

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE MARITIME MOBILITY

CAPT Jon Wright, USN

2/17/99

1

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE MISSION

**Conduct or support special
operations, primarily in offshore,
coastal and riverine environments.**

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE FORCES

- SEALs**
- Special Warfare Combatant Craft Specialists**
- Patrol Coastal crews/maintenance teams**
- Logistics, communications, admin support personnel**

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE PRIMARY TOOLS

- **Our people**
 - **Personal equipment**
- **Combatant craft**
- **Patrol Coastals**
- **SEAL Delivery Vehicles/Dry Deck Shelters**

COMBATANT CRAFT History

- **World War II - early 1960s**
- **Viet Nam era**
- **Post-Viet Nam/Transition period**

COMBATANT CRAFT

General Characteristics

- **TRANSPORTABLE** (overland, air/parachute, ship)
- **RUGGED/SEAWORTHY** (> SS3)
- **HIGH PERFORMANCE** (acceleration/sustained (adult) speeds)
- **ROBUST CAPACITIES** (payload, comms, sensors, etc.)
- **FLEXIBLE DESIGN** (seating, weapons, comms, armor, etc.)

COMBATANT CRAFT

Current Capabilities

- **Offshore** **Patrol Coastals** **Long range** (~3000NMs)

- **Nearshore** **MK V SOC** **Medium range** (~600NMs)
- 11M RIB** **Short range** (~175NMs)
- 24' RIB - MCADS**

- **Inshore** **MATC** **Interim**
- CAC** **Interim**
- MK II PBR** **Training aids (TA)**
- PBL** **CD-only TA**

COMBATANT CRAFT

Future Vision

- **Near Term** (1-3 years)
 - Air-drop 11M RIB
 - SOCR (next MATC/CAC)
 - PC CCRS (?\$\$?)
- **Long Term** (7-10 years)
 - PC replacement
 - MK V replacement
 - RIB replacement

- **Concepts/Options**
 - VSV (wave piercing hull)
 - Semi-submersible
 - "Alligator"
 - Submersible/recoverable
 - "SUBBOAT"
 - "MFOB"
- **Developments**
 - DD-21 SOF support req't

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE MARITIME MOBILITY

CONCLUSIONS

- As long as there are oceans and rivers, we'll need combatant craft.
- The maritime environment is **tough**.
- COTS is preferred, but commercial standards rarely match SOF needs.
- Future capabilities should take quantum leaps forward.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.
- For every action there is an equal and opposite criticism.
- No one is listening until you make a mistake.
- To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.
- If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving definitely is not for you.

COMBATANT SUBMERSIBLES

- **Past**

- Variations of small, short-range, wet personnel delivery vehicles
- USS Tunney, USS Grayback (DDS-equivalents)

- **Present**

- MK VIII Mod I SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV)
- Dry Deck Shelter (DDS)
- Modified 637, 608, 640, 688 SSNs

- **Future**

- Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS)

COMBATANT SUBMERSIBLES

- **Primary support platforms**
 - Current
 - 637 class SSN (2, single DDS capable)
 - 640 class SSN (1, dual DDS capable)
 - 688 class SSN (2, single DDS capable)
 - Future
 - SEAWOLF SSN (1, single DDS capable)
 - VIRGINIA class (6+, single DDS/ASDS capable)
 - SSGN (TBD, dual DDS/ASDS capable)
- **Secondary support platforms**
 - PC (1 w/CCRS), MK V (sled tow), COOP (with crane)

COMBATANT CRAFT

World War II

(1941-1945)

- **Short range insertion/extraction**
 - A variety of small landing craft (LCVPs [Higgins boats] , LCPLs) provided pre-assault support for Scouts and Raiders units, NCDUs, then UDTs.
- **Direct action/special operations support**
 - 70', 71', 78' and 80' PT boats built (in the US) by Elco (418), Higgins (221) and Huckins (18) conducted patrol/direct action missions worldwide.
 - Some PT boats conducted special operations - inserting/extracting commandos/agents/coast watchers and supporting other clandestine missions.
 - Three boats, organized as MTBRon 2, supported OSS (forerunner of the CIA/USSOCOM) operations in 1944 in the English Channel.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Post WWII

(1946-1960)

- **Short range insertion/extraction**
 - Variations of the LCVP, then LCPLs (primarily MK IVs), operating from APDs (converted DEs) and Amphibs supported UDT operations. (UDTs operated their own craft until the mid-1960s.)
- **Direct action/special operations**
 - After 1945, the MTBRons were all disbanded and virtually all WWII-vintage PT boats were scrapped or sold (to allies/private citizens).
 - Four experimental PT boats were built in the late 1940s, with LOAs of 90', 95', 98' and 105'; max. (warload) speeds ranged from 38-52 KTs.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Early Viet Nam Era

(1961-1965)

- **Direct Action/Special Operations**

- 14 Norwegian NASTY-class PTFs were acquired, initially for coastal SEAL support, eventually being "leased" to the South Vietnamese (in 1965) for covert operations into North Viet Nam. Six were sunk before the remainder were returned to the Navy in 1970.
- In the early 1960s some attempts were made to improve/replace LCPLs for SPECOPSs support, but a reliable, tactically suitable boat never emerged.
- The early days of SEAL Team ONE (and to a lesser extent TWO) saw that command primarily providing advisory personnel in-country.

- **Coastal/Riverine Patrol and Interdiction**

- In the early 1960s conventional Navy, not NSW units, conducted this mission.
- Initial requirements were for craft to equip the Vietnamese Navy, to augment/replace older craft left over from the French occupation.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Mid-late Viet Nam Era

(1966-1971)

- SEAL support

- Early offensive SEAL platoon operations in-country were supported by organic UBs, indigenous craft, MK IV LCPLs and some modified LCM6s.
- Boat Support Unit (BSU) 1 was established in 1964. It tested several hull forms, supported Nasty-class PTF operations and operated LCSRs for the UDTs. BSU 1 (and BSU 2) was officially assigned a SEAL support role in 1966. Initially, the few modified LCM6s were regarded as HSSC and modified MK IV LCPLs were regarded as MSSC.
- SEAL Team TWO converted (by arming/armoring) and operated a small number of commercially available 26' trimarans that were referred to as SEAL Team Assault Boats (STABs).
- 24' LSSCs evolved from the early STABs, replacing them in 1968.
- 36' MSSCs also started to see service in early 1969.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Mid-late Viet Nam Era

(1966-1971)

- Coastal/Riverine Patrol/Interdiction Operations

- The Navy conducted these operations from 1964, transitioning to an advisory role in 1968/1969.
- Various craft were modified/developed to conduct these operations. MK I then II PBRs were introduced for river patrol/interdiction, MK II PCFs and USCG 82' WPBs conducted coastal patrols and (3) air-cushioned vessels (PACVs) were trialed by both the Navy and Army in-country.
- LCM6s were reconfigured to be ATCs and monitors, ASPBs were developed.
- Navy (and USCG) personnel both operated craft and advised the South Vietnamese Navy on coastal/riverine operations under commands such as TF 115, TF 116, TF 117, etc..
- STABRon 20 was in commission from Aug 1969 through Oct 1970.
 - 26' Strike Assault Boats (STABs) were modified LSSCs.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Post Viet Nam Period

(1972-1979)

- Beginning in the late 1960s/early 1970s, all Navy/USCG coastal/riverine units that were operational during the Viet Nam conflict were disbanded.
- In 1972, the remnants of the conventional coastal/riverine training and operational units and the BSUs were redesignated, becoming components of the same commands that provided leadership for the SEAL Teams/UDTS - Naval Inshore Warfare Groups.
 - **MK III PBs** came into service as **MK II PCF** replacements.
 - **MATCs** replaced **MSSC**.
 - Remaining riverine craft were assigned, but began to be retired in the mid-1970s.
- In 1979 Special Boat Squadrons and Units evolved.
 - SEAL officers began to be assigned to command SBRs/SBUs.

COMBATANT CRAFT

Transition Period

(1980-1993)

- Special operations became the focus.
 - **SWCLs** replaced **LCPLs**.
 - **SBU 26** evolved from **PCZ HPU**; assigned to **NSW**.
 - **MK IV PBs** (3) assigned to **SBU 26**
 - **UBs** became **PBLs** which began to evolve as **CD "training aids."**
 - **SWCM** and other **CC** programs were still-born (late '80s).
 - **PBC** became **PC** ('91).
 - **HSBs** (previously owned/new) introduced (limited employment).
- Combatant craft were operational in **Grenada**, **Beirut**, **NAG**, **RPI**, **Panama**, **Desert Storm**, **Somalia** and **Haiti**.
- The **RIB** became the preferred hull form to replace **SWCL** ('87).
- The requirement for **MK V** was born ('90).

COMBATANT CRAFT

Modern Era

(1993-1999)

- Special Boat Squadrons became Major Commands ('93).
 - SBUs 11, 13, 24 and 26 were decommissioned.
 - Facilities improved.
 - SBU 22 relocated to NASA Stennis.
 - MK III and IV PBs were retired.
 - HSBs were retired.
- PCs were introduced
- MK Vs were introduced.
 - Deployed to the Med, Africa, the Baltic, the Carib, Korea, Australia, Hawaii, NAG.
- NSW RIBs were introduced, began deployments.
- Air drop-capable RIB system was born.

2/17/99

(BACK UP)

COMBATANT CRAFT Commands

Mid 1960s

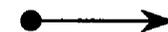
Early 1970s

Late 1970s

BSUs 1&2



COSRIVRONs 1&2

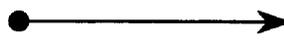


SPECBOATRONs 1&2

(COSRIVDIVs 12, 13, 22, 20, 24)

(SBUs 12, 13, 22, 20, 24)

NIOTC



COSRIVDIV 11



SBU 11

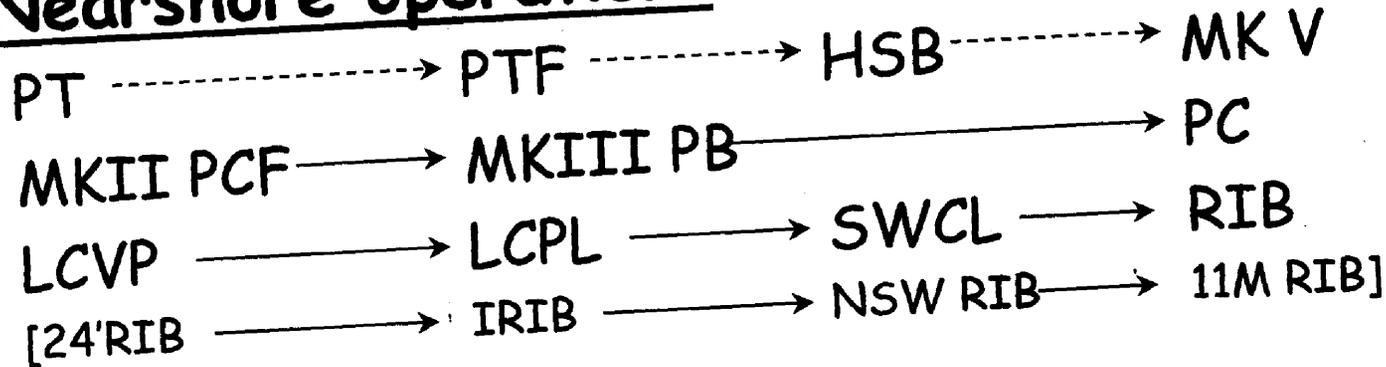
HPU



SBU 26 (mid '80s)

COMBATANT CRAFT

- Nearshore operations



- Inshore Operations

