

Enroute Vietnam

.I was chief staff officer, DESRON22, home-ported Norfolk, VA in 1967. We received orders to Vietnam via The Canal to arrive Vietnam on a particular date. How we got there was our problem! The squadron was made up of 3 DDs and 1 DLG. I presented my plan to the Commodore and it was approved. It was very important that we arrive off the coast of Vietnam at the specified date.

When we got to CINCPAC FLT HDQ in Hawaii I realized that I had computed crossing the International Date Line wrong. We had to make up one day to get to Vietnam on time. I told the Commodore of the problem and his response was, "I can take care of it" between Hawaii and our next fuel stop, Guam. He put out an order for all ships to form up on a line of bearing with the flag ship (USS Dupont, DD-941) and to lite off super heat. When all were lined up the Commodore announced there would be a race for 24 hours. At 31 KTS for 24 hours we made up the lost day.

The winner of the race was the USS Eaton (DD-510), a Fletcher class DD. The old WWII destroyer could do 36 KTS, so the old "five and dime" won easily.

Submitted by CAPT Ace F. Trask, USN RET