



## First Person Account

# Origin of the Echo Raiders



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"E" 2/1

The origin of the Echo company Raiders began in the spring of 1965 at [Camp Pendleton](#) with the forming of the **Vietnam Era 2nd Battalion 1st Marines**. The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Hanifin, or perhaps someone above him, wanted one company trained to conduct small targeted operations. Marines in Echo company first learned of scheduled **Raid Training** in May of 1965. It would be a supplement to all the other normal battalion infantry training conducted that summer at **Camp Pendleton**.

Training began in early June working with rubber boats at [Lake O'Neill](#). It included an individual night swim across the lake wearing Mae West life jackets. Then the company moved to [Del Mar](#) and spent two weeks training with rubber boats in the ocean. The training consisted of getting a fully loaded boat off the beach through the crashing surf and navigating in the ocean. During this period everyone really began to embrace the "Raider" moniker.

All of the rubber boat work led up to an ambitious training exercise conducted off the coast of **Camp Pend-**

**leton**. The mission was to land the company at night from a Navy ship,



Operation Harvest Moon

locate and destroy a radio transmission facility, return to the ship and be gone before sunrise. Echo company launched rubber boats in the dark, landed, marched inland to attack the objective, and returned to the beach where they were greeted with a huge crashing surf. The unforgiving, pounding surf overturned many boats trying to get off the beach leaving it littered with Marine equipment and even one or two field stripped M14 rifles.

Eventually most got off the beach and returned to the ship before sunrise as planned.

Orders finally came to ship out to **Vietnam** and 2/1 left **San Diego** in August of 1965 sailing to **Okina-**

**wa**. During the short stay in Okinawa, Echo company conducted one more night time training raid in rubber boats; it was also the very last time we used them.

The primary reason for the stop in

Okinawa was for 2/1 to become the infantry component of the **Navy/Marine Special Landing Force (SLF)**. The SLF consisted of both amphibious and helicopter landing components with **Echo** and **Hotel** companies aboard the [USS Taladega](#)

*Echo company would be the lead company for the amphibious component of four Dagger Thrust raids, transferring to the USS Point Defiance and hitting the beach in amtracs.*

[APA208](#) and **Fox** and **Golf** companies aboard the [USS Iwo Jima LPH2](#). In addition, the [USS Point Defiance LSD-31](#) carried the [Amtracs](#). The SLF left Okinawa in early September.

*"The Raider moniker faded away but it was not forgotten; it would live on in the memories of individual Marines."*

a Raider plaque; it had the image of a **Sea Turtle** in the center with a **Knife** on it's shell and the letters **RA** and **ID** on each side of the turtle.

The **Dagger Thrust** operations weren't very productive but they gave 2/1 their

first taste of the war. Between oper-

ations we had a short diversion to the Philippines in order to change two of the SLF ships - the **Taladega** and the **Point Defiance**. During our stay Echo company participated in a five-day

[Forge LPH8](#) with **Fox** and **Golf** companies aboard. After completing the last **Dagger Thrust** operation, 2/1 was unexpectedly committed to [Operation Harvest Moon](#) on December 10. It was a grueling and miserable operation that took place in the [Que Son Valley](#) between [Da Nang](#) and [Chu Lai](#). 2/1's job was to enter and search the [Phouc Ha Valley](#). While this was strictly



USS Iwo Jima LPH-2

of the battalion and Echo company began to change.

There was a large cross transfer of Marines between battalions and companies in order to stagger the 12/13 month tours of individual Marines. Echo company Marines transferred out and we received Marines from other battalions.

Replacements and new additions did not share our history. From then on it was just plain grunt work in an ever expanding war.



USS Point Defiance LSD-31

grunt work, the Raider identity was still strong in the minds of some Marines. In one action, Echo (3rd Platoon) killed five VC. Someone left our "calling card" by marking the bare behind of one of the dead VC with the letters **RAID**.

It was my last memory to any reference to Echo company Raiders. After Harvest Moon, the battalion left the SLF and took over responsibility for the [Phu Bai combat base](#). Some-time in January 1966 the makeup



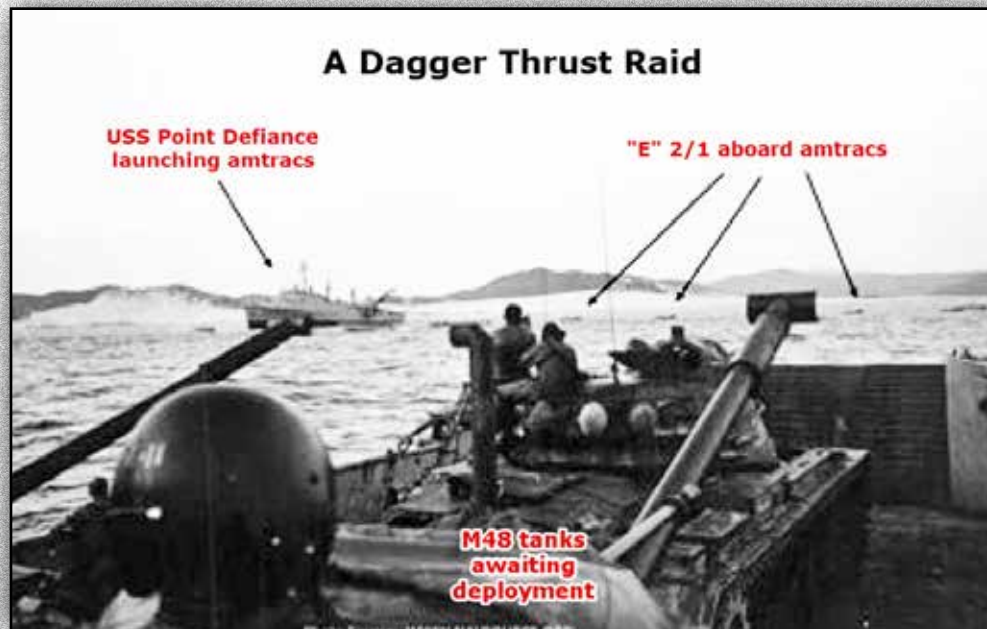
USS Montrose APA-212

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— Paul Stenzel  
Vietnam  
1965-66



USS Monticello LSD-35



The USS Port Defiance deploys the Echo Raiders via amtrac on the Dagger Thrust raid

Five **Dagger Thrust** operations on the coast of **Vietnam** were planned. Echo company would be the lead company for the amphibious component, transferring to the **Point Defiance** and landing in amtracs on four **Dagger Thrust** raids.

During this period someone crafted

jungle survival course on the **Bataan Peninsula**. We marched into a mature bamboo forest and learned the basics of staying alive with limited resources. **Echo** and **Hotel** left the Philippines in early November aboard the [USS Montrose APA-212](#) along with the [USS Monticello LSD35](#) and rejoined the SLF helicopter carrier [USS Valley](#)