NPS Form 10-900 **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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1. Name of Property

Historic name: PCF 816

Other names/site number: <u>P24; Swift Boat</u>

Name of related multiple property listing:

<u>N/A</u>

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location _

Street & number: 1492 N. Harbor Drive			
City or town: San Diego	_ State: <u>California</u> _ County:		
Not For Publication:	Vicinity:		

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

____national _____statewide ____local Applicable National Register Criteria:

__A __B __C __D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets	does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ entered in the National Register
- ____ determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ____ removed from the National Register
- ____ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.) Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Category of Property

Building(s)	
District	
Site	
Structure	X
Object	

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)				
Contributing	Noncontributing			
		buildings		
		sites		
1		structures		
		objects		
1		Total		

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register ____0____

6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) Defense______ Naval facility______ Navy patrol/gun training boat

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) Education Museum vessel

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.) Vietnam War era Other: Patrol Craft Fast

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.) Principal exterior materials of the property: <u>Aluminum</u>

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The former naval vessel PCF-816 (Patrol Craft Fast – also known by the term 'Swift Boat') is an aluminum-hull patrol boat fabricated by Seawart Seacraft of Morgan City, Louisiana in 1968. In total, 171 of these craft were built between 1965 and 1970 in three model variations (Mark I, Mark II, & Mark III). PCF816, a Mark II variant, is located at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, 1492 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. PCF816 is 51'-6" in length, with a shallow draft of 4'-6", and a beam of 13'-7", displacing 22 tons. The vessel is constructed entirely of aluminum, carries 780 gallons of fuel, and has a top speed of 25-30 knots, powered by two Detroit Diesel 12V71 N engines that generate 480 h.p. each. PCF816 features a .50 caliber gun mount and 81 mm mortar mount on its aft deck (the gun is affixed on the rear mount, the mortar is not), and two .50 caliber gun mounts and guns in a gun tub above the helm. The vessel appears largely as it did during its relevant period of service (1968-1969), with the exception as noted that some armaments are not in place, a railing has been added around the rear of the ship, some benches have been added fore and aft, and a modern radar fixture is visible above the helm. The Museum estimates that the vessel retains approximately 90% of its historical integrity.

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Narrative Description

The U.S. Navy-designated PCF-816 (Mk-II) is classified as a Patrol Craft-Fast, and was one of 171 PCFs, always known as 'Swift Boats', that were built between 1965 and 1970 in three different designs ('Mark I', 'Mark II', and 'Mark III'), of which PCF-816 was a Mark II version. As noted above, the Museum estimates that this vessel maintains 90% of its integrity, and its integrity to the eye could be increased to nearly 100% with the removal of the railings and benches that were installed to meet requirements for conveyance of passengers around the aft deck and on the front deck. Otherwise, the prime visual difference that exists when compared to its original form is the inclusion of a small radome at the top of the original post to provide the benefits of modern radar capability when voyaging.

A visual review of PCF-816 from stem to stern illustrates the following features. The transom features the name of the vessel, 'PCF816', the name of the hailing port, 'San Diego', and the inscription '50 NS 6824'. This inscription indicates that PCF-816 is 50 feet in length, that it was built in 1968, and that it was the 24th keel laid in that year by the manufacturer. On the aft deck, the eye is drawn to two particular features: a .50 caliber machine mount in the center of the deck, and an ammunition locker set against the rear railing above the transom, which contained thousands of rounds of ball, armor piercing, incendiary, and tracer rounds. Less immediately noticeable are the two covers for the aft fuel tanks, and forward of those the two heavy engine hatch covers that house PCF-816's two original Detroit Diesel 12V71N engines. The engine room also contains a 6.0 kilowatt Onan diesel-driven AC generator that provides 120 volt 50 amp power for the vessel's signal lights, refrigerator, and stove. There also is a wheel affixed to the left rear wall of the pilothouse superstructure as an alternate for navigating/docking.

Looking forward from the engine room covers, one finds the main deck hatch on the aft end of the deckhouse that leads to the galley, below deck. The galley is striking for the presence of stained wood cabinetry on a vessel that is otherwise almost wholly constructed of aluminum. This relatively cramped compartment includes both counter space and a sink on the starboard side of the compartment, and a table area on the port side of the galley capable of seating four crew. There are four portholes in the galley area. To the left forward portion of the galley is a ladder that leads to the pilothouse or helm.

At the forward end of the galley, a hatch leads to a small stairwell that descends to the crew quarters, which houses eight bunks, which are basically narrow aluminum platforms anchored to the ceiling and held in suspension by link chains. The crew quarters also contains a head, and a modest storage area. An escape hatch on the forward main deck provides an alternate means of entry to the crew quarters.

The pilothouse is characterized by its three large rectangular windows providing excellent visibility, the single seat for the helmsman, with the wheel in front of the helmsman's seat, the two polished metallic throttles at the helmsman's left hand, and a variety of gauges and read-outs

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on the panel directly in front of the wheel. All of these indicators are original analog instruments: there have been no replacements with electronic counterparts, including the domed compass. The only visible pieces of equipment that have been added since the vessel's initial service are the radar screen installation to the right of the wheel and some communication devices mounted on the ceiling above the right-side window. On the left side of the console below the window is a wooden structure that includes a binocular holder and a couple of small shelves for maps, charts, and logs. Directly behind the helmsman's chair is a stair that leads to the gun tub, which features the two .50 caliber machine guns on their mounts.

Immediately forward of the pilothouse is a hatch leading down to the crew quarters. The Museum has installed two small benches on either side of the venting structure in the center of the deck, in front of which is a cover plate providing access to the anchor locker where the line attached to the anchor is stored.

PCF-816 is painted in Navy Gray throughout. The historical integrity of PCF-816 is enhanced by the fact that the vessel is located 300 yards from Coronado Island and the North Island Naval Station, where PCF-816 first served during the Vietnam War period. As a working historical vessel, PCF-816 makes multiple trips weekly on San Diego Bay, and provides visitors tours that include passage by key active Naval sites, including the North Island Naval Base and the Navy's submarine yard.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
 - D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

- B. Removed from its original location



- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- - E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

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- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.) <u>Military</u> <u>Architecture</u>

Period of Significance 1968-1971

Significant Dates

Launched 1968 Decommissioned 1971

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.) N/A_____

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder Sewart Seacraft, Louisiana PCF 816 Name of Property San Diego, California County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

PCF-816 is a United States Navy Patrol Craft, Fast, completed in 1968. eligible under Criteria A and C. Criterion A eligibility, military history, is related specifically to the vessel's role in training and preparation of thousands of sailors who then served on this vessel type in the Vietnam War. Criterion C eligibility, architecture, is based on the vessel's status as last intact vessel of its type, and that this vessel, which almost wholly maintains its historical integrity, is one of only two known examples of its type still in full operational shape, and the only known example that largely retains the appearance and structural features that characterize the vessel type during its relevant years of service. Between the years 1965 and 1970, Swift Boats played integral roles both in coastal patrol and riverine patrol and interdiction activities in the context of the Vietnam War. The activities of PCF-816, as a training and testing vessel at Coronado Island in San Diego, and then at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, CA, were essential to preparing American sailors for their roles in a war that offered unprecedented challenges for American military personnel, including Swift Boat sailors' interdiction activities along the coast and on the inland waterways of Vietnam. The property is eligible at the local level of significance, with a period of significance from 1968, the year of its completion, to 1971, the year the property was declared surplus and removed from US Navy training service. The property's period of significance ends less than fifty years ago, but the period of significance overlaps the 50 year period by only a few years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A:

PCF-816 is eligible for *National Register of Historic Places* Criterion A in the area of Military history, based on the ship's role in preparing hundreds of sailors for specific roles engaging in coastal patrol and inland waterway patrol and interdiction in Vietnam during the Vietnam War years of 1968-1970, first in San Diego (based at Coronado Island at the Naval Amphibious Base there), and later at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Northern California.

To fully appreciate the historical value of PCF-816 specifically, one must have a baseline understanding of the need driving the development of the Swift Boats and the roles these vessels undertook in the context of the Vietnam War. In February 1965 a staff study by the Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command Vietnam, called for the development of a naval craft capable of meeting the needs of the war effort in a counterinsurgency environment. In essence, the study noted the absence of any acceptable existing naval craft, and laid out the specifications for what would become the Swift Boat.

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Shortly thereafter, the first four Swift Boats were delivered to the Navy, including two of those that were delivered to the Navy as proof-of-concept and training vessels in San Diego in August 1965 (PCF-816 was not one of those). Ultimately, 3,000 sailors and 600 officers would be trained on and deployed to serve on a total of 117 Swift Boats in Vietnam, beginning in late 1965. Between late 1965 and 1969 the PCFs were deployed to five Coastal Divisions in Vietnam, where they conducted coastal patrols and interdiction, with sufficient success that much of the oceanic resupply that the North Vietnamese had executed was forced on to inland trails. With the ascension of Admiral Zumwalt to command of America's naval forces in Vietnam in 1969, the focus of the Swift Boats turned from blue water (oceanic) patrols to 'brown water' operations in the rivers, canals, and smaller waterways of Vietnam. This change of strategic focus led to the shift of training operations from San Diego to Mare Island in Vallejo, CA, which provided conditions suitable for brown-water training.

In 1969 the United States Navy began a process of 'Vietnamization', which involved the transfer of responsibility for direct war activities to the South Vietnamese. By December 1970 responsibility for all five of the Navy's divisions and those divisions' boats was devolved to the South Vietnamese Army.

While PCF-816 did not serve in Vietnam, the significance of PCF-816 is based on its use as a training vessel in San Diego and Mare Island. Those sailors and officers who would operate the Swift Boats in conditions of war required training on the vessel that would prepare them to undertake perilous duties once in the field. PCF-816 was fabricated in Louisiana and delivered to the Navy in San Diego in July 1968. Over its approximately two years of Naval service (the exact date of PCF-816's retirement from service and delivery to the Maltese government is not known), PCF-816 was responsible for training 600 sailors and officers: the equivalent of one-sixth of all those American personnel who would serve aboard the Swift Boats on active duty in Vietnam.

PCF-816 was one of just six Swift Boats that were designated for proof-of-concept work and training on this side of the Pacific. Swift Boats retain an iconic status in the context of Vietnam War history in part because they were indeed fast craft, but also relatively fragile, with hulls of ¹/₄" aluminum, and were generally quite physically stressed by the time they were handed over to the Vietnamese. PCF-816, while serving for over 30 years with the Maltese Coast Guard after completion of its role as a training vessel, was never subjected to the physical strains of wartime conflict, which accounts for its relatively excellent condition at this point in time. The Swift Boats' iconic status is also a function, in part, of the relationships that developed among those who crewed them. These crews of six generally were set prior to deployment to Vietnam, and given the closeness of conditions that crews shared and the dangers inherent in these vessels' missions, the ability to develop symbiotic working and living relationships was paramount in a way that few other Naval personnel experienced. PCF-816 made it possible for crews of young Americans with no prior war experience to initiate their duties in Vietnam with a measure of confidence in their ability to handle the primary tool used in the achievement of their mission.

PCF 816 Name of Property Criterion C: Architecture

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PCF-816 is eligible under National Register Criterion C as the only fully intact example of its class of naval craft. Only two surviving examples exist, and PCF-186 retains a much greater level of historic integrity.

PCF-816 as a Unique Example of its Type

The Patrol Craft Fast boat type was designed to meet a specific demand of American naval forces in the context of the nature of the fighting take place in the Vietnam War, and to fulfill the strategies evolved for responding to the changing circumstances of that conflict.

PCFs were designed for their speed, maneuverability, and ability to carry significant armaments, including 50 caliber machine guns fore and aft, and a rocket launcher. Swift Boats served in the context of two major operations in Vietnam: Operation Market Time; and Operation Sealords. Operation Market Time arose in the wake of the interception of a trawler serving as an arms resupply vessel along the Vietnamese coast. Market Time, which involved the deployment of a large number of boats and ships at various distances up to 40 miles from shore along an 1,100 mile 'defensive sea area', with additional air support, was executed with the idea of creating a deep and impenetrable barrier to enemy resupply vessels. Swift Boats were the dominant vessel in the first cordon of ships placed closest to the Vietnamese coastline. As noted earlier, Operation Market Time was quite successful, forcing much of the North Vietnamese weapons resupply activity to inland waterways and trails. However, the Swift Boats proved somewhat perilous themselves in the context of open seas, being rather forward-heavy and prone to violent pitching even in moderate seas.

Indeed, with the inauguration of Operation Sealords, and the refocusing of Swift Boats' efforts toward Vietnam's rivers and the Mekong Delta, the vessels proved that they had additional deficits: it was widely commented that Swift Boats were too small for ocean-going service and too large for river navigation. Once moved to 'brown water' operations, the Swift Boats faced the challenges of working through the monsoons, and surviving bullets, rockets, groundings, and other indignities with their ¹/₄"-thick aluminum hulls. Even given those realities, review of the memoirs of Swift Boat crews makes clear that they held (and continue to hold) these craft in great affection. Swift Boats were indeed swift, and their powerful twin engines made it possible at times to catch up to or outrun the enemy. They were sufficiently maneuverable to navigate the canals, rivers, and estuaries that characterized much of Vietnam, and many of the successes of Swift Boat operations related to operating in and liberating territory, giving the South Vietnamese access to territory that they had never held before. The men who crewed the PCFs did so at significant personal cost, from great physical discomfort to injury and death. The boats themselves were both a necessary and imperfect solution to a variety of problems that were neither readily defined nor easily solved, and so mirrored the larger realities stemming from engagement in war.

In June, 1995 David P. Marion, an Army Captain who owed his life and that of his fellows to the work of the PCF-56 crew while under attack at An Hoa, attended the dedication of PCF-1, on

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static display at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy. The only other known static Swift Boat example remains at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, in San Diego, CA. The former PCF-2, now known as the R/V (research vessel) Matthew F. Maury, remains a working boat at Tidewater Community College in Virginia Beach, VA. It is unknown whether other Swift Boat examples remain in working order outside the United States. Museum staff who have investigated this have found no evidence of such boats. PCF-816 came to the Maritime Museum of San Diego following 30 years of service with the Armed Forces of Malta; a second PCF donated to Malta was destroyed in an accident. While it is nearly impossible to verify, it is highly likely that PCF-816 is the only Swift Boat remaining in the world that is fully operable; that retains the great majority of its historical integrity; that is housed and cared for in an environment that fully values the vessel as a unique nautical and historical example; that is within the environment in which it fulfilled its mission; and that provides visitors with an authentic experience in that environment.

The reverberations of the Vietnam War can seem as profound and immediate today as they have at any time in the 52 years since America initiated major activity in that sphere. The Swift Boats played key roles in the context of America's involvement in that war, and PCF-816 stands as the lone known exemplar retaining the near-complete integrity of its type.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Cutler, Thomas, Brown Water, Black Berets, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 1998.

Friedman, Norman, US Small Combatants: An Illustrated History, Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD, 1987.

Gugliotta, Guy, John Yeoman, and Neva Sullaway, *Swift Boats at War in Vietnam*, Stackpole Books, Guilford, CT, 2017.

Hawley, Kent, Brownwater Navy in Vietnam, Internet. Retrieved 25 October 2012.

Wasikowski, Larry, Coastal Squadron One, 10/12/2012. Internet. Retrieved 29 October 2012.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- _____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _____ previously listed in the National Register
- _____previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _____designated a National Historic Landmark
- _____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
- _____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- _____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #_____

Primary location of additional data:

- _____ State Historic Preservation Office
- ____ Other State agency
- _____ Federal agency
- ____ Local government
- _____ University
- ____ Other
 - Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property < 1 acre_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84:	
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places) 1. Latitude: N 32 Degrees, 43.223772	Longitude: W 117 Degrees, 10.426884
2. Latitude:	Longitude:
3. Latitude:	Longitude:
4. Latitude:	Longitude:

Or UTM References Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or	NAD 1983	
1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The vessel is located within the Port of San Diego leasehold at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, 1492 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination of PCF 816 is solely for the vessel itself. Therefore, the boundary for the purposes of this nomination includes the vessel only.

11. Form Prepared By

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: PCF-816 (Patrol Craft Fast 816, 'Swift Boat')

City or Vicinity: San Diego

County: San Diego State: CA

Photographer: Mark Gallant

Date Photographed: All photographs taken 6/20/2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 10. View of transom looking west/northwest from dock.

2. View of aft deck with .50 caliber machine gun and ammo locker looking east/northeast.

- 3. View of engine compartment, aft deck.
- 4. View of galley, counter area, port side of ship.
- 5. View of galley, table area, port side of ship.
- 6. View (partial) of crew quarters, forward, starboard side of ship.
- 7. View of helm of ship looking west.

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8. View of the front of the pilot house, looking east from the bow.

9. View of the vessel number on bow of hull, port side, from dock looking west/northwest.

10. View of mast with radar, mast light, anchor light, and flags from port side looking north.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

PCF 816 Name of Property Figure Log San Diego, California County and State

- 1. Certification of Origin for Swift Boat PCF816
- 2. Certificate of Build and Quasi Title
- 3. Side view line drawing of craft
- 4. Deck & side view drawings of craft
- 5. Photo of PCF816 at dock in Coronado, CA, Amphibious Base, circa 1968
- 6. PCF816/P24 on patrol in Malta
- 7. PCF816/P24 on patrol in Malta
- 8. Swift boats docked in Vietnam
- 9. PCF 816 ready to be loaded on Maersk Lines Bavaria, Port of Malta
- 10. PCF 816 loaded aboard Maersk Lines Bavaria, Malta
- 11. PCF 816 loaded aboard flatbed truck, Norfolk, VA
- 12. PCF 816 arriving in San Diego
- 13. PCF 816 prepares for overhaul in shipyard
- 14. PCF 816 contained in preparation for stripping and sanding
- 15. Congressman Duncan Hunter assisting with grinding
- 16. Instruments removed in preparation of stripping and sanding
- 17. Sanding and priming procedure
- 18. Rebuilt engines being reinstalled
- 19. PCF 816 completed by "Dirty Boat Guys" Swift Boat veterans
- 20. Preparing to launch PCF 816
- 21. Swift Boat Veterans prepared to depart in restored PCF 816