

USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
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1 MAY 1972

OPNAV Report 5750-1

From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D.C. 20390

Subj: Command History USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) 1971 (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAV Instruction 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Basic History
(2) Documentary Annexes

1. (U) In accordance with reference (a) enclosures (1) and (2) are forwarded.


William BECK Jr.

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DOCUMENTARY ANNEXES

- a. Congratulatory Messages
- b. Operation SUBOK
- c. Post Deployment Report
- d. ROPEVAL 3-71
- e. UPTIDE 3A
- f. DH Evaluation

ENCLOSURE (2)

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BASIC HISTORY
USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
1971

1. (U) Commanding Officers

John R. DEWENTER, Jr., CAPT, USN
1 January - 18 August

William BECK, Jr., CAPT, USN
18 August - 31 December

2. (C) SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.

1971 commenced with CLEVELAND and other ships of Amphibious Squadron THREE assigned as units of the 7th Fleet Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) ALFA in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. ARG ALFA was conducting a scheduled upkeep period at the Ship Repair Facility (SRF). On 7 January 1971, the scheduled ten day upkeep period was shortened by three days and CLEVELAND in company with USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2), USS TULARE (LKA-112) proceeded to the Gulf of Thailand. CLEVELAND participated in combined operations with U. S. Army units assigned to the Delta Military Assistance Command (DMAC) which were engaged in helicopter support of a Vietnamese Army operation in Cambodia to clear the road from Phnom Penh to Kompong Som. The road, Route 4, was under control of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces. This operation was called CUU LONG 44/02 by the Army of Vietnam (ARVN). CLEVELAND's missions during this operation to clear Route 4 were to act as a mobile command post and as a forward fueling/rearming platform for U. S. Army Helicopter Light Fire Teams. The U. S. Army support of CUU LONG 44/02 was under the direction of Brigadier General J. H. CUSHMAN, U. S. Army, Deputy Commander, DMAC, with his command center aboard CLEVELAND. Numerous VIP's visited CLEVELAND during this period. Among them were Commander, SEVENTH Fleet; Commander, Delta Military Assistance Command; Commander Amphibious Force, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet; and other U. S. and foreign General Officers. The operation terminated on 25 January and the Amphibious Ready Group returned to Subic Bay, R.P. for an upkeep period.¹ During this operation CLEVELAND received replenishments from the USS ASHTABULA (AO-51) and the USS MARS (AFS-1). The transit to Subic Bay was completed on 28 January 1971, with the USS FRESNO (LST-1182) rejoining the ARG.

1. See Annex A, msg 1, 2, & 3

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On 2 February 1971, the ships of ARG ALFA had another upkeep period interrupted and sailed to an assembly area north of the DMZ in the Gulf of Tonkin. This operation was a diversion tactic in support of the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos, Operation LAMSON 719. During this operation CLEVELAND with USMC BLT 3/9 embarked received visits from CINCPACFLT, COMSEVENTHFLT, and COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT. On this operation the ARG was supported by destroyers of Destroyer Squadron ONE. This operation included numerous heliborne raid rehearsals. The operation ended on 6 March and the ARG proceeded to Okinawa for relief of BLT 3/9 by BLT 1/9.²

On 10 March CLEVELAND arrived at Okinawa to begin the BLT turnover, embarking elements of BLT 1/9 at Blue Beach, Kin Red, White Beach, and Ora Wan. The ARG completed the transit back to Subic Bay on 15 March. During the transit final plans were made for conducting an amphibious landing in the Zambales training area. CLEVELAND acted as Primary Control Ship for this exercise.

From 16 to 24 March the ARG underwent an uninterrupted upkeep at SRF, Subic Bay.

On 25 March CLEVELAND and other units of Amphibious Squadron THREE with ARG ALFA were enroute to Manila Bay to participate in Exercise "SUBOK".³ This SEATO exercise involved units of the Philippine, British, Australian, New Zealand, and United States Navies. Thirteen days were spent conducting training exercises in preparation for the final landing 5 April. The mission of the Task Force was to conduct an amphibious, airborne, and air-landed assault on the northeast coast of Lingayen Gulf, Republic of the Philippines. This assault would be conducted simultaneously on three separate beaches. CLEVELAND's mission in this operation was as Flag Ship and Primary Control Ship for the central assault group. During the operation TACRON 12, NAVSECGRUDET TWO, BJU ONE Detachment, CO 31st MAU and Staff, CO BLT 1/9 and Staff were embarked along with U. S., Philippine and Thailand SEATO observers.⁴ On 8 April, with the operation completed, the ships were enroute Hong Kong for rest and recreation: three previous visits had been cancelled due to schedule changes. On 15 April, following the Hong Kong visit, CLEVELAND and the other units of Amphibious Squadron THREE returned to Subic Bay for four days of upkeep and turnover of the Amphibious Ready Group responsibility to Amphibious Squadron ONE. On 21 April the CLEVELAND proceeded to Danang, RVN to load retrograde cargo bound for Hawaii and San Diego. On 23 April, after a 9 hour loading, CLEVELAND departed for Hawaii and arrived on 5 May. Following a fueling and major offload and onload of retrograde equipment, CLEVELAND departed for San Diego on 6 May, and arrived on 11 May, thus completing her third WESTPAC Deployment. CLEVELAND's deployment covered a period of 191 days, of which 145 (76%) were spent underway and 46 (24%) were in port.⁵

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2. Annex A, msg 4-11
 3. Annex B
 4. Annex A, msg 12, 13
 5. Annex C
Annex A, msg 14-17

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Upon its return from deployment, CLEVELAND entered an extended inport leave and upkeep period from 12 May to 5 July.

CLEVELAND returned to sea briefly from 6-9 July for sea trials following the upkeep period.

Following a brief inport period, CLEVELAND went to sea on the 16th of July for a Dependent's Cruise. Friends and relatives joined the officers and crew and witnessed demonstrations of the ship's capabilities.

From 19-23 July, CLEVELAND was at sea operating as Helicopter Control Ship for elements of HS-2 and HC-5 who were engaged in Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) tactics. This was a new role for CLEVELAND (for any LPD), and extended CLEVELAND's capability to include ASW in addition to amphibious warfare operations.

In this role CLEVELAND had the mission of establishing sonobuoy patterns and vectoring ASW surface and air units in the event of an enemy sonar contact. Aboard CLEVELAND, Anti-Submarine Classification and Analysis Center (ASCAC) is charged with designing and monitoring sonobuoy patterns while Combat Information Center (CIC) air controls helicopters in setting the actual pattern. Should a submarine sonar contact be recorded, ASCAC evaluates the threat and provides information upon which helos and destroyers can be directed to prosecute the contact.

CLEVELAND's participation in this and later ASW exercises was part of the Navy's Sea Control Ship Program. The Sea Control Ship System (SCSS) Program is under the cognizance of the Program Coordinator for Surface Ship Aviation Integration, Naval Ship Systems Command. The Sea Control Ship (DH) will be about 14,000 tons and will look much like an LPH. Its principal mission will be the protection of underway replenishment groups, and task groups in a low air threat environment in the absence of a carrier. The Ship Control Ship (DH) will operate in formation with other surface escorts which will provide the close-in active and passive sonar search, the cruise missile defense, and Light Aircraft Multi-purpose System (LAMPS) aircraft. The Sea Control Ship will extend the ASW defense perimeter of the protecting force and provide a limited contribution toward AAW, ASMD, and surface strike warfare. This mission is expected to be carried out largely by its embarked air group (17 helicopters and VSTOL aircraft). These will provide two ASW helos airborne at all times, an Airborne Early Warning (AEW) helicopter about 50% of the time, and VSTOL for a deck launched intercept and surface attack role. By keeping the sensors and weapons of the DH itself to a minimum, the cost will be kept low, allowing the building of more DHs while relying on improved aircraft and sensors to enhance overall capability. CLEVELAND, in the ASW operations operated as an Interim Sea Control Ship, and provided operational, logistic, and technical inputs to the Sea Control Ship system design and evaluated tactics for its employment.

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From 26-27 July the CLEVELAND participated with the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2) in an amphibious landing off the coast of Del Mar, California. On 28-29 July CLEVELAND conducted surface to surface, surface to air gunnery exercises, and a shore bombardment exercise.

On 18 August, Captain William BECK, Jr., USN, relieved Captain John R. DEWENTER, Jr., USN, and became the fifth Commanding Officer of the USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7).

Following the Change of Command, the CLEVELAND prepared for ROPEVAL 3-71, a major exercise from 7-17 September evaluating the Pacific Fleet's operational readiness.⁶ Participating with 23 aircraft squadrons, a Marine Brigade, and 40 other ships, CLEVELAND was employed in a dual role as an amphibious landing ship and as an Anti-Submarine Warfare Control Ship as part of the DH evaluation. In these roles, CLEVELAND participated in a rehearsal and an actual amphibious landing off the coast of Camp Pendleton, California. With Helicopter Squadrons (HS-2, HC-5) and COMDESRON THREE embarked, CLEVELAND continued her new function as an Interim Sea Control Ship (DH) through daily practice and evaluation of helicopter oriented ASW tactics.

From 28 September to 8 October CLEVELAND participated in Operation UPTIDE 3A. This operation was one of a series of exercises designed to evaluate new ASW tactics. CLEVELAND's primary mission was to act as Sea Control Ship (DH) and direct ASW helicopters in conducting LOFAR and SONAR searches of the operating area.⁷ Secondary missions included embarking COMDESRON 23 and staff who would act as Escort Force Commander and Surface, Sub Surface Coordinator. CLEVELAND embarked elements of Helicopter Squadrons (HS-2 and HC-5). Throughout UPTIDE 3A CLEVELAND complemented the missions of USS TICONDEROGA by providing a remote helicopter platform for both embarked and TICONDEROGA helicopters to reduce time required to prosecute possible submarine contacts. CLEVELAND also controlled fixed wing ASW aircraft from TICONDEROGA and provided navigation assistance to all aircraft.⁸

UPTIDE 3A completed, CLEVELAND entered San Diego for four weeks restricted availability (RAV). This RAV was utilized to convert CLEVELAND's engineering plant to burn Navy Distillate Fuel (ND). In addition, preparation was made for a Nuclear Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI), a 3-M Inspection, and a Command Inspection.

In-House 3-M Inspections were held as a means of ensuring proper management and documentation of the shipboard material maintenance program. On 27-29 October the Type Commander's (COMPHIBPAC) 3-M Inspection was held, with CLEVELAND obtaining an overall satisfactory grade. Concurrently the ship held daily special weapons

- 6. Annex D
7. Annex E
8. Annex A, msg 18-20

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handling drills as part of a continuing training program. On 27-28 October a Type Commander's Boiler Inspection was held, a necessary step in the conversion of the engineering plant to use distillate fuel. A grade of satisfactory was assigned.

During this period CLEVELAND was being considered as primary recovery ship for the next APOLLO Mission. On 29 October representatives of Commander Task Force 130 visited CLEVELAND to examine its physical layout, command and control facilities. Task Force 130 was impressed with CLEVELAND's capabilities, but considered that a ship the size of a CV or LPH would be more suitable for accommodating the needs of the news media.

CLEVELAND continued the RAV in November to complete the conversion to ND. On 1 November representatives from Naval Subsistence Office and NAVSEC toured CLEVELAND to study the feasibility of habitability modifications for LPD ships. On 5 November CLEVELAND acted as host ship for the USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH-10) on her return from a 6 month WESTPAC deployment. On 7 November, six officers and eight enlisted Naval Reservists reported aboard for two weeks of active duty for training. The conversion to ND neared completion and preparations for lighting off were begun. Minor problems with fuel oil gaskets and fuel oil service pumps were detected and CLEVELAND's engineering personnel worked with representatives of the Naval Ship Engineering Center and Supervisor of Ship Building, 11th Naval District to resolve these problems.

On 18-19 November the NTPI was held. The Chief Inspector was COMPHIBRON THREE and CLEVELAND received a satisfactory grade.

On the 22nd, the ND conversion was completed. CLEVELAND got underway for three days at sea. This time was spent conducting sea trials to test the engineering plant, helicopter carrier qualifications (night and day) with Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron TWO (HS-2) aboard, and amphibious boat operations with Assault Craft Unit ONE (ACU-1) boats off the beach at Coronado Roads. During this underway period CLEVELAND conducted a burial at sea for three civilian and two retired military personnel at the request of the Commandant, ELEVENTH Naval District.

CLEVELAND put to sea on 29 November for a week of operations in the Southern California operations areas, this time operating in support of COMPTUEX 14-71. A thorough check of the electronic communications package was accomplished, while around-the-clock helicopter operations with HS-2 were conducted. Further engineering data on the use of distillate fuel was gathered and a surface-to-surface and anti-air gun shoot were conducted. CLEVELAND also acted as high value target for the USS GUDGEON, a Fast Attack Submarine during this exercise.⁹

On 6 December a team from Field Command, Defense Nuclear Agency conducted a Technical Standardization Inspection. CLEVELAND was given a satisfactory grade.

9. Annex A, msg 21, 22

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CLEVELAND became the Flag Ship of Commander Amphibious Squadron THREE on 9 December when Commodore T. H. WILDER and his staff embarked.

On 11 December CLEVELAND hosted a Christmas Party for dependents of Amphibious Squadron FIVE Staff members and dependents of crew members of the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10). Both the TRIPOLI and PHIBRON FIVE were deployed during December, and it was the CLEVELAND's pleasure to entertain the dependents.

The remainder of December was devoted to holiday leave and upkeep at the Naval Station, San Diego.

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