U. S. S. CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History, calendar year 1968; forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5750.2A

Encl: (1) USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) Command History, calendar year 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

ISHAM LINDER

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USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)

SHIPS HISTORY
(1 JAN 1968 - 31 DEC 1968)

INTRODUCTION

After being commissioned in April of 1967, the USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) proceeded to WESTPAC where it relieved the USS DULUTH (LPD-6) and began to operate with Amphibious Ready Group ALFA on 13 November 1967.

The Amphibious Ready Group of Task Group 76.4 had been operating on station off the I Corps Area of South Vietnam.

On 31 December 1967 the CLEVELAND, commanded by Captain Robert A. HOGSED, proceeded in the backloading of Battalion Landing Team 2/4. Progress was minimal due to 10 to 12 foot surf at the mouth of the Cua Viet and Hue Rivers.

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High surf precluded boat operations on 1 January.

On 2 January, CLEVELAND backloaded 157 personnel and 32 vehicles from COL CO Ramp, Hue River Mouth. Upon completion of backload, the ship proceeded to the vicinity of the Cua Viet River Mouth at 20 knots. While enroute, the ship received 200 BLT 2/4 additional personnel and 9,000 pounds of seabags by H-34 helos. Upon arrival in the vicinity of the Cua Viet River Mouth, 3,400 pounds of cargo, 22 personnel, and 2 vehicles were backloaded from the NSA ramp at the river mouth. In view of the fact that surf conditions were still considered unsatisfacrory for safe LVT operations, on 3 January, the decision was made to backload the 11 LVTs by LCM-8. CLEVELAND also backloaded 281 personnel, 109 pallets, and one vehicle. Two LCM-8s were dispatched to Dong Ha that evening with orders to remain overnight in order to load the last 70 pallets and a rough terrain forklift. Unable to receive cargo over the side due to sea conditions IWO JIMA with CTG 76.4 embarked, departed the OpArea at 031600H, with a destination of Subic Bay. Due to CLEVELAND's wet well cargo handling capability in moderately heavy weather, she remained in the vicinity of the Cua Viet River Mouth to complete the backload of all remaining BLT 2/4 personnel, cargo and vehicles.

At 0810H, 4 January, CLEVELAND completed the backload of BLT 2/4, having embarked ECHO and FOXTROT Companies, WHISKEY and HOTEL Batteries, an LSC Detachment, AMTRAC and Engineer Platoons. In addition to CLEVELAND's embarkation team, 61 vehicles and 174 pallets were received onboard for further transfer to LPH-2 in Subic. Upon grounding out of the last LCM-8 CLEVELAND proceeded independently to Subic Bay for upkeep.

With arrival at Subic Bay on 6 January, CLEVELAND moored to Leyte Pier, Cubi Point, ballasted down and commenced offloading troops and vehicles from the well deck, while at the same time offloading with the B & A crane to pierside. The entire offloading operation was completed in record time. CLEVELAND also commenced its first upkeep since 17 October 1967. The major job was a replacement of batter boards in the well deck which had been damaged by extensive well deck boat and LVT operations during the heavy monsoon weather. This job was completed just prior to moving out to anchorage for backloading BLT 2/4 on 14 January.

A Battalion Landing Exercise, Hilltop XIX, was scheduled for 15-16 January to be conducted in Subic Bay prior to the departure of ARG/SLF ALFA for VN on the 17th. However, due to the deteriorating tactical situation in the I Corps, brought about by increased concentration of enemy forces in the Khe San area of Quang Tri Province, the exercise was canceled and TG 76.4 departed for the I Corps area on 15 January, one day ahead of schedule.

While enroute to RVN, the initiating directive for Operation BALLISTIC ARMOR was received with D-Day to depend upon the tactical situation in I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ). Enroute to and after arrival in the Cua Viet operating areas on 17 January, troop and crew training was conducted on all phases of amphibious procedures due to the limited recent training by embarked troops.

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On 18 January, LTCOL WEISE, Commanding Officer BLT 2/4, and members of his staff arrived on the CLEVELAND to brief embarked Marine officers and selected ship's company officers on the tactical situation in the First Corps Tactical ZONE and, in particular the area of Khe San, in anticipation of Operation BALLISTIC ARMOR.

COL MEYERS, SLF ALFA Commanding Officer, accompanied by LTCOL WEISE, Commanding Officer of BLT 2/4, arrived on CLEVELAND on 21 January for a tour of the ship and a demonstration of the capabilities of an LPD.

A flash message at 221245H set in motion Operation BALLISTIC ARMOR. Two hours and forty five minutes after receipt of the message directing Amphibious Ready Group ALFA to conduct an airborne amphibious landing, elements of BLT 2/4 were landed in the Objective Area north of Hue. In support of the operation, on 23 January, 252 troops, 27,000 pounds of cargo and four vehicles were lifted by helo from the CLEVELAND in a three hour period. FOXTROT Company and HOTEL Battery were held in reserve in CLEVELAND. CG III MAF assumed operational control of elements of SLF ALFA at 231130H.

Having been relieved by First Air Cavalry Division, U. S. Army, Operation BALLISTIC ARMOR was terminated at 261200H and CLEVELAND backloaded selected elements of SLF ALFA by LCM-8 from COL Co causeway, Hue River Mouth. All troops and equipment were backloaded by 261821H in preparation for operation FORTRESS ATTACK on 27 January.

FORTRESS ATTACK, a completely helicopter borne landing in the vicinity of Cam Lo had an L-HOUR of 270900H. TG 76.4 H-34 helos were augmented by TG 76.5 CH-46s. This augmentation allowed the CLEVELAND to debark 604 troops, 12 vehicles and 61,000 pounds of cargo on D-Day. D-Day was also the occasion of the 1,000th helo landing on the CLEVELAND helo deck. A VALLEY FORGE CH-46 became the 1,000th helo on deck, fortunately during a lull in operations, and the occasion was celebrated with a presentation of a cake to the flight crew. Offloading for FORTRESS ATTACK was completed with the transfer of 3.3 tons of "4.2" ammunition on 28 January. CLEVELAND and the other units of TG 76.4 remained in a supporting role for BLT 2/4 with the IWO JIMA retaining the MEDEVAC duty while the CLEVELAND, COMSTOCK, and WEXFORD COUNTY furnished logistic support.

During the TET Offensive on 30 January, while Da Nang was placed under a "red alert", CLEVELAND loaded 80 pallets of Class V and II pallets of Class I L-FORM while anchored in Da Nang Harbor. The ship set Weapons Condition III and maximum inport security. In answer to a request for assistance from Commander Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet, CLEVELAND got underway upon completion of loading L-FORM and replenished the USS COOK (APD 130) with 64,522 gallons NSFO utilizing a "close in" rig. This was a highly successful evolution and again gave evidence of the flexibility of the LPD.

While in support of FORTRESS ATTACK as well as other operations, the embarked LCM-8s were utilized frequently to move spare parts, vehicles and other material up the Cua Viet River to Dong Ha and to bring out vehicles and troops for rehabilitation or rotation.

Long periods of op-area steaming were well used for exercises and training periods. UNREPS were scheduled about every 4-5 days with alternate TG 76.4 ships being designated for AO UNREPS. This alternation of UNREP assured the TRANSCOR material and personnel for the TG ships would always be received. UNREPS were primarily scheduled for periods of darkness.

On 2 February CLEVELAND hosted a USO "Soldiers Show".

With increased VC/NVA activity in the ICTZ and increased strikes at airfields, the concept of "Helo Havens" was adopted. All TG 76.4 and 76.5 ships with helo deck capability were made available as a night time place of safety for helicopters and their crews. If an airbase was under, or threatened by attack, Army and Marine helos would seek the safety of the Ready Group's helo decks for the night and depart, generally around first light. TACAN and UHF homers were used to vector in the helos, and the Army soon learned to use Fleet Common to raise the ships on radio. The helo crews were always appreciative of a hot shower, clean linen, good food and most of all a peaceful nights sleep. This "Helo Haven' concept was in effect from the TET offensive and continued throughout the deployment.

The increased VC/NVA activity denied the normal supply channels to the Northern ICTZ during early February. The CLEVELAND and COMSTOCK were designated to move critical Army and Marine ammunition from DaNang to Camp Evans and Hue respectively. On 7 February, CLEVELAND loaded 550 tons of ammunition in DaNang Harbor for transport to a location off the DMZ for further transfer "in country". Loading was complicated by DaNang once again being under attack. Maximum security measures were taken at anchor including the use of hand grenades at random locations and times, an armed picket boat, propellor shafts turning over at 05 RPM, and armed sentries topside. During this loading evolution, a rate of over a ton a minute, sustained over an 8 hour period, was achieved.

The majority of the day-light periods from 8-18 February were spent on station off the DMZ transferring 400 tons of ammunition by helo. Army CH-54s were the mainstay of the ammunition lift, being able to lift 8 pallets weighing 7 tons, externally, each trip. CH-53s and CH-47s were employed frequently also. The offload was delayed by bad weather, low ceilings, non-availability of helos and escort gunships (UH-1Es). Helicopters with external lifts of ammunition must have a minimum ceiling of 1500 feet to preclude being a favored target of enemy small arms fire.

With continued bad weather, on the 19th of February, the decision was made to deliver the remaining 200 tons of ammunition to Dong Ha via ARG/LCM-8 boats. The offload was completed the next day despite the boats being harrassed by sporadic rounds of incoming mortar fire.

On the night of 19 February, a Marine CH-53 went down at sea between Phu Bai and Danang. CLEVELAND joined other ships in a SAR mission under control of CTF 76.

From completion of the critical ammunition offload until 14 March, the termination of FORTRESS ATTACK, CLEVELAND remained in the holding area conducting periodic Admin/Log trips to DaNang. LCM-8s were dispatched for intership transfer and movement of BLT 2/4 equipment, personnel, and supplies to Dong Ha, the Cua Viet River Mouth ramp and Mai Xa Thi. The routine was broken by on-station relief of ACDIV 13 boat crews by personnel of ACDIV 11 detachment "N" on 9 March. As the enemy action, on Sunday, 10 March, an ammunition/POL fire was started at the staging area,in vicinity of Cua Viet River Mouth ramp. Upon loss of communications with the NSA representative, a CLEVELAND LCM-8 with the Combat Cargo Officer embarked was ordered to establish liaision concerning the status of the fire and the need for assistance. As secondary explosions continued, assistance in the form of medical personnel, MEDEVAC and additional firefighting teams with equipment was requested. CLEVELAND and ALAMO responded with rescue and assistance teams and medical personnel being dispatched by LCM-8; while the IWO JIMA dispatched firefighting equipment by helo and also furnished helo MEDEVAC. Secondary explosions caused by exploding ammunition severely jeopardized firefighting efforts. Personnel casualties were helo evacuated to the IWO JIMA while CLEVELAND received six casualties via LCM-8.

With the termination of FORTRESS ATTACK on 14 March, BLT 2/4 remained "in country" in support of Operation SALINE II while units of Ready Group ALFA proceeded independently to Subic Bay for upkeep.

Upon arrival in Subic Bay, on the afternoon of 16 March, 59 BLT 2/4 vehicles were offloaded for maintenance;as well as ammunition which was offloaded for inventory and repalletization. Major upkeep items were the repair of well deck batter boards and overhaul of attached LCM-8s. SRF Subic Bay once again did outstanding work on the batter boards, but when CLEVELAND shifted anchorage on 24 March, for backloading BLT 2/4 equipment and material, it was discovered that the work on 3 of the 4 LCM-8s was unsatisfactory. This necessitated returning the boats to the SRF Boat Annex for emergency additional corrective action during the night.

CLEVELAND departed Subic Bay independently on 25 March, conducted gunnery exercises, and then proceeded to ICTZ South Vietnam where, on 27 March, ARG ALFA was reconstituted and commenced support of BLT 2/4 employed in the Cua Viet River area in Operation FORTRESS ATTACK II.

On 5 and 12 April, the CLEVELAND Chaplain went "in country" for three and five days respectively, on duty with BLT 2/4.

CLEVELAND had the distinction of being the flagship for CTF 76, COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT, from 14-18 April when RADM William W. BEHRENS, USN, shifted his flag to the CLEVELAND while his regular flagship, USS ESTES (AGC 12), was out of the area.

On Thursday, 18 April, the CLEVELAND's Commanding Officer and four ships company officers were escorted by a Civic Action Officer of NSA DaNang on a tour of that city and outlying villages including a Vietnamese hospital. A contribution of $380 from the crew of the CLEVELAND was presented to the NSA Civic Action Group for the purpose of assisting in the construction of a school building in the village of Tam TAo near DaNang.

On the same date, the CLEVELAND's Medical Officer and two Hospital Corpmen returned from a three day MEDCAP visit to the villages of Nam Tho and Hans Hien Dong where they treated approximately 200 Vietnamese civilians.

Communication Security (COMSEC) Team Two, Detachment Alfa, reported on board 13 April to monitor ARG communication circuits. After several days it was reported that the flag configured LPD's, without the staff embarked served as an ideal platform the the COMSEC operations.

LVT training was conducted on 19 and 20 April for ALFA, BRAVO, HOTEL, and SIERRA Companies of the 1st AMTRAC BN stationed ashore at Cua Viet River Mouth.

On Sunday, the 21st of April, the CLEVELAND celebrated her first anniversary. CTG 76.4, Captain T.C. HARBERT and CTG 79.4, LTCOL FIELDS, participated in a birthday party as honored guests. The events included fishing parties, sporting events, a barbecue cook-out on helo deck, three bands, and various tournaments. As this most enjoyable day was ending, a CLEVELAND LCM-8 participated in the rescue at sea of two USAF Pilots who had ejected from their disabled F-4 while returning from a mission over North Vietnam. As a coincidence, the senior pilot rescued was a resident of Cleveland, Ohio.

The ship's Medical Officer and two corpmen departed 25 April for a five day MEDCAP visit. The team resided in the village of Hua Cuong, treating over 400 civilians. The doctor and two corpmen received certificates of appreciation signed by RADM J. B. OSBORN, COMNAVSUPPACT, DaNang.

CLEVELAND conducted her first vertical replenishment on 28 April, receiving 9.5 tons of stores and 9 tons of provisions from USS NIAGRA FALLS (AFS-3). The flexibility and rapidity of transfer using two CH-46s was impressive.

On 1 May, during unusually heavy action and enemy contact north of the Cua Viet River, the IWO JIMA began receiving MEDVAC cases from "in country" BLT 2/4. In response to a request for medical personnel assistance, the CLEVELAND's Medical Officer and two corpsmen were sent to assist Surgical Team 10, embarked aboard IWO JIMA. With the IWO JIMA and VALLEY FORGE (TG 76.5) saturated with casualties, the Hospital ship REPOSE furnished additional medical facilities. The CLEVELAND was stationed in the vicinity of the REPOSE to act as a communication relay ship. Contact was retained with the IWO JIMA via the KY-8 covered circuits while Fleet Common and flashing light were used with the REPOSE. This relay extended until 7 May at which time the casualty rate was reduced to the point where TG facilities were once again able to handle the unusual casualty flow.

CLEVELAND proceeded to DaNang on 13 May to embark COMPHIBRON SEVEN, Prospective CTG 76.4, and CADRE STAFF to be transferred to IWO JIMA the following morning. Also on 14 May, ETN2 STONE, was sent TAD to the WESTCHESTER COUNTY to assist in the repair of their SRC-21 radios. This instance was representative of many such requests for technical assistance that CLEVELAND was able to provide because of a depth of qualified personnel.

On 15 May CLEVELAND conducted her 29th and final UNREP with USS CASTOR (AKS-1) receiving 7 tons of stores. Certain difficulties encountered during UNREPS could be attributed to a lack of familiarity with the LPD type by the support ship. This condition was aggravated by the lack of UNREP station data

for the LPD-7 class in the COMSERVPAC INST 03180.6. One of the most unique physical characteristics of the LPD-7 is the location of UNREP stations. These are considerably aft, which complicates station keeping and the tending ot transfer rigs. Other features affecting underway replenishment operations to a lesser degree are: (1) forward position of conning station (Bridge wings), (2) forward location of pivot point, (3) helo deck catwalk and other fixed appurtenances extending 12-15 feet outboard from hull, (4) fueling at sea winch located starboardside station 1, (5) height of UNREP stations and tripods, 36 feet and 54 feet respectively above the water line, and (6) a large freeboard and sail area, especially forward.

On 18 May, RADM J. B. SMITH, USN, Prospective COMPHIBPAC and party arrived for lunch and a deomonstration of CLEVELAND's capabilities. Upon completion of the visit, LVTs which had been brought on board from "in country", were offloaded. CLEVELAND was detached to proceed independently to Subic Bay for upkeep and its relief of ARG ALFA duties by USS DUBUOUE (LPD-8).

Upon arrival in Subic Bay on the afternoon of the 20th of May, all remaining BLT 2/4 vehicles and baggage, Class I B/A, and the LSU block of supplies were staged ashore for furhter transfer to DUBUOUE. The four embarked LCM-8s were detached to report to their parent unit for upkeep.

The DUBUOUE arrived in Subic on 24 May with turn-over briefings being held on 24 and 25 May. On 26 May CLEVELAND was relieved as a unit of Amphibious Ready Group ALFA.

CLEVELAND departed from Subic Bay on 28 May for Hong Kong, arriving on 30 May for five days of liberty and recreation. The period of 4-5 June was spent enroute fo Buckner Bay, Okinawa for the purpose of offloading L-FORM. Pier space was not available at Buckner Bay. Unloading at anchorage, however, proved to be no problem. CG NINTH MAB arranged for one YFU, one LCU, three LCM-6, and the necessary beach support for an expeditious offload. 550 S/T of L-FORM were offloaded in less than eleven hours.

With adequate boat support and good weather, the loading and unloading of cargo from an LPD can be accomplished even more rapidly at anchor than alongside a pier. This is accomplished with the full utilization of the six well deck monorail cranes in addition to the B&A crane employed in loading/unloading a boat along starboard side.

The ship got underway 8 June for Yokosuka, Japan arriving there on 10 June for a five day upkeep period. On 15 June CLEVELAND became a member of Task Unit 16.9.7 with COMPHIBRON THREE embarked in IWO JIMA as Commander of the Task Unit. An 18.4 knot SOA required the CLEVELAND and IWO JIMA to depart Yokisuka prior to 0700 on 15 June. Favorable seas and turns for 19.5 knots enabled the Task Unit to arrive in Pearl Harbor at 220800W.

After clearing U. S. Customs, and satisfying the requirements of the Quarantine and Agriculture inspection, there was a brief but pleasant opportunity to enjoy the island of Oahu.

During the abbreviated in-port period, the Commanding Officer of the CLEVELAND joined COMPHIBRON THREE for a call on Deputy CINCPACFLT. With the departure of COMPHIBRON THREE for TAD in Washington, D.C., the Commanding Officer of the IWO JIMA assumed OTC of the Task Unit for further transit to San Diego.

The Pearl Harbor to San Diego transit again necessitated an extremely high SOA of 18.3 knots. To maintain PIM CLEVELAND was required to make 215 RPM with 216.8 RPM being the requirement for Full Power at the injection temperature encountered and with the existing displacement.

At 0900 on the morning of the 28th of June, VADM J.B. SMITH, COMPHIBPAC, arrived by helicopter to welcome the return of CLEVELAND to CONUS after an 8-1/2 month deployment to WESTPAC.

July was designated as a post deployment leave and upkeep period.

An Awards Presentation and Command Personnel Inspection was held on 26 July in preparation for the July 31 Change of Command. At this ceremony, Captain R.A. HOGSED was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain I. W. LINDER. Rear Admiral BEHRENS, COMPHIBGRU ONE, was in attendance. Captain T. C. HARBERT, COMPHIBRON THREE, the principle speaker, presented the Bronze Star with Combat "V" to Captain HOGSED.

The upkeep period was continued through August. On August 4th, eighteen WAF's from Norton Air Force Base were guests of the CLEVELAND. They attended Protestent Worship Services, had brunch, and toured the ship. The following day, seventeen senior Marine Officers, attending Landing Force Training Unit schools, were given a complete tour of spaces which would be involved in Marine activities. On August 7th, Captain A. M. SACHETT, of the Bureau of Naval Personnel for unit Commanders and EASTPAC Commanding Officers, presented a briefing, hosted by the CLEVELAND, on Officer Retention. In port damage control exercises occupied the 9th, through 11th of August. An Independent Steaming Exercise was conducted from August 12th until August 15th. During the period all departments were exercised at general drills, however, difficulties were encountered when inclement weather precluded some intended training and a Fleet Exercise minimized the available services.

Vice Admiral W. W. PRATT, COMPHIBTRAPAC, returned a call on PHIBRON THREE on the 17th, by touring the various spaces on the CLEVELAND. Also on this date the Commanding Officer and certain Department Heads attended a pre-sail conference for BLTLEX 2-68.

BLTLEX 2-68 began with the CLEVELAND, as a unit of TG 176.4, taking three ACRON LCM-8's into the well for further transfer to the BELLE GROVE (LSD-2) off Camp Del Mar. The exercise commenced on 19 August. Upon anchoring at anchorage off the Del Mar boat basin,the LPD-7 commenced to load troops, vehicles, and cargo. High surf would not allow the LVT's engaged in the exercise to leave the beach. As a result of the inability of the LVT's to enter the surf, CTG 176.4, COMPHIBRON FIVE embarked on the OKINAWA, ordered the CLEVELAND to remain at Del Mar until after first light. If at that time loading of the LVT's were accomplished, the CLEVELAND was to rejoin the main body of the group which had proceeded to the OpArea. This was done and

consequently a new H-Hour established, with the landing force being ordered ashore at 201400T.

With completion of the rehearsal landing and critique, the units of the exercise proceeded independently intending to rendezvous off White Beach, Camp Pendleton, California. Other ships involved were the USS OKINAWA (LPH-3), JEROME COUNTY (LST-848), and BELLE GROVE (LSD-2). An underway launch of the 11 LVT's for an 0800 H-Hour began the off-load of troops, equipment, and vehicles which was complete by 1535T on the 21st. Detached at 210700T from TG 176.4, the CLEVELAND exercised at damage control drills enroute to San Diego.

The period of 23 to 29 August was spent in port. Mr. S. Giannccolo of the West Coast Shock Test Facility at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard, briefed all officers concerning the forthcoming shock test. The briefing was 27 August. The IWO JIMA was inspected at damage control exercises on the 28th by the CLEVELAND, which was inspected by the TULARE on the 29th. Additionally, the Naval Electronics Labortory in San Diego inspected the electronic equipment in preparation for the shock test. The inspection continued during 1 September.

CLEVELAND personnel assisted COMPHIBRON THREE in the Administrative Inspection of the IWO JIMA on the 3rd and 4th of September. Concurrently the Embarked Section of the Landing Force Training Command shot film of the CLEVELAND demonstrating LPD capabilities. The film was intended for use at the training facility.

A Branding Iron CPX Exercise was participated in on September 6th. Dr. Giannoccolo of the Shock Test Facility held a pre-test briefing for observers and engineers at 091300T, 9 September on the CLEVELAND. On the following day, while underway, five unsuccessfull attempts were made to fire a 10,000 pound charge for shot number one in the shock test series. At 111727T 11 September the charge was successfully fired. No material or personnel casualties were incurred. The 40,000 pound charge of HBX-1 was fired at 121740T, 12 September. The testing was completed at 1830T. A final shock test critique was held in port, San Diego, on the 13th.

110 USS DENVER (LPD-9) personnel were received on 13 September for berthing and training.

The USS UNION returned from a deployment to WESTPAC and was hosted by the CLEVELAND on the 16th of the month.

Underway for Port Hueneme at 0830T, two Monitors had been embarked in the well. At Port Hueneme a pair of twenty ton distilling units were loaded for further transfer to Hunters Point. Berthed at Hunters Point San Francisco on the 20th, the distilling units were offloaded, and followed by liberty commencing for the week-end. At 0800, 23 September, in the vicinity of Mare Island the CLEVELAND ballasted down and launched the embarked Monitors consigned to NIOTC. Proceeding to San Diego on the 24th, helicopter deck qualifications were held from 1730 to 2000. COMPHIBRON THREE re-embarked upon the ship's arrival in San Diego.

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Damage Control drills conducted on the USS TULARE (LKA-112) were observed 26 September by the CLEVELAND.

Battalion Landing Team 1/28 embarked 35 officers, 517 enlisted men, 61 vehicles and 18 pallets of cargo on 1 October. Proceeding from anchorage at Coronado Roads, CLEVELAND sortied as a unit of TU 176.2.4 participating in FLEETEX 5-68. During the 4th of October an unrep was conducted with the TOLOVANA and part was taken in a RAIDEX on San Clemente Island. Rehearsal Day at Camp Pendleton was October 5th and D-Day the 7th. With the exercise complete, COMPHIBRON THREE re-embarked on the 8th. An LCAX experimental amphibious vehicle being carried was evaluated and general drills were conducted as the ship returned to San Diego.

Upkeep continued through 24 October. Rear Admiral WILLIAMS, the Inspector General of the Pacific Fleet, paid a call on the Commanding Officer on this date.

The DENVER personnel, previously embarked on 20 September, departed.

The Post Shakedown Availability period officially commenced on 24 October. Actual work did not start on any of the jobs until 15 November. The delay was occasioned by the late completion of specifications. The delay ultimately caused an extention of the PSA period.

Damage Control exercises were observed on the USS WHETSTONE (LSD-27) by the CLEVELAND on the 24th and on the CLEVELAND by the USS COLONIAL (LSD-18) on the 28th. The Commanding Officer, Chief Inspector, and two CLEVELAND officers participated in a Technical Assist Visit on the USS COOK (APD-130) on 31 October. The Medical Officer conducted a Medical Inspection concurrently with the T.A.V.

At this time the PSA specifications had been issued and various planners of civilian yards were inspecting items of the work package. Bids had not yet been received.

COMPHIBTRAPAC, Rear Admiral R.R. PRATT, made an indoctrinational visit to the CLEVELAND on November 1st. At this time a total of 357 personnel were on board the CLEVELAND.

The PSA contract was let on 13 November, with work intended to commence on the 15th. On the 14th an arrival conference was conducted on board the CLEVELAND. The contract had been awarded to the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company.

In order to prepare for the 20 November COMPHIBRON THREE Change of Command, a dress rehearsal of the ceremony was held on the 19th of the month. Vice Admiral R.R. PRATT, COMPHIBTRAPAC, was the ceremony's principal speaker.

On the 26th of November the Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection Training Assist Visit was conducted. The same day LCDR FIELD, representing the COMPHIBPAC Career Information Team, presented a lecture to the ships's officers concerning enlisted retention.

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As the PSA continued into December, the NRFC, (Naval Regional Finance Center) San Diego, audit board examined the pay records and associated documents. The audit was conducted on the days from the 2nd to the 4th of the month. Progress on the PSA was considered to be satisfactory with no potentially delaying items known at that date.

An NWAI "Shape" was received on board for handling, storage and security. The Shape, received on the ninth, was used in conjunction with drills conducted daily in preparation for the NWAI to be held 6 January 1969.

The CLEVELAND was officially recognized as the recipient of the Force Commander's Personnel Excellence Award on 4 December. Extensive alteration of the messdeck required the crew to eat at the Naval Station Galley from the 9th to the 22nd of the month.

The NWAI MK 57 training "Shape" was offloaded on the twelfth and returned to PHIBPAC custody. During a personnel inspection on the following day, four enlisted personnel were presented with the Commander Seventh Fleet Letter of Commendation. These were awarded for performance during the WESTPAC cruise.

The year ended with the Holiday leave period and the continuation of the PSA. On 30 December a ships party was held at the First and Second Class Petty Officer Club at the 32nd Street Naval Base, San Diego.

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