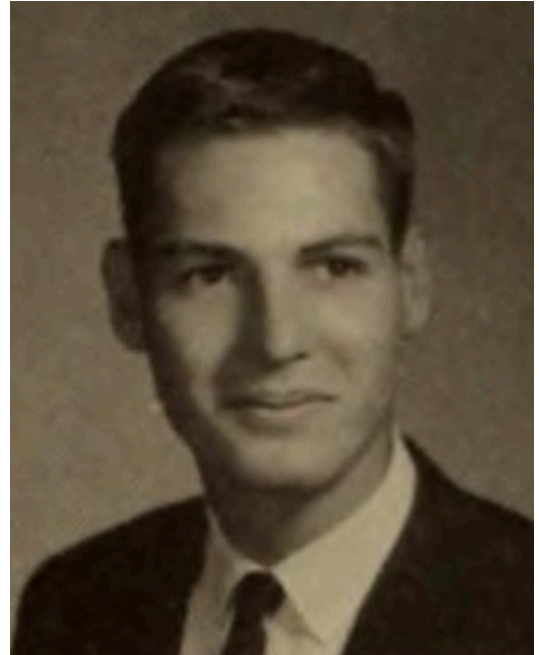


## **“Brown-Water” Soldier**

The Vietnam War recalls images of soldiers and Marines trudging through thick jungles and wading through rice paddies. But, for a small number of soldiers, this war was fought from a boat.

William Raymond Yongue, a member of the Class of 1964 from Chester, was a member of the “brown-water navy,” the “Riverines.” Composed of Army and Navy units, the Riverines were formed based on the experiences of the French in their Indochina War. The Riverines engaged in both transport and combat missions along the waterways of the Mekong River Delta. Yongue’s assignment to the 1097<sup>th</sup> Transportation Boat Company seems strangely appropriate—he had been born in February 1941 in Honolulu where his father was serving in the Navy.



Yongue attended Clemson for three years before joining the National Guard. He earned his second lieutenant’s commission from the Palmetto Military Academy at Fort Jackson and volunteered for active duty. He was ordered to active duty in January 1967 and by that summer had arrived in Vietnam.



The 1097<sup>th</sup> Medium Boat Company had arrived in Vietnam at the end of May 1965. In June of 1967, it moved to Dong Tam where it was assigned to support the operations of the Army's 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The 1097<sup>th</sup> was the only tactical boat company in the Army's Transportation Corps. Its mission was to tow artillery barges supporting the division's artillery operations.

Yongue's company utilized LCM-8 flat bottom boats designed for use in rough or exposed waters. Its four-foot, six-inch draft made it ideal for use in the delta's maze of waterways. LCM-8s were propelled by four Detroit Diesel boat engines. Its propellers were protected by a skeg assembly. Even so, trouble on the river was never far away.

On Tuesday, September 26, 1967, Yongue's boat was patrolling in the Mekong Delta. One of the craft's propeller became fouled by an underwater obstruction. Yongue dived overboard in an attempt to diagnose the problem and free the propeller. He never resurfaced. Initially declared "Missing In Action," Yongue's body was later recovered.

Yongue was survived by his parents and two brothers, one of whom was then a captain serving at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Yongue was the recipient of the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

