UNDER COVERED ORDERS

The following information was received from RMC Russell Coots and is among the many new pieces of information received from officers and crew providing valuable insight and memories for all. **Coots begins** –

"General Quarters, General Quarters! All hands man your battle stations. This is no drill." It was around midnight. The Knox was moored in Subic Bay Philippine Islands when orders came for the Knox to untie and get underway in early 1962. Coots hurried to his duty station in CIC (Combat Information Center) and watched as the CO, Captain Swank and his XO entered CIC with sealed orders. Once opened the orders directed the Knox to rendezvous with USS Princeton LPH-5 and escort Princeton to the coast of Vietnam to deliver about 52-52 helicopters to Da Nang and the airbase there. The Knox and Princeton anchored off shore and the helicopters were transferred to the Vietnamese Airforce. [Editor's note- the 2nd Vietnamese Helicopter Squadron was formed in Da Nang in October 1962 and received their aircraft. The Princeton was involved in delivering helos and the Marines Corps advisors to Soc Trang in the Mekong Delta area of the Republic of Vietnam in April 1962. Princeton served as flagship of a JTF during nuclear weapons test series Sept-November 1962.] Coots recalls returning to Seventh Fleet escort duty as a radar picket. An article in Knox Knews reminded Coots that the Knox operated through typhoons and 48' rolls. "you don't forget having to walk on the bulkhead when the deck is angled too far up to walk on. Previous Knox Knews stories of typhoons brought back unforgettable storms and ship's rolls."

The following is a statement from the Frank Knox Operations Officer LT William Peerenboom, now Captain USN Retired. 10 February 2016

"Subject: Operations of USS FRANK KNOX (DDR-742) on waters of Viet Nam in 1962

I served as Operations Officer aboard USS FRANK KNOX from mid-1961 to late summer 1963. During that tour of duty, on one occasion, the ship conducted support operations off the coast of Viet Nam in the vicinity of Da Nang. The time frame of the operation was, to the best of my recollection, early 1962. The ship was home ported in Yokosuka, Japan in that time frame and its normal schedule was to go to the Philippines right after our holiday stand down to conduct competitive exercises in the more favorable waters off Subic Bay. During our stay in port, the Commanding Officer received confidential orders to get underway and proceed to sea and, upon reaching open waters, open the orders sealed in and envelope. He recalled the crew and we proceeded to sea. He opened the orders and announced that the ship was to rendezvous with an Amphibious ship

(whose name I cannot recall) with its group and to proceed to "DaNang" in Viet Nam.

As Operations Officer it was my duty to prepare the charts and schedule the operations in conjunction with the ship's navigator and Commanding Officer as the port listed with its' French name "officer. Upon retrieving the pertinent charts, we were unable to identify "Da Nang" – until the Commanding Officer who had come to the ship from Seventh Fleet informed us that it was the same as the port listed with its' French name "Touraine". FRANK KNOX carried out the orders and we met with the Amphibious group and escorted it to Da Nang where a small number of US Marines were off loaded. We were in sight of land during that phase of the operation – probably within territorial waters of Viet Nam. The entire operation was carried out with confidentiality and that is why it does not appear in Unclassified "Ships History Update Reports" that were sent to the Director of Naval History every calendar year.

The only verification that is possible is the ship's LOGS which are available at cost, but given the uncertainty of the dates, a search of these records is too costly to undertake.

This account is based on memory many years after the fact – but in light of the unique nature of the operation, it remained as a memorable event in my life. I served in seven ships in my 30 year career – commanded 4 of them – and only once (on this occasion) did I experience "Sealed Orders"."