

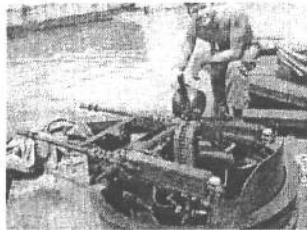
River Patrol Boat MK 2 – 458th Transportation Company, 18th Military Police Brigade

by Jim Rogers, Editor

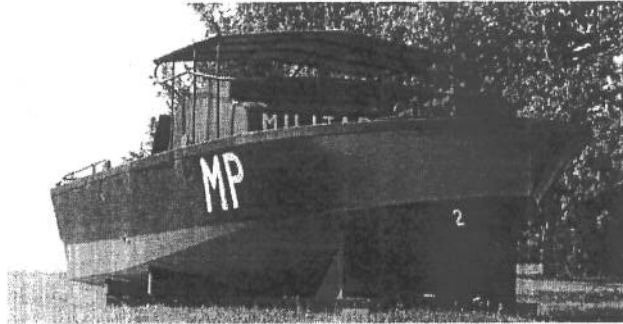
The Patrol Boat, River (PBR) MK 2 was developed during the Vietnam conflict as a direct result of the need for a fast and maneuverable craft to patrol the coastal and river waterways in Southeast Asia. The U.S. Army operated 39 PBRs under the control of the 458th Transportation Company, attached to the 18th Military Police Brigade. The cost to the U.S. Army was \$86,000 for each vessel.

The 458th received the PBRs in early 1968, thus becoming the only PBR company in the U.S. Army. The Transportation Corps provided one coxswain and engine man for each boat. A Military Policeman served as the forward gunner and a South Vietnamese soldier as the interpreter. The PBR crews were initially sent to the U. S. Navy facility at Nha Be, California, for training. All replacement crew members coming from the United States would go through four weeks of Army security boat training at the Naval Inshore Operations Training Center at Mare Island, California.

The 458th established its headquarters at the Military Police compound at Ton Son Nhut Air Base in the Saigon area in March 1968, when it came under the control of the 92nd Military Police Battalion of the 18th Military Police Brigade. It was also the only Transportation Corps unit assigned to the Military Police Corps. The company positioned detachments of four PBRs, each, to First Logistics Command ports at Qui Nhon, Vung Ro Bay, Vung Tau, Newport, Cat Lai and Cat Lo. Each PBR detachment worked with a different MP company. They



➤ SGT Lowe on PBR 7818 at Cat Lo



➤ The museum's PBR on display in the vehicle park across from the museum facility.

searched sampans, set up night ambushes to disrupt enemy supply lines, and conducted harbor and river patrol and ammunition ship security throughout the Qui Nhon area. In total the 458th patrolled 500 miles of inland waterway and canals.

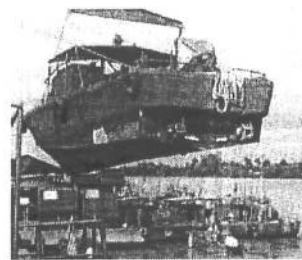
Patrol Boat, River (PBR) MK 2

- Manufacturer: Uniflite Corporation
- Length: 31'-11"
- Width: 11'-7.5"
- Height (to canopy): 9'-9"
- Displacement: 16,000 lbs.
- Powerplant: Two Detroit Diesel 6V53N, 216 h.p. @ 2,880 r.p.m.
- Propulsion: Two Jacuzzi 14YJ waterjets
- Maximum speed: 28 knots
- Crew: 4
- Armament:
 - Twin .50 caliber machine gun turret in bow
 - One .50 caliber machine gun in stern
 - Two M-79 grenade launchers
 - M-60 machine gun, 12 gauge shotgun and crew small arms

This PBR (MPC-1910) was acquired by the museum in January of 1983 from Keesler AFB, Gulf Port, Mississippi. Museum records state that this boat was transported to the museum at Fort McClellan by a CH-54 "Flying Crane".



➤ A PBR under way at full speed



➤ A PBR being lifted for maintenance. This view shows the two propulsion jets that provided exceptional maneuverability and allowed the PBR to operate in shallow water.