

USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
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LPD7/02/js
5700
SER 145
10 MAR 1975

From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D.C. 20374

Subj: Command History, 1974

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B dtd 20 MAY 71

Encl: (1) Command History of USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) for CY 1974

1. Enclosure (1) is submitted in accordance with the provisions of reference (a).


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COMMAND HISTORY, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7), CY 1974

With the coming of 1974, CLEVELAND faced a busy period. The ship had just completed a full-scale overhaul, lasting six months, and she had had a large personnel turnover since her last extended period at sea in May, 1973. Thus, the ship had to ready herself both in material and in training to meet the requirements of an upcoming deployment to the Western Pacific.

Holiday leave period ended 7 January and CLEVELAND's crew returned to work in full force. The ship began a Restricted Availability period to complete work remaining from the overhaul and to prepare the ship for sea.

Shortly after, on 16-17 January, representatives from Fleet Training Group came aboard for CLEVELAND's Training Readiness Evaluation (TRE). This consisted of an administrative inspection to determine whether or not the ship was prepared to commence Refresher Training during February. After examining all departments thoroughly, the Fleet Training Group personnel reported CLEVELAND ready for training in all respects.

Restricted availability ended on 21 January and CLEVELAND went to sea during that week (until 25 January) to shake out the kinks and test her newly-installed equipment. This was only CLEVELAND's second week out since the preceding summer, so crew members had to relearn a lot of the underway routine. The week of the 21st included a test of Electronic Warfare equipment, a run of the measured mile, conduct of a full power run, loading of ammunition at Seal Beach, California, and test-firing of the guns in both surface and air shoots with the crew at their battle stations. CLEVELAND returned to port over the weekend of 26 - 27 January, ready for Refresher Training.

"REFTRA" began on the following Monday, 28 January, and lasted for four weeks. The first week consisted of in-port training and dealt with training lectures and briefings, followed by a self-observed Battle Problem and in-port Underway Replenishment training. Each week thereafter until the completion of training on 22 February featured progressively more concentrated training, culminating in the Final Battle Problem and critique of the training period on the last day. Except for weekends, when the ship was in port, CLEVELAND remained underway throughout these weeks, and the training was indeed varied, ranging from underway replenishment, to anti-submarine warfare exercises with USS CHICAGO, USS HEPBURN, USS MC CAIN, USCGC BOUTWELL, USS CONSTELLATION and SS GUDGEON, to flight operations, gun shoots, and continuous Damage Control and Engineering drills.

CLEVELAND's performance throughout the period was excellent, and her grades on the Final Battle Problem drew praise from all the observers (numerical grades ranged between 88 and 97 on a 100 point scale).

In spite of the grueling four-week Refresher Training just completed, CLEVELAND could not yet take a breather, as two more major evolutions in the readiness and training field were to begin immediately. On 25 February, preparation began for Amphibious Refresher Training with another Training Readiness Evaluation. Also on that Monday and during the week of the 25th, a command inspection was held by the staff of the Commander, Amphibious Squadron THREE, CLEVELAND's parent squadron. CLEVELAND again performed excellently in these administrative inspections and was ready to commence the underway portion of Amphibious Refresher Training on 4 March.

Amphibious Refresher Training, like regular Refresher Training, consists of concentrated periods of underway training evolutions. However, while the latter is general in nature, PHIBREFTRA is geared entirely toward amphibious operations. Assisted by boats from Assault Craft Unit ONE and by personnel from Beachmaster Unit ONE, both based at Coronado Amphibious Base, CLEVELAND anchored off the Silver Strand beaches and, during a ten-working-day period, conducted fifteen H-hours (the first week also included LVT control training and underway LVT launch off Camp Pendleton).

On 15 March, CLEVELAND completed Amphibious Refresher Training, once again with excellent grades, in spite of a high percentage of new crew members when training began. On 16 March, the ship again entered a period of Restricted Availability.

Monday, 18 March, began a busy week in port. An Annual Supply Inspection was conducted during that week, along with assist visits by the Personnel and Administrative Assistance Team (PAAT) and Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (NWA) technical assist team. A type commander's 3-M Inspection was conducted, and senior command personnel attended an Executive Race Relations seminar. CLEVELAND also received a SECAS validation during this week, SECAS standing for Ship's Equipment Configuration Accounting System.

The remainder of March was devoted to preparation for Nuclear Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI), which the ship completed successfully, receiving certification on 1 April.

During early April, CLEVELAND took part in a large-scale amphibious operation called Operation Bell Cannon. The operation involved nine ships and lasted ten days, and included practice landings off Coronado, shore bombardment qualification at San Clemente Island, and a final H-hour landing at Camp Pendleton.

CLEVELAND then began her POM period - Preparation for Overseas Movement. All material work had to be completed and all charts and publications readied for deployment, which was to begin late in May.

On 24 May, CLEVELAND departed San Diego for Hawaii and the Western Pacific. Deploying with CLEVELAND were USS OGDEN, USS MONTICELLO, USS TULARE, USS RACINE, and USS SAN BERNARDINO. CLEVELAND was OCE during the transit with Commander Amphibious Squadron THREE embarked. CLEVELAND also served as flagship for

Commander, Task Group 76.5. Shortly after beginning the 4000-mile trip to Subic, the group rendezvoused with three destroyers, USS BAUSELL, USS GURKE, and USS WADELL. Training evolutions were conducted during the transit.

The ready group spent the weekend of 10 - 11 July inport Subic Bay. On 12 July, CLEVELAND, TULARE, and SAN BERNARDINO departed for Okinawa; USS FRESNO remained in Subic with mechanical repairs in progress. Arriving at Buckner Bay on 15 July, the group was joined the next day by USS RACINE to conduct training operations at Chin Wan, Okinawa. CLEVELAND was OCE for this two-day period which included emplacement of Amphibious Assault Bulk Fuel System, and three landings - regular, low visibility, and silent procedures being employed. The training was observed by members of the staff of the Commander, Amphibious Forces, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet (CTF 76).

On 18 July, CLEVELAND departed for Yokosuka, Japan, arriving on 21 July and commencing a week of upkeep, a blessing after sixty days with no repair opportunities.

The first of three CLEVELAND trips to Numazu Bay near Mount Fuji occurred 28 - 29 July. CLEVELAND and TULARE off-loaded troops and equipment they had picked up in Australia. Following this hectic two-day offload, CLEVELAND headed once again to Okinawa.

It was a short stopover for CLEVELAND in Okinawa - just long enough to load eight LVT's on 2 August. Underway immediately after loading, CLEVELAND sailed to Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The LVT's were offloaded there on arrival on the 4th.

But again the stopover was short. Departing Taiwan without entering port, CLEVELAND set course for Subic Bay and a long awaited liberty and upkeep period. The ship arrived there on 5 August, remaining in port for a week.

Amphibious operations and flight operations were conducted in the Subic Bay area on 13 - 14 August following CLEVELAND's departure from Subic. Upon completion of these evolutions, the ship departed the Philippines for Hong Kong and the first real liberty period since Brisbane two months earlier. CLEVELAND spent five days in the British Crown Colony where the crew took advantage of that city's many bargains and diversions.

Departing Hong Kong on the 21st, CLEVELAND joined Task Force 72 briefly on Taiwan Straits Patrol while steaming toward Okinawa. The ship arrived back in Okinawa on 24 August, but, due to weather conditions, remained underway that night.

On 25 August, CLEVELAND left White Beach for Chinhai, South Korea, arriving there on 27 August, where members of a Seal Platoon were offloaded for training in the Republic of Korea. The ship anchored during this offload in Chinhai's harbor, remaining only a few hours, and got underway that evening for Yokosuka. The period of 29 August through 4 September were spent in upkeep in Yokosuka.

On 5 September, CLEVELAND sailed again to Numazu Bay to pick up Marine troops and equipment. The on-load was completed 6 September and CLEVELAND sailed back to Okinawa, arriving on 10 September for an extended stay at White Beach.

the senior officer conducting a transit exercise termed CONVEX 1-74, a convoy exercise in which the task group simulated a merchant convoy steaming under Navy command in wartime conditions. For a certain period of every day and night, the task group became "merchant ships" and practiced maneuvering and communications utilizing a special set of merchant ship signals and lights. The staff for CONVEX 1-74 consisted of a Navy Captain and five reserve officers who had been tasked to conduct the exercise as part of their active duty for training.

On arrival in Hawaii on 31 May, COMPHIBRON THREE shifted his pennant to USS OGDEN and the Task Group was divided. OGDEN steamed for Subic Bay along with MONTICELLO and RACINE. CLEVELAND and TULARE spent two days conducting Marine troop and helo training off Kaneohe Bay, departing Hawaii on 4 June. CLEVELAND steamed south independently for Pago Pago, American Samoa, while TULARE and SAN BERNARDINO departed for Fiji.

For the next three weeks, CLEVELAND would be steaming independently. The ship continued south on the 2300-mile run to Samoa, crossing the Equator during the night of 7 - 8 June. Arriving in tropical Pago Pago on 10 June, CLEVELAND commenced two relaxing days of liberty and sightseeing. During this visit, an Open House was held which drew most of the town; the ship also was refueled in Samoa.

On 12 June, CLEVELAND said good-bye to Samoa and commenced another 2000-plus-mile trek, this time steaming under the Southern Cross toward Brisbane, Australia. The ship arrived at the Queensland capital city on 20 June, and began six days of enjoyment of first-rate Australian hospitality. The Brisbane area offered something for everyone, and CLEVELAND's crew was delighted to learn that all the stories about the warm-hearted Australians were absolutely true. It was a sad day on 26 June when CLEVELAND sailed slowly down the Brisbane River toward the sea.

USS FRESNO had arrived shortly after CLEVELAND in Brisbane, having departed San Diego after the rest of the task group. Already in the Australian port were TULARE and SAN BERNARDINO. Thus, the four ships, departing together, headed for Hervey Bay, some 100 miles north of Brisbane, to rendezvous with Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO. These ships - USS JUNEAU, USS FORT FISHER, USS ALAMO, and USS BRISTOL COUNTY - would be heading for the States as soon as CLEVELAND's task group relieved them.

During 27 - 28 June, the relieving process was conducted while at anchor in Hervey Bay. This included the turnover of all Marine troops and equipment used in Exercise Kangaroo One, in which Ready Group BRAVO had participated. Such a turnover is normally conducted on land; thus, the water-borne evolution required special coordination to be completed safely and efficiently.

On 29 June, the turnover completed, CLEVELAND and her Ready Group departed Australian waters for Subic Bay. Captain ZOEHRER, CLEVELAND's Commanding Officer, had relieved USS JUNEAU's Commanding Officer as the Commander of Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO and

On 11 September, CLEVELAND became flagship for COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT/Commander, Task Force 76, RADM PRICE.

Except for a two-day period on 24-25 September when the ship was underway for flight ops, CLEVELAND remained inport at White Beach until 28 September. The crew spent most of this period of nearly three weeks doing routine work, but there was ample time for liberty and an active intramuaral athletics program, as well as weekend and liberty hours for snorkeling and sightseeing. Many men utilized the excellent facilities of Kadena Air Base, some forty minutes by bus from White Beach near Koza.

Underway again on 28 September, CLEVELAND steamed north, returning to Chinhae to retrieve Seal Platoon personnel. Spending only a brief period anchored in the harbor on 30 September, CLEVELAND departed for Inchon, South Korea for a liberty visit. The ship arrived there on 2 October and remained for five days. Much of the crew's time was spent enjoying the sights and relaxation of Seoul, the metropolitan capital city only thirty minutes from Inchon.

Underway again on 7 - 9 October, CLEVELAND returned to familiar Okinawa for another long stay. Remaining in port from the 9th to the 22nd, CLEVELAND revived her athletics program and began to anticipate her imminent departure from WESTPAC in early November.

On 22 October, CLEVELAND departed Okinawa and proceeded for one last time to Numazu Bay to offload the last of the Marines the ship had carried. The offload was completed on the 25th, and on the 26th CLEVELAND commenced her final upkeep period in Yokosuka.

On 6 November, COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT shifted his flag to USS BLUE RIDGE in Yokosuka. The next day, CLEVELAND was underway for Okinawa and the final leg of her WESTPAC deployment before the trip home. Arriving in Okinawa on the 9th, the ship once again became COMPHIBRON THREE's flagship.

On 10 November, five and a half months after departing San Diego, CLEVELAND, along with OGDEN, departed Okinawa for San Diego. USS BLUE RIDGE, entering port as CLEVELAND departed, was treated to the sounds of the popular song "California Dreamin'" over the CLEVELAND public address system.

The 4000 miles to Hawaii was, for many, the cruise's most interminable leg. During the last three days of the transit to Pearl Harbor, CLEVELAND and OGDEN took part in an Electronic Countermeasures exercise with USS LONG BEACH and patrol aircraft from Patrol Squadron 22, based at Barber's Point, Hawaii.

CLEVELAND spent a brief period on 23 November in Pearl, clearing customs and taking aboard about a dozen civilian guests of crew members for the transit to San Diego. The next day, 24 November, the ships left Hawaii.

On Saturday, 30 November, loved ones lined Pier Three in San Diego, waving at familiar faces manning the rail of USS CLEVELAND as she returned home, six months and a week after her departure.

1974 ended far differently from the way it had begun - the hectic first weeks of January were much different from the last weeks of December. There was still ship's work to do, but now the crew members were enjoying leave and liberty and the joy of post-cruise reunions at home.