

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

U.S.S. NUECES

(APB-40)

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CONFIDENTIAL (Unclassified upon removal of Annex 4)
OPNAV REPORT 5750-1

From: Commanding Officer, USS NUECES (APB-40)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20390

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) USS NUECES (APB-40) Command History for 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


L. D. TURNER

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT (w/o Annexes)
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CONFIDENTIAL

USS NUECES (APB-40)

COMMAND HISTORY

1968

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CHRONOLOGY

1945 USS NUECES (APB-40) built and commissioned in Boston Navy Yard.

1947 Decommissioned at Charleston, South Carolina, and placed in the Reserve Fleet at Orange, Texas.

1968 Ship moved to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, for conversion and outfitting prior to deployment Western Pacific.

FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL 1968 Precommissioning crew arrives Bremerton, Washington, to prepare and begin outfitting the ship. Nucleus crew arrives Fleet Training Center, San Diego, California, for pre-deployment training.

29 APRIL 1968 Nucleus crew arrives at Bremerton, Washington, to aid in completion of outfitting prior to commissioning.

3 MAY 1968 USS NUECES (APB-40) put in commission, special, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, by Lieutenant Lewis D. TURNER, Commanding Officer. (Reference Annexes 1 - 3)

7-10 MAY 1968 Builders Trials and Insurv Inspection.

11-31 MAY 1968 Final outfitting period.

30 MAY 1968 Placed in commission.

1 JUNE 1968 Underway for San Diego, California.

1-7 JUNE 1968 Abbreviated Underway Training. Commander Landing Ship Squadron One Team and Fleet Training Group, San Diego Representatives assist.

7 JUNE 1968 Arrived San Diego, California, joined USS MERCER (APB-39).

8-14 JUNE 1968 Inport San Diego. Final logistic preparation made for extended deployment.

15 JUNE 1968 Underway for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

26-30 JUNE 1968 Inport Pearl Harbor.

1 JULY 1968 Underway for Republic of Vietnam.

25-26 JULY 1968 Inport Subic Bay, Philippines.

31 JULY 1968 Arrived Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam.
Reported to Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam,
and Commander Task Force 117 for incountry
duty.

1 AUGUST 1968 Underway for Can Tho, Republic of Vietnam, to
join Commander Task Force 117, Mobile Riverine
Force.

2 AUGUST 1968 Arrived Can Tho, Republic of Vietnam, received
Ammi pontoon, troops of 4/47th 2nd Brigade 9th
Infantry Division, Underwater Demolition Team
Eleven Detachment GOLF, and Assault Craft of
River Assault Squadron Eleven.

11 AUGUST 1968 Arrived Dong Tam, Republic of Vietnam.

11-31 AUGUST 1968 Shifted anchorages between Dong Tam, Vinh Long
and My Tho in support of Riverine operations.

1-30 SEPTEMBER 1968 Operated in the areas of Dong Tam, Vinh Long,
My Tho and Ben Tre in support of Riverine
operations.

1-15 OCTOBER 1968 Operated in the Ben Tre, My Tho, Dong Tam area.

6 OCTOBER 1968 NUECES visited by Secretary of the Navy Paul R.
IGNATIUS and Staff. Medical facilities
inspected.

15 OCTOBER 1968 Chopped to Task Group 117.2 (Group Bravo of
Mobile Riverine Forces).

16 OCTOBER 1968 Delta Company 9th Medical Battalion, U. S.
Army embarked. NUECES designated Surgical/
Medivac ship for Group Bravo. River Assault
Squadron Fifteen embarked.

16 OCTOBER 1968 Troops of the 4th/47th 2nd Brigade 9th Infantry
Division, U. S. Army, River Assault Squadron
Eleven, Underwater Demolition Team Eleven
Detachment GOLF, detached.

17 OCTOBER 1968 Began operations in Can Tho area with Republic
of Vietnam Marines.

16-31 OCTOBER 1968 Operated in the Can Tho - Binh Thuy area.

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2-25 NOVEMBER 1968

Operated in the Long Xuyen area.

25-30 NOVEMBER 1968

Operated in the Binh Thuy - Can Tho area.

1-31 DECEMBER 1968

Operated in the Binh Thuy - Can Tho area.

NARRATIVE

The USS NUECES (APB-40) was recommissioned 3 May 1968 in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, with Lieutenant Commander Lewis D. TURNER, U. S. Navy, assuming Command.

The mission and purpose of NUECES is to operate as an integral, and if need be independent, support element to the Riverine operations in the Mekong Delta region of the Republic of Vietnam. The NUECES is designed to provide berthing, messing, recreational, and extensive medical facilities to ship's personnel, and embarked Army and Navy personnel.

During the months of February, March and April members of the Pre-Commissioning crew arrived in Bremerton and began preparations for commissioning and outfitting of the ship prior to deployment to Southeast Asia. Simultaneously members of the Nucleus crew were arriving at the Fleet Training Center, San Diego, for pre-deployment training which included extensive training in damage control, fire fighting, 40MM gun team training and other courses necessary to prepare a ship for sea.

In an effort to meet operational commitments the NUECES was placed on an accelerated, priority completion program in March 1968 to enable her completion and subsequent deployment approximately two months ahead of initial scheduling. Long hours with little free time, combined with the excellent cooperation between shipyard and ship's company personnel enabled the NUECES to meet her accelerated deadline.

The NUECES was placed "in commission, special", on 3 May 1968 in ceremonies at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. The principal speaker was Major General William W. BEVERLEY, U. S. Army, Commanding General of Fort Lewis. Commander Amphibious Force Pacific Representative, Captain W. C. WELLS, U. S. Navy, was present as well as Commander Naval Shipyard Puget Sound, Rear Admiral W. F. PETROVIC, U. S. Navy.

From 7 May to 10 May 1968, the NUECES underwent a combined Insurv and Builders underway trials in Puget Sound where all major Weapons, Electronics and Engineering Systems were tested and inspected with relatively minor discrepancies. The discrepancies were corrected by the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and the NUECES was placed "in commission" on 10 May 1968, and reported to Commander First Fleet for duty under the immediate operational control of Commander Amphibious Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

On 1 June 1968, the NUECES was underway for San Diego, California, her homeport, to join the USS MERCER (APB-39), for the transit to the Republic of Vietnam to operate as an integral part of the Mobile Riverine Force in the waterways of the Mekong Delta. Prior to departure from Bremerton, an Underway Training Group hastily but thoroughly prepared under the leadership of Commander Landing Ship Squadron One, Commander J. J. SOWINSKI, U. S. Navy, and consisting of trained personnel from

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anding Ship Squadron One and Fleet Training Group San Diego Representatives, the ship was given excellent and exhaustive training in all aspects. Intensive concentration was given damage control and ship control procedures. Despite the lack of previous training, the underway training group working together with an eager spirited crew helped mold the crew into an effective organization. Within the span of one week the ship's crew showed a marked improvement in all areas of damage, casualty and ship control.

From 7 June 1968 to 15 June 1968, the NUECES busily made final logistic preparations in San Diego. The NUECES got underway from San Diego on 15 June 1968, in company with USS MERCER (APB-39) for Pearl Harbor as a unit of Task Unit 16.8.6 with Commanding Officer, USS NUECES being Commander Task Unit 16.8.6.

NUECES and MERCER arrived Pearl Harbor on 26 June 1968 for a short stop prior to continuing her transit.

On 1 July 1968, the NUECES and MERCER got underway for Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam. On 12 July 1968, task Unit 16.8.6 and both ships chopped to Commander Seventh Fleet and became Task Unit 76.9.7 with Commander Task Unit the Commanding Officer, USS NUECES. Due to rough seas and low fuel the Task Unit was forced to proceed to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, arriving 25 July. After refueling the Task Unit got underway on 26 July to continue the transit to Vietnam. It arrived in Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam, on 30 July 1968.

During the entire transit a rigorous training program was conducted with emphasis placed on damage control and weapons training.

The NUECES left the MERCER in Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam, and on 2 August 1968, made her first river penetration up the Bassac River in the Mekong Delta to join Group Alpha of the Mobile Riverine Force at Can Tho, Republic of Vietnam.

Upon arrival at Can Tho, NUECES tied up along side APL-26 to transfer personnel and Ammi pontoons which would be utilized as a staging area for debarkation of troops on operations and as a floating dock for assigned assault boats to tie up to. Included in the personnel transfer were troops of the 4th/47th 2nd Brigade 9th Infantry Division, Staff and personnel of River Assault Squadron Eleven and River Division III, and personnel of Underwater Demolition Team Eleven Detachment GOLF.

On 3 August 1968, the USS NUECES (APB-40) began operating as a support unit of the Mobile Riverine Force. From August until 16 October the NUECES traveled in company with Group Alpha of the Mobile Riverine Force extensively throughout the Mekong Delta in support of Army-Navy operations. Area of operations have been from Sa Dec to My Tho-Dong Tam to Vinh Long and Ben Tre along the Mekong River. On 16 October 1968, in a realignment of Mobile Riverine Forces, Groups Alpha and Bravo met in the My Tho-Dong Tam area to complete a transfer of troops and equipment and effect the

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necessary changes. At this time the NUECES became a part of Group Bravo under the Command of Commander Task Group 117.2, disembarked her Army troops, River Assault Squadron Eleven, River Division 111, Underwater Demolition Team Eleven Detachment GOLF, and embarked River Assault Squadron Fifteen and River Division 151, and personnel of Underwater Demolition Team Eleven Detachment HOTEL. The NUECES was additionally designated as the Surgical Ship for Group Bravo and as such embarked the Surgical Detachment of Delta Company 9th Medical Battalion and assumed Dust-Off (MEDIVAC) responsibilities. From 16 October to 31 December 1968, the NUECES operated in the areas of Long Xuyen, Binh Thuy, Can Tho and the Dung Island complex along the Bassac River.

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

During the first part of 1968 the Operations Department, comprised of OX, OE/OI, and OC Divisions, was tasked with outfitting, organizing and training in preparation for its role of supporting United States Army Infantry and Navy River Assault Squadrons in Mobile Riverine operations.

Prior to deployment to the Republic of Vietnam in June, the Operations Department set up organizational and communications procedures for independent and riverine support operations. Extensive training, both intra-ship and inter-ship with the USS MERCER (APB-39) underway, was carried out by the communications people prior to entering Vietnam in anticipation of the expected heavy traffic and utilization of equipment as a major communications center. Since entering Vietnam and with the support of attached River Squadron personnel the NUECES radiomen have established a highly efficient and effective communications team. Upon commissioning volume of traffic was 360 messages of which 17 were outgoing and 343 were incoming. The following is a month by month breakdown of communications traffic:

	Incoming Messages	Outgoing Messages
June	351	117
July	406	248
August	763	194
September	661	178

In October, after chopping to Task Group 117.2, the NUECES became the relay ship for outgoing messages of Group Bravo. The communications traffic consisted of the following:

			Received	Written Up	Transmitted
October	1. Fleet Broadcast		9514	1031	---
	2. Ship - Ship		903	343	228
	3. Ship - Shore		---	---	666
November	1. Fleet Broadcast		9441	407	---
	2. Ship - Ship		849	241	310
	3. Ship - Shore		---	---	523
December	1. Fleet Broadcast		9640	461	---
	2. Ship - Ship		1035	484	69
	3. Ship - Shore		---	---	497

Upon commissioning volume of traffic was 360 messages, by December 1968, the NUECES was screening up to 9000 messages and processing 2880 of those. The ship has also been designated as the ship-shore relay ship and handles all outgoing traffic for Group Bravo of the Mobile Riverine Force.

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Although much of the communications gear has operated continually since commissioning there have been no major problems in maintaining communications capabilities. Several new trunk lines were installed to Army Radio to increase their communications flexibility and capabilities.

The Electronics Material Division commenced preparations upon commissioning for repairing and maintaining the ship's extensive communications gear. The majority of work hours have been spent in Preventive Maintenance and minor corrective action. The only notable problems in this division have been with the CRP-MP 2502 Pathfinder Radar and the availability for electronic test equipment to be calibrated. The Pathfinder Radar (located in the Conning Station) initially was difficult to utilize because of the difference between its output frequency and that of the AN/SPS-53 Radar (located in Combat Information Center) was so small as to cause extreme difficulty in reading Combat Information Center's radar due to the presence of "running rabbits". Once the magnetrons "baked in" the frequencies drifted apart to correct, to a large degree, the problem.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Engineering Department was established on board the USS NUECES (APB-40) 3 May 1968, when the ship was commissioned. The Department consists of two officers and fifty enlisted men who have various backgrounds contributing to form a versatile organization.

On 4 May 1968, the ship was placed in drydock No. 2 for an inclining experiment in accordance with the circular of requirements for modification of barracks ships, self-propelled, dated 31 March 1966. The center of gravity above the reference line was found to be 21.65 feet for light load conditions, 16.42 feet for full load conditions, and 18.40 feet for minimum operating conditions. The period of roll was timed during the inclining experiment and found to be 8.5 seconds. After obtaining other vital data concerning the ship's stability characteristics, USS NUECES was moved to Pier 6A where the crew commenced standing watches under instruction by shipyard personnel. Yard workers were busy conducting tests and inspections on equipment preparing for underway trials.

The ship got underway early 8 May for two days to conduct a thorough Insurv Inspection and Builders Trials. All engineering equipment was tested and found to be operating in a high state of readiness with relatively minor discrepancies. Upon returning to the shipyard on the 10th of May, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard was able to complete most of the Insurv Inspection deficiencies before final delivery of the ship to the U. S. Navy on 30 May.

On 1 June 1968, the USS NUECES (APB-40) got underway for San Diego, California, with Commander SOWINSKI, Commander Landing Ship Squadron One, and his Staff to conduct underway training in all phases of Damage Control and Engineering Casualty Control. The Engineering Department experienced little difficulty in carrying out scheduled drills and was qualified in all aspects of Damage Control concerning the ship and equipment by the end of the training period. Commander SOWINSKI, Commander Landing Ship Squadron One, established four repair parties on board the NUECES. A vegetable locker on the boat deck aft was designed Repair I and equipped to handle topside casualties. Compartment A-102-AL contains Repair II and is equipped for coverage of spaces forward of frame twenty-eight, main deck and below. Repair V is located in Compartment A-103-AL and provides assistance to all Engineering spaces. Repair III is located aft in Compartment C-203-E and provides assistance from frame twenty-eight aft, main deck and below. Repair Parties I, II and III are controlled by Damage Control Central and Repair V is controlled from Main Control. The ship's Coordinated Shipboard Allowance List is based on three repair lockers, however, adequate equipment was available to supply all four repair lockers.

The ship arrived in San Diego, California, on 8 June to complete outfitting before proceeding on its scheduled mission. While in San Diego, the Engineering Department made final preparations for getting underway. During this time, the Department completed its administrative duties pertaining to watch, quarter, and station bill and engineering logs. Also

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valuable time was spent conducting inport drills and becoming more familiar with the operating procedures of the ship's equipment.

On 13 June 1968, the ship moved to the Degaussing Pier in San Diego for a deperming and last minute checks to insure maximum readiness for the voyage to Vietnam.

The ship was underway for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 15 June. During this transit the Engineering Department experienced two major casualties with the ship's number three General Motors 16V AC Generator. The first occurrence was when the coupling between the engine and generator broke while paralleling generators. Investigation determined cause due to loose bolts connecting the coupling. Engineering Department personnel manufactured necessary bolts and restored the casualty. A second problem caused a failure in the voltage regulator. It was discovered that extreme heat in the switchboard caused an output transistor to burn up. Replacement parts were not available aboard ship and repairs could not be completed until arrival at Pearl Harbor on 26 June 1968.

On 1 July, the NUECES got underway for the long transit to Vung Tau, Vietnam. While enroute the Engineering Department conducted various Damage Control and Engineering Casualty Control Drills in preparation for maximum readiness upon arrival. During the month of July the Department experienced major difficulties with all five ship's service Superior DC Generators. The major problems were fuel pumps having stuck plungers, broken springs, broken cam shafts, and sticky or binding racks. Serious problems were also encountered with all AC Generator Injectors. Engineering personnel disassembled, cleaned, and repaired the injection valves as required even though spare parts were limited.

Investigation on both DC and AC generator problems was proved to be due to continuous operation of equipment. Overall the transit went smooth for the Engineering Department and all equipment was in operation upon arrival at Vung Tau, Vietnam, on 31 July 1968. After arriving in Vietnam the USS NUECES has been operating as a unit of the Mobile Riverine Force under Commander Task Force 117. The Engineering Department has contributed a major role in the ability of USS NUECES to perform her duties in supporting River Boat Squadrons with fuel oil, lube oil, and water, maintain electrical power and auxiliary services for other departments to perform their functions, and sustain mobility to meet operational commitments. The overall pride and "can do" attitude of the crew has been displayed in their success to perform extremely difficult tasks.

For the month of August the Engineering Department encountered three major casualties. Number two AC generator lost voltage regulator control due to excessive heat causing the output transistor to burn up. The electricians replaced the transistor and manufactured a metal diffuser to dissipate the heat and it worked successfully. A second major casualty occurred in all ship's service DC generators throughout August. Oil and compression rings became sticky due to faulty injector nozzels thus causing carbon to accumulate. Rings were available in the Supply system but unable

to obtain parts for the injectors. A third casualty occurred when number three DC generator was placed out of commission for eight hours to investigate a loss of lube oil pressure. It was found that the lube oil pump had worn excessively. A new pump was installed and the engine was placed back in commission.

The Engineering Department continued to have new and some recurring problems during September. Number two DC generator engine was placed out of commission due to wiped bearings. A Casualty Report was initiated and an immediate overhaul was commenced. A bearing failure due to excessive heat in the engine end of number two ship's service AC generator caused a thirty-six hour down time while ship's force installed a new bearing. Number one AC generator experienced erratic voltage and was corrected by replacing the output transistor and installing a diffuser to keep it from overheating. Number one and two evaporators had to be secured for two days in order to flush sand from the system and associated equipment since sand and mud had entered the sea suction clogging the system. Also in September persisting difficulties with DC generator fuel pumps continuous operation and excessive heat caused metal fatigue to the springs, plunger, and bushing, rendering them inoperative and unreliable. The Engineering Repair Division made noted improvements in the medical area by constructing a ramp from the flight deck to the boat deck on the port side to facilitate reliability and speed in moving personnel casualties from the helicopter landing area to the medical spaces. Also shelves were manufactured and installed in the medical triage area and operating rooms to provide proper stowage of the numerous supplies necessary for efficient medical treatment.

During October while enroute from Dong Tam, Republic of Vietnam, to the Phan Tho area, the Engineering Department experienced difficulty with the clutch assembly for the number one Main Engine Reduction Gear. It was disclosed that the aft spherical brass bearing had worn excessively and broken causing the air shaft to rub against the housing wearing holes in the air shaft causing leakage and loss of pressure. This prevented the clutch from engaging properly. Temporary repairs were effected by manufacturing a bushing from brass stock and welding the worn shaft. After twelve hours of arduous work the reduction gear was back in commission.

Number three AC generator was difficult to start due to badly worn compression rings and defective valves caused from continuous use and lack of upkeep period. A Casualty Report was initiated and number three AC generator was placed out of commission for overhaul. Overhaul was completed on number two DC generator engine and it was placed back in commission.

The problems of worn injectors and fuel pumps on DC generators continued to be a problem. With the engines emitting smoke and carbon from exhausts, difficulty was imposed on keeping air filters cleaned in ventilation systems throughout the ship. The installed steam sink is very inadequate since it does not remove all carbon from filters, some filters are too large to be placed in the sink, and is very time consuming making it infeasible to keep the system clean. The Engineering Department resorted to using a steam pressure hose and fire hose to accomplish the task. The Planned Maintenance system schedules filters for cleaning once a month, however, they are being

cleaned once or twice a week when possible as an attempt to alleviate excessive smoke and carbon from entering the ship.

In November, the Engineering Department experienced a few minor difficulties with all DC generators. Recurring, are problems with injectors and fuel pumps. The spare parts allowance for injectors and fuel pumps is inadequate and should be increased. The ship's master gyro failed to remain settled on the meridian when the ship changed courses and while swinging at anchorage. The mercury ballast was cleaned and eight percent new mercury added. A link bearing and new ballast bearing were replaced. Further research disclosed reversed leads in the centerline repeater and the flywheel was sticking on a core sensitive element when the ship's head passed 090 degrees. The flywheel armature motor was adjusted and corrected the problem.

Number one boiler was placed out of commission for a thorough maintenance and cleaning. On 14 November, number three AC generator was placed back in commission and number two AC generator taken down for a complete overhaul. The engine had over three thousand hours and had a heavy carbon buildup.

In December, the ship's brine pump became inoperative when the motor armature shorted. The short was caused by deterioration over an extended period of time. A replacement armature was installed. Vent Supply System L-47 was placed out of commission because of an open shunt field that caused the motor to overspeed beyond safe limits and damaged the armature excessively. Since no replacement was on board, the armature was forwarded to a repair facility in Saigon. The main problem is a shortage of repair parts such as injectors, filters, gaskets, and fuel pumps parts. Continuous operation causes rapid wear on the parts and results in irregular operation. On 28 December, number two AC generator was placed back in commission. Also number one boiler was restored to commission and number two boiler was cleaned and maintained during December.

The Engineering Plant on NUECES has been operating for seven continuous months with no shut down time or availabilities. Surprisingly enough, the Plant is still in excellent condition due to the hard work exerted by Engineering Department personnel and the ship is ready in every respect to accomplish her mission. The major problems existing in the Engineering Department continue to be concerned with the ship's electrical plant. In December, for the first time in three months, all three AC generators were in commission. As of December, all of NUECES AC generators were load tested and found capable of carrying ninety percent of their rated capacity.

The ship's main propulsion engines and fresh water plants have been running constantly and are in excellent shape. The Department seldom drops below one hundred thousand gallons fresh water supply. No problems have been encountered in supplying purified fuel to the assault boats.

The ship has not had an availability or any down time since leaving San Diego on 15 June. The high morale and well qualified personnel in the Engineering Department have demonstrated ingenuity and resourcefulness in accomplishing their task during 1968.

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

Commencing as early as February 1968, the complex problems of properly insuring the initial logistic requirements of NUECES were completed prior to deployment commenced at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. With the expert assistance from shipyard supply personnel the inherent problems which arise in initial outfitting, stores requirements and departmental organization were met.

Space proved to be a problem area when attempting to insure as complete stocking as possible of all possible ship's store and food items necessary to provide support for the Mobile Riverine Force. This logistic problem area continued throughout the period of time the ship was in Bremerton, Washington, and while in San Diego, California, final loading of stores and equipment was completed without serious deficiencies. Due to various procurement reasons and availability a percentage of initial outfitting equipment continues to arrive while the ship is in Vietnam.

Logistic procedures in Vietnam and unique to the Mobile Riverine Force are currently in effect. The majority of all supply is provided by a resupply LST which makes periodic supply runs to the Mobile Riverine Force from Vung Tau. Additionally, a certain amount of material is received by rail. Ordinarily this is limited to high priority items. The majority of requisitioning for repair parts is through Naval Support Activity, Saigon, while that for consumables is through INREPS by the LST in Vung Tau.

While Army personnel are attached, they augment the ship's force cooks, messmen, barbers and laundrymen which makes the requirements of up to 1000 total personnel possible. Ship's store operations after entry in Vietnam increased five times from approximately \$10,000 per month to \$50,000 per month. A limiting factor is the amount of sales in the long lead time required to receive merchandise.

Statistics indicative of the Supply Department function follow:

1. Subsistence:

a. Amount under issue end of 4th quarter FY68 - \$1,010.33.

b. Amount under issue end of 1st quarter FY69 - \$33,317.21.

This is due to large number of personnel allowed rations for daily, but not all personnel ate aboard.

c. Average daily number of personnel fed (prior to arrival in-country) - 215.

d. Average daily number of personnel fed (subsequent arrival in-country) - 915.

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2. Disbursing:

- 15. a. Number of payrecords held (prior to arrival in-country) -
- 50. b. Number of payrecords held (subsequent arrival in-country) -
- 10,000. c. Average amount of paydays (prior to arrival in-country) -
- 100,000. d. Average amount of paydays (subsequent arrival in-country) -

WEAPONS DEPARTMENT

Weapons Department, was extremely busy during outfitting and after commissioning ensuring the materials necessary for general upkeep and operation of the ship were aboard. May was primarily a month of outfitting and loading of stores and making up of mooring lines. During this month the Boatswain Locker and Armory were made ready for operation. Six Division personnel were sent to Imperial Beach Naval Air Station in San Diego, California, for Helicopter Landing Safety School. All General Quarters Stations were assigned to the crew along with Sea Detail Stations and assignment for special evolutions.

On 6 May 1968, the NUECES set her first Special Sea and Anchor Detail. On 8 May, she commenced anchoring exercises in Puget Sound. All brakes and safety devices on the port, starboard, and stern anchors were checked as were all fathom markings. On 31 May 1968, the NUECES, underway for San Diego, California, moored at Indian Island, Washington, for loading of ammunition.

During the transit to San Diego, the ship test fired all machine guns and the 40MM mounts. The Helicopter Launching Detail was organized and drills were held. All troops compartments were outfitted with blankets, sheets and pillow cases.

During the transit to Vietnam, Third Division was busy checking out and cleaning the ship's armament. Maintenance programs and safety procedures were initiated and all weapons were test fired several times. All deck entries were instructed in the proper use and safety features of the ship's small arms. Small arms aboard the NUECES include: .45 caliber pistols, M-1 rifles, 12 gauge shotguns, M-79 grenade launchers, and Thompson sub-machine guns.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, procedures for new evolutions, such as flight quarters, embarkation - debarkation were practiced and perfected. After the first river penetration to Can Tho, the NUECES tied up alongside APL-26 to receive personnel and transfer of necessary equipment. Three Ammi pontoons were received from APL-26 and moored alongside to starboard. The pontoons are used as a staging area for the embarked troops, and as a pier for the River Division boats nested alongside. The pontoons are also used for embarking and debarking troops which is a safer and more efficient method than the conventional cargo nets. The pontoons are towed alongside for all river transits, and would be towed astern when going into the open sea.

Although utilization of the ship's weapons systems for support or suppressive fire has not been necessary, a total of 1636 rounds of 40MM have been fired in Free Fire Zones, near Dong Tam and Ren Tre, Republic of Vietnam, since arrival in Vietnam.

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In 1968, the NUECES had a total of 633 flight operations ranging from personnel transfers to medical evacuations. Flight operations are not limited to daylight hours as the NUECES has a very sophisticated lighting system for night operations including deck perimeter light, line-up, touch-down, and overhead lights. Equipment also included on the flight deck are: a relative wind indicator and wind speed indicator; Homing Beacon; Helicopter transmitter/receiver unit; full firefighting capabilities including a Purple-K firefighting unit and two asbestos suits.

Third Division was occupied with the continual job of maintenance and upkeep of all mounts and small arms. On 8 October 1968, the NUECES loaded nine tons of ammunition for River Assault Squadron Thirteen for storage purposes. On 26 October 1968, Mount 41 Local Control went out. It was determined to be faulty wiring on the Joy Stick assembly and was repaired that day.

During the month of November, First Division continued general upkeep and maintenance of the ship. On 3 November, the pin in No. 1 Detachable Link, Starboard Anchor, was replaced. Seventy-five fathom marker was painted out 13 November 1968. Short shot, starboard side was painted out. On 20 November 1968, the fifteen and thirty fathom markers were painted out. The painting and preservation of the motor whale boat was completed.

During the month of December, First Division continued the general upkeep and maintenance of the ship. On the 02 level of the ship and the catwalks, painting was started and will be completed in January 1969. A general inventory was undertaken of all foul weather gear for turnover to supply. The boat davits were painted and an accelerated form of Preventive Maintenance was held. The fifteen fathom detachable link on the Port chain was exchanged with the ninety fathom detachable link on the Starboard chain. Third Division again continued the upkeep and maintenance of the ship's armament. On the 31st of December, the magazine sprinkler system was successfully tested. Since commissioning, the NUECES has received and launched 633 helicopters and has dropped her anchors a total of 185 times.

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MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

A. Phase I: Precommissioning and Transit to Vietnam

Commissioning Day, 3 May 1968, brought little change in routine for the NUECES Medical Department. Lieutenant [REDACTED], Medical Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve, the Medical Officer, and five corpsmen continued to inventory medical equipment and supplies. This process was conducted ashore in Building 550, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, until 22 May, when loading aboard commenced.

At the same time, strenuous efforts were made by both yard workers and ship's company to correct deficiencies in the extensive medical facilities (detailed in Table I below) noted by the Insurv Board during sea trials on 8 May, and to prepare the ship for sea. Also, the maintenance of the crew's medical records was taken over from the Bremerton Naval Hospital.

Table I. Medical Facilities

- 30 Bed Sick Ward
- 4 Bed Quiet Room
- 3 Bed Intensive Care Unit (Later converted to 2 beds for Triage/Dressing Area more effective operation)
- 2 Operating Rooms
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory
- Doctor's Office and Examining Room
- Clerical Office
- Dental Office
- Forward Battle Dressing Station
- ABC Decontamination Station

After getting underway for San Diego, California, on 31 May, intensive training of both corpsmen and crew in first aid procedures under battle conditions was begun under the supervision of the embarked team from the Fleet Training Group, San Diego, California. This week's work helped a great deal to alleviate the problem of the inexperience of the corpsmen.

The week in San Diego, California, was largely spent procuring supplies, instructions, and manuals. This was necessary because the Initial Outfitting List proved grossly insufficient for the requirements of the expanded medical facilities aboard.

Three new corpsmen reported aboard in San Diego, California, bringing the department within one man of its authorized allowance.

Training films on all phases of first aid, including treatment of burns, shock, fractures and wounds, followed by question and answer periods, were shown to all hands during the transit. The training of the corpsmen continued, covering such subjects as operating room, x-ray, and laboratory techniques, pharmacy, and transportation of casualties.

Furthermore, a continuing program of inoculation and malaria prophylaxis was begun for the crew.

Inspection of topside first aid boxes revealed that many supplies were ruined by water seepage. This problem has been corrected by the installation of perforated false bottoms, drilling of drainage holes in the bottoms of the boxes, and sealing their seams with adhesive tape. The above changes are recommended for incorporation into the manufacture of the boxes; rubber gasketing should be substituted for the tape as a sealant.

Phase II: Operation with Task Group 117.1

Arriving in-country on 31 July; NUECES became duty medical ship assuming responsibilities for all routine medical treatments and minor surgery for embarked troops and river assault squadron personnel. Treatment was administered by an Army-Navy team consisting of medics of the 4/47th Infantry Battalion and ship's company.

It was readily apparent upon embarkation of Army medical units, with their additional supplies and material, that a serious lack of storage space would and does exist. This situation has been partially remedied by the addition of a three shelf cabinet on the after bulkhead and three metal shelves running three-fourths the length of the portside bulkhead of the triage area and two 8' X 5' X 4' plywood huts located one to each side of the elevator on the flight deck aft.

Phase III: Operation with Task Group 117.2

Preparations to become the surgical ship of Task Group 117.2 began in early October. Problems were encountered in a number of areas. First, the medical elevator on the flight deck aft proved to be inadequate for casualty handling. Thus a ramp from the flight deck to the 02 level on the port side was fabricated by the USS SPHINX (ARL-24), and its installation completed by 12 October, by the NUECES' shipfitters. This ramp has functioned well and is superior to the elevator for transporting casualties from helo deck to hospital area.

Second, the three bed intensive care unit proved to be too crowded for proper use; one bed and the inboard bulkhead were removed to allow sufficient working space around each of the two remaining beds.

Five officers and twenty-four enlisted men of the Army Surgical Team, Delta Company, 9th Medical Battalion, moved aboard on 13 October, and "dust-off" operations with the Vietnamese Marines began with Task Group 117.2. This phase of operations continued until the end of the year. Army-Navy cooperation was excellent, with the available personnel being split into two surgical/watch sections. Procedures ranged from sewing up minor lacerations to open heart surgery. Table II below gives statistics of patients treated each month:

Enclosure (1)

Table II. Patients Admitted

<u>Month</u>	<u>Vietnamese</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
16-30 October	21	0
November	31	17
December	18	12
Totals	<u>70</u>	<u>29</u>

DENTAL DEPARTMENT

The Dental Department, staffed by Lieutenant [REDACTED], Dental Corps, J. S. Naval Reserve, and one Dental Technician First Class, has functioned on a routine basis since commencing operations on 1 June.

Facilities are quite complete, including a 9 X 15 foot office with a 1/32 inch lead lining on the bulkheads as x-ray shielding, a storeroom, and the equipment listed below:

- Weber P-64 Dental Unit
- Ritter Power Vega Chair
- Pelton and Crane Operating Light
- S.S. White X-Ray Unit
- Ritter Speed Autoclave Sterilizer
- Dri-Clave Sterilizer
- S.S. White High Speed Oral Evacuator
- Hamilton Cabinet
- Midwest Quiet-Air High Speed Handpiece
- Tru-Torque Handpiece

Table III below summarizes the number and types of treatments rendered:

Table III: Personnel Treated

Army: 259
Navy: 805

Procedures

	<u>JUN-SEP 1968</u>	<u>OCT-DEC 1968</u>
Amalgam 1 surface	268	214
Amalgam 2 or more surfaces	202	169
Base Intermediate	526	430
Tooth Removal	102	104
Alvealectomy	2	27
Silicate	62	74
Prophylaxis	68	62
Cariec Prevention Treatment	132	75
Scaling, Peridontal	1	3
Denture Repair	7	3
Root Tip Removal	-	8
Resin	8	8
Exams: Type 1,2,&3	238	110
X-Rays	422	271
Post Operative Treatment	40	73
Totals	2094	1660

Enclosure (1)