

The SURFBIRD was a minesweeper (AM / MSF) converted to a degaussing ship (ADG).

To counter the threat of magnetic mines the navy has equipped its ships with degaussing systems that would, when calibrated correctly, neutralize unwanted magnetism that could otherwise trigger magnetic mines. The only way to determine when a ship's degaussing system is calibrated correctly is to have it move across a submerged degaussing range. The magnetism is measured on each pass and if the ship's degaussing system is out of calibration, they are told what coil changes to make on the system that will bring it back into calibration. The navy has installed permanent degaussing ranges near the entrances to most ports that it uses. The Surfbird was the only ship in the world capable of deploying a portable degaussing range to forward areas.

When the Surfbird was deployed to Vietnam we spent most of our time degaussing small minesweepers (MSB's and MSL's) since they were most likely to encounter magnetic mines. In Cam Ranh Bay we routinely tied up at the "Market Time" pier to use the facilities there. When in Danang, the Surfbird would normally anchor off Red Beach where the Mobile Construction Battalion was based. We often went ashore there to take advantage of their facilities. When in Vung Tau, the situation was similar to Cam Ranh Bay. When not actively operating the degaussing range we were tied up to a pier.

Because of the Surfbird's unique mission, she was required to enter the shallow waters of Vietnam's Bays and harbors. Anchored close to the beach or tied up to a pier she most definitely operated "in country".

NOTE: The above was plagiarized from a variety of sources.