



PHOTO COURTESY OF CDR JON MALAY '73, USN (RET)

LEGACY OF VALOR: VIETNAM

This is the final installment in a yearlong series of Shipmate features commemorating the service and sacrifice of U.S. Naval Academy alumni who served in the Vietnam War. These stories are featured in print, on a dedicated webpage, on social media and in videos.

More than 40 alumni shared their stories to help further the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association & Foundation's Legacy of Valor series. For all who stood watch, we honor your service and will not forget.

Visit www.usna.com/legacy-of-valor for more of Shipmate's Legacy of Valor coverage including online only content.

VIETNAM PRESENTED MYRIAD OF CHALLENGES FOR SURFACE WARFARE OFFICERS

Then-Lieutenant Junior Grade Ed Moore '70, USN, found his orders were to be direct and unambiguous while patrolling off the North Vietnamese shore.

Seeking specific targets aboard the destroyer MORTON, Moore served as a combat information center officer and stood watch on general quarters as a gunnery liaison officer during Operation Linebacker off the coast of North Vietnam. The destroyer was running at night at 30 knots in line with four other ships. They synchronized their turning so their five-inch/54 caliber Mark 42 guns were facing their assigned targets when they turned parallel to the beach.

Moore explained that navigation and accurate targeting were difficult during these rapid operations, which relied primarily on radar. However, the captain didn't want to hear about difficult timing using radar or inaccurate locations.

"The captain would say, 'I don't care exactly where we really are,'" said Moore who retired as a Navy commander. "'You just figure it out and shoot at our assigned targets.' Meanwhile, (the North Vietnamese) were shooting back at us."

Fortunately for MORTON's crew, the North Vietnamese were generally only equipped with anti-aircraft rounds. Most of the guns ashore were shooting rounds that produced airburst designed to target aircraft and not ships, Moore said.

"They would go off above us and we tended only to get shrapnel coming down," Moore said. "The crew would go out and sweep it off the deck the next morning. The biggest worry was—and it did happen to one of the ships in our squadron—if they fired the wrong kind of ammunition (high explosive), or if the anti-aircraft and the fuse didn't work at altitude. When these rounds hit a ship, they could do significant damage and kill crewmen."

Surface warfare officers served in a range of operations and responsibilities during the Vietnam War. This included the riverine navy aboard swift boats in and around Vietnamese waterways. It also meant supporting aerial combat missions and assisting ground assaults with ship-to-shore bombardments. Those serving as Saigon fell in April 1975 stepped into humanitarian roles to aid thousands of evacuees fleeing the North Vietnamese.

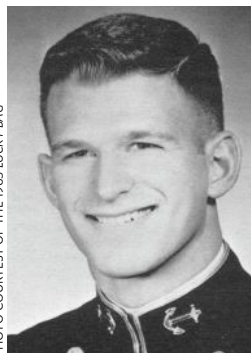
Vietnamese refugees disembark BENJAMIN STODDERT in Subic Bay in the Philippines in May 1975. CDR Jon Malay '73, USN (Ret.), was aboard during the close of the Vietnam War.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1970 LUCKY BAG



Then-MIDN Edmund Moore '70

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1965 LUCKY BAG



Then-MIDN Steve Chubb '65

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1970 LUCKY BAG



Then-MIDN James Zaborowski '70

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1973 LUCKY BAG



Then-MIDN Jon Malay '73

Top: CAPT Steve Chubb '65, USNR (Ret.), with his counterpart Ensign Nguyen Minh Tu of the Republic of Vietnam Navy in 1967.

Bottom: CAPT Steve Chubb '65, USNR (Ret.), with Nguyen Minh Tu at the Orange County, CA, Vietnam War Memorial in 2003.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAPT STEVE CHUBB '65, USNR (RET.)

SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY

Then-Lieutenant Junior Grade Steve Chubb '65, USN, was stationed on an island south of Cambodia with the Vietnamese Junk Force. The Junk Force was composed of U.S. Navy-trained Vietnamese officers and sailors who sailed on small wooden vessels.

Chubb and his crew's mission in 1967 was interdicting the flow of arms from North Vietnam to the south by sea. Weapon caches were smuggled through Laos and into Cambodia. American advisors patrolled with their Vietnamese counterparts on the west coast of Vietnam to deter transit of North Vietnamese arms.

U.S. swift boats, U.S. Coast Guard ships and their South Vietnamese partners helped neutralize the flow of weapons into South Vietnam, Chubb said.

"Once they figured out that the coast was being patrolled, they had to seek or emphasize alternate means," said Chubb, who served as an advisor to the South Vietnamese and retired as a captain with the Naval Reserve. "We were pretty effective."

While credible intelligence and quick action were needed to intercede

weapons runners on the coast, Commander James Zaborowski '70, USN (Ret.), witnessed the destruction of what a squadron of B-52 Stratofortresses could unleash. In December 1972, during Operation Linebacker II, the U.S. initiated a steady campaign of bombings in which more than 20,000 tons of ordnance was dropped on targets in Hanoi and Haiphong.

The mission featured B-52s flying in a "wagon train" about a mile behind one another, Zaborowski said. Bombers came from Guam and Thailand.

"The B-52 bombings were massive," Zaborowski said. "We'd see them carpet-bombing, kind of like what happened in World War II, where the U.S. carpet-bombed some of the German industrial cities."

"The North Vietnamese would basically just shoot hundreds of surface-to-air missiles and hope that they would intercept some of the B-52s. On average those 50-plus on each side would take maybe a half hour to go through their bombing run. They were doing two or three of these bombing runs a day."

Twenty-eight months later, Commander Jon Malay '73, USN (Ret.), witnessed the final waning moments of America's military involvement in Vietnam. As a junior officer on his first deployment, Malay was part of the last U.S. military force in Vietnam as Saigon fell in late April 1975.

As the destroyer BENJAMIN STODDERT played its historic role in the last days of the war, then-Ensign Malay was performing a special assignment to manage the paperwork for his ship's upcoming overhaul. He continued to stand his bridge watches as JOOW and also prepared for his soon-to-be job as an ASW officer.

BENJAMIN STODDERT was with the 7th Fleet standing by off the Vietnam coast. As Saigon fell, Operation Frequent Wind commenced with the final evacuation of American civilians and at-risk Vietnamese.

With the war winding down, Malay had a bird's-eye view of its final days.

"There was a tremendous sense of uncertainty," Malay said. "We knew there was a small chance we could be drawn back into active warfare ... On that fateful night of April 29 when the final chaotic evacuation of Saigon began, our ship was sent away on a highly secret mission, and we were all on edge."

"We didn't know what was going to happen ... Once we came back from our secret mission, did a middle-of-the-night rescue of the crew of a South Vietnamese Navy gunboat (and scuttling of their ship), and then picked up the nearly 150 refugees from an overloaded small boat right off the mouth of the Saigon River (after the CO was told not to pick them up), I felt we should be pretty proud of ourselves."

"The war was over. We were on our way back to Subic Bay in the Philippines with our decks covered with Vietnamese people. And then, we were going home to our loved ones in Hawaii." 🚢