

The Vietnam War

Beach Jumpers Unit ONE, Team TWELVE was deployed in the Western Pacific Area on a continuous basis. Although the Officer in Charge (OIC), Assistant OIC and an administrative staff were headquartered at White Beach, Okinawa, the bulk of Beach Jumpers were divided into detachments and deployed in Vietnam.

First to Deploy for Vietnam service was Beach Jumpers Unit One Detachment ALPHA made up of initially of 2 Officers (later only one) and 10 enlisted men. The unit was assigned under the operational control of the Navy's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) BRAVO which supported Marine Special Landing Force (SLF) operations. Detachment ALPHA was responsible for employing psychological operations (PSYOP) which would become one of the Beach Jumpers' Vietnam missions and later, their unclassified cover activity. For the Beach Jumpers this meant things such as propaganda leaflet drops and loudspeaker broadcasts, which Detachment ALPHA conducted during all major ARG/SLF operations in 1966. Detachment ALPHA operated off of several naval platforms including the USS Tripoli (LPH 10). Subsequently, Detachments BRAVO, CHARLIE, DELTA, ECHO, FOXTROT, and GOLF joined Detachment ALPHA in Vietnam.

Detachment BRAVO initially consisted of one officer and eight enlisted men (The team would later operate minus the officer). Their primary task was to assist the carrier strike force in planning and executing deception efforts. They were assigned the primary mission of assist and support the operating forces in the conduct of Tactical Cover and Deception in Naval Warfare. Bravo was under the operational control of Commander Seventh Fleet. They conducted monitoring, tape preparation and Soviet Signal Intelligence SIGINT trawler jamming missions from destroyers.

Detachment CHARLIE consisted of one officer and five enlisted men. CHARLIE was under the operational control of Commander Task Force 77 and were assigned on board of fleet tugs such as the USS Cocopa (ATF-101) shown in the photo at right. CHARLIE operated under the cover name "Yankee Station Special Surveillance Unit". Their mission was to deceive and jam Soviet Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) and Electrical Intelligence (ELINT) trawlers that were monitoring US Naval operations in the Gulf of Tonkin. Detachment CHARLIE conducted counter SIGINT trawler activities which included random wave jamming with noises which even included bagpipe recordings.



Detachment DELTA, formed in June 1966, consisted of one officer and four enlisted men and was assigned to Commander Naval Forces Vietnam. DELTA conducted psychological operations in support of Commander Task Forces 115, 116, and 117 operating in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. They later were designated as Team THIRTEEN. This detachment deployed to support SEA DRAGON operations which were cruiser-destroyer patrols carried out against North Vietnamese coastal sea and land objectives such as shore batteries.

Detachment ECHO, formed in February 1967, consisted of only one officer. He was tasked with the primary objective of conducting liaison with Commander Task Force 77 and acted as an advisor to the admiral on the feasibility of using communication deceptions in support of operations such as GAME WARDEN and MARKET TIME which were then underway on the rivers, canals and along the coastline of South Vietnam. The Echo Detachment Officer operated from the flag ship (the admiral's ship).

Detachment FOXTROT consisted of two officers and ten enlisted men and was under the operational control of the Commander, Amphibious Ready Group ALFA. Detachment FOXTROT mission was similar to that of Detachment ALPHA and was formed and deployed to further support Marine Special Landing Forces. FOXTROT also monitored Special Landing Force (SLF) frequencies for security breaches and rode River Patrol Boats conducting psychological operation on the Cua Viet and Hue rivers in northernmost I Corps. FOXTROT dropped over 260,000 leaflets during Operation "Daring Rebel" which was a multi-battalion assault on the Hoi An area against the Viet Cong. The leaflets carried rally themes of Chieu Hoi, population control directives, and pleas for local population

assistance. Aerial broadcasts, which followed the leaflet drops, carried the same themes and were made by Vietnamese liaison personnel.

Detachments GOLF, which consisted of only two enlisted men, was activated in August 1967 and deployed as a support unit for other Team TWELVE Detachments. Golf operated out of the Naval Station in Subic Bay, Philippines.

Team THIRTEEN was established in December 1968 from Team TWELVE Detachment DELTA and consisted of one officer and four enlisted men. Team THIRTEEN conducted psychological operations from River Patrol Boats on all waterways in country. Additionally, they supported both Army 5th Special Forces A and B Teams and Navy SEALs. THIRTEEN also set up the DUFFEL BAG sensor operation program which was later taken over by the SEA LORDS. For their efforts, Beach Jumper Unit One Team Thirteen was presented the Navy Unit Commendation.

CITATION

For exceptionally meritorious service from 1 December 1968 till 30 April 1971 during operations against enemy forces in the Delta Region of the Republic of Vietnam. Throughout this period, Beach Jumper Unit ONE, Team THIRTEEN operated with units of the United States Navy, the United States Army, and the Vietnamese Navy in carrying out psychological operations and combat missions of a classified nature. By April 1971, the Team had established detachments throughout the IV Corps area, effectively covering the fifteen provinces of the Mekong Delta with their diversified psychological operations capabilities, including loudspeaker broadcast equipment, leaflet drops, civic action projects, and other techniques. Team THIRTEEN participated in over eighty civic action projects in which thousands of Vietnamese civilians were assisted in innumerable ways. During their operations, the Beach Jumpers were subjected to enemy fire on a number of occasions. In each instance they distinguished themselves by suppressing the fire and completing the assigned mission. The outstanding courage, resourcefulness, perseverance and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and men of Beach Jumper Unit ONE, Team THIRTEEN in combat psychological operations against a determined enemy, reflected great credit upon themselves and their unit and were in keeping with the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

"Navy Beach Jumpers, the Vietnam War", source:

"Seaborne Deception - The History of U.S. Navy Beach Jumpers" by John B. Dwyer (Praeger Publish. 1992)

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