



There were several occasions during our deployment when sick bay was the busiest place on the ship. But our medical trio also served well ashore. The United States in Vietnam has developed what is known as a MEDCAP, or Medical Civil Action Program, where a medical team enters a village and holds a clinic for the Vietnamese civilians, free of charge. Our trio served as a MEDCAP team on several occasions, and Wachusett initiated three of these. One hundred sixty South Vietnamese civilians were examined and treated.



Aside from these purely humanitarian efforts, we stood by during river operations to treat any wounded soldiers. On one such occasion several Navy Swift boats were pinned up river by accurate brackets of enemy recoilless rifle fire. One boat was sunk and several men were wounded. The wounded were brought to our sick bay for immediate treatment, then later evacuated by small boat or helicopter to hospitals ashore. Sick bay treated one hundred wounded South Vietnamese or American soldiers.



Another time, BM2 Fletcher complained of a pain in the side. It was diagnosed as an appendicitis, and Fletcher was transferred to a shore hospital where his appendix was removed. He returned to the ship several weeks later, but this timely diagnosis probably saved him undue pain and lessened the chances of any complications.