

Don Gillispie

From: Edward Williams [edwillia1@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 20, 2012 6:27 PM
To: 'Don Gillispie'
Subject: South Vietnam Deployment Dates for Years 1968, 1969, 1970
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Yellow
Attachments: Vietnam Deployment Dates Jan 1968 -1970.pdf

Don,

I have been asked by a few former USS Surfbird (ADG 383) ship's personnel to provide a letter outlining the ship's South Vietnam deployment and to certify that they were on board and set foot on shore South Vietnam sometime during the deployment. Unfortunately I kept no official records apart from my own so I am unable to completely satisfy those requests.

What I have done is review the annual ship's history reports which are posted on your terrific website and I have prepared a summary of South Vietnam ports that Surfbird visited. The ship anchored close ashore in fairly shallow waters and on occasion went alongside the pier but the summary does not show where the ship was located or whether it went alongside a pier. However in almost every instance liberty was granted to the crew during many of those events whenever appropriate and this was done so whether the ship was at pier or not. When at anchor liberty parties went ashore by way of the ship's motor whale boat or a utility boat such as a LCM that was obtained from the local shore installation.

What is needed big time are the ship's log book entries covering those periods. The VA rep in Wisconsin did for those on board during 1966 and 1967 a big favour by obtaining the log entries for South Vietnam deployments during those years.

I have sent her the same list as attached in hopes that she can obtain log book entries. She may be working on it and then again she may not because no Surfbird person is applying for VA benefits under the Vietnam program who come within her jurisdiction. Apparently that is one of the requirements for VA reps who want to obtain log book entries from the archives.

I am presently working on a letter in depth describing what Surfbird did and how it was deployed in South Vietnam during those years but it is presently a work in progress. I have attached the South Vietnam Deployment summary to this email and will send you a copy of the in depth letter when completed. I hope you can post both under the Vietnam Heading on Surfbird website so those in need can refer to them.

If they are applying to the VA they can definitely ask that the source document (i.e. the ship's deck log entries for the periods concerned) be obtained for at least the time they were on board. This attached summary does give the dates of deployment based on the annual history reports and this provides a starting point for log book reference.

Further, there is a reference document that VA reps refer to in which is listed the "Blue Water" ships that were in South Vietnam "Brown Water". I believe if ships are listed in that document there is enough proof for personnel to use in establishing they were ashore in South Vietnam – that is provided they can prove they were attached to the ship during the times listed in the summary document. So far Surfbird is not listed in the VA documents though it should be. Consequently a more circuitous procedure is needed by former ship persons to prove that they served on a "Blue Water" ship that was in "Brown Water". The deck log entry that the ship was

alongside a pier apparently is enough proof – at least for that particular period.

In conclusion would you post the attached summary as a starting point? Also will you do the same when the in depth letter is finally completed?

In addition, perhaps you can establish a lessons learned section under the Vietnam Tab so persons who have successfully achieved results can report what was done to get there etc. and as copies of Log Book Entries are obtained they too can be posted.

By the way I am including the year 1970 in my letters because the officer who relieved me is now deceased. I believe how and where the ship anchored or moved around the area in 1970 was probably not much different than during my watch – at least I hope someone will buy the logic.

Thanks for your help,
Edward Williams
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