

## Foreword

David Bruhn's *Gators Offshore and Upriver* presents a detailed and lavishly illustrated study of the contribution during the Vietnam War of the U.S. and Australian forces that operated along South Vietnam's 1,200-mile coastline and on the country's myriad rivers and canals. He focuses on the ships of the amphibious fleet that carried Marines of the Special Landing Force to battle on the coast and in the swamps near Saigon; on the LSTs that enabled the Navy's River Patrol Force and the Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force to fight far from the sea in the Mekong Delta; and the vital contribution of the Royal Australian Navy's Clearance Diving Team 3.

We learn how the sailors of these units braved fire and accomplished their missions during Operation Game Warden, the Tet Offensive, the SEALORDS Campaign, the Cambodian incursion, and the enemy swimmer-sapper campaign to sink allied ships and craft. Indeed, critical to the success of allied arms was the work of the U.S. underwater demolition team and explosive ordnance disposal personnel and the Australian divers who operated to frustrate enemy swimmer-sapper attacks. Also covered are amphibious and anti-mining operations with the Vietnam Navy, the Vietnamization Program, and Frequent Wind, the evacuation of South Vietnam.

We gain an appreciation of the sacrifices made by the men who paid the ultimate price, including the twenty-five crewmen of USS *Westchester County* (LST 1167) killed when underwater explosions tore into their ship on 1 November 1968. Appendices identify awards given to the U.S. amphibious and Australian units and a listing of the ships of the Vietnam Navy that survived the evacuation from South Vietnam in 1975 to reach the Philippines. In short, this volume should be on the shelf of any serious student of the Vietnam War and the contribution of many courageous and dedicated American and Australian sailors.

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