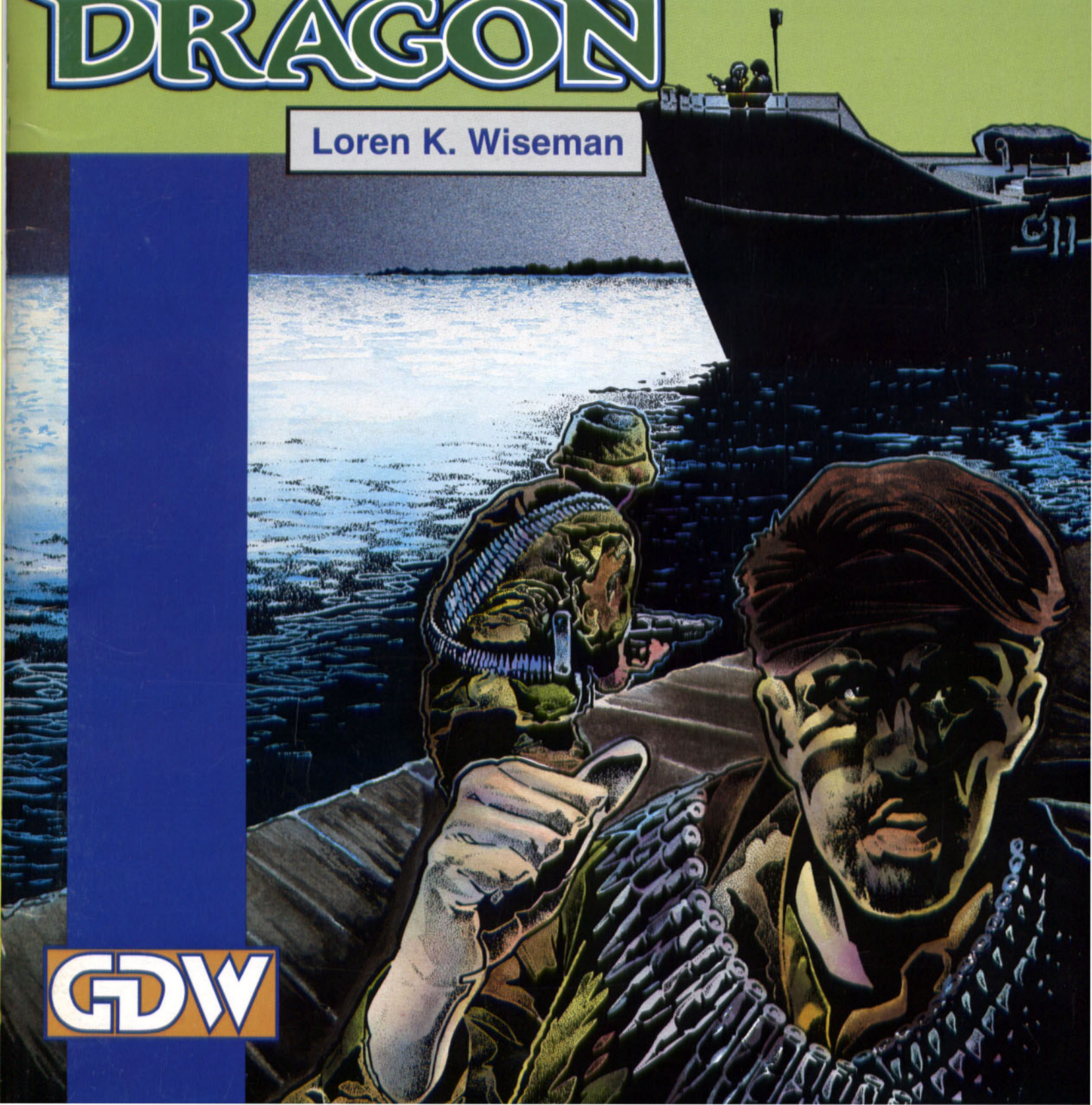


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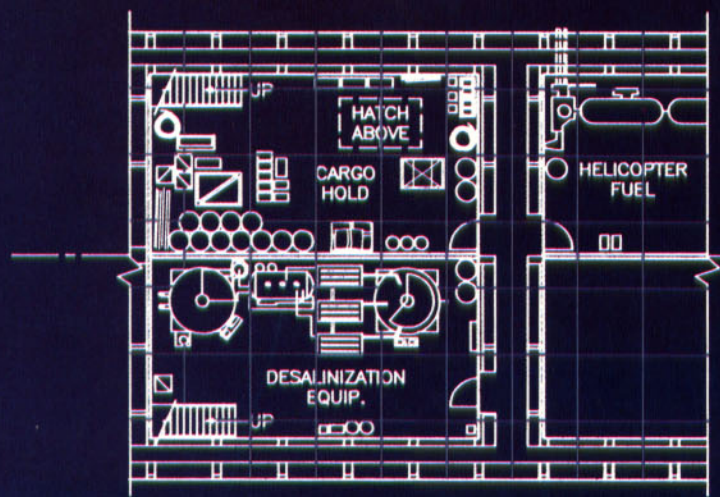
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OPERATION CROUCHING DRAGON™

Loren K. Wiseman



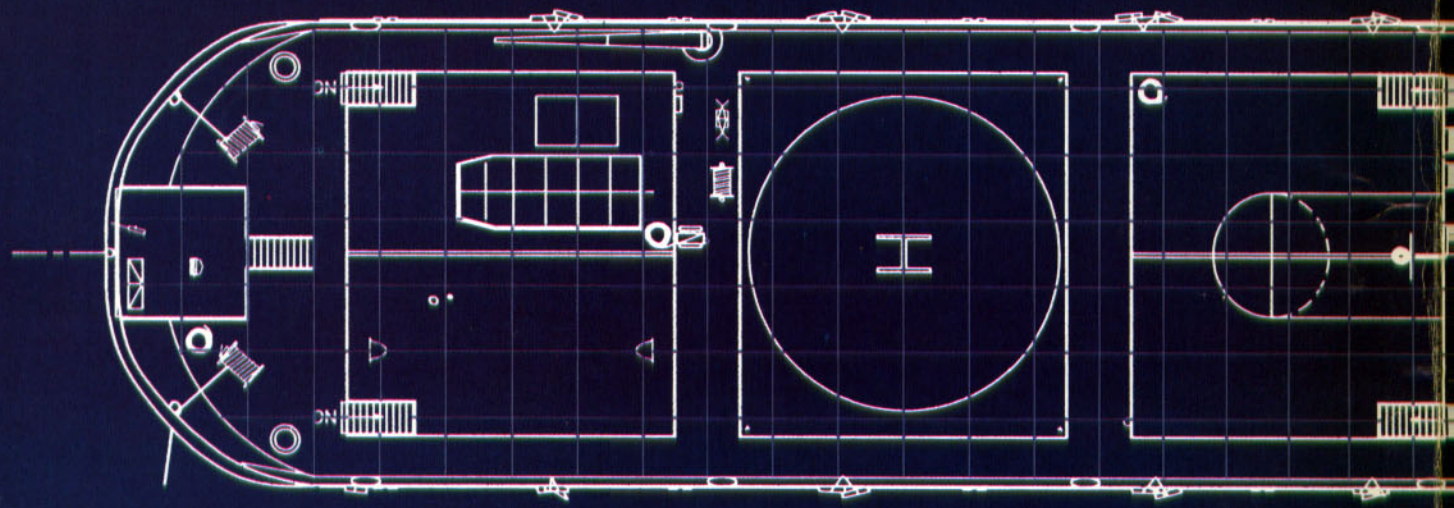
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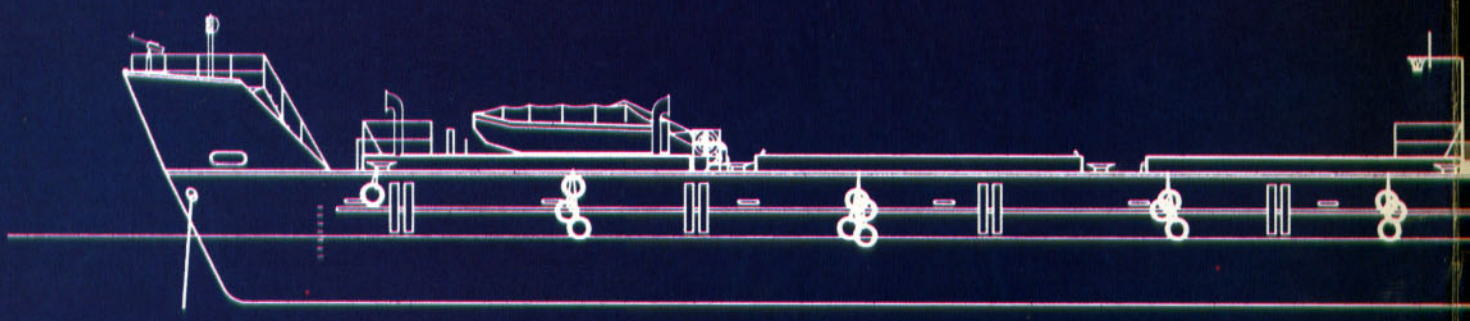
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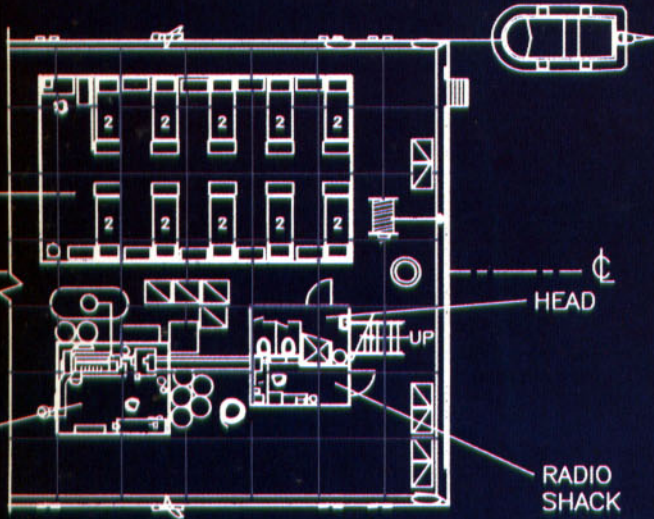
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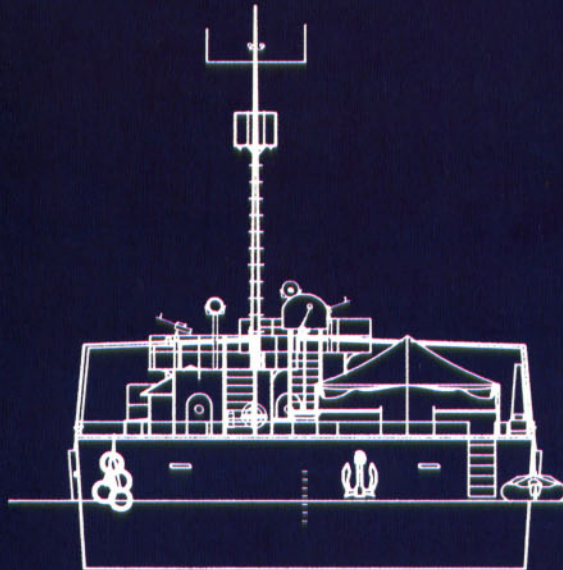
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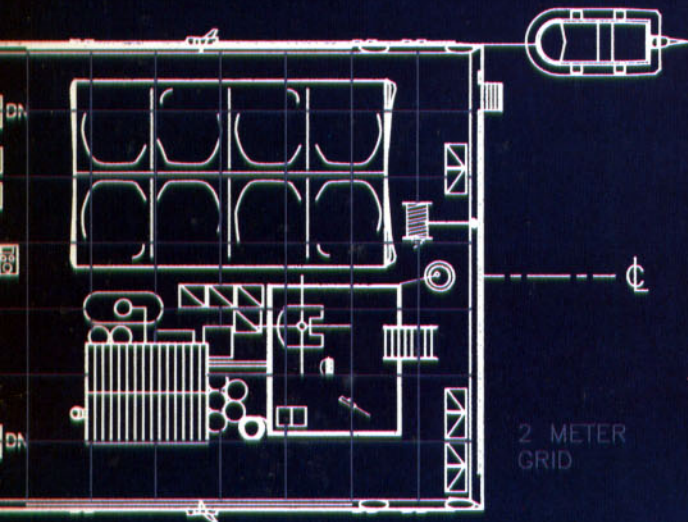
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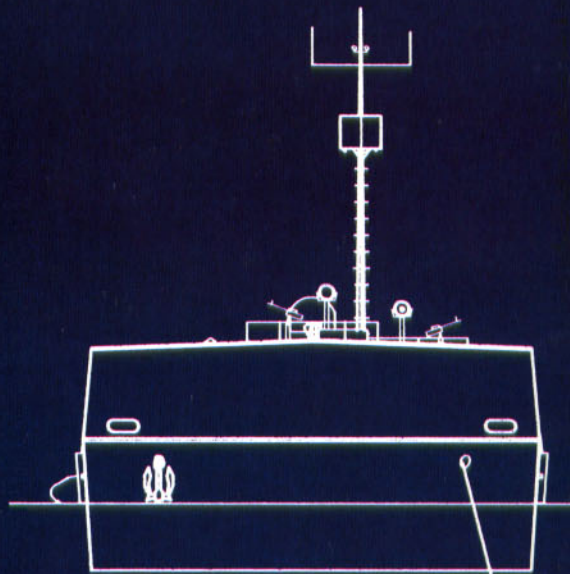
INTERIOR PLAN, DECK



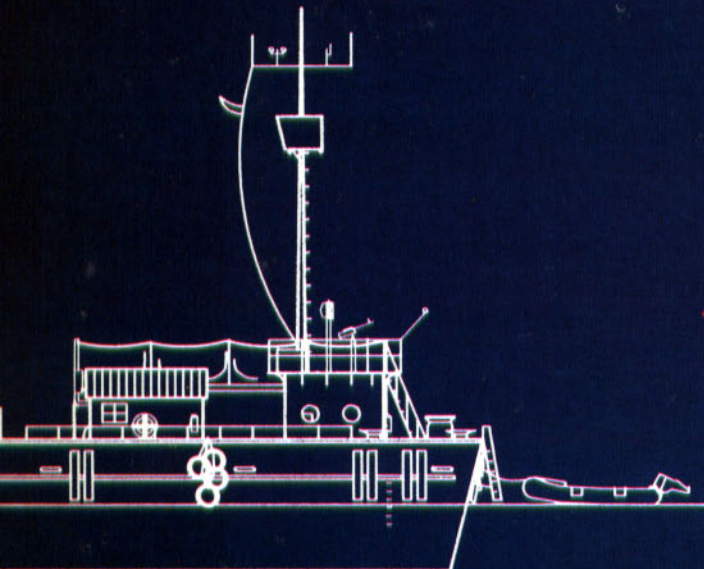
STERN



2 METER
GRID



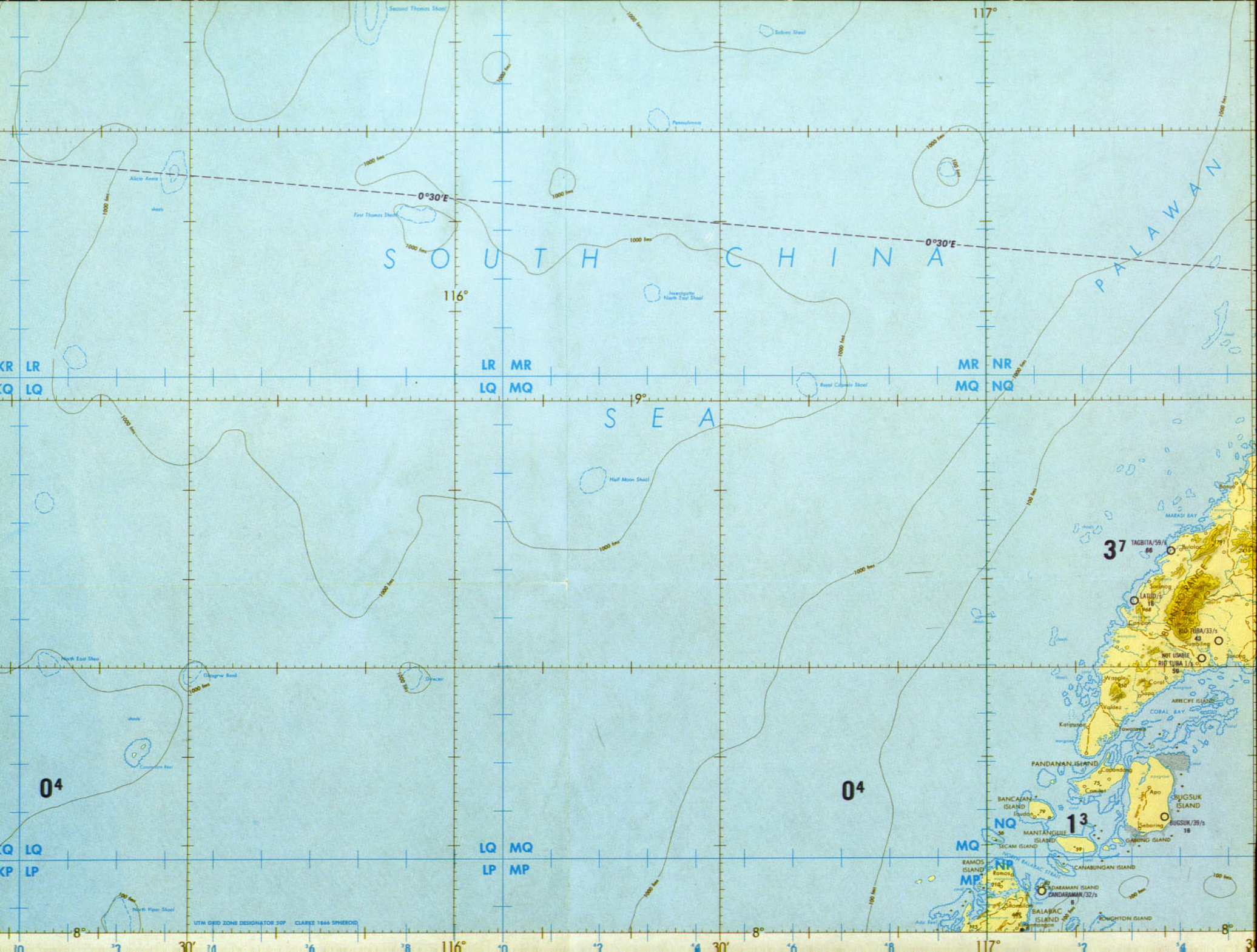
BOW



OCCUPATION BARGE

LENGTH W/L 53.5 M
 LENGTH O/A 56.25 M
 WIDTH 14 M
 DRAFT 2 M

CHK'D: *BOU* DRAWN: RICK BOQUIST



S O U T H C H I N A

S E A

P A L A W A N

04

04

37

13

UTM GRID ZONE DESIGNATOR 50P CLAREE 1864 SPHEROID

13

PHILIPPINE A

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04

NOT GEODESIC
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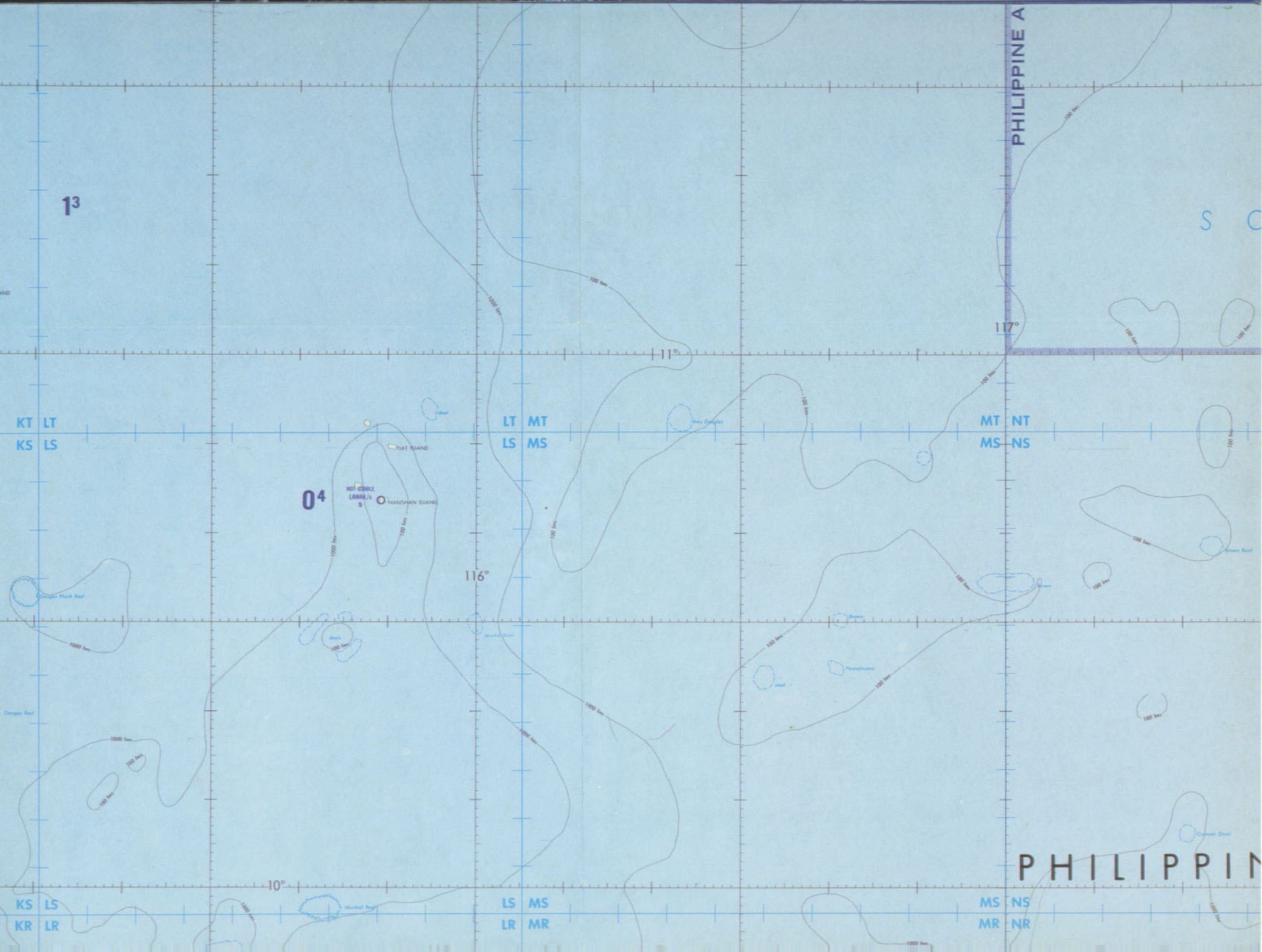
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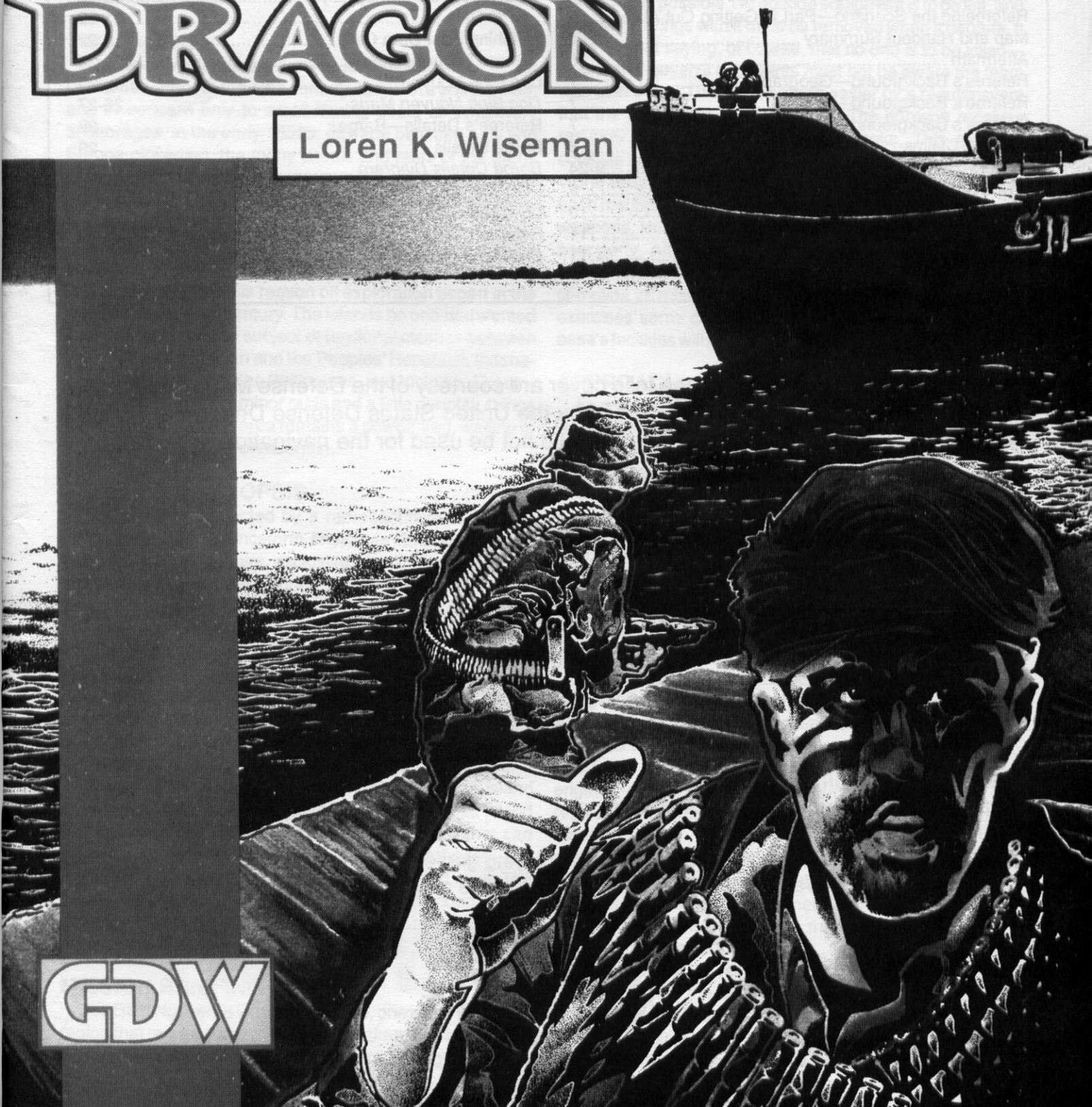
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OPERATION CROUCHING DRAGON™

Loren K. Wiseman



GDW

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Operation Crouching Dragon

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OPERATION CROUCHING DRAGON

Operation Crouching Dragon is designed for use with the **Merc: 2000** background of the **Twilight: 2000** game system. All task statements are given according to the new D20 system outlined in the **Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000 Referee's Screen**.

The center 16 pages are designed to be removed and used as handouts during play. To remove these pages, carefully pry up the staples using a screwdriver, butter knife, or a similar tool; remove the appropriate pages; and bend the staples down again.

Introduction

The Spratly Islands are a minor archipelago in the South China Sea. Prior to the 18th century, they were uninhabited, and of concern only to small fishing boats as temporary anchorages. In the early 1800s, as trade between Asia and Europe picked up, the many shoals and reefs of the archipelago became navigational hazards, and the region became labeled "the Dangerous Area" on European charts, and avoided if possible.

The Spratlys are located on the Sarawak Basin, the same geological formation as the oil fields of Malaysia, Borneo, and Brunei, and for this reason oil exploration began in the last third of the 20th century. The islands no one had wanted suddenly became the subject of territorial clashes between the two Chinas (Taiwan and the Peoples' Republic), Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Eventually, after a number of minor raids and a little gunplay, things quieted down, but the area remains a powderkeg, waiting to explode into violence once again.

REFEREE'S SYNOPSIS

The group is contacted by a representative of "a large international firm," henceforth known as "the patron." The patron wants to acquire exclusive rights to off-shore oil production in the Eastern Spratlys, an area mandated to the government of Vietnam. The Vietnamese government is currently conducting test drilling, and is undecided as to whether to put oil rights up for bid or to unilaterally grant them to one company. A call for sealed bids has not been formally announced, but is expected soon, and if the patron knows exactly what the test cores show, it will be in a better position to formulate a bid that will enable it to undercut the competition.

The petrochemical survey team is based on the island known as Doc Binh Nguyen to the Vietnamese (Flat Island on European charts). The patron wants a team that can travel to Doc Binh Nguyen, land unnoticed, get the required information and depart without leaving a trace of itself. The patron is anxious to avoid any appearance of underhanded dealings, so the team's actions and the information gained from it must remain a secret.

MISSION BRIEFING

Doc Binh Nguyen is very small island, one of the few in the region that remains above water all the time. The installation there serves as a central repository for drilling cores and

contains a small geological lab for initial analysis of the core samples. The lab's records are computerized, and the patron wants copies of them, as well as a few samples of the drilling cores for verification of the island's analyses. The patron will send along a specialist (a geologist with some computer cross-training) whose job will be to pick out the proper samples from among the hundreds of drill cores there, and will be able to download the required reports from the island lab's computers.

It is important that the team leave as little trace of its presence as possible. No outside equipment is to be left, and anything it brings with it must be removed when it departs. It goes without saying, of course, that no one is to be killed—Doc Binh Nguyen's occupants must not be aware the team was ever there. This will be made easier by a regular event that the patron has learned about: The garrison receives resupply once every six to eight weeks. This resupply consists of food, any spare parts needed by the installation or the drilling vessel, mail, and a small quantity of beer. At each resupply, the island commander collects the garrison's weapons, locks them up (so no one gets hurt) and holds a beer party. After a few hours, the garrison will be asleep or immobile, and the team will be able to move onto the island, complete its mission, and get away unobserved provided it exercises some discretion. Any minor disturbances of the base's facilities will be blamed on the beer party and ignored.

APPROACH

An approach by submarine is out of the question. The area is very shallow and strewn with poorly mapped subsurface hazards. Any sub in the region risks detection by air if it proceeds cautiously enough (and close enough to the surface) to avoid ripping its hull out. Any seaborne approach will also be spotted unless it looks like a local fishing boat, which are common enough to receive only a cursory inspection if spotted by an aerial patrol. Any detection of an unauthorized vessel in the area will bring a surface vessel to investigate, and the patron must avoid official involvement at all costs.

Therefore, the patron has two options for the team's insertion:

Water Insertion: The first option is for the team to land using rubber rafts launched at night from a boat disguised as a local native fishing craft. The drop-off boat will approach to within six kilometers of the island under cover of darkness. The team must come the rest of the way under muffled engines, and make the last kilometer or so by paddling. The release will be timed so that the team's arrival coincides with moonset.

Paradrop Insertion: The second option is for the team to land via HALO insertion, timed to that the team's arrival coincides with moonset. All members of the team will be supplied with HALO gear and maps of the island with a landing zone marked.

Equipment: If the team chooses a HALO insertion, it will be supplied with the appropriate parachutes. The team will be supplied with inflatable rubber boats in any case, as their retrieval requires them to paddle out to sea. If the water insertion is chosen, the team will need to deflate the rafts for

concealment while it is on the island, and re-inflate them using hand pumps. The patron will not supply any weapons or ammunition, but will supply up to four pairs of IR goggles if the team thinks to ask. Any other equipment must be supplied by the team.

Retrieval: Retrieval is scheduled to be 24 hours after insertion. The team will make its way out to sea using rubber rafts, where it will use a small radio-direction finder to enable it to locate and rendezvous with a boat disguised as a local native fishing craft.

NPCs: NPC descriptions and data are provided on page 21, which can be cut out for the referee's convenience.

PAYMENT

The patron promises to pay \$24,000 per teammember, one third in advance and the remainder upon successful completion of the mission. The form of the payment can be arranged to suit the team's specifications (gold, bearer bonds, deposit to a numbered bank account, etc.). Note only the advance payment of \$8000 per teammember will be made (see below).

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO— “THEY WERE EXPENDABLE”

In any large organization, there are always other irons in the fire, and the team's patron corporation is no exception—numerous plans regarding the Spratlys are in operation, not just the one involving the team.

One of these “other irons” was a mission to bribe a high Vietnamese government official in the patron's favor. While the group was in transit to the Spratlys and operating under radio silence, this mission was successful. There will be no sealed bids—the patron has been granted a license to extract oil in the Eastern Spratlys by the Vietnamese government. The patron has decided to double-cross the team (to eliminate a potentially embarrassing situation, and to avoid having to pay the team) by alerting the Vietnamese military forces in the area to a potential terrorist attack. Since the team has been dealt with only through a system of very secure cut-outs, there will be no call-backs (nothing to connect the team with the patron). The repercussions of this action are discussed later.

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO— PART 1: THE PRIMARY TARGET

Before running the scenario, the referee should become familiar with the the map on pages 26 and 27 and the description of Doc Binh Nguyen's facilities on page 25 of this booklet.

The team should arrive on the island without incident. A quick recce will show that the garrison is largely incapacitated by the effects of the party, and is asleep in the barracks or near it. Only three members of the garrison are awake when the players land, and all of them are sitting around a gasoline lantern on the beach, listening to a cassette tape player blaring Oriental versions of popular American songs of the '80s and '90s. This will continue for two more hours after the team lands, at which point the



remaining garrison will have fallen asleep around the lantern. The cassette player will continue to recycle the last tape over and over.

Visibility and Detection: Moonset occurs approximately eight hours after the departure of the supply vessel. Although it is night, and the moon will have set, the lack of cloud cover will mean that naked-eye visibility will be about 300 meters (if the group has any enhanced-vision devices, it will be able to see farther). Use the rules from page 84 of *Merc: 2000* to determine if any of the sounds made by the team's actions awaken the garrison.

Twilight will commence at three hours after moonset, and sunrise will occur half an hour later. The garrison will begin to awaken at sunrise.

The Mission: After the player characters arrive, they need to carry out their assigned mission. They will need to secure their landing area, do a quick recce of the area, and gather up the evidence of their arrival (this will mean either deflating the rafts and hiding them or folding and concealing their parachutes).

Once the group is certain it has not been discovered, it will allow "Trang" to get on with her job. First, "Trang" will examine the drilling cores, an action she says will take about an hour. During this time, any responsible team leader will have assigned sentries to keep the garrison under observation, and put someone inside the commo shack (see below).

After the cores are examined, "Trang" will move on to the lab trailer, where she will spend 30 minutes before moving on to the commo shack.

Commo Shack: The commo shack is air conditioned in order to protect the island's electronic equipment from overheating in the tropical climate. Anyone who enters the commo shack should test to see if he notices the teletype message (a Difficult task versus Observation+INT). Any character who succeeds notices that the teletype has received a long message in Vietnamese. Characters who read Vietnamese should test to see if they can read it (Easy task versus Language (Vietnamese)+CHR). Characters who succeed should be given a copy of the teletype provided on page 12. At the referee's discretion, based on the character's Language (Vietnamese) skill level, the referee can black out a portion of the words in the copy of the teletype, to represent an incomplete translation. "Trang" will automatically notice the teletype after 30 minutes in the commo shack.

Teletype Message: The teletype message is addressed to the island's commander, and alerts him to a probable terrorist attack, instructing him to place his soldiers on immediate 24-hour alert. The terrorists are identified as being extremely dangerous, and "shoot to kill" orders are authorized. The message also states that a platoon of Vietnamese Marines is being sent to assist the island's garrison in dealing with the terrorists.

Once the teletype message is brought to "Trang's" attention, "Trang" will provide an immediate and 100% accurate translation (and will be royally steamed that the patron has sold her out).

Other items that can be found in the commo shack are discussed under the heading "Map and Handout Summary," below.

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO— PART 2: GETTING OUT ALIVE

At this stage, the team is presented with a major problem. It should be fairly obvious that the teammembers' pickup boat has been told to abandon them, and they are now stranded. There is no transport on the island other than the rubber boats the group has brought with them, and they have only a short time before the garrison starts to recover from its drunken revelry the night before. They will need to evaluate their situation, formulate a plan, and carry it out with little time to spare.

Boats: These are inflatables, whose data card is provided on page 11. The small motors on the rubber boats use normal gasoline, of which there is not a drop on the island (only diesel fuel). Each boat engine has a full tank, but that is only enough to carry the boat 16 kilometers—after that, paddles must be used.

Options: After the discovery of the teletype message, the characters have four basic options for their escape:

— Travel by boat to LT-8/1.5 and "borrow" the Bell Model 206 JetRanger recon helicopter from the Vietnamese barge there (call this the helicopter option).

— Travel by boat to the Vietnamese barge anchored at point LT-6/10 and "borrow" the patrol boat from the barge there (call this the patrol boat option).

— Travel by boat to Doc Vinh Vien Island and "borrow" the drilling vessel from there (call this the drilling vessel option).

— Remain on Doc Binh Nguyen, deal with the oncoming platoon of Vietnamese Marines somehow, and escape using one of their boats (call this the stay put option).

Of course, the characters could always awaken the Doc Binh Nguyen garrison and surrender, ending the scenario and starting another (called "escape from prison").

Helicopter Option: Point LT-8/1.5 is located 12 kilometers northeast of Doc Binh Nguyen, a four-hour trip by the boats available. There is little chance of the group arriving before sunrise, but the barge has no teletype machine, and has not received the news that "terrorists" are in the area. The referee should read through the material on pages 28-30, the relevant NPC data on 21 and 22, and examine the maps on pages 23 and 24 before adjudicating this option.

Patrol Boat Option: Point LS-6/10 is located 12 kilometers west-northwest of Doc Binh Nguyen, a four-hour trip by the boats available. The barge there serves as a base for a PBR-type boat (see page 11 for stats) operating in the area. The referee should read through the material on pages 28-30, the relevant NPC data on 21 and 22, and examine the maps on pages 23 and 24 before adjudicating this option.

Drilling Vessel Option: The drilling vessel's last reported position was at Doc Vinh Vien Island, 12 kilometers from Flat Island/Doc Binh Nguyen, but it has moved on without informing anyone. The only vessel at Nanshan/Doc Vinh Vien Island when the team arrives is a small fishing boat (see page 22 for stats), gathering seabird eggs, sea slugs, and other items for Chinese gourmet restaurants in Hong Kong. The referee should read through the material on page 28-30 and the relevant NPC data on 21 and 22 before adjudicating this option.

Stay Put Option: This option requires the most planning of

any. If they choose this option, the group will need to deal with the garrison, a fairly easy task if it does so immediately. The team should have no problems capturing a dozen sleeping and/or hung-over soldiers, and (since they already hold the commo shack) no news will leave the island. They will need to convince the incoming Marines to land or come close enough to enable the team to capture their boats, either by making it look like the "terrorists" have not landed yet or by making it appear that the "terrorists" have landed and been captured. Exactly how this works must be gamed out.

The referee will find the following information useful if this option is chosen:

If the group thinks to search the garrison upon capture, the commander of Doc Binh Nguyen will be found to have a small code book on his person, giving challenge/password combinations for each day of the month. "Trang" will be able to translate if no other character can read Vietnamese. The commander will hide the code book given the first opportunity.

The PBR-type boats carrying the Marine platoon will arrive at 0815 hours, and will approach cautiously. If there are no signs of any hostile activity, the platoon leader will attempt radio contact unless the "Radio Inoperative" signal is displayed (this is a combination of colored smoke grenades specified in the commander's book), in which case the platoon leader will use a signal lamp to flash the day's challenge in code. If the group can give the correct password in return (no problem if the group has the code book), the platoon will land at the pier and (if no one meets them there) will move inland. They will know something is wrong immediately if they spot any non-Vietnamese that are not obviously prisoners.

If the platoon leader becomes suspicious, he may attempt a landing on a deserted section of the island, or may hold off and radio for help (which he does is the referee's call). Subsequent action must be gamed out.

MAP AND HANDOUT SUMMARY

To assist the referee in keeping everything straight, here is a rundown of each of the handouts and when they should be used:

Players' Handouts

Mission Briefing Sheet (Page 10): This summarizes the team's objectives and gives details of the mission. This material is assumed to be presented to the team by the patron's representative. The company listed on the logo is a cut-out, a false front corporation based out of an untraceable mail-drop in Singapore.

Background Data, Spratlys (pages 19 & 20): This is presented in the form of a printout report from a computer database. It gives the team an idea where they are going and gives them some facts about the region. The patron provides this information for the team's benefit.

Doc Binh Nguyen Map (page 9): This map is provided by the patron as part of the mission briefing.

Follo Jacket Maps (Follo Jacket): This represents the relevant portions of a standard DMA map of the area, which the players may obtain prior to their landing, or which they

can find in the commo shack. These maps (at a scale of one centimeter = 10 kilometers) will give the team the distances involved in the various options.

Barge Blueprint (Follo Jacket): This shows a blueprint of the "standard" garrison barge, which the team can find in the commo shack on Doc Binh Nguyen (at the referee's option).

Commo Shack Documents

Teletype Message (page 12): This is the text of the teletype printout to the commander of Doc Binh Nguyen.

Vietnamese Installations (pages 16 & 17): This represents a computer printout showing Vietnamese installations in the area. It is to be used to acquaint the players with the options open to them.

Non-Vietnamese Installations (pages 15 & 18): This covers the same area as the Vietnamese Installations map, but showing non-Vietnamese installations instead. It also serves to acquaint the players with the options available to the team.

Follo Jacket Maps (Follo Jacket): The referee may choose to have the team discover these maps in the commo shack on Doc Binh Nguyen. See the description above.

Referee's Documents

Doc Binh Nguyen Maps (pages 26 & 27): These maps are intended for use by the referee in administering the scenario. The overall map is at a scale of one centimeter = 50 meters, the two eight-meter scale maps show the barracks and the dock area with insets at two-meter scale, showing the commo shack and generator shed interiors.

Barge Environs (page 23 & 24): The maps on this page show the environs of the two barges at points LT-8/1.5 and LS-6/10.

Barge Details (pages 28 & 29): These diagrams give more details about the barges that only the referee should know.

PBR and Rubber Raft Data Cards (page 16): This page contains the game statistics for the various scenarios involving PBR-type boats (the staying put and patrol boat options) and the statistics for the rubber rafts.

Fishing Boat Data Card (page 22): This page contains the game statistics for the fishing boat encountered in the drilling vessel option.

AFTERMATH

Once the group has acquired a means of escape (either the helicopter or one of the two boats), the adventure is over. The teammates are assumed to make it safely to Manila, Brunei, or Hong Kong, where they can secure passage home. This adventure can serve as a springboard for a whole series of adventures if the teammates decide they want to avenge themselves upon the patron...in any case, the team has acquired a nemesis to dog its steps in future adventures. The patron's agent was very good at covering his tracks, and if the PCs choose to investigate the agent that contacted them, they will be doomed to failure. Another approach, however, will yield success—after all, how many companies are known to be in the oil business in concert with the Vietnamese government.

REFEREE'S BACKGROUND—GEOGRAPHY

The Spratly Islands are a minor archipelago spread across the southeastern part of the South China Sea: a grouping of many coral reefs, exposed rocks and low-lying islets in a wide-spread area of shallow water. Stretching more than 1000 kilometers, most of the archipelago is submerged at high tide, and the few islands that stay high and dry are too small, too remote, and too poorly supplied with fresh water to have native inhabitants. The archipelago is divided into the Western and Eastern Spratlys (although these names would more properly be Southwestern and Northeastern) and runs along the edge of what geologists call the Sarawak Basin. Until the last third of the 20th century, the archipelago was poorly mapped, as the many rocks and reefs presented a major hazard to deep-water vessels.

The shallow waters of the archipelago provide an excellent feeding ground for maritime life of all sorts: coral, fish (primarily black tuna), squid, oysters, and sea turtles. For thousands of years, migratory birds have used the more stable islands as a rest stop, and sea birds have used them as nesting grounds, resulting in thick deposits of nitrate-laden guano.

Lastly, the Sarawak Basin is known to include rich oil and natural gas deposits in Borneo, Brunei, and Malaysia, both offshore and on land. Recent explorations have confirmed that the Spratlys are richly supplied with petrochemical deposits also, and the global economic potential of the islands is significant.

REFEREE'S BACKGROUND—HISTORY

The first inhabitants of the islands surrounding the South China Sea were proto-Melanesians, Malayo-Polynesians, and Negritos from Southeast Asia, who moved into the area before 2500 B.C. These peoples never settled on any of the Spratlys (for reasons explained above, but their fishing boats periodically passed through the shallows in search of food, and occasionally camped out on the larger islets to dry their catch or repair their boats. These fishermen were merely temporary inhabitants, however.

It is not known when the islands first came to the attention of the outside world. Fragmentary references in Chinese literature suggest that Southeast Asian (if not Chinese) seafarers may have been aware of the islands as early as the first century A.D., but there is no conclusive reference to the islands until the 1200s, when Chinese geographers first make reference to the region.

From the 12th to the 15th century, the Chinese underwent a tremendous upsurge in naval technology and in overseas trade. By 1450, Chinese vessels ranged as far as Arabia to the west, and eastward as far as the spice islands of what would later be called the East Indies. Chinese navigators of the time recorded the navigational hazards of the area they called *Nan Chai* (the Southern Sea), and then, like now, recommended avoiding the area if possible. Contact with the islands was largely accidental, and information on them sparse.

Then, in the 16th century, the Chinese dropped their overseas trade activities and disbanded their navy. Why the Chinese abandoned overseas affairs and turned inward is a mystery still debated by historians, but it left a vacuum to be filled, and Asian trade fell to the Indochinese, Arab, Malay, Persian, and Indian sailors that had conducted it before the Chinese hegemony. There were, in addition, new players in the Asian mercantile game: Europeans (the Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, and later, the French and English).

In the 1700s, as trade between Asia and Europe picked up, the

many shoals and reefs of the archipelago became navigational hazards, and the region became labeled "the Dangerous Area" on European charts, and avoided if possible. The 19th century brought increased merchant ship traffic through the Singapore Straits and the South China Sea, and the "Dangerous Area" began to be explored, albeit tentatively. Rocks, reefs, and shoals began to be marked, usually with the name of the first ship to run aground on them (regrettably, the most common means by which a subsurface reef is discovered). The mapping techniques of the 1800s left much to be desired, and it was not uncommon for a particular hazard to navigation to be listed in three or four different locations, with as many names, and for none of these to be the genuine location of the reef.

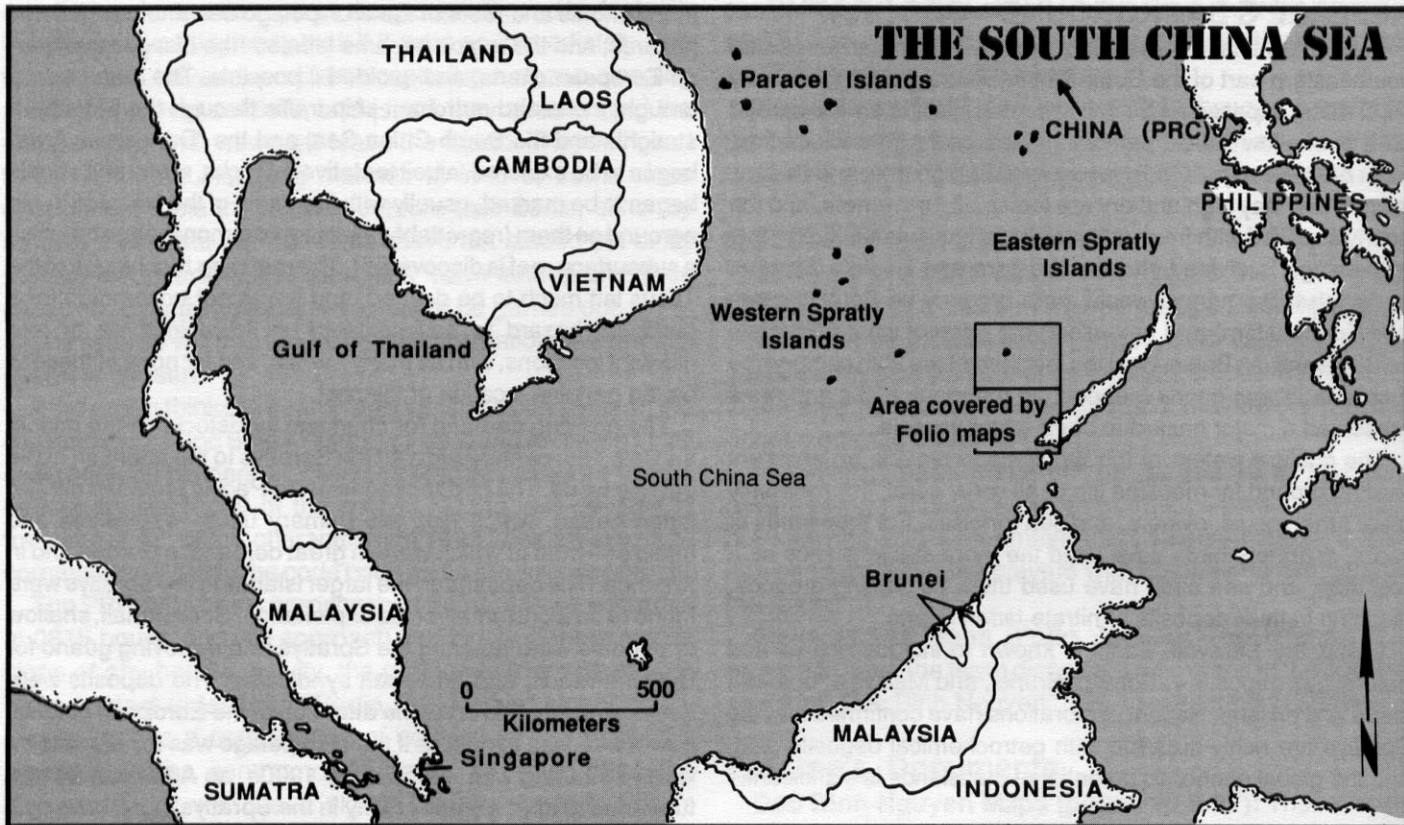
The growing demand for chemical feedstocks in the middle and late 19th century brought the Spratlys to the attention of the outside world. The bird rookeries of the Pacific provided nitrate-laden guano, which had two primary uses—explosives and fertilizer—both of which were in great demand in Europe and in America. The deposits on the larger islands in the Spratlys were found to be worth small-scale exploitation. Soon, small, shallow draft boats were entering the Spratlys and removing guano for British, French, and American syndicates. The deposits were not large enough to draw the attention of the European colonial powers—it was almost as if the archipelago was too small to be worth bothering with. In the early 1900s, an American adventurer tried to start a small colony in the Spratlys, but it never got off the ground, and the last remaining colonists allegedly were detained as enemy aliens when the Japanese occupied the islands during WWII.

The larger islands of the archipelago were used by the Japanese during the war, primarily as bases for reconnaissance seaplanes. When the war ended, these bases were abandoned, along with most of the guano harvesting settlements. Oil was a cheaper, more plentiful source of fertilizer in the late 1940s, and there were better sources of the nitrates needed for explosives. The great colonial powers no longer had any interest in the Spratlys, and the islands were once again inhabited only by transient fishermen and sea birds.

REFEREE'S BACKGROUND—THE PRESENT CONFLICT

For years, the Sarawak Basin has been known to hold massive oil reserves. One of the major reasons for Japanese military expansion into the area in 1941 was to secure control of the "Southern Resource Area" as they called it. After the war, offshore drilling technology made exploitation of undersea oil fields possible, and the breakup of the colonial control over the region created new countries with new national objectives. The oil fields of the Sarawak Basin became a part of those objectives in the last third of the century.

Other Resources: Although oil is the primary resource of the Spratlys, it is not the only one. Maritime products include not only fish, but also sea turtles (harvested for their eggs and their shells), oysters, gem-quality coral, and gourmet food items such as sea slugs and bird's eggs. Small, shallow draft native boats circulate among the islands, earning their owners a small living. The nations from which these fishing boats operate claim their actions as justification for occupation of the islands. So even the native fishermen have now become pawns in the international chess game.



Geo-Political Importance: Of course, even if the islands had no resources, their location would make them important. The changing nature of the way the world works has meant that places which were formerly of little importance have become vital to many national interests. One view of the question of national versus international waters holds that all of the area inside an archipelago belongs to the country that owns the islands of the archipelago. If, for example, Vietnam could secure undisputed control of the Spratlys, it would be able to make a good case internationally that the entire South China Sea was the internal waters of Vietnam. One of the world's major trade routes runs through this area (almost all of the oil tankers going from the Middle East to Japan and Korea use the route passing through the South China Sea), and the Vietnamese would be able to regulate it as they saw fit, imposing such duties and taxes as they felt necessary. This would have a profound effect on world trade.

NATIONAL CLAIMS

The question of ownership is determined by more than simple military occupation—it looks better to international arbiters and to the world at large if your control is social and economic as well as political. For this reason, nations are under considerable pressure to show that they are making good use of a particular territory, and that their involvement is long-standing.

Vietnam and China: The claims of Vietnam to the Spratlys were asserted with vigor only after the mid-1970s, when North and South Vietnam became simply Vietnam. The Vietnamese assert that they have sovereignty over the archipelago because of the presence of Southeast Asian sailors since the 12th century A.D. (supported by the fact of their presence, both military and civilian, on the islands).

The Chinese claim (on the basis of rather specious documentary evidence) knowledge of the islands dating back to the eighth century A.D. These claims, also, were not pursued until the

1970s. Things turned violent in the 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash over Sinh Cow Island, but neither nation was prepared to go to war over the potential for oil. By the time the presence of oil in exploitable quantities had been demonstrated, China had broken up into several warring factions, and Vietnam was at war with Yunnan, one of the Chinese warlords.

By 2000, only the warlord of Guangzhou is in a position to pursue China's claims in the Spratlys. Vietnam was in better shape, having almost defeated the warlord of Yunnan.

Philippines: The Philippines hold that the continual presence of Filipino fishermen and guano harvesters in the Eastern Spratlys gives them an economic presence in the archipelago. After 1971, Filipino oil survey teams began prospecting in the area, and some initial exploratory drilling was done in concert with Swedish petrochemical firms. Recently, the Philippine government has become increasingly absorbed with internal security questions, however, and the Spratlys have taken a back seat. For this reason, all Philippine-held facilities have been abandoned, including the facilities at Patag (the Filipino name for Doc Binh Nguyen) and Lawak (the Filipino name for Doc Vinh Vien), which have been taken over by the Vietnamese.

Malaysia: Malaysian claims are based on the "Internal Waters" principle, namely that the ocean between the Malay Peninsula and the Malaysian provinces on the island of Borneo constitute internal waters.

Brunei: Brunei has continually claimed a portion of the archipelago, but has never undertaken active measures to press them. This is primarily because Brunei lacks the military power to become involved.

Indonesia: Indonesian claims to the archipelago are based on the contiguous presence of the oil in Borneo, and have not been pressed with vigor. This is primarily due to the preoccupation of the Indonesian government with internal affairs, and (lately) the war with Australia.

DOC BINH NGUYEN ISLAND



Low Tide

Water Approach Landing Zone

HALO Landing Zone

Abandoned Structures

Pier

Warehouse

High Tide

Sea Bird Rookeries

Commo Shack
and Other Buildings

Barracks

LZ

LZ

KEY



Beach



Reef/Sandbar



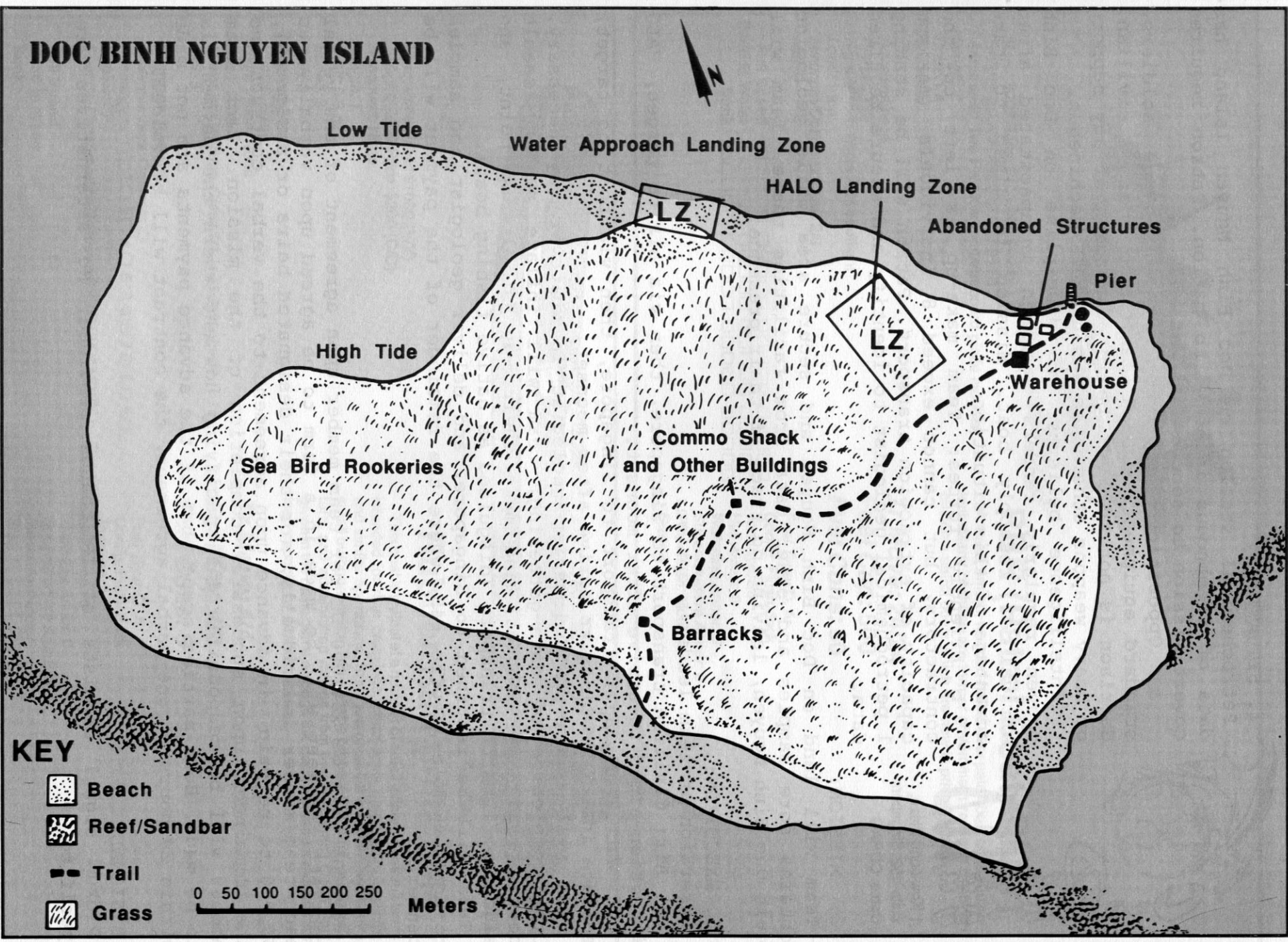
Trail



Grass

0 50 100 150 200 250

Meters





1 Kowloong Plaza,
suite 452, Singapore
Cable: CDRAG

1. SITUATION:

Petrochemical station on Doc Binh Nguyen Island has data of tremendous interest to patron. Patron requires covert mission to secure this data.

a: Opposition: At least 12 Vietnamese soldiers, standard equipment, and at least one unarmed civilian. Garrison is not known to be in possession of any support or heavy weapons other than a single PK machinegun.

Intelligence believes lax discipline on Doc Binh Nguyen regularly renders garrison incapacitated after arrival of resupply boat. Mission is timed to take advantage of this situation.

b Friendly forces: Team make-up is left to the contractors, but cannot exceed 8 individuals (maximum capacity of extraction transport. Patron will be sending 1 petrochemical geologist to identify and secure required data.

2. MISSION:

Team will land on Doc Binh Nguyen and secure area while geologist obtains core samples and other data from facilities there. Team will quit Doc Binh Nguyen, leaving no trace of their presence.

3. EXECUTION:

Insertion at team leader's option:

a. Air: Civilian transport to Singapore, then via air to target, HALO insertion timed to arrive after moonset.

b. Water: Civilian transport to Singapore, then via boat to target, surface insertion timed to arrive after moonset.

Team will secure LZ and assist geologist in whatever way necessary. Upon completion of data-gathering, team will inflate rubber assault boats, load core samples, and make their way to pick-up point, and signal extraction transport (disguised as native fishing boat).

Team will be returned to Singapore, and deliver geologist and samples to Hotel Raffles, suite 345, where the remainder of the payment will be tendered.

4 RECOMPENSE:

Payment will be \$24,000 US per team member upon agreement of the verbal contract. Payment will be made in a form to be agreed upon verbally, to each team member individually, (or their designated heirs or assignees), \$8,000 to be paid in advance upon agreement to the verbal contract and the remainder upon successful completion of the mission. Each team member will be responsible for specifying how and where the payment is to be made. Both parties agree that if the advance payments are not made within 24 hours of the verbal agreement, the contract will be voided.

5 SIGNAL:

Pickup signal consists of IR beacon provided. No alternatives are specified.



Merc: 2000 Price: \$100,000 (—/R)
Twilight: 2000 Price: \$40,000 (R/R)
Armament: Two PK MGs (port/starboard pintle mounts)
Length: 2
Draft: 1 m
Speed: 8
Turn: 4
Acceleration: 4
Pumps: 1
Night Vision: White light spotlight
Load: 1 ton
Minimum/Optimum Crew: 2/8
Mnt: 6

Full Speed
Dead in Water
Sunk

PBR (Patrol Boat, River)

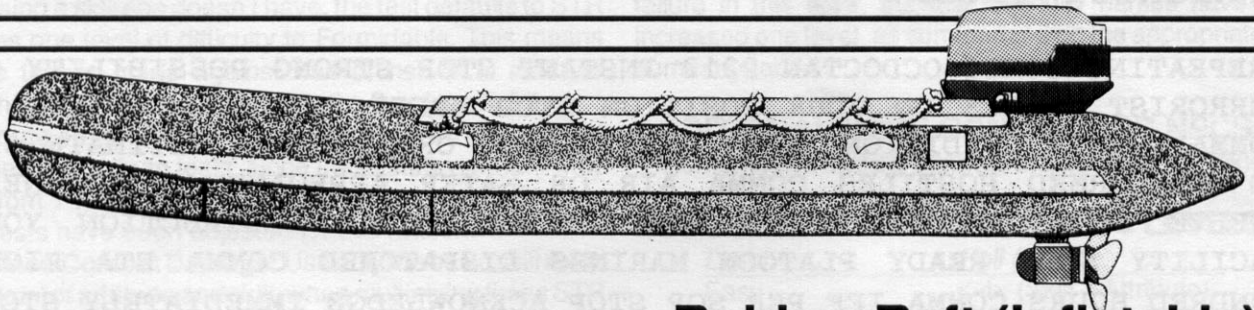
A small, armed, wooden-hulled river patrol boat or its equivalent. Many of these are former government revenue boats or customs patrol boats which are now in private hands.

Tr Move: 24/24

Fuel Cap: 500

Fuel Cons: 50

Fuel Type: D, A
Config: Flush deck
Tonnage: 20
Hull Armor: 0
Waterline Armor: 0
Superstructure Armor: 0
Propulsion: Motor
Size: 2



Rubber Raft (Inflatable)

This boat is typical of a number of small inflatable assault boats intended for river crossings, small-scale amphibious landings, and similar operations. Stats are given for a model fitted with a small outboard motor. If the boat is propelled by oars, use speed, turn, and acceleration ratings from the Very Small Open Boat given in the basic game on page 89. Each passenger reduces the load capacity by 100 kilograms.

Tr Move: 4/4

Fuel Cap: 20

Fuel Cons: 5

Merc: 2000 Price: \$1000 (V/V)
Twilight: 2000 Price: \$200 (C/C)
Armament: None
Length: 1
Draft: 0.5 m
Speed: 3
Turn: 2
Acceleration: 1
Pumps: None
Night Vision: None
Load: 1000
Minimum/Optimum Crew: 1/1 (+9 passengers)
Mnt: 3

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Operator
Passengers: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Engine:
Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed):

Full Speed
Dead in Water
Sunk

Fuel Type: G, A
Config: Flush deck
Tonnage: 1
Hull Armor: 0
Waterline Armor: 0
Superstructure Armor: 0
Propulsion: Motor
Size: 1

== BEGINS ==

COM14 > OCDOCTAN
2212:11:06:00

PRIORITY URGENT

STRONG POSSIBILITY OF TERRORIST ATTACK ON YOUR POSITION STOP
ORDER IMMEDIATE STAND TO COMMA REMAIN CONDITION ALERT AND FURTHER
ORDERS STOP ESTIMATE SIX TO TEN ARMED HOSTILES COMMA AIR OR WATER
APPROACH WITHIN NEXT TWELVE HOURS STOP PRESUME THEY INTEND TOTAL
DESTRUCTION YOUR FACILITY STOP READY PLATOON MARINES DISPATCHED
COMMA ETA EIGHT HUNDRED HOURS COMMA IFF PER SOP STOP ACKNOWLEDGE
STOP

== ENDS ==

== BEGINS ==

COM14 > OCDOCTAN
2245:11:06:00

PRIORITY URGENT

REPEATING COM14>OCDOCTAN 2212 INSTANT STOP STRONG POSSIBILITY OF
TERRORIST ATTACK ON YOUR POSITION STOP ORDER IMMEDIATE STAND TO
COMMA REMAIN CONDITION ALERT AND FURTHER ORDERS STOP ESTIMATE SIX
TO TEN ARMED HOSTILES COMMA AIR OR WATER APPROACH WITHIN NEXT
TWELVE HOURS STOP PRESUME THEY INTEND TOTAL DESTRUCTION YOUR
FACILITY STOP READY PLATOON MARINES DISPATCHED COMMA ETA EIGHT
HUNDRED HOURS COMMA IFF PER SOP STOP ACKNOWLEDGE IMMEDIATELY STOP

== ENDS ==

== BEGINS ==

COM14 > OCDOCTAN
2302:11:06:00

PRIORITY URGENT

COMMUNICATIONS INTERRUPTION ASSUMED YOUR STATION STOP MARINES
INFORMED COMMA WILL BE ALERT FOR BACKUP SIGNAL PER SOP STOP
ACKNOWLEDGE IF POSSIBLE STOP

== ENDS ==

THE D20 SYSTEM

After extended playtesting, the official system of **Twilight: 2000** and other games using the **Twilight** rules system have been changed from a D10 base to a D20 based system, as outlined in the **Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000 Referee's Screen**. These two pages present a summary of the major points of the new system for players and referees who may not yet have acquired the referee's screen.

D20 CHARACTER GENERATION CHANGES

The notes that follow explain how to create the range of skill levels necessary for the D20 system.

Basic Attributes: Generate these normally, as per the basic game rules.

Skill Levels: Generate all skill levels normally, but in addition record the total of the skill level and its controlling attribute. For example, a character with a STR of 9 and a Melee Combat (Unarmed) skill of 7 would record the skill as "Melee Combat (Unarmed) 7/16," the first number being the skill level and the second number being the total of skill and controlling attribute.

Skill Tests: All skill tests are versus the total of skill plus attribute.

Unskilled Tests: Characters may attempt to use skills for which they have no training by making a test versus the controlling attribute alone, at one difficulty level higher than normal. For example, Sylvia wants to shoot a pistol, but has no Small Arms skill. She has a STR of 6, and is shooting at medium range, normally a Difficult: Small Arms test. Since she is using a skill she doesn't have, the test defaults to STR and rises one level of difficulty to Formidable. This means that the test is made against half of her STR attribute (rounding down), and she has to roll a 3 or less to hit.

Attribute Tests: Referees should be careful in assigning difficulties for attribute tests, since these stats normally only range from 1 to 10. Note, for example, that Melee Combat Agility tests have been adjusted for this reason.

Unarmed Combat Damage: Use only the basic skill level, not the total of attribute and skill, when multiplying times STR in the Unarmed Combat Damage formula.

Attribute and Skill Maximums: Attributes are limited to a maximum of 10. Skills have no maximum limit; you can improve a skill to as high as desired (provided the referee allows).

D20 SYSTEM COMBAT NOTES

Under the original D10 combat system, a roll of 9 or 10 resulted in an automatic miss when using missile weapons. Under the new D20 system, a roll of 17-20 results in an automatic miss when using missile weapons.

D20 SYSTEM TASK DIFFICULTY LEVELS

A few comments are worth making concerning the revised task difficulty levels for the new D20 system. Whenever the term "skill" is used in context of a task, it means the total of the attribute and skill combined unless otherwise specified. The ranges for Easy, Average, and Difficult tasks have been effectively made one level lower in difficulty than before; Easy becomes equal or less than $4 \times$ skill, rather than merely 2, and so on. The purpose of this is to bring the task names more in line with what players would expect. Now, characters with a skill level of 10 are virtually assured of success at an Average task, unless they roll an automatic failure.

Automatic Success/Failure: Under the D20 system, a natural roll of 1 always succeeds, and a natural roll of 20 always fails, regardless of skill level. This gives characters a small chance of success even at the absolute worst of times, and of failure even at the absolute best of times. Both of these are intellectually satisfying, and bring an element of tension to the simplest of situations.

Outstanding Success/Failure: Under the D20 system, a roll of 10 or more points less than the target number results in an Outstanding Success, and a roll of 10 or more points over the target number results in an Outstanding Failure. The effects of these are decided by the referee unless specified in the rules.

Combat Task Levels: While tasks in general have become more easy for characters to accomplish in the D20 system, combat tasks worked very well under the D10 system. To maintain the same percentages of success and failure in this area, the task difficulty names have been increased one level, as summarized on the appropriate task summary tables.

ADDITIONAL NOTE CONCERNING NPCs

Remember to add the attribute and skill of NPC skill levels.

D20 SYSTEM: TASK DIFFICULTY LEVELS

<i>Level</i>	<i>Roll (1D20)</i>
Easy	$\leq 4 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Average	$\leq 2 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Difficult	$\leq (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Formidable	$\leq \frac{1}{2} \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Impossible	$\leq \frac{1}{4} \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$

*Round fractions down

D20 SYSTEM: COMMON TASK SUMMARY TABLES

Combat Tasks

Unarmed Melee

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Strike	Difficult	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Damage
Block	Formidable	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Avoid Strike/Lose Action
Aimed Strike	Formidable	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Damage Chosen Location
Grapple	Difficult	Agility	Controlling "Hits"
Strangling	Difficult	Agility	Controlling "Hits"/Damage
Escape	Difficult	Agility	Remove Controlling "Hits"
Avoid Diving Blow	Difficult	Agility	Avoid Diving Blow

Armed Melee

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Attack	Difficult	Melee Combat (Armed)*	Damage
Block	Formidable	Melee Combat (Armed)**	Avoid Strike/Lose Action
Aimed Attack	Formidable	Melee Combat (Armed)	Damage Chosen Location

*Some weapons have die modifiers.

**Must have object to block with.

Thrown Weapon

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Throw	Difficult	Thrown Weapon	Damage
Throw, Long Range	Formidable	Thrown Weapon	Damage

Direct Fire Combat

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Fire, Short Range	Average	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Medium Range	Difficult	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Long Range	Formidable	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Extreme Range	Impossible	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Aimed	-1 Level	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Target Obscured	+1 Level	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Automatic	*	*	Damage

*See Automatic Fire and Autoburst rules

Indirect Fire Combat

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Conventional	Formidable	Heavy Weapons*	Explosive Damage
Hand-Held	Formidable	Heavy Weapons*	Explosive Damage

* Lower of firer's or forward observer's. Bonuses for repeated fire.

y (A)

(H)

Doc Ben Ligc (M)

LT-8/1.5 (H)

LS-6/10 (S)

Doc Binh Nguyen (O)

Doc Vinh Vien +(D)

Nui Thi (W)

Son Ca (O)

Nam Yit (S)

(Z)

Da Len Bao (O)

(W)

Da Thien Nu (A)

Da Nui Li (S)

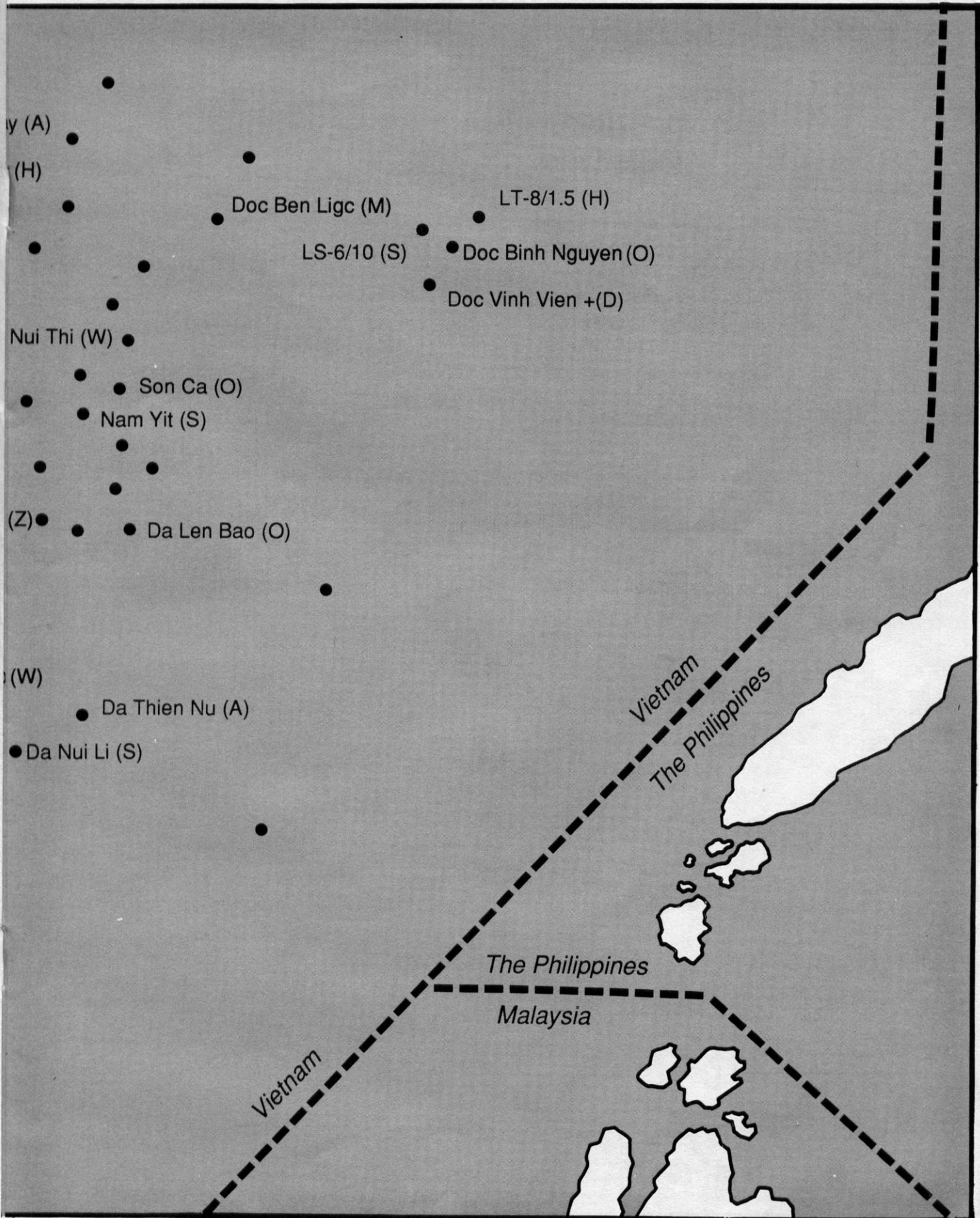
Vietnam

The Philippines

The Philippines

Malaysia

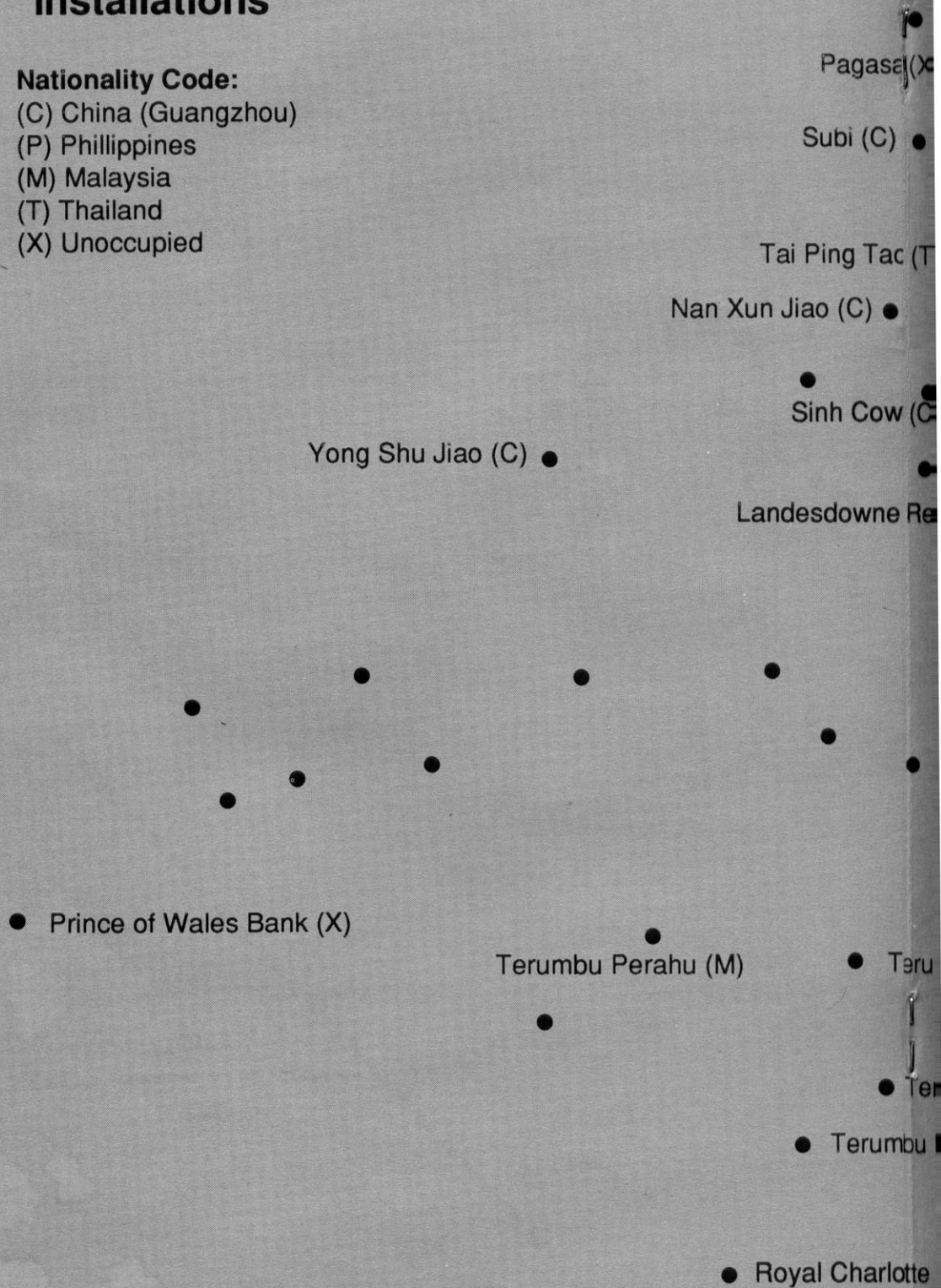
Vietnam

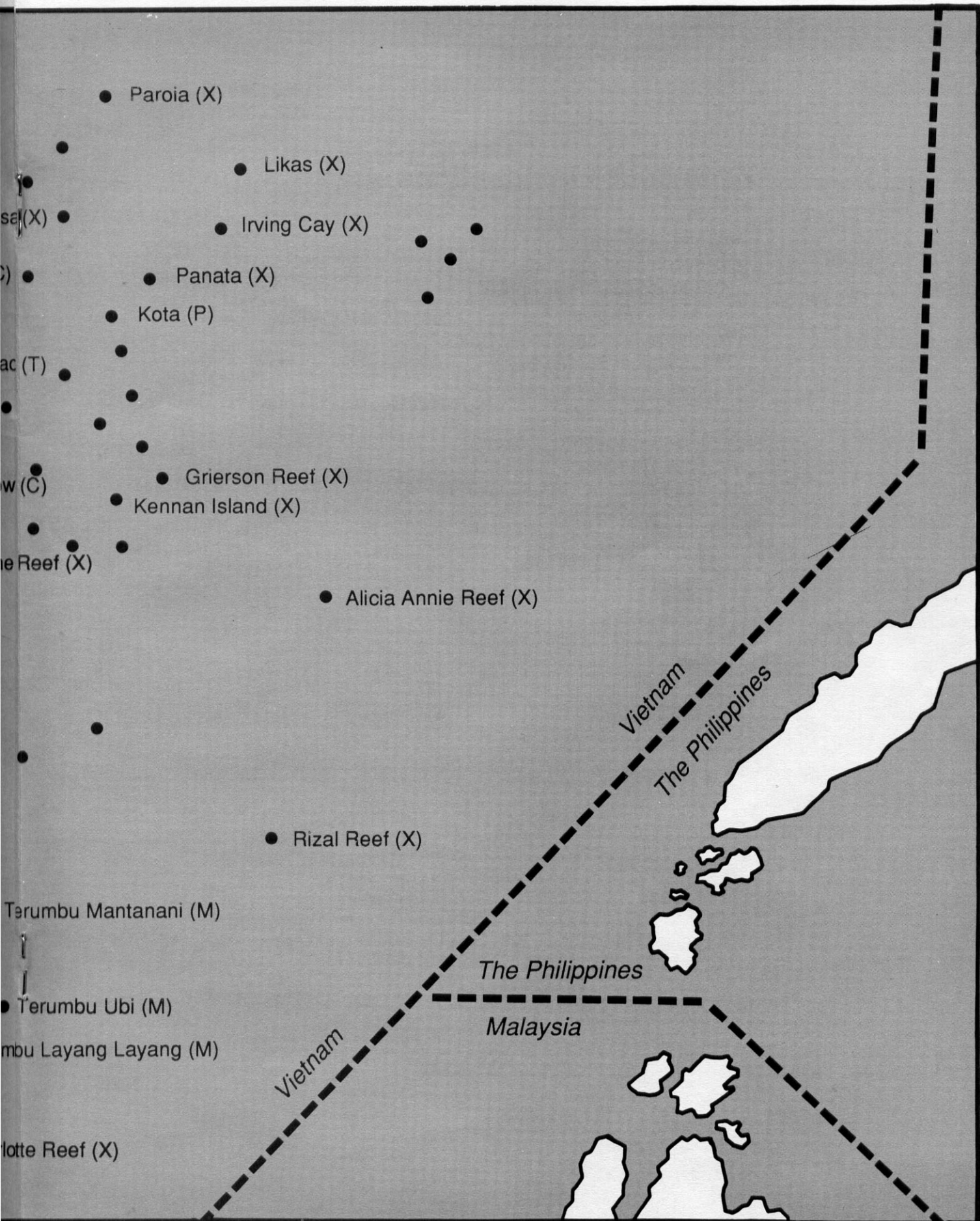


Non-Vietnamese Installations

Nationality Code:

- (C) China (Guangzhou)
- (P) Phillipines
- (M) Malaysia
- (T) Thailand
- (X) Unoccupied





● Paroia (X)

● Likas (X)

● Irving Cay (X)

● Panata (X)

● Kota (P)

● Grierson Reef (X)

● Kennan Island (X)

● Alicia Annie Reef (X)

● Rizal Reef (X)

● Terumbu Mantanani (M)

● Terumbu Ubi (M)

● Terumbu Layang Layang (M)

● Lotte Reef (X)

Vietnam

The Philippines

The Philippines

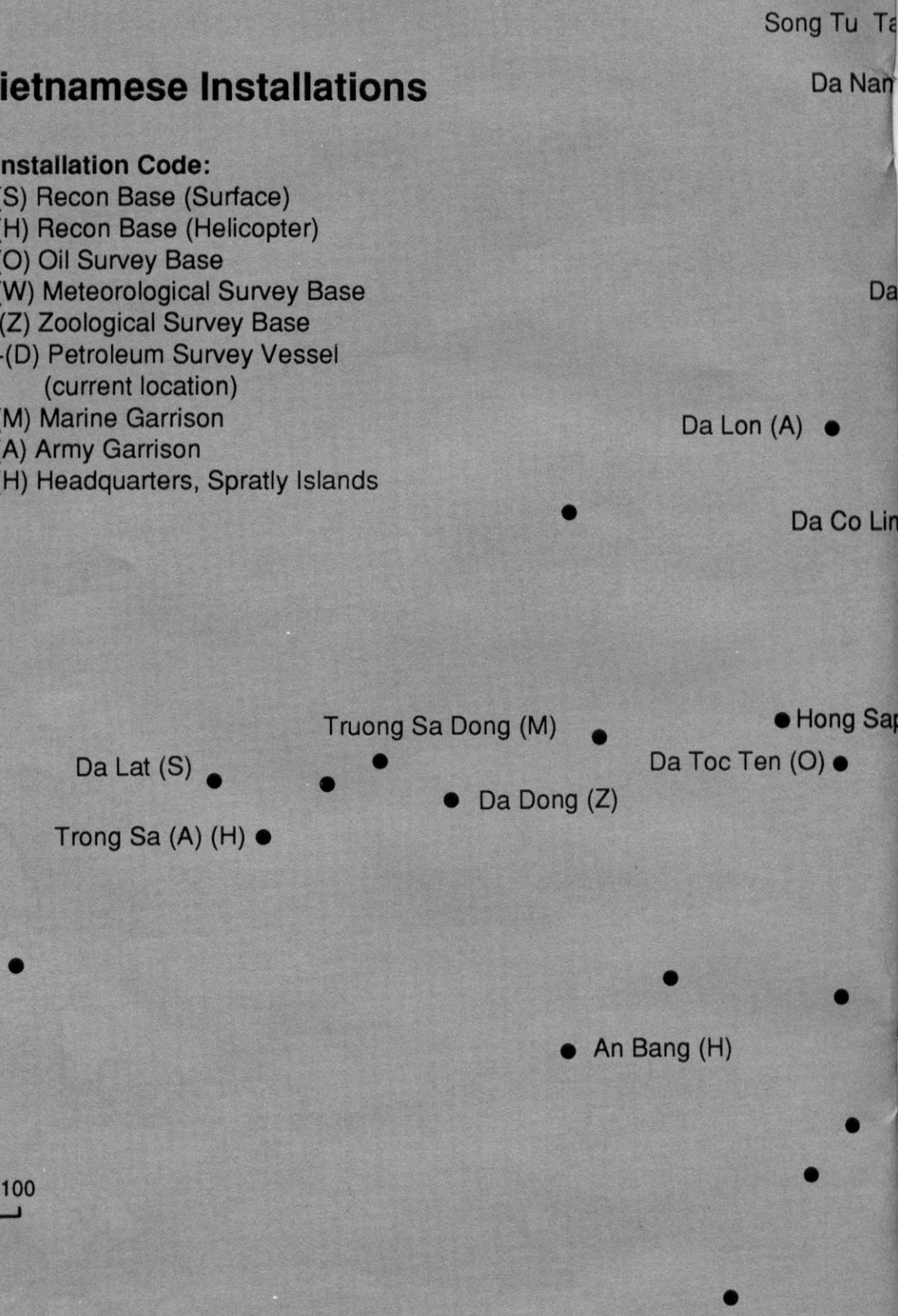
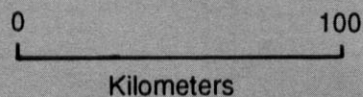
Malaysia

Vietnam

Vietnamese Installations

Installation Code:

- (S) Recon Base (Surface)
- (H) Recon Base (Helicopter)
- (O) Oil Survey Base
- (W) Meteorological Survey Base
- (Z) Zoological Survey Base
- +(D) Petroleum Survey Vessel
(current location)
- (M) Marine Garrison
- (A) Army Garrison
- (H) Headquarters, Spratly Islands



MAYBRIDGE'S DATABANK

Total Fees: £1.00

Search Menu 14: Geographic Locations

OPTIONS:

- M** Search Main Entries
- P** Search Periodicals Index
- K** Keyword Search, All Entries (may take up to 3.5 hours)
- T** Location Search
- H** Help (No Fees Will Accrue)

CHOOSE OPTION: M

Input Keywords from Location (separated by commas): Spratly Islands

Searching...

Found 0 Main Entry(ies) containing Keyword "Spratly Islands"

Found 1 Sub-Entry(ies) containing Keyword "Spratly Islands"

TOTAL FEES: £1.14

OPTIONS:

- T** Display Title(s)
- D** Display Entry Options
- R** Return to Search Menu
- H** Help (No Fees Will Accrue)

CHOOSE OPTION: D

Working...

TOTAL FEES: £1.15

"South China Sea — Spratly Islands," Entry Options:

- A** Display Abstract of Entry/Sub-Entry
- B** Display Bibliography Section Only
- G** Display Geography/Geology Section Only
- I** Display History Section Only
- E** Display Economics/Demography Section Only
- D** Display Complete Entry/Sub-Entry
- H** Help (No Fees Will Accrue)
- X** (E)Xit to main menu
- L** Log-off

CHOOSE OPTION: A

Working...

South China Sea — Spratly Islands, Abstract of Entry:

SCS169@ABS: SOUTH CHINA SEA —SPRATLY ISLANDS

AKA: *Nansha Qundao* (Chinese), *Truong Sa* (Vietnamese), *Kalayaan* (Filipino), Storm Islands, Tempest Islands, Meads Islands, Humanity Islands, Dangerous Area.

Classification: Minor coral archipelago, consisting primarily of over 100 sand banks, shoals, reefs, and islets. Territory claimed by numerous littoral nation-states (PRC and Vietnam claim entire archipelago, the Philippines claim the north and northeastern corner, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Brunei have asserted unspecified interests), but no permanent adjudication of sovereignty has been made.

Location: South China Sea, from approximately 4° to 11° 30' N latitude and from approximately 109° 30' to 117° 50' E longitude.

Geology: The archipelago is located on the terrane known as the Sarawak Basin (q.v.), provoking speculation that the Spratlys might share in the known mineral deposits of Borneo, Brunei, and Malaysia. Since the bulk of the Spratly's are submerged, only oil and natural gas deposits are exploitable under current technological limits.

Demography: No permanent inhabitants, although scientific and military stations of several nations are present.

Economy: Permanent economic activities primarily associated with off-shore oil exploration and exploitation. Drilling and production undertaken on a small scale in 1994 by PRC and Vietnamese governments, but major exploitation awaits settlement of sovereignty problems.

Secondary economic activities involve marine exploitation: fish (primarily black tuna, squid, oysters, and sea turtles), and gem-quality coral. Minor exploitation of guano deposits in the 19th and early 20th centuries, now largely abandoned.

Pre-History (summary): Archaeological exploration of the islands is incomplete. There is no evidence of their presence, but the proto-Melanesian and Negrito inhabitants of the Philippines and the Indonesian archipelago must have passed through the Spratlys in the process of migrating to the Philippines and the rest of Melanesia.

History (to 1750 ACE): There is fragmentary evidence of an Asiatic maritime presence in the vicinity of the Spratlys as early as the 12th century ACE. Chinese and Asiatic mercantile expeditions between 1350 and 1750 ACE avoided the area as too hazardous, as did the Europeans after 1650 ACE). Native exploitation of fishing grounds continued on low level.

History 1750 to 1900 ACE (Summary): No significant events involving the archipelago. Minor exploitation of guano deposits beginning in the 1800s ACE. Exploitation of marine life by fishermen from Borneo and the Philippines continued.

History (1900 ACE to Present): From 1914 to 1941, attempts were made to establish an independent nation by American adventurers (q.v.: Kingdom of Humanity, Republic of Morac-Songhrati-Meads, Meads, Franklin W.). Larger islands used as Imperial Japanese Navy seaplane and meteorological stations during the Second World War (refer to indices under War, 1939-45 — Pacific Theatre of Operations).

With the discovery of proven oil reserves after 1950 ACE, there was some minor interest in the region, but no major oil exploration took place until the latter half of the decade of the 1970s. At this time, several nations asserted or re-asserted claims of sovereignty, primarily Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, and Vietnam. The latter two nations became embroiled in a series of minor military clashes, from 1979 to 1988 (q.v.: Sinh Cow Island, Sino-Vietnamese Conflict — 1976-1989), but neither nation was prepared to go to war over the potential for oil. By the time the presence of oil in exploitable quantities had been demonstrated, China had broken up into several warring factions, and Vietnam was at war with Yunnan, one of the Chinese splinter states.

TOTAL FEES: £2.47

"South China Sea — Spratly Islands," Entry Options:

- A Display Abstract of Entry/Sub-Entry
- B Display Bibliography Section Only
- G Display Geography/Geology Section Only
- I Display History Section Only
- E Display Economics/Demography Section Only
- D Display Complete Entry/Sub-Entry
- H Help (No Fees Will Accrue)
- X (E)Xit to main menu
- L Log-off

CHOOSE OPTION: L

NPC DATA "Trang"

"Trang" (she refuses to give her real name) is a small, very athletic Vietnamese woman who appears to be in her late 20s or early 30s. Although she declines to talk much about her background, she admits to having been very, very young when her mother managed to get her on one of the last American transport aircraft leaving Saigon. She admits to having taken a degree in geology (specializing in petrochemical geology), and to having been an undergraduate at Cal-Tech for a year before transferring. She, too, is an independent contractor, and does not know the true identity of the patron.

"Trang" comes on the mission with one small duffel bag, a notebook-sized computer, a Walther PPK in a well-worn shoulder holster, and a "let's get on with it" attitude. She is not dismayed by the prospect of rowing to shore or of a HALO drop, demands her own set of equipment for either insertion, and seems quite familiar with the procedures involved.



Level: Veteran

Skills: Small Arms (Pistol): 3, Melee Combat (Unarmed): 2, Computer: 5, Parachute: 4, Swimming: 5, Scuba: 4

Initiative: 4

NPCs—Doc Binh Nguyen Island Garrison

The Doc Binh Nguyen Island garrison includes the following NPCs. The last two are civilians; the remainder are Vietnamese soldiers.

NPC	Weapon	Level	Initiative
CO, Doc Binh			
Nguyen Facility	PM Makarov	Experienced	3
2 NCOs	2 AK-47s	Experienced	3

2 radio operators	2 AK-47s	Novice	1
2 mach. operators	2 AK-47s	Novice	1
(1 generator, 1 desalination plant)			
1 machinegunner	PK MG	Experienced	3
1 asst. m'gunner	AK-47	Novice	1
4 soldiers	4 AK-47s	Novice	1
Computer operator	—	Novice	1
Lab technician	—	Novice	1

Each AK-47 has 300 rounds allocated; the PK MG has 600 belted rounds. In addition to the weapons listed above, the island's warehouse contains 48 fragmentation grenades (three cases of 16 each), 12 claymore mines (acquired when the United States left Vietnam in the 1970s, and getting a little old), and a few assorted signal flares and colored smoke grenades for signaling.

NPCs—Barge at LT-8/1.5

NPC	Weapon	Level	Initiative
Platoon leader	1 AK-47	Veteran	4
Asst. platoon leader	1 AK-47	Experienced	3
2 NCOs	1 AK-47	Experienced	3
2 radio operators	2 AK-47s	Novice	1
4 mach. operators	4 AK-47s	Novice	1
(2 generators, 2 desalination plants)			
2 machinegunner	2 PK MGs	Experienced	3
2 asst. m'gunner	2 AK-47	Novice	1
5 soldiers	5 AK-47	Novice	1
1 pilot	PM Makarov	Experienced	3
1 co-pilot	PM Makarov	Experienced	3

Each AK-47 has 300 rounds allocated, each pistol 120 rounds, and each PK MG 600 belted rounds. Three cases of 16 fragmentation grenades and assorted signal flares and smoke grenades are stored in a locked cabinet in the radio shack.

NPCs—Barge at LS-6/10

NPC	Weapon	Level	Initiative
Platoon leader	1 AK-47	Veteran	4
Asst. platoon leader	1 AK-47	Experienced	3
2 NCOs	1 AK-47	Experienced	3
2 radio operators	2 AK-47s	Novice	1
4 mach. operators	4 AK-47s	Novice	1
(2 generators, 2 desalination plants)			
2 machinegunner	2 PK MGs	Experienced	3
2 asst. m'gunner	2 AK-47s	Novice	1
5 soldiers	5 AK-47s	Novice	1
1 grenadier	AK-47 w/GL	Experienced	3
3 recon boat crew	—	Experienced	3

Each AK-47 has 300 rounds allocated; each PK MG has 600 belted rounds. The grenadier has 18 HE grenades for his BG-1 grenade launcher. Three cases of 16 fragmentation grenades, two SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles (still in their packing crates), and assorted signal flares and smoke grenades are stored in a locked cabinet in the radio shack.

NPCs—Doc Vinh Vien Island Fishing Boat

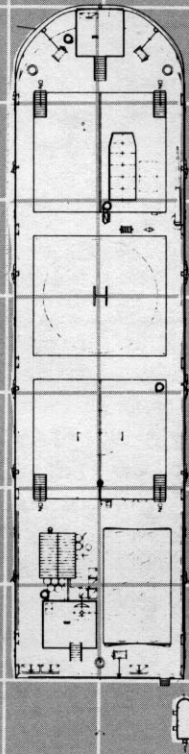
NPC	Weapon	Level	Initiative
Fishing boat captain*	Knife	Experienced	3
4 crewmembers†	4 knives	Novice	1

*Chinese 10, English 3, Vietnamese 1

† Chinese 10, English 1

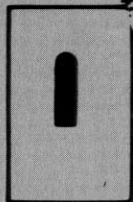
The weapons locker on the fishing boat contains a pump shotgun, 20 rounds of 12-gauge buckshot, and a dozen signal flares.

BARGE ENVIRONS



(8-meter grid squares)

LT-8/1.5



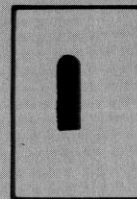
Area covered
by 8-meter map
on page 23

Sand bar
(exposed at low tide)

0 100
meters

High Tides: 0745 and 1945 hours
Low Tides: 0145 and 1345 hours

LS-6/10



Area covered
by 8-meter map
on page 23

Shoal
(exposed at low tide)

Sand bar
(exposed at low tide)

0 100
meters

High Tides: 0745 and 1945 hours
Low Tides: 0145 and 1345 hours

DOC BINH NGUYEN

The island called Doc Binh Nguyen by the Vietnamese is listed on English maps (such as the DMA maps partly reproduced on the folio cover) as Flat Island. The island is very small, and is one of the few in the Eastern Spratlys that remains above water all of the time, which is the reason why Doc Binh Nguyen was picked for the petrochemical survey installation. The Vietnamese government is anxious to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the archipelago, and feels that the international community will be more likely to support its claims to the region if its presence is primarily nonmilitary. The installation serves a dual function: a refueling station for the drilling vessel, and a site for a lab to perform preliminary analysis of the rock cores brought back by the drilling vessel.

The crew of the drilling vessel seldom spends much time ashore here, normally living on board even when the vessel is anchored off Doc Binh Nguyen. The garrison of Doc Binh Nguyen is detailed in the NPC summary on pages 21 and 22.

Geography

Doc Binh Nguyen is a coral island, and is no more than two meters above sea level at its highest point. There is no fresh water except for small stagnant pools from the rainy season, insufficient to supply human inhabitants year-round, and barely sufficient for what little flora and fauna live here. The entire island is covered by scrubby beach grass (varying from 0.5 to 1.2 meters high), except for a strip of beach about 30 meters in from the water line, several paths, and a number of clearings around various buildings. The soil is a mixture of sand, dead vegetation, and guano. There are no trees and little in the way of other forms of plant life.

Animal Life: The island was an annual nesting place for thousands of seabirds, but over the last few years, the human presence on the island has caused most of them to go elsewhere. A few seabirds of assorted species (mostly gulls and albatrosses) can be found on the island at any given time, but they are resting or recovering from injuries, not nesting.

Besides humans, the only mammals on the island are rats, brought here years ago by 19th-century visitors and reinforced by more recent "stowaways" on the various oil prospecting vessels. The rodents are not numerous enough to pose a health threat, but improvising rat traps from bits of junk is a hobby of several of the island's current garrison, and the island's commander occasionally authorizes ammunition for rat hunts at the garbage dump (more to break up the boredom than for marksmanship practice or pest control).

Sea Life: In contrast to the sparse land life, the reefs, shoals, and shallows around Doc Binh Nguyen teem with life. Coral formations, kelp, cuttlefish, shellfish, and free-swimming fish are present in abundance, and provide a change from the preserved military rations that form the standard fare for the garrison.

Buildings & Structures

The following are identified on the referee's map of Doc Binh Nguyen found on page 26.

Commo Shack: This is an air-conditioned modular building (i.e., a modified house trailer) containing computer equipment and communications gear. An internal plan is shown on page 31.

Lab Shack: This is another modular building (not air-conditioned), containing a moderately sophisticated petrochemical laboratory for the analysis of the core samples brought back by the drilling vessel. An internal plan is shown on page 31.

Generator Shed: This is an open-sided, concrete-floored, tin-roofed shelter containing an electric generator. The generator and the island's other machinery are powered by diesel fuel, contained in several small tanks (one per machine) improvised from 55-gallon drums elevated on a framework (to provide fuel feed pressure by gravity). The tanks are filled as necessary from the diesel fuel stored by the pier.

Machine Shed and Enclosure: This area is a small enclosure, circled by a three-meter high cyclone fence topped with a coil of barbed wire. Inside the enclosure is a tin shed containing the island's water desalinization still and other assorted machinery for operation of the facility. Outside the shelter are several water trailers, WWII US surplus, used for water storage. All faucets/taps/etc. are locked because water is limited, and must be rationed.

Barracks: Mostly shelter from the sun, this is a tin shed located so as to catch the coolest prevailing wind, and thus some distance away from the rest of the facilities. A small latrine is located about 100 yards leeward of the prevailing wind.

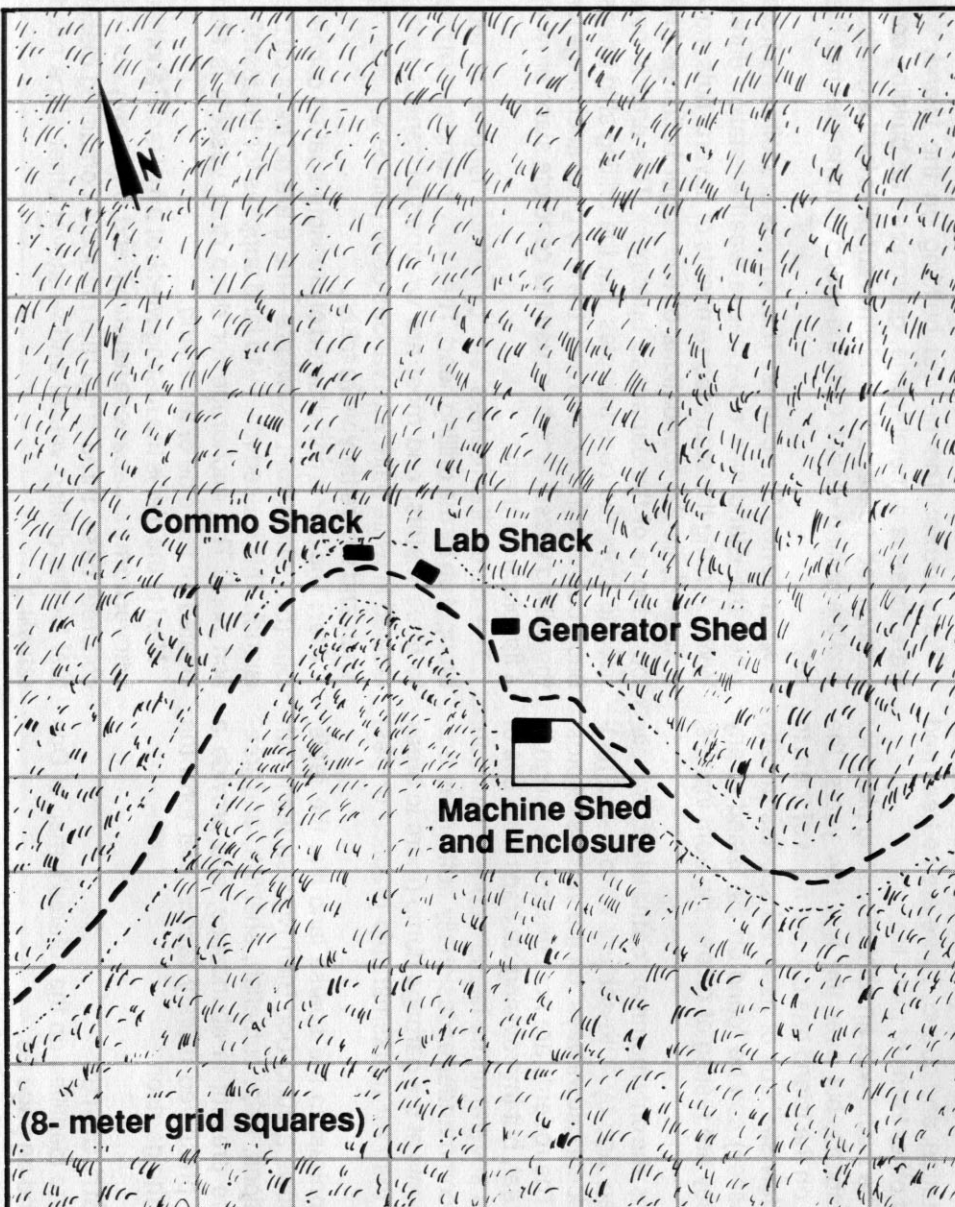
Warehouse: The newest building on the island, the warehouse is a metal-frame, galvanized tin building containing food, spare parts, and other supplies for the garrison and the drilling vessel. Only the island commander has the key.

Abandoned Structures: These ruins are leftovers from when the island was a Japanese weather station during WWII. Among the scattered remnants of several huts, now collapsed, lie the foundations of two larger buildings (the foundations of the Japanese buildings). This area is now used to store the core samples that the drilling ship brings back, because it is located near the only good anchorage for the drilling vessel, and because the concrete slabs provide a flat place for them.

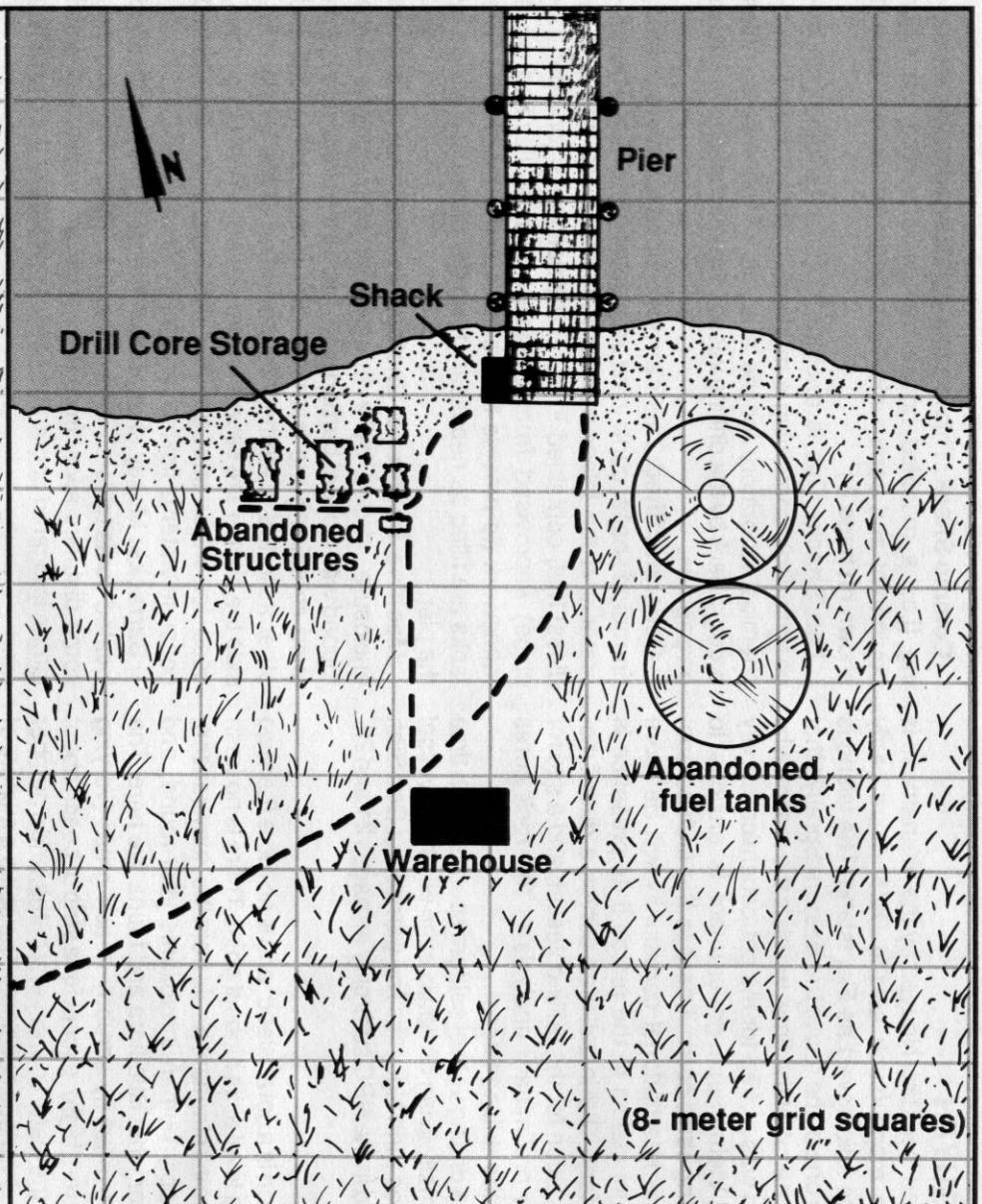
The cores themselves are cylindrical lengths of rock brought up by the drilling head. They vary in length from one to three meters, and most are wrapped in canvas tarps, labeled in white paint with various code numbers indicating when and where they were taken.

Pier: The pier is constructed of creosote-soaked coconut logs (brought in from elsewhere—there are no trees on the island). This is used mainly to land supplies for the installation here. The anchorage for deep draft vessels is also located on this side of the island.

Next to the pier is the rusting wreck of a fuel tank (another leftover from the Japanese tenancy), and, on a newly poured concrete base, three large fuel bladders containing diesel fuel for the drilling vessel and whatever other ships need refueling.

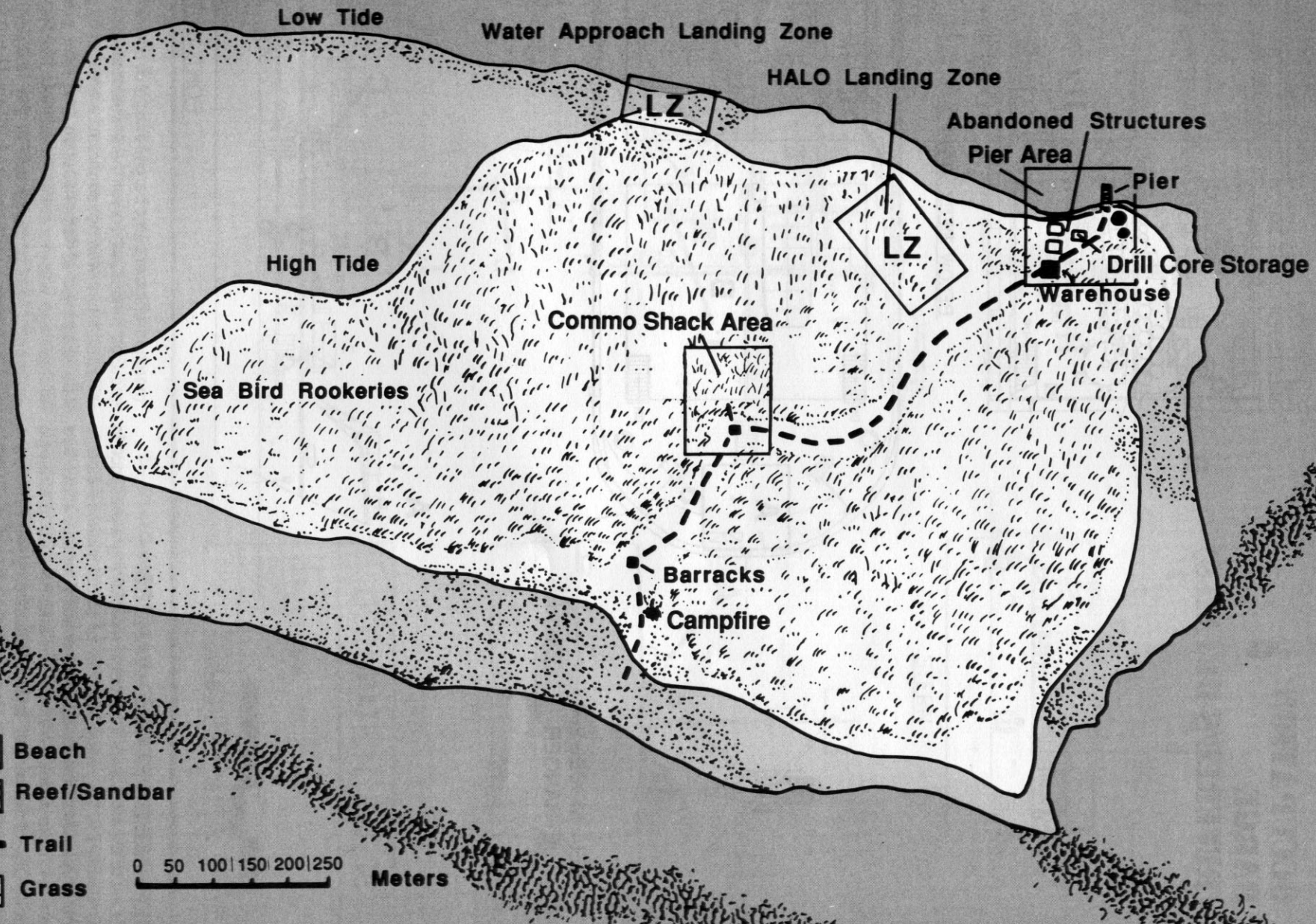


**DOC BINH NGUYEN'S REFEREE'S MAP—
COMMO SHACK AREA**





**DOC BINH NGUYEN'S REFEREE'S MAP—
PIER AREA**

DOC BINH NGUYEN ISLAND— REFEREE




KEY

 Beach

 Reef/Sandbar

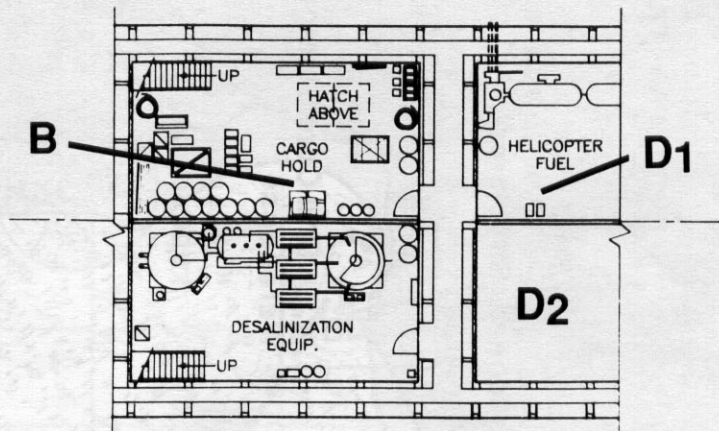
 Trail

 Grass

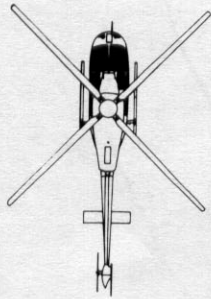
0 50 100 150 200 250

Meters

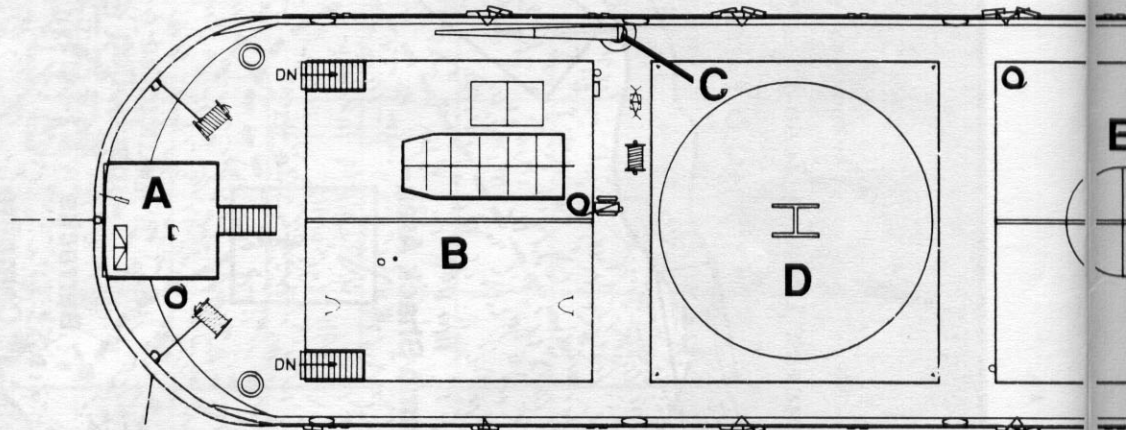
OCCUPATION BARGE (REFEREE'S DETAILS)



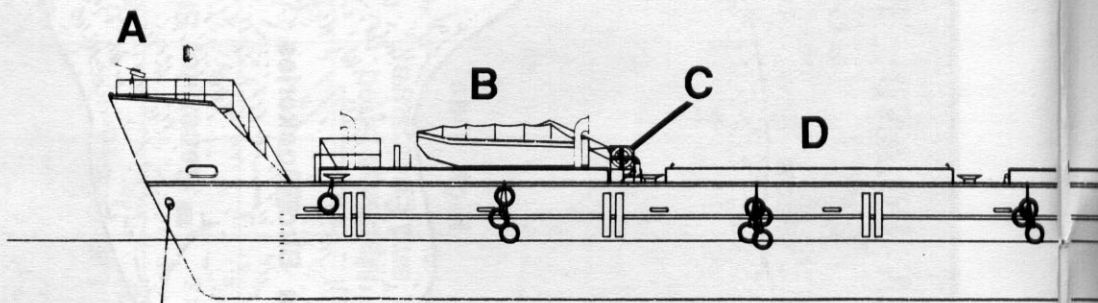
BELOW DECK PLAN



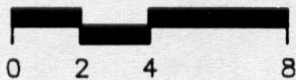
BELL MODEL 206
JETRANGER



DECK PLAN



PORT OUTBOARD

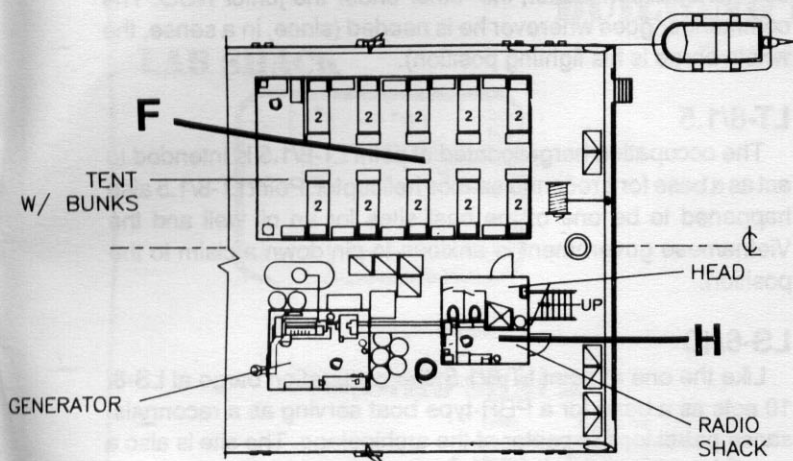


REFEREE'S DETAILS—BARGES

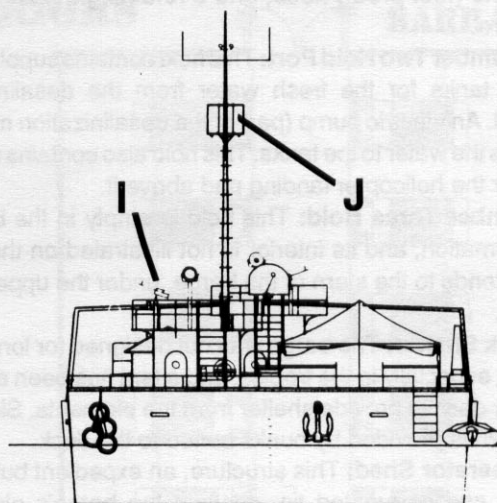
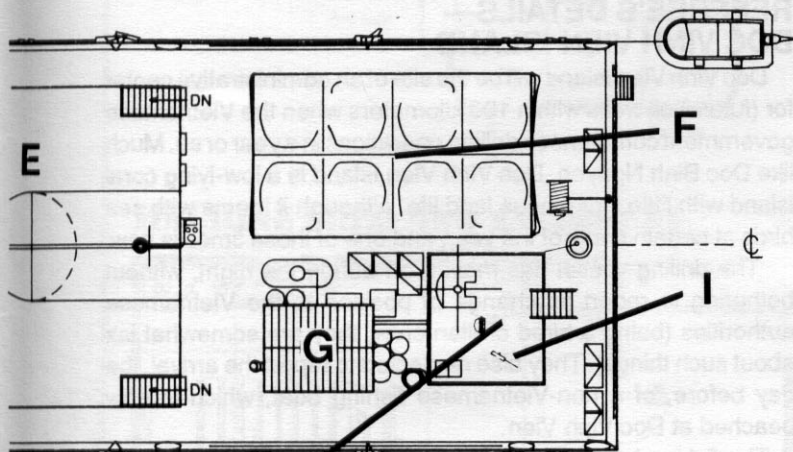
One of the difficulties inherent in maintaining a presence in the Spratlys is the limited number of actual islands—sizable enough pieces of real estate that actually remain above sea level 24 hours a day—especially islands located in strategic spots. One of the central “islands” claimed by the PRC in the Spratlys, the Macclesfield Bank, is not an island at all, but a series of submerged rocks that are above sea level only at low tide.

The solution was to anchor (more or less permanently) old

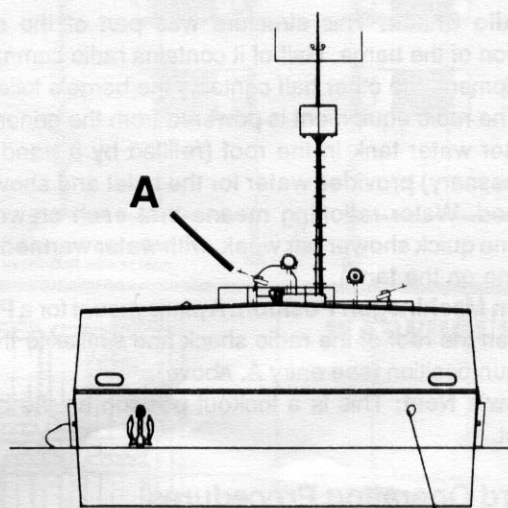
merchant ships or cargo barges into place wherever a base was required (that is, wherever there was some chance of striking oil) and nature was not cooperative enough to supply a bona fide island. As a demonstration that their presence in the archipelago was not primarily military, the Vietnamese government chose to make use of the few actual islands for “civilian” bases, and tends to use barges for the smaller “military” outposts. This enables them to maintain a military presence without seeming to put soldiers on every available island.



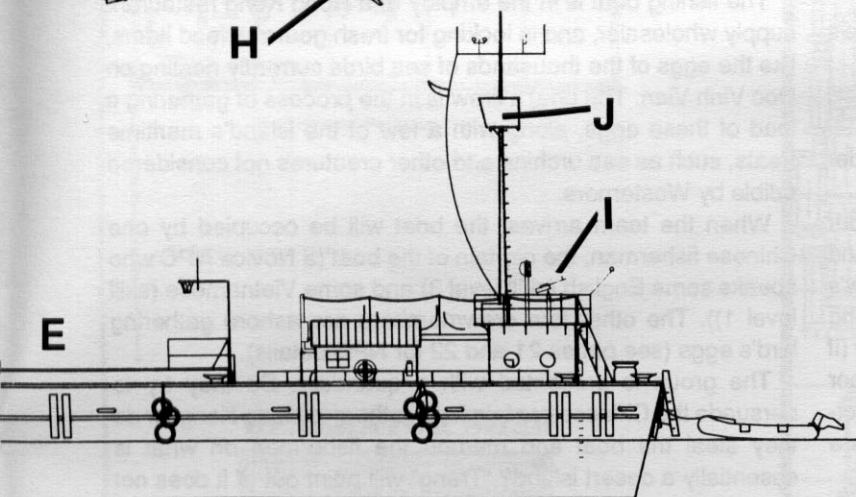
INTERIOR PLAN. DECK



STERN



BOW



OCCUPATION BARGE

LENGTH W/L	53.5 M
LENGTH O/A	56.25 M
WIDTH	14 M
DRAFT	2 M

CHK'D: *DAU* DRAWN: RICK BOQUIST

© RICK BOQUIST 1992

Explanation of the Plans

A—Bow Machinegun Position: This is a pintle mount for a PK machinegun, normally kept in position, with a belt loaded. Under everyday conditions, the machinegun is covered with a plastic tarp to protect it from the elements. It can be dismantled and fired from a bipod from any position on the barge.

B—Number One Hold: This hold contains supplies and the barge's desalinization equipment. A soldier is on duty here constantly, in case the machinery should fail. Two soldiers are specially trained in the operation and maintenance of this machinery.

C—Boat Crane: This device is used to hoist the barge's boat from the deck to the sea, and vice versa. It is also used to load supplies and equipment. It is ordinarily lashed in place to prevent it from swinging unpredictably and causing damage. Both of the NCOs are trained in operation of the crane.

D—Helicopter Landing Pad: The helicopter landing pad is located atop number two hold.

D1—Number Two Hold Starboard: This hold contains fuel tanks for both diesel fuel (for the barge's generator) and avgas (for refueling helicopters). A two-man hand-pump, 10 meters

of neoprene (fuel-proof) hose, and a refueling nozzle is also stored here.

D2—Number Two Hold Port: This hold contains supplies and fiberglass tanks for the fresh water from the desalinization equipment. An electric pump (part of the desalinization machinery) moves the water to the tanks. This hold also contains special bracing for the helicopter landing pad above it.

E—Number Three Hold: This hold is empty in the barge's current formation, and its interior is not illustrated on the blueprint. It extends to the stern of the barge, under the upper-deck structures.

F—Deck Shelter: The barge was not designed for long-term habitation, especially in the tropics, and a tent has been erected on the rear deck to provide shelter from the elements. Sleeping space for 20 is provided by bunks bolted to the deck.

G—Generator Shed: This structure, an expedient built from angle iron and corrugated tin, shelters the barge's electrical generator. The generator's primary function is to provide power for the desalinization machinery and for the barge's radio communications equipment.

H—Radio Shack: This structure was part of the original construction of the barge. Half of it contains radio communications equipment, the other half contains the barge's toilets and shower. The radio equipment is powered from the generator.

A 50-liter water tank in the roof (refilled by a hand pump when necessary) provides water for the toilet and shower via gravity feed. Water rationing means that each crewman is allowed one quick shower per week, with water warmed by the sun shining on the tank).

I—Stern Machinegun Position: A pintle mount for a PK MG, mounted on the roof of the radio shack and similar to the bow machinegun position (see entry A, above).

J—Crow's Nest: This is a lookout position on the barge's radio mast.

Standard Operating Procedures

The barges are staffed by military personnel, and are under discipline, and thus follow certain standardized procedures.

Normal Watch: Barge crews normally stand eight-hour watches. One crewman is on duty in the radio shack, the bow and stern machinegun positions, the generator shed, the "crow's nest" on the radio mast, and in number one hold. The remaining crew are either asleep (if they just got off watch) or on standby (if they are up next watch). Notice that for both barges, the number of bodies exceeds the number of bunks, indicating that "hot-bunking" is practiced (since a certain number of soldiers are always awake, some bunks are double-occupied).

Stand To: When the order "Stand To" is given, the soldiers go to their appointed fighting position (this order is called General Quarters in most navies, and Stand To in most armies). Fighting positions on an occupation barge are as follows:

Bow and Stern Machinegun Positions: One machinegunner and assistant machinegunner each.

Damage Control: The generator technicians, the desalinization technicians, and two other soldiers make up a roving damage control party.

Radio Shack: The senior NCO (3rd in command of the barge) takes up position here with the radio operator.

Deck: Soldiers not assigned other stations take up firing positions on the deck in two teams, one under command of the

assistant platoon leader, the other under the junior NCO. The commander goes wherever he is needed (since, in a sense, the whole barge is his fighting position).

LT-8/1.5

The occupation barge located at point LT-8/1.5 is intended to act as a base for a reconnaissance helicopter. Point LT-8/1.5 also happened to be one of the best sites for an oil well and the Vietnamese government is anxious to pin down a claim to the position.

LS-6/10

Like the one at point LT-8/1.5, the occupation barge at LS-6/10 acts as a base for a PBR-type boat serving as a reconnaissance patrol for this sector of the archipelago. The site is also a promising oil well location.

REFEREE'S DETAILS— DOC VINH VIEN ISLAND

Doc Vinh Vien Island will be the site of an administrative center for (future) oil wells within 100 kilometers when the Vietnamese government commences drilling operations in a year or so. Much like Doc Binh Nguyen, Doc Vinh Vien Island is a low-lying coral island with little indigenous land life, although it teems with sea birds at certain times of the year, and one of those times is now.

The drilling vessel has moved on during the night, without bothering to report its change of position to the Vietnamese authorities (being a hired civilian crew, they are somewhat lax about such things). They also neglected to report the arrival, the day before, of a non-Vietnamese fishing boat, which is now beached at Doc Vinh Vien.

The fishing boat is in the employ of a Hong Kong restaurant supply wholesaler, and is looking for fresh gourmet food items, like the eggs of the thousands of sea birds currently nesting on Doc Vinh Vien. The boat's crew is in the process of gathering a load of these eggs, along with a few of the island's maritime treats, such as sea urchins and other creatures not considered edible by Westerners.

When the team arrives, the boat will be occupied by one Chinese fisherman, the captain of the boat (a Novice NPC who speaks some English (skill level 3) and some Vietnamese (skill level 1)). The other four crewmembers are ashore gathering bird's eggs (see pages 21 and 22 for NPC details).

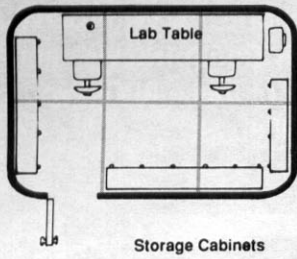
The group is presented with a quandary: Do they try to persuade the Chinese captain to take them to Hong Kong, or do they steal the boat and maroon the fishermen on what is essentially a desert island? "Trang" will point out (if it does not occur to any of the group) that the island is too small to provide any fresh water, and the heat is such that the fishermen will die of thirst in a few days unless the Vietnamese rescue them. "Trang" will continue by saying that the fishermen have no means of sending a distress signal unless the group leaves them one, and that even if the Vietnamese receive a distress signal, they might not help out what they consider to be foreign interlopers.

The fishing boat contains room for the team if no gourmet foodstuffs are loaded (i.e., if the boat leaves immediately). The Chinese captain, presented with a choice between being marooned and leaving immediately, will grudgingly agree to take the team to Hong Kong, but will argue for some kind of recompense for his lost cargo. "Trang" will argue in favor of taking the crew along.

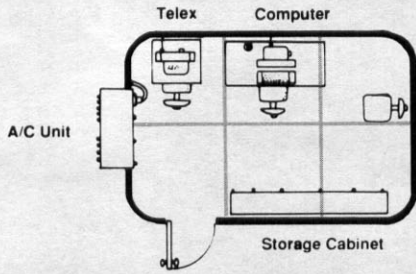
BUILDING INTERIORS

2- meter grid

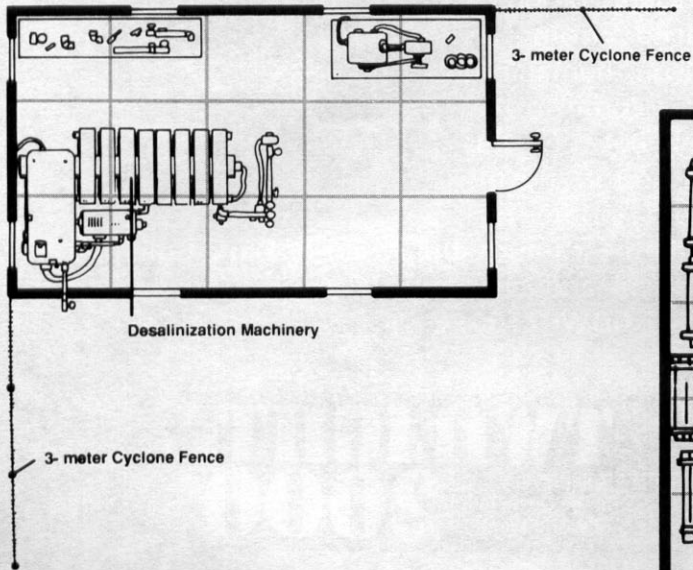
LAB SHACK



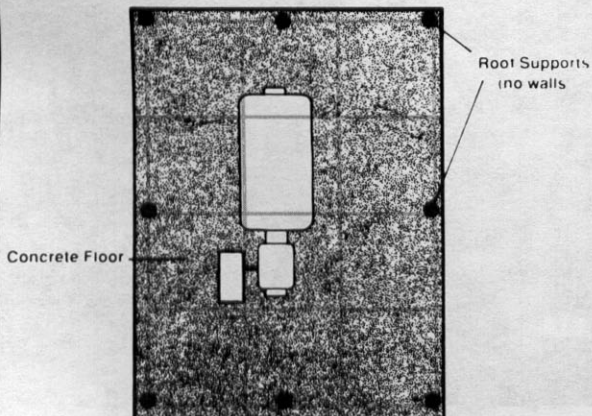
COMMO SHACK



MACHINE SHED AND ENCLOSURE

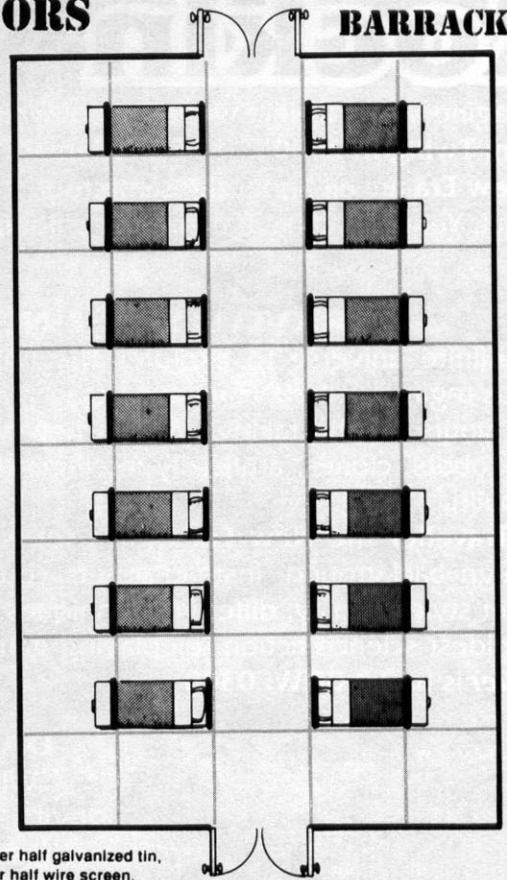


GENERATOR SHED

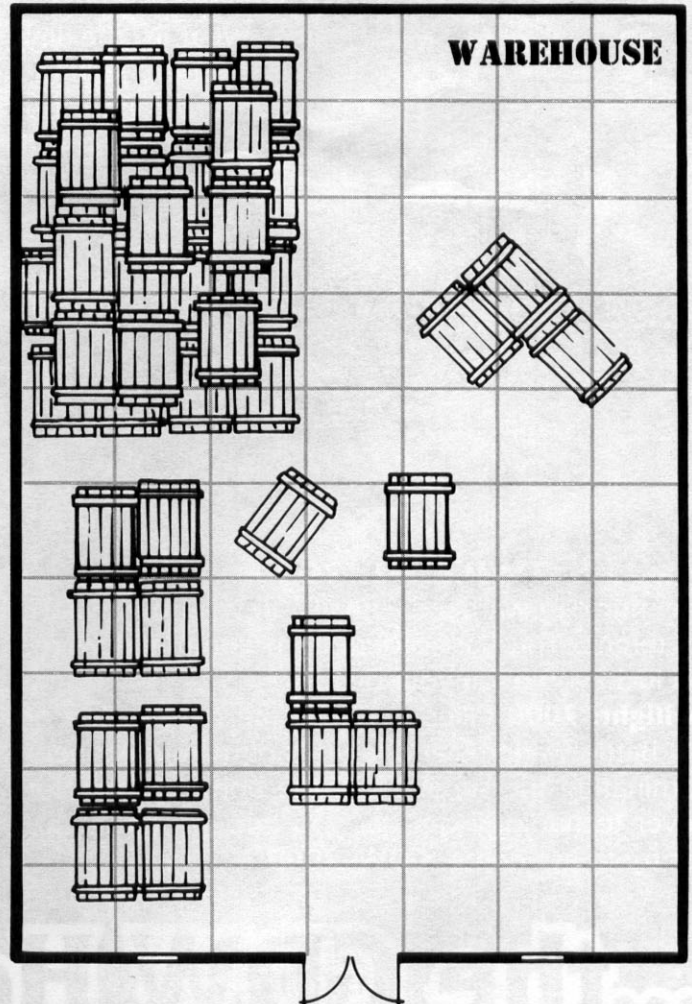


Power cable (insulated) is buried 10cm below the surface of the ground

BARRACKS



WAREHOUSE



OPERATION CROUCHING DRAGON™

I thought I was through with surprises after six years in the merc trade. We've been sent to a lot of strange places, and done some pretty mysterious stuff. It's not unusual for us to be hired by people we never see. It's not out of the ordinary for us to be told to do things that we don't understand... "ours not to reason why," and all that. And it's par for the course to be sent places we've never been before. I've grown used to that. But I've never been sent on a mission to an island that doesn't have the decency to exist. I was under the impression that an island had to be above water... isn't that why they call it dry land?

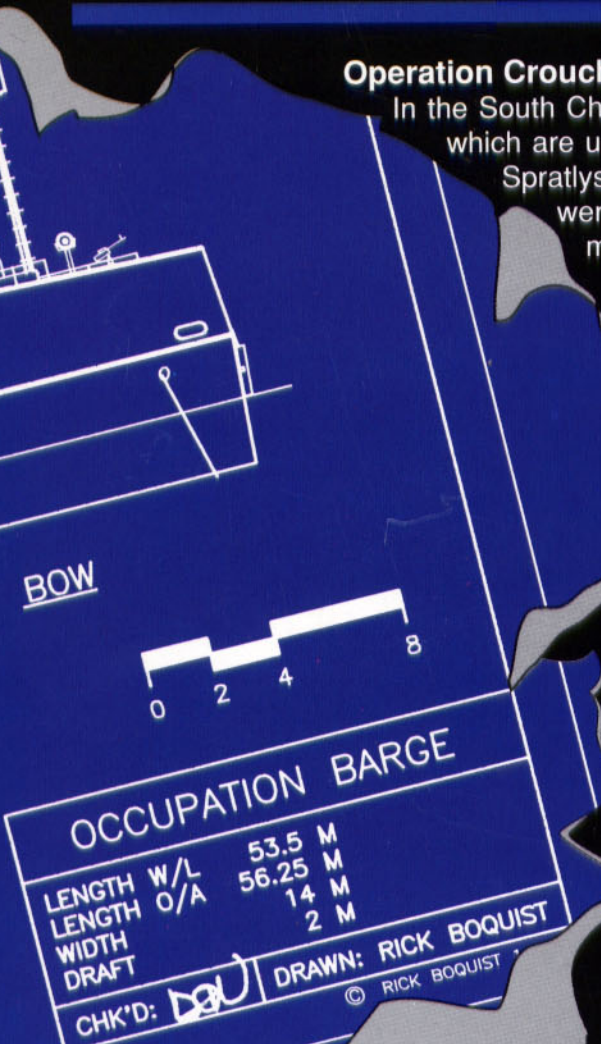
Operation Crouching Dragon

In the South China Sea lie a group of very tiny islands, some of which are under water at high tide. The British call them the Spratlys and marked them on charts only because they were a hazard to navigation. They were never of much use to anyone until oil was discovered underneath them.

In A.D. 2000, five nations claim the islands, five nations have assigned them names, five nations have sent survey parties and military units to secure their claims, five nations have made arrangements with oil companies for their exploitation.

The team is hired by one oil giant to spy out what the competition is up to. Easy as pie, right? In the middle of their mission, however, they make a discovery that is infinitely more important to their long-term survival... they discover what their patron is up to.

Operation Crouching Dragon takes the players to a minute island in the middle of the South China Sea, where forces from five nations claim the region's oil reserves. It's a situation so tense, the slightest spark could touch off a war, and the team is dropped right in the middle.



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