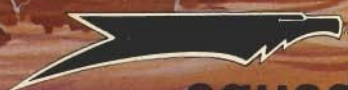


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# RIVERINE

A Pictorial History of the Brown Water War in Vietnam

by Jim Mesko

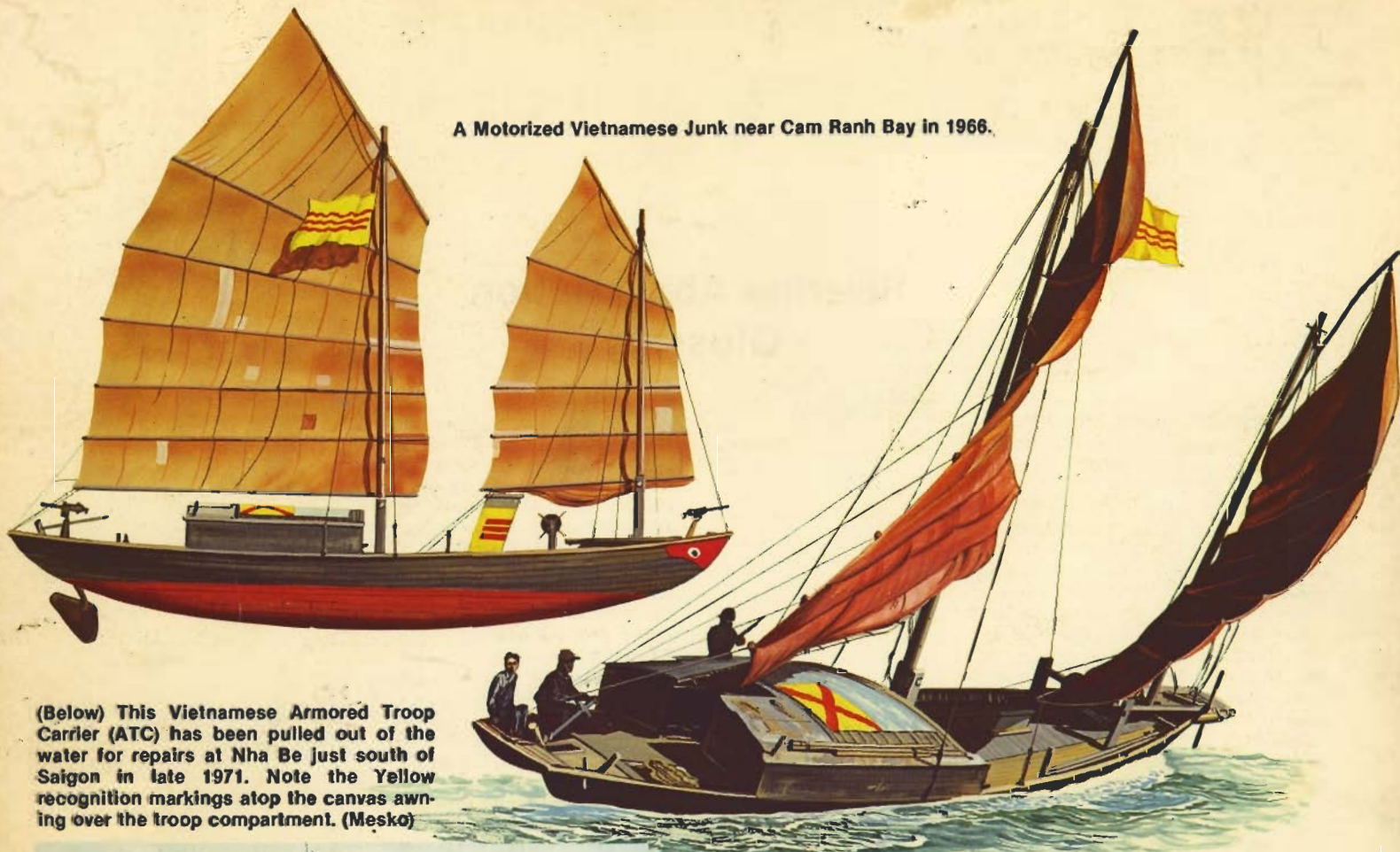


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A Motorized Vietnamese Junk near Cam Ranh Bay in 1966.



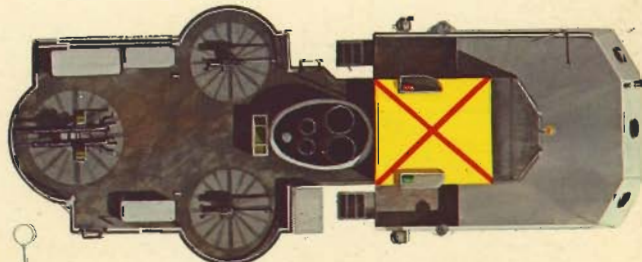
(Below) This Vietnamese Armored Troop Carrier (ATC) has been pulled out of the water for repairs at Nha Be just south of Saigon in late 1971. Note the Yellow recognition markings atop the canvas awning over the troop compartment. (Mesko)



A pair of Vietnamese Monitors at anchor. Again, note the Yellow recognition marking atop the vessel, in this case, on the forward 40mm turret. Such aerial identification became common after a number of mistaken attacks by US and VNAF aircraft on allied vessels. (Jacobs)



(Above) A Vietnamese "Swift Boat" carries out a Market Time patrol along the coast. This is a PCF Mark II which had a different superstructure from the original variant, in addition, the MARK II was also slightly longer. The armament is covered with canvas to protect it from salt spray. (US Navy)



Vietnamese Patrol Motor Gunboat (PGM) off Da Nang in late 1971.



# ***RIVERINE***

**A Pictorial History of the Brown Water War in Vietnam**



**By JIM MESKO**

**Illustrated by Don Greer**



**squadron/signal publications inc.**





**PBR 105, under the command of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class James Williams, fires on Viet Cong junks, sampans, and shore positions during a patrol on 31 October 1966. As a result of this action Williams was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.**

## Author's Note

In the fall of 1971 I received orders assigning me to a naval advisory team in the Republic of Vietnam. During this period I came into personal contact with many of the men of the Brown Water Navy who participated in the actions which are related in the following pages. In particular I met men from HAL-3, VAL-4, and SEAL detachments, as well as American trained Vietnamese naval officers and enlisted men. I was able to visit a number of bases and photograph various river craft and aircraft, some of which appear in this book. While this background helped immensely in the research and writing of this text it also made it somewhat difficult to remain objective. Throughout this book there can be ascertained a certain pride in the accomplishments which the brave men of the Brown Water Navy achieved. Their story is one which demonstrates that the American sailor in Vietnam exhibited the same raw courage which countless sailors before them exhibited in all the wars in which the US Navy has been called upon to serve. The Vietnam War is still considered by many to be a stain on American history, and the men who served in Vietnam have yet to receive the credit they so rightfully deserve. Perhaps in a small way this book will help to set a part of the record straight.

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## Dedication:

This book is dedicated to the officers and men of the Brown Water Navy who served so valiantly for the cause of freedom. May it also serve as a memorial to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

### And to my father

Peter Mesko, the finest man I have ever known, whom I owe more than I can ever repay.

## Credits

As is the case in any book there are a number of people whose help was indispensable. Without a doubt the key person in providing help was Bob Cressman, who provided unpublished material, photos, and other material without which this book could not have been written. He also answered numerous questions during late night telephone calls which proved extremely helpful in nailing down certain key points. Another person who provided very important information was Roy Wiggs, who provided invaluable information on VAL-4. Finally, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my mother who proof read my rough drafts and typed the final copies, even though this took time away from her holiday preparations, and my wife who suffered through this writing with a great deal of good grace. Other people and organizations who helped out in equal fashion are listed below.

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