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**U.S.S. AUSTIN (LPD-4)**  
**FLEET POST OFFICE**  
**NEW YORK, N.Y. 09501**

IN REPLY REFER TO:

LPD4:PMM:pn  
5000 **51**  
Ser:

**1 MAR 1969**

From: Commanding Officer, USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)  
Subj: Command History 1 January - 31 December 1968  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12  
Encl: (1) Command History 1 JAN - 31 DEC 1968

*1968* →

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

*HT Walsh, Jr.*  
H. T. WALSH, JR.  
By direction

Copy to:  
COMPHIBLANT

USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) COMMAND HISTORY 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 1968

The Christmas-New Years leave period ended on 4 January when AUSTIN began loading UDT-21 personnel and gear for transportation to Key West, Florida. On 8 January AUSTIN departed Norfolk and arrived in Key West, on 10 January. UDT-21 personnel and equipment debarked in Key West and AUSTIN continued on, arriving in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico on 13 January.

14 and 15 January were spent in San Juan, 19 and 21 January AUSTIN paid a port visit to Port Everglades, Florida. During this visit Public Affairs functions were the main effort. The Second Marine Drum and Bugle Corps was flown to Port Everglades to assist in AUSTIN's public display of amphibious capability of the Navy-Marine Corps team.

AUSTIN arrived back in Norfolk on 25 January and spent the remainder of the month in upkeep of the ship.

12 through 23 February AUSTIN participated in test of the CH-53 helicopter at the Sikorsky Aircraft plant in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Part of the test included AUSTIN being towed by a CH-53 helicopter. 26 through 29 February AUSTIN underwent individual ship exercises off the Virginia coast. The Navy's East Coast Food Service Instructional Team visited AUSTIN during the period 11 through 21 March to aid and instruct the ship's cooks and bakers in the latest methods of food preparation.

Enclosure (1) to AUSTIN ltr Ser  
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1 through 5 April AUSTIN conducted helicopter and firing exercises off the Virginia and North Carolina coast. PHIBLANT inspected AUSTIN'S administrative procedures on 9 and 10 April.

Marine amphibious tractors experimented with high speed underway launch from AUSTIN on 30 April through 3 May at Onslow Beach, N. C.

Commander Amphibious Forces, Atlantic, Vice Admiral MUSTIN and his staff embarked in AUSTIN on 13 May for a trip to the Caribbean area. Underway on 15 May, AUSTIN arrived in Bermuda on 17 May. After a liberty and port familiarization visit, AUSTIN, with COMPHIBLANT still embarked, departed Bermuda on 21 May.

Nassau was visited 23 through 26 May. On 28 May AUSTIN, with COMPHIBLANT embarked, arrived in Key West, Florida.

1 June AUSTIN departed Key West, arrived in Norfolk on 3 June and debarked COMPHIBLANT.

10 June AUSTIN was again underway to participate in the large scale amphibious operation RACER RUN which took place on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Marines and equipment of the landing force were loaded at Moorehead City, N. C. on 11 June. D-Day of the operation was 20 June. AUSTIN made use of the experience gained in underway launch of amphibious tractors by executing such a launch to form the initial assault wave of the landing force.

24 and 25 June AUSTIN was in port at San Juan. On 26 June elements of the RACER RUN landing force were reembarked off Vieques Island. AUSTIN arrived in Norfolk on 30 June after debarking the Marines and their equipment at Moorehead City on 29 June.

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In preparation for an extended yard period, AUSTIN unloaded all ship, aviation and vehicle fuel at Craney Island Naval Fuel Depot on 7 and 8 July. Troop rations were unloaded at Naval Station, Norfolk on 10 July. The unloading of troop and ship ammunition was accomplished in explosive anchorage at Norfolk on 11 and 12 July.

On 19 July AUSTIN entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, Va. for a yard period that ended on 19 December. During the yard period many of AUSTIN's crew members attended schools and refresher training and leave periods were granted.

Captain W. H. HOOVER was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain J. M. MATHEWS in a ceremony aboard AUSTIN on 16 December.

The remainder of the year was spent in a holiday leave and ship's upkeep status.