was not that his actions constituted a war crime. Rather, our major contention was that Kerry's action was not meritorious.

In review of the controversy over the Silver Star, *Unfit for Command's* argument is intact. Kerry killed a fleeing Viet Cong, most likely one who was already wounded, an action not reaching the level of valor expected of one awarded a Silver Star. We are not surprised to learn that Kerry's revisions of the citation sanitized the incident by removing altogether any mention of the fleeing Viet Cong shot in the back. Verdict: ***Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.***

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. Did you write the after-action report for this incident?
2. Why does the after-action report differ from the eyewitness accounts?
3. Why are there three different citations for your Silver Star medal?
4. How did you come to have a "V" on the citation?

Christmas in Cambodia

The core of the Christmas in Cambodia story as told by John Kerry contained an obvious lie from which there was no immediate recovery. According to John Kerry, President Nixon had ordered his Swift Boat into Cambodia in Christmas 1968, while Nixon was at the same time denying to the world that any U.S. military forces were engaged in Cambodia. This, as Kerry told the story, was “seared, seared” into his memory, a key experience which caused him to realize the Vietnam war was immoral and hence his Vietnam protesting justified. The problem was that Nixon was not president until January 20, 1969. No one in the mainstream press had ever noticed this obvious fabrication in the over thirty years John Kerry had told multiple versions of the story, all predicated on Nixon’s supposed duplicity.

Once John Kerry’s obvious lie was brought to light, his campaign had little option but to obscure the edges of the story. Perhaps he had just wandered into Cambodia as a mistake. Impossible, answered the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. The U.S. Navy heavily guarded the river entry into Cambodia, preventing accidental drifting into Cambodian waters.

Then Kerry’s supporters suggested that he was near Cambodia, if not actually in Cambodia. John Hurley, Kerry’s national director of veterans, was quoted as saying: “I don’t know that anyone can actually say whether or not they were in Cambodia. It’s a very watery area. There’s no sign that says welcome to Cambodia. It is obviously dusk and getting darker, and so they were in those waters.” There were suggestions that Kerry was in Cambodia on a different mission, one with Navy Seals, but he couldn’t provide any dates. Hurley again tried to come to the rescue: “He was five miles into Cambodia, but what’s happened is these two stories have gotten confused.” Or, again, in yet another attempt to explain the problem away, Hurley

offered this: "I think he knows that he was under fire in Cambodia. I think the date is what's inaccurate, that it was just not Christmas Eve Day."²⁷

Then Steve Gardner, the Kerry crewmember who joined Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, said he was never in Cambodia with Kerry. None of the crewmembers who support Kerry's campaign came forward to support his Christmas in Cambodia story. The Kerry camp was reduced to claiming that the mission was so secret that no one but Kerry knew about it. Then, Kerry surrogates just decided to abandon the issue altogether. Kerry supporters tried to maintain that the story was not important, so what if Kerry got this thirty-four year-old story wrong?

Finally, Kerry himself may have revealed the truth in his journal in the following passage he wrote while on his final mission, quoted in *Tour of Duty*: "The banks of the [Rach Giang Thanh River] whistled by as we churned out mile after mile at full speed. On my left were occasional open fields that allowed us a clear view into Cambodia. At some points, the border was only fifty yards away and it then would meander out to several hundred or even as much as a thousand yards away, always making one wonder what lay on the other side."

Kerry described his Christmas in Cambodia pivotal to his coming to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was immoral. As the story unraveled, so did a key pillar for Kerry's explanation of why he became an anti-war activist. With this, Kerry's credibility also collapsed. *Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.*

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. If you were in Cambodia, where in Cambodia? When was it?
How did you get there? Who was with you?
2. If you had already been to Cambodia, why did you write in your diary that you were curious about what lay "on the other side"?

Meeting with the Enemy

On September 21, 2004, the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth introduced a television ad entitled “Friends,” with the message that “John Kerry Secretly Met Enemy Leaders” during the Vietnam War, in 1970, while he was still in the Naval Reserves.²⁸

The Kerry rapid response team jumped into action, charging once again that the Swift vets were lying. John Kerry, his surrogates maintained, did not meet “secretly” with Vietnamese communist negotiators to the Paris Peace talks—he openly told Senator Fulbright’s committee in April 1971 that he had traveled to Paris and met with “both sides” to the Paris Peace talks. Since he told the Fulbright Committee about his meeting, it could not be “secret,” the spokespersons for the campaign maintained. Besides, since he met with “both sides,” implying that one of the sides had to be ours, so how could the trip have been anything else other than a fact-finding trip? Kerry’s camp also suggested many anti-war radicals were in Paris in 1970 and 1971 meeting with the Vietnamese communists. So, why wouldn’t John Kerry have done the same?

The meeting was secret—certainly secretive. Only in March of this year did Michael Meehan, one of Kerry’s top spokespersons, finally admit to the *Boston Globe* that Kerry did actually meet with Madame Binh, the top Viet Cong negotiator to the Paris Peace talks.²⁹ Kerry has ignored questions regarding who arranged the meeting, where it was held, how long it lasted, or what precisely Kerry and Madame Binh discussed. These details remain hidden.

All we know for sure is that on July 22, 1971, John Kerry held a press conference in Washington, D.C., where surrounded by POW families, he called upon President Nixon to accept Madame Binh’s peace proposal, a peace proposal that called for the United States to set a date for military withdrawal and pay reparations—in effect, to

surrender—to induce the Vietnamese communists to set a date for the release of our POWs.

Judged by the outcome, Kerry's trip to Paris was no simple "fact-finding mission." The evidence is that Kerry, while still in the Naval Reserves, inserted himself into a complex negotiation with the result that he advanced the communist side to the detriment of our official negotiating position. From Paris where Kerry received the communist message, to Washington, D.C., where he mouthed that message, Kerry became the Vietnamese communists' surrogate spokesperson.

There is no historical evidence that would support a Kerry contention that he met with anyone else other than the Viet Cong, officially known as the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), of whom Madame Binh was the foreign minister, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the official name of North Vietnam's communist government, of which Lo Duc Tho was a member. There were two Vietnamese communist parties to the Paris Peace talks—these are the "both sides" with whom Kerry met. Because of Kerry's refusal to disclose any of the details of his trip, we believe the charge still stands. *Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.*

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. Who arranged your Paris meeting with Madame Binh? Where was it held? Who else participated? What was discussed?
2. Did you visit the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in Paris on other occasions including the summer of 1971?
3. Where, when, and who were these talks with "the other side?"

The Winter Soldier Investigation

On September 15, 2004, Steven J. Pitkin came forward with an affidavit that supported the charge in *Unfit for Command* that the testi-

mony before the Winter Soldier Investigation held by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War was largely fraudulent. Pitkin did not originally intend to speak at the Winter Soldier Investigation when he traveled to Detroit in January 1971. Unlike many who testified there, Pitkin was a veteran who had seen combat in Vietnam. What drew him to Detroit, however, was the prospect of meeting a few girls and hearing David Crosby perform with Graham Nash.

In Vietnam, Pitkin was injured in a mortar attack, suffering minor wounds to both legs. In the months following his injury, his legs became infected and he was medivaced to an Army hospital in Okinawa. He received a Purple Heart and an honorable discharge and was sent back to the states. Once back home, he received far less than a hero's welcome. At nineteen years old, Pitkin was confused and angry. He signed up for classes at Catonsville Community College outside Baltimore, where he was recruited to join the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, although he had no clear idea what the organization was about.

Scott Swett, the creator of WinterSoldier.com, reported Pitkin's story:

In January of 1971, Pitkin was invited to go to Detroit for the VVAW's "Winter Soldier Investigation," a national conference intended to convince the public that American troops were routinely committing war crimes in Vietnam. "I was just going to show support for the guys who were already picked out to testify," said Pitkin. "Fighting in the war was terrible enough—I shot people—but I never saw any atrocities against civilians. The Vietcong hung up tribal chiefs and disemboweled them in front of their own families—they did that to their own people. I never saw Americans do anything like that."³⁰

Pitkin met John Kerry on the trip from Washington, D.C., to Detroit. Scott Swett continues his description of events:

The Baltimore contingent met up with other VVAW members in Washington, where they were loaded into rental vans with no back seats. It was freezing cold in Pitkin's van, and Kerry with another former officer were in the front where all the heat was, which made for a long drive. Pitkin was unimpressed with the tall, aloof Kerry, who rarely spoke to anyone other than the organization's leaders, and tagged Kerry with the nickname "Lurch" after the Addams Family TV character. The ragtag group eventually made it to Detroit, got lost for a while, and then spent the night at somebody's house. The conference was held at a Howard Johnson's motel, in a room Pitkin remembers as having big concrete posts and no windows, with press lights glaring down on the participants. An entourage of VVAW leaders and reporters always surrounded John Kerry, who, Pitkin thought, looked like he was running for president.³¹

According to Pitkin's affidavit, he was pressured into giving testimony of war crimes in Vietnam even though he had not participated in any such war crimes, nor had he witnessed any atrocities. Two paragraphs of his sworn statement are important here:

In January of 1971, I rode in a van with John Kerry, a national leader of the VVAW, and others from Washington D.C. to Detroit to attend the Winter Soldier Investigation, a conference intended to publicize alleged American war crimes in Vietnam. Having no knowledge of such war crimes, I did not intend to speak at the event.

During the Winter Soldier Investigation, John Kerry and other leaders of that event pressured me to testify about American war crimes, despite my repeated statements that I could not honestly do so. One event leader strongly implied that I would not be provided transportation back to my home in Baltimore, Maryland, if I failed to comply. Kerry and other leaders of the event instructed me to publicly state that I had witnessed incidents of rape, brutality, atrocities and racism, knowing that such statements would necessarily be untrue.³²

Succumbing to the pressure, Pitkin testified that in Vietnam he came to feel like an animal, that “You’re so scared that you’ll shoot anything, that you’ll look at your enemy, and these people that you’re sort of a visitor to—you’ll look at them as animals. And at the same time you’re just turning yourself into an animal, too.”³³

Even today Pitkin feels John Kerry pressured him into giving false testimony to the Winter Soldier Investigation: “The second day I was there, Kerry and the other leaders told me they wanted me to testify. They knew I was one of the very few real combat veterans in the room. I told them I didn’t have anything to say. Kerry said, ‘Surely you’ve seen some of the atrocities.’” Pitkin did not feel he could resist testifying the way Kerry and the other VVAW leaders wanted:

I kept saying “no” and the mood turned ugly. One of the other leaders whispered to me, “It’s a long walk back to Baltimore.” I’m not proud of this, but I finally agreed to speak. They told me what to talk about—American troops beating civilians and prisoners, shelling and destroying villages for no reason, and acts of racism against the Vietnamese.

John Kerry knew that the Winter Soldier testimony was a pack of lies. I know, because I was there, and I told some of those lies.³⁴

Pitkin's testimony is just one example of the many lies told during the Winter Soldier "investigation." One astute observer pointed out that in Kerry's book *The New Soldier*, one purported Marine was photographed on a wheelchair in one page and then marching proudly down Pennsylvania on another page.

Kerry's campaign has chosen to ignore Pitkin's affidavit. The mainstream liberal press has followed suit, giving Pitkin's claims no attention. Still, the statements are documented and powerful. Unable or unwilling to rebut Pitkin's testimony, the claim of *Unfit for Command* is substantiated—that the Winter Soldier Investigation was fraudulent. So too, was Kerry's April 1971 testimony to Senator Fulbright's Foreign Relation Committee since Kerry himself claimed he based his Senate testimony on the witness statements given at the Winter Soldier Investigation. Conclusion: ***Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.***

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR KERRY

1. Do you truly believe that war crimes were committed in Vietnam "on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command?"
2. If so, what were they? If not, why did you say it?
3. Do you believe that the officers commanding you in Vietnam were war criminals? Why did you say this?
4. Do you apologize for your war crimes charges? Were any of them false? Did any of your VVAW fellows make false war crimes charges?

Kerry's Refusal to Sign Standard Form 180

Unfit for Command called upon John Kerry to sign Standard Form 180, which would authorize the complete release of all his military records. To date, Kerry has refused to comply.

Kerry campaign surrogates have maintained that the Senator has completely disclosed his military records on his web site. On September 16, 2004, the public interest group Judicial Watch released a Navy response to a Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") request. In an email sent to Judicial Watch, the Navy confirmed that thirty-one pages of documents from Kerry's military file were being withheld because the Navy had not received from Senator Kerry a signed release authorization. Typically, the Kerry campaign refused comment on why Senator Kerry had refused to sign Standard Form 180 and authorize the release of these yet hidden pages. Nor would the Kerry campaign respond to questions asking what the Senator was afraid might be disclosed should the pages become public.³⁵

The Kerry campaign has also refused to release to the public the Senator's private Vietnam journals that he shared with campaign biographer Douglas Brinkley when Brinkley was writing *Tour of Duty*. As reported by the *Washington Post*, a mainstream newspaper generally pro-Kerry, the refusal to release the private journals rested entirely upon Kerry himself, not upon Brinkley:

The Kerry campaign has refused to release Kerry's personal Vietnam archive, including his journals and letters, saying that the senator is contractually bound to grant Brinkley exclusive access to the material. But Brinkley said this week the papers are the property of the senator and in his full control.

“I don’t mind if John Kerry shows anybody anything,” he said. “If he wants to let anybody in, that’s his business. Go bug John Kerry, and leave me alone.” The exclusivity agreement, he said, simply requires “that anybody quoting any of the material needs to cite my book.”³⁶

Kerry’s camp continues to stonewall on the release of primary documents regarding his military records, despite extensive selective access he has given to writers known to be favorable or to the publication of documents on his website. This refusal to release information has been maintained in the face of intense public pressure to comply to the more open standards that have become customary for presidential campaigns in recent years, standards the Kerry camp has itself demanded from its Republican opponent. Once again, we reach the same conclusion: *Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth*.

John Kerry and the Politics of Betrayal

In the concluding pages of *Unfit for Command*, we noted that our concerns about Kerry focused on the question of character and our conclusions were that Senator Kerry was unfit to be commander in chief. We believe Senator Kerry broke the trust indispensable to successful command and we expressed our concern that the pattern we had observed with Kerry’s history regarding the Vietnam War would only be played out again in the context of today’s international crises.

John Kerry undoubtedly calculated he could have it both ways—for those who wanted to see a war hero, he could tout his decorations—for those who were anti-war, he could point to his role as spokesperson for the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. What John Kerry never calculated fully was that a great number of the men and women who served in Vietnam simply wouldn’t buy the story.³⁷

To the Swift Boat Veterans For Truth, John Kerry was a betrayer, plain and simple. He betrayed the over two million men and women who served honorably in Vietnam when he testified to Senator Fulbright's committee in April 1971 that they were the army of Ghengis Khan, committing war crimes on a daily basis, with their atrocities completely approved up and down the chain of command.

John Kerry wanted to be a war hero of a war he said was immoral. The self-contradiction implied in that statement never seemed to bother him. Put simply, he wanted to be an honored member of a select club, even though he insulted the club's members and claimed to the world that the club itself had no legitimate moral authority.

Unfortunately for John Kerry, the most memorable speech of his life may prove to be one of his first, his 1971 testimony before Senator Fulbright's committee. There he sat in street-theater military fatigues, claiming that the Vietnam War was a mistake, that the United States was a colonial power interfering in a civil war, that we were in Vietnam not to win a victory against godless communism but to protect a corrupt regime and a puppet dictator in South Vietnam.

John Kerry in that April 1971 testimony asked his most memorable public question: "How do you ask a man to be the last to die for a mistake?" Perhaps the ultimate mistake was his. To run for president with his Vietnam "war hero" story as the central pillar of his campaign invited the criticism that his true legacy was that of a Judas, a betrayer, who abandoned his brothers-in-arms on the field of battle and denigrated their honor once he secured the safety of home.

If the past is to be taken as prologue to the future, the parallels between John Kerry's anti-administration rhetoric on Iraq today and his war-protest rhetoric of 1971 must be taken seriously. For Senator Kerry, terrorists are a nuisance, like gambling and prostitution. This is not a surprise to the authors. By taking the side of the enemy, as he did in Vietnam, or reducing terrorists to the ranks of gamblers and

prostitutes, as he does today, Kerry believes that Iraq is no more a war against terrorism than Vietnam was a war against communism. Indeed, John Kerry's cynicism prevents him from understanding people's desire for freedom.

John Kerry began his campaign at the Democratic National Committee a "war hero," but as was the case with Vietnam, he has now shifted to his second phase, presenting himself as a vocal "anti-war" critic, this time of President Bush's efforts in Iraq.

John Kerry clearly has no commitment to consistency, but he does have an unwavering ambition to win the presidential election in 2004, no matter what he has to say. The parallels to 1971 are all too apparent. How can we be sure that John Kerry will not end up this time where he ended up last time—betraying our troops by withdrawing from the field of battle at any cost should he ever get the chance to give the order?

Reviewing the controversy following the publication of our book, we hold fast to our original conclusion: John Kerry is truly unfit for command. ***Advantage, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.***

To get the whole story, and your very own copy
of the bestselling *Unfit for Command*, click on the link below:

[Save 40% at Amazon.com!](#)

APPENDIX

CONFIDENTIAL

02 252 (AH)

20 Jan

2 PCF

Chris Don R.

NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
DECLASSIFIED IAW
E.O. 12958
Signature *[Signature]*
Date 13 Oct 77

NNNNVOMOVV #DJ338
PTCZYUW RHMCSDK834 9210925-CCCC--RUMUGKD.
ZNY CCCCC
P 281923Z JAN 69
FM CTU ONE ONE FIVE PT FOUR PT FOUR
TO ZEN/CTG ONE ONE FIVE P FOUR
INFO RHMCSDK/CTF ONE ONE FIVE
RUMUGKD/COMNAVFORV
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BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L
SEA LORDS MISSION 2528
MARKET TIME SPOT REPORT 21/1/CTU 115.4.4/1
1. (C) CTU 115.4.4
2. (C) VQ 8165/VQ 968628
3. (C) 292330/310146H

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021
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4. (C) PCF 21/PCF 44
5. (U) ABOVE UNIT PUNROLLED RIVER AT ABOVE POSIT. AT
VQ 968628. SIGHTED 38 FOOT SAMPAN ON NORTH SIDE OF RIVER
6. (C) PCF 44 TOOK SAMPAN UNDER FIRE RETURNED TO CAPTURE
1 WOMAN AND SMALL CHILD, 1 ENEMY KIA, CAPTURED 1 BLANKET
1 US TYPE NEW FLASHLIGHTS, MEDICAL SUPPLIES OF GAUZE,
2 LONGSHAFT MOTORS DESTROYED 1 SAMPAN, 5000 POUNDS OF

PAGE TWO RHMCSDK834 C O N F I D E N T I A L
FISH, RICE, FOOD AND PERSONNEL BELONGINGS. BELIEVE 4 OCCUPANTS
PLED TO BEACH OR POSSIBLE KIA. PCF 21 SIGHTED SIGNL LIVYTS
IN AREA.
EXPENDED 200 RDS 50 CAL WILL TURN CIA OVER TO USA SONG ONG
DOC IN MORNING. OPENING FIRE 30 YDS, CLOSED FIRE 30YDS.
7. (U) NEG FRIENDLY CASUALTIES, 1 ENEMY BC, 4 INEMY
KIA (ESTIMATED), 2 ENEMY CIA
8. (U) FINAL

GP-4
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Sack P. Don

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THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the
BRONZE STAR MEDAL to

LIEUTENANT (JUNIOR GRADE) JOHN F. KERRY
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For heroic achievement while serving with Coastal Division ELEVEN engaged in armed conflict with Viet Cong communist aggressors in An Xuyen Province, Republic of Vietnam on 13 March 1969. Lieutenant (jg) Kerry was serving as Officer in Charge of Inshore Patrol Craft 94, one of five boats conducting a SEA LORDS operation in the Bay Hap River. While exiting the River, a mine detonated under another Inshore Patrol Craft and almost simultaneously, another mine detonated close aboard his Inshore Patrol Craft knocking a man into the water and wounding Lieutenant (jg) Kerry in the right arm. In addition, all units began receiving small arms and automatic weapons fire from the river banks. When Lieutenant (jg) Kerry discovered he had a man overboard, he returned upriver to assist. The man in the water was receiving sniper fire from both banks. Lieutenant (jg) Kerry directed his gunners to provide suppressing fire, while from an exposed position on the bow, his arm bleeding and in pain and with disregard for his personal safety, he pulled the man aboard. Lieutenant (jg) Kerry then directed his boat to return and assist the other damaged Inshore Patrol Craft. His crew attached a line and towed the damaged boat to safety. Lieutenant (jg) Kerry's professionalism, great personal courage under fire, and complete dedication to duty reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

The Combat Distinguishing Device is authorized.

For the President,

Secretary of the Navy

WV ED552GA579
 W RHMCSAA3498
 CC ZYO RHMCSAA
 P 131600Z MAR 69
 FM NSA DET ATHOI
 TO RUENAAA/SECNIV
 INFO RUENAAA/CWO
 RHM5MVA/COMUSMACV
 RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT
 RUEBJFA/BUPERS
 RCEBJIA/BUMED
 RUHHBRA/COMSEVPAC
 RUMUGKD/COMNAVFORV
 RUEQNA/COMFOUR
 RUWJMSA/COMPHIBPAC
 RUMUGAA/COMNAV SUPPACT SGN
 RHMCSAA/COMCOSRON ONE
 ZEN/COMCOSDIV ELEVEN
 RUMLHAA/CTF E ONE FIVE
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PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORT
 A. ART C-9801HBUPERS MANUAL
 B. NSA SAIGON INST 1770.1B

PAGE TWO RHMCSAA3498

1. IAW REF A AND B FOL INFO SUBMITTED:

ALFA: LTJG RICHARD WAYNE PEES, USNR, 711192/1105
 BRAVO: ACTIVE DUTY, ATTACHED TO COASTAL DIVISION ELEVEN
 AT AN THOI, RVN
 CHARLIE: INJURY, HOSTILE FIRE

DELTA: 13 MAR 69, 1530H, SONG BAY HAP, WQ 010780.HWHILE
 SERVING AS OFFICER IN CHARGE OF PNF-3, ENGAGED
 IN OPERATIONS IN THE ABOVE RIVER, LTJG PEES SUFFE
 RED CONCUSSION AND POSSIBLE BANK INJURY RPN WHEN
 A MINE DETONATED UNDER PCF-3W

ECHO: CONDITION UNKNOWN AND PROGNOSIS UNKNOWN. PRESENCE
 OF NOX IS NOT MEDICALLY WARRANTED.

GOLF: NOX NOT OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED. REQ NOX NOT REPEAT

NOT BE NOTIFIED.

HOTEL: TREATED BY MEDICAL OFFICER ABOARD USCGC SPENCER
 (WHRC-36) AND MEDEVACED. DESTINATION

UNKNOWN.

2. PATIENT ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH NOX.

3. FURTHER INFO WILL FOL.

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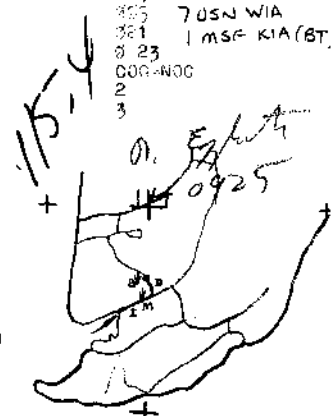
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5 PCFS
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ZNY 0000
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1 Song Bay Hap
1 Rach Dong Cung
HF Stret Plus MINE

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RUMUGK/COMNAVFORV
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RHMCSDK/CTU ONE ONE FIVE PT FOUR PT SEVEN
RUMUJ.E/RILO CA MAU
RUSVVAI/PSA AN XUYEN
RUMUJ.B/IV CZ LXQ
RUMFSA/CTU ONE ONE FIVE PT FOUR PT TWO
RUMUGK/COMCOSRON ONE
RHMSNVA/COMUSMACV
BT

SA 4 CTZ NOT ADDEE, PASS NAVLE
COMUSMACV ATTN MACJ3-06 AND MACSOG OP-31
MARKET TIME SPOT REPORT 13/1/TE 194.5.4.4.1
1. (U) CTE 194.5.4.4

- PAGE TWO RUMFSBB0618
- 2. (U) 130500H TO 131600H
- 3. (C) SONG BAY HAP AND RACH DONG CUNG WQ 020783
- 4. (C) PCFS 94, 51, 23, 43, 3, MSF A404 DET, UDT DET 12, RF/PF CAI NUOC.
- 5. (C) SEA LORDS 358
- 6. (C) ACTION SUMMARY:

4. PCFS 43 AND 3. PROCEEDED UP BAY HAP RIVER TO CAI NUOC DISTRICT TOWN (WQ 0379) EMBARKING 50HRF/PF TROOPS AND ADVISORS. AT 130750H PCFS 94 AND 52 EMBARKED MSF AIYWASHIENAW CTY AND PROCEEDED UP BAY HAP RIVER. FOUR UNITS UP RACH DONG CUNG. MSF INSERTED AT VQ 983815. HRF/PF INSERTED AT VQ 985830. MSF: MOVED WEST APPROX 500 METERS FROM CANAL. ONE MSF KIA BY BOOBY TRAP. UDT ESTIMATES 20 LB CHARGE IN BOOBY TRAP. PROSPEROUS SETTLEMENT ALONG CANAL. ONLY WOMEN, CHILDREN AND OLD MEN IN VILLAGE. TWO LARGE GRAIN, RIC

YEAUYNQ
OWNS IN AREA DE TROZED.
SEVERAL CHICOM HAND GRENADES, LIGHT MACHINE GUN AND AK-47 AMMUNITION LYING LOOSE AROUND AREA. MSF RCVD A/W AND LIGHT MACHINE GUN FIRE FROM VICINITY VQ 978812. STATIONARY FIREFIGHT CONTINUED APPROX TWO HRS. ENEMY BROKE CONTACT WHEN RF/ F TROOPS WERE EXTRACTED AND BROUGHT DOWN RIVER ABT 1345H. MSF WAS PINNED DOWN FOR SHORT TIME AND LHFT WAS REQUESTED AT 0945H. CO MSF ESTIMATES

PG 4/5

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FM NSA DET AN THOI
TO RUEHAAA/SECHAV
INFO RUEHAAA/CNO
RHMNSVA/COMNSMACV
RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT
RUEBJFA/BIPERS
RUEBJA/BMED
RUHHBRA/COMSERVPAC
NUMUSKD/COMNAVFORV
RUEBJA/COMONE
RUMJMS/COMPHIBPAC
RUMGSA/COMNAV SUPPACT SAIGON
RHMCSA/COMCOSRON ONE
ZEM/COMCOSDIV ONE ONE
RUMLPAN/CTF ONE ONE FIVE
BT

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2002
201
C06-025
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221
223
22L
226
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205

PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORT
A. ART C-9801 BUPERS MANUAL
B. NSA SAIGON INST 1770.1B
I. IAW REF A AND B FOL INFO SUBMITTED:

PAGE TWO RUMGSA2137
ALPHA: LTJG JOHN F. KERRY USN 713525/1100
BRAVO: ACTIVE DUTY, ATTACHED TO COASTAL DIVISION ELEVEN AT AN THOI RVN
CHARLIE: MINJURY, HOSTILE FIRE
DELTA: HIS MAR 69, 1530H, HSONG BAY MAP, WQ 010780. WHILE SERVING AS OFFICER IN CHARGE ABOARD PCF-24 ENGAGED IN OPERATIONS IN THE ABOVE RIVER. LTJG KERRY SUFFERED SHAPNEL WOUNDS IN HIS LEFT BUTTOCKS AND CONTUSIONS ON HIS RIGHT FOREARM WHEN A MINE DETONATED ABOARD PCF-24
ECHO: CONDITION GOOD, PROGNOSIS EXCELLENT. PRESENCE OF NOK IS NOT MEDICALLY WARRANTED

GOLF: NOK NOT OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED. REQ NOK NOT REPEAT NOT BE NOTIFIED
HOTEL: TREATED BY MEDICAL OFFICER ABOARD USCGC SPENCER (WHEC-36) AND RETURNED TO DUTY WITH COASTAL DIVISION ELEVEN
2. PATIENT ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH NOK
3. NO FURTHER INFO WILL FOLLOW

GP-4
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TOR/141955Z/MF/WAS

140830Z MAR 69

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NNNNJ WILKVV B3260Z CRGB364
 PTICZ YUN RHMSAA 1454 0591225-CCCC-RUMUGKD.
 ZNY CCCCC ZYO RHMSAA
 P 281225Z FEB 69
 FM CTE ONE NINE FOUR PT FIVE PT FOUR PT FOUR
 TO RHMSDK/CT G ONE ONE FIVE PT FOUR
 INFO RHMSDE/CTF ONE ONE FIVE
 RHMS11/CTU ONE ONE FIVE PT FOUR PT SEVEN
 RUMUGKD/COMNAVFORV
 RHMSAA/COMCOSRON ONE
 ZEN/USCGC SPENCER
 RUMUJLE/NILQ CA MAU
 RUMUGKD/FIRST SEA LORDS
 RUMJMSA/JDT THIRTEEN
 RUMUJLA/PSA AN XUYEN
 BT

02
 021
 023
 001
 004
 005
 2
 3
 COG-NOC

NOC AM
0625
Report Service

5. SEALORDS 270
 6. UNITS ENTERED SONG BAY HAP AT 1000H AND PROCEEDED TOWARD

RENDEZVOUS AT CAI NUOC. AT VQ 945752, AREA FROM WHICH UNITS WERE AMBUSHED PREVIOUS NIGHT, (MY 271545Z) PCF 94 AND 23 BEACHED AND PLACED LANDING PARTIES ASHORE TO RECON AREA WHILE PCF 43 PROVIDED COVER IN RIVER. LANDING PARTIES DISCOVERED 2 FRESHLY DUG SPIDER HOLES

PAGE TWO CTE 194.5.4.4 281225Z FEB 69 [REDACTED]

WITH MANY SPENT ROUNDS OF AK 47 AND CARBINE IN THE AREA. LOT 13 BLEW 2 LARGE OFFENSIVE BUNKERS. UNITS THEN PROCEEDED DIRECTLY TO CAI NUOC LOCATION WITHOUT INCIDENT. RFPF TROOPS WERE EMBARKED, 30 MEN IN EACH PCF, AND UNITS DEPARTED ENROUTE INSERTION POINT AT VQ 984832. AT VQ 982818 UNITS WERE TAKEN UNDER HEAVY SMALL ARMS FIRE. OTC CALLED FOR ALL UNITS TO TURN INTO FIRE AND BEACH. UNITS RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE AND PCF'S CHARGED AMBUSH COMPLETELY THROWING ENEMY OFF GUARD. SURPRISE RUSH ON AMBUSH SITE CAUSED VQ TO STAND UP AND RUN. PCF 23 AND 43 ACCOUNTED FOR 3 KIA (BC) BEFORE TROOPS WERE LAOED. WITH SUBSEQUENT INSERTION OF TROOPS, ENEMY WAS OVERRUN. 3 CHINESE COMMUNIST RIFLES WERE CAPTURED 20 YARDS FROM PCF'S. LANDING PARTIES FROM BEACHED UNITS PROCEEDED TO SWEEP IMMEDIATE AREA AND DESTROYED 2 STRUCTURES WHILE RFPF MOVED INLAND IN PURSUIT OF ENEMY. WHILE TROOPS CONDUCTED SWEEP, PCF 94 AND 23 MOVEFAUINKIVER TOWARDS AREA FROM WHICH ARMY ADVISOR REPORTED GUNSHOTS. PCF 43 REMAINED AT ORIGINAL AMBUSH SITE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR TROOPS. PCF 94 AND 23 PROCEEDED TO VQ 984831 AND THEN TURNED TO RETURN TO PCF 43 LOCATION. AT VQ 984830 B-40 ROCKET EXPLODED IN WATER CLOSE ABOARD PCF 94 BLOWING OUT WINDOW FRAME. BOTH UNITS RECEIVED HEAVY SMALL ARMS FIRE AND OTC AGA CALLED UNITS TO TURN INTO FIRE AND CHARGE AMBUSH SITE. PCF 43 WAS CA

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AND MOVED IMMEDIATELY TO ASSIST. PCF 94 BEACHED IN CENTER OF AMBUSH IN FRONT OF SMALL PATH WHEN VC SPRUNG UP FROM BUNKER 10 FEET FROM UNIT. MAN RAN WITH WEAPON TOWARDS HOOTCH. FORWARD M-60 GUNNER WOUNDED MAN IN LEG. OINC JUMPED ASHORE AND GAVE PURSUIT WHILE OTHER UNITS SATURATED AREA WITH FIRE AND BEACHED PLACING ASSAULT PARTIES ASHORE. OINC OF PCF 94 CHASED VC INLAND BEHIND HOOTCH AND SHOT HIM WHILE HE FLED CAPTURING ONE B-40 ROCKET LAUNCHER WITH ROUND IN CHAMBER. OINC'S OF PCF'S 43 AND 23 LED ASSAULT PARTIES THROUGH BRUSH AND JOINED WITH PCF 94 GROUP. PARTIES FRVVM 3 ACF'S VOOCEEDED TO SWEEP AREA AND SUSTAIN FEEDBACKS ~ 431 .6 BNPQ HEQZ FEB 69. UNITS REMAINED IN AMBUSH AREA AT LENGTH DUE TO SIZE AND IMPORTANCE OF AREA OVERRUN. RFPF ADVISOR CALLED FOR MORTAR SUPPORT TO SUPPRESS SNIPER FIRE. PCF 43 PROVIDED MORTAR WITH LIGHT MINE 36 SPOTTING. PCF 43'S QUICK AND ACCURATE RESPONSE WAS DESCRIBE BY LIGHT MINE 36 AS INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPRESSING FIRE AND ALLOWING RFPF'S TO MOVE AHEAD AND ROUT ENEMY. WHILE PCF 43 PROVIDE MORTAR SUPPORT, PCF 94 AND 23 ASSAULT PARTIES RECONNED TO VQ 985335 WHERE 3 VC WERE OBSERVED RUNNING FROM THEM OUT OF FIRING RANGE. ASSAULT PARTY COULD NOT FIVE PURSUIT DUE TO PROXIMITY OF MORTAR ROUNDS PASSING OVERHEAD. UOI 13 PERSONNEL PLACED CHARGECS IN

GE FOUR CTE 194.5.4.4 281225Z FEB 69 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
 MAJOR BUNKERS AND 101CE 8INS AND PROVIDED MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION POSSIBLE. ASSAULT PARTIES THEN RENDEZVOUSED WITH RFPF AND UNITS PROCEEDED TO CLEAR AREA. WHILE BACKING AWAY FROM BEACH, SMALL ARMS FIRE WAS RECEIVED FROM OPPOSITE BANK. FIRE WAS SUPPRESSED AND ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO CHIEU HOI SNIPERS. RESULTS NEGATIVE AND MORE SMALL ARMS FIRE WAS RECEIVED. UNITS AGAIN SUPPRESSSSSS SED FILAHYMO RLE

NDB RWNLMN PGZQENDING TO CAI NUOC
 LOCATION WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT. TROOPS WERE DISEMBARKED AND UNITS DEPARTED AREA. WHILE EXITING SONG BAY HAP UNITS RECEIVED SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM VQ 960765 AND VQ 965765, UNITS TURNED AND MADE 2 STRAFING RUNS ON LOCATION, SUPPRESSING FIRE, AND THEN CLEARED RIVER WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT. AREA OF SECOND AMBUSH WHERE PCF'S RUTED 3 AND LANDED ASSAULT PARTIES WAS OF CONSIDERABLE TACTICAL IMPORTANCE. AREA WAS MAJOR VC SUPPLY POINT AND WAYSTATION FOR INFILTRATION. BUNKERS DISCOVERED ALMOST ONE MILE INLAND BY PCF ASSAULT PARTIES REVEALED MANY BUNDLES OF CLOTHING WRAPPED IN WATERPROOF PACKETS. CONSTRUCTION OF COMPOUND SHOWED MUCH PLANNING FOR EFFICIENT PRODUCTION OF SUPPLY MATERIALS AND PERIMETER DEFENSE. BELIEVE FIRST AMBUSH WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP UNITS OUT OF AREU BUT PCF TACTICS NEGATED VC EFFORTS. STRONGLY RECOMMEND ADDITIONAL SWEEP IN AREA WITH LHFT SUPPORT. ROUNDS EXPENDED 7000 .50 CAL, 6000 M-60, 40 81MM HE
 & CLOSED

P620F2

GP-4

BT

1454

TOP29233Z/CM/WARAP

281225Z FEB 69

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NOTES

CHAPTER 1

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