

On March 1, 1968 the WINONA became the first High Endurance Coast Guard Cutter to singly engage and destroy an enemy vessel since World War II.

Offshore from the CaBoDe River, a major waterway on the delta southwest of Saigon, a 125 foot NVN trawler was detected infiltrating arms and ammunition to Viet Cong forces ashore. We shadowed the trawler for six long hours into the night before it finally turned for the beach, our cue to intercept. Closing to 700 yards we illuminated and challenged them to stop when a running gun battle ensued. The effect in the night outlasted the 4th of July. .50 cal. tracers, fiery red in the black, streaked both ways, punctuated by 5" gun flashes, white with the intensity of burning magnesium. The ricochets whined off into the distance, or metal piercing rounds thwacked through steel. For seven minutes we fought until a 5" round found home at the base of the trawler's deckhouse, and the night was day, and our ship rocked from the explosion that rained debris on our decks.



For meritorious achievement that night, Captain Lynch was awarded the Bronze Star. Lt. Commander Atkinson, conning officer, Lt. Bujarski, gunnery officer, and BM3 "Audie" Slawson, director operator were awarded Navy Accommodation Medals. All four were authorized a Combat "V".

Pictured above, five crewmen receive Good Conduct Medals.