

The United States Coast Guard in Vietnam



“Petty Officer Villarreal was serving aboard the USCGC POINT BANKS when his unit was requested to assist nine South Vietnamese Army personnel trapped on a beach by two platoons of Viet Cong. The sea was the only means of escape. Villarreal, along with a fellow crewman, volunteered to pilot the POINT BANKS’ 14-foot Boston whaler into the beach to rescue the trapped personnel. Villarreal, acting as a small boat coxswain, made two trips into the beach in heavy surf while exposed to intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons fire, and the additional hazard of close-in gunfire support from three naval patrol units and a C-47 aircraft... With courageous disregard for his own safety Petty Officer Villarreal and his fellow crew member were able to rescue the trapped personnel.”

Silver Star Citation, Engineman Second Class Larry D. Villarreal, USCG

“When the bullet hit, I could see shattered Plexiglas coming toward me in slow-motion. It was a stop-measure sensation, then everything went back to normal. I’ll never forget that part of it. Then, the whole world erupted. They opened up with everything. They were shooting at us from every angle. Once they were above the tree line, I took off with the two of them swinging fifty feet below the aircraft. When I got on the ground, I counted forty hits in the aircraft. I guess they were intent on stopping us. I had several hits in my rotor blades. A few more inches either way and my Jolly would have gone down.”

LT Lance Eagan, Coast Guard helicopter pilot serving with 37th AARS.



“Late in the evening of the 29th, Hamilton received orders to proceed to the Phan Thiet area, which is about midway between the Mekong Delta and Cam Ranh Bay on Vietnam’s eastern coast and assume duties as gunship for the entire area. As far as I can determine, we are the first Coast Guard cutter to be assigned to the Seventh Fleet’s Naval Gunfire Support Unit... I guess they must have heard of our fine gunnery record on Market Time.”

Captain James H. B Morton, Commanding Officer, USCGC Hamilton

“These Explosive Loading Detachments have provided invaluable support and advice to elements of the 1st Logistical Command in the matter of explosive safety... Attesting to the success of their tireless efforts is the fact that despite many adverse conditions, explosive safety and port security at our ports has been maintained at a remarkably high level... Their accomplishments here in the Republic of Vietnam merit the highest praise and add luster to the reputation of the United States Coast Guard.

Major General C. W. Eifler, US Army, commanding officer, 1st Logistical Command

