

U. S. S. CLEVELAND (LPD-7)

FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Director of Naval History  
(OP 09B9)), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.  
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Subj: USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) Command History for CY-1976

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Narrative Command History for 1976

1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a),  
enclosure (1) is forwarded herewith.

  
D. J. SULLIVAN  
By direction

**U. S. S. CLEVELAND (LPD-7)**

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**COMMAND HISTORY, USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) CY 1976**

With the coming of 1976, CLEVELAND had to ready herself both in material and in training to meet the requirements of an imminent deployment to the Western Pacific.

The holiday leave period ended 5 January, and CLEVELAND's crew returned to work in full force to engage in Amphibious Refresher Training (AMPHIBREFTRA). CLEVELAND anchored off the Silver Strand beaches at Coronado to conduct ship-to-shore assault craft exercises. Subsequently, LVT control exercises and underway launches of LVT were conducted off Camp Pendleton. On 16 January, CLEVELAND completed Amphibious Refresher Training.

During the period 23 FEB - 1 MAR CLEVELAND was provided an excellent opportunity to train in many phases of Surface and Amphibious Warfare by participating in Exercise BEAD CHEVRON with other units of Amphibious Squadron THREE. The exercise served as an excellent pre-deployment test of the skills which were gained during AMPHIBREFTRA.

The following congratulatory message was received from COMPHIBRON THREE:

"The manner in which the crew of CLEVELAND responded to the demanding requirements of BEAD CHEVRON was noted with pleasure. All exercises you participated in including ASW, AAW, Shore Bombardment, Surface and Air Gunnery plus Helicopter and Amphibious Operations were executed with precision and dedication throughout. CLEVELAND was also noticeably aggressive and professional during the AAWEX and EWEX. The services provided to the Staffs and troops embarked were impressive and the attitude of the crew was inspiring.

The performance noted above required long hours, dedication, and teamwork. Well done."

CLEVELAND was again underway on 11 and 12 March for COMPHIBRON THREE Operational Readiness Evaluation (ORE). As of 13 March CLEVELAND entered the thirty day period known as "Preparation for Overseas Movement" (POM). These thirty days were devoted to intense final preparation for deployment to the Western Pacific. On 22 March CLEVELAND steamed to Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach for final ammunition loading before deploying to WESTPAC. On 13 April, CLEVELAND departed San Diego for Hawaii and the Western Pacific but was forced

to return to San Diego on 15 April due to an Engineering Casualty. On 19 April CLEVELAND departed San Diego for the second time sailing independently enroute to White Beach, Buckner Bay, Okinawa.

CLEVELAND arrived in Okinawa on 6 May and immediately commenced turnover with USS JUNEAU (LPD-10) as COMPHIBFOR-SEVENTHFLT/CTF 76 Flagship and as CTG 76.5 (Commander Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) BRAVO. Opportune Lift LVT were off-loaded and ferried to KIN BLUE by the embarked LCU. Various turnover items were accepted by CLEVELAND from outchopping ARG Bravo units for further transfer to inchopping units who were due to arrive in Okinawa on 8 May. CLEVELAND spent 7-9 May in port at White Beach, Okinawa. Liaison was conducted with Regimental Landing Team (RLT) Headquarters, Fourth Marines, for an LVT landing exercise to be conducted 10 May. On the morning of the 10th, CLEVELAND was underway for Ora Wan, Okinawa and conducted Flight Operations enroute to receive the RLT HQ personnel. Heavy swell conditions precluded an LVT off-load of the RLT. Therefore, a contingency Helo lift was arranged for troop movement to the beach. CLEVELAND returned to White Beach the same day and remained there through the rest of the week.

CLEVELAND was underway from White Beach on 14 May, enroute to Subic Bay, PI. One CH-46 and two SH-3 helicopters were landed enroute for Opportune Lift (OPLIFT) to Subic Bay. The 15th and 16th were spent in transit; general drills were conducted enroute. May 17th was spent off-loading "Handclasp" material (which CLEVELAND had carried from San Diego), and OPLIFT and Thailand Retrograde Cargo (from White Beach).

The Commanding Officer paid an official call on Rear Admiral KILCLINE, USN, COMUSNAVPHIL/COMNAVBASE Subic. CLEVELAND was underway for Sattahip, Thailand on 19 May; a section of aircraft was "overhead" for air controller proficiency training while she transitted the Subic Op areas.

CLEVELAND arrived at Sattahip on 22 May and commenced on-load of Thailand Retrograde material. On-load of Retrograde continued around the clock on 23 May and until late on the 24th.

On 24 May the Commanding Officer paid a call on Vice Admiral SMUT, Thai Navy, Commandant Naval Base, Sattahip, and presented him with a ship's plaque. CLEVELAND was underway for Subic Bay on the morning of 25 May. The 25th and 26th were spent in transit with the ship conducting general drills and training. Training culminated with an all officer gun mount crew conducting a test firing on 26 May.

Transit enroute to Subic Bay continued on 27-28 May. On the morning of 29 May, CLEVELAND refueled from USNS MISPELLION. CLEVELAND arrived at the Naval Supply Depot Pier, Subic, on 29 May and commenced off-load of Thailand Retrograde material. 30-31 May were spent in port with off-load operations continuing until 2300, 30 May. Opportune Lift cargo and personnel for HMA-369 and VC-5 were loaded on board on 31 May for lift to Okinawa. CLEVELAND was underway from Subic enroute to Buckner Bay on 1 June; flight operations were conducted to receive HMA-369 and VC-5 Helicopters. Test firing of gun mounts and Engineering Casualty Control exercises were conducted on 1 June. June 2 was spent in transit with lectures on Anti-Air Warfare (AAW) and a local AAW exercise for Surface Warfare Officer PQS training. A 15 knot Economy Trial was conducted during the transit. CLEVELAND was enroute to Buckner Bay on 3 June and night flight operations were conducted with HMA-369 and the VC-5 DET (both on board for Opportune Lift from Subic to Okinawa) for pilot proficiency.

June 4th and 5th were spent in port at White Beach. Advance liaison was conducted with BLT 3/9 for the BLT turnover to be conducted 13-14 June and the Turn Away Landing scheduled for 17 June at Numazu, Japan. On 4 June, CTF 76 (RADM WHITMIRE, USN) hosted CG 9TH MAB and the US Consul General for Okinawa for lunch on board CLEVELAND. On the afternoon of 6 June, CLEVELAND was underway with USS FREDERICK (LST 1184) in company, enroute to Numazu for the on-load of BLT 1/9. CLEVELAND provided three hours of flight deck time for USMC Helo Shipboard Qualifications with MAG 36 while within the Okinawa operating area. Seventy-Six "Bicentennial" landings were conducted. The 7th and 8th were spent in transit with both ships conducting mutual training services. Conning officers were afforded valuable training opportunities in station keeping while conducting tactical maneuvers and leap frog exercises. This was CLEVELAND's first chance to steam in company with another unit since the first day of deployment. On 11 June, CLEVELAND conducted satisfactory 15 knot economy trials. At first light on 9 June, CLEVELAND and FREDERICK rendezvoused with USS THOMASTON (LSD 28) in the Numazu Training Area. Noted for unusual environmental conditions, Numazu did not disappoint ARG Bravo.

On 9 June, a frontal system associated with a low pressure region in the Northern Sea of Japan created strong southwesterly winds of 25-32 knots with gusts of over 40 knots; effective surf was in excess of 12 feet. These conditions continued throughout the day and precluded assault craft landings. The on-load of BLT 1/9 was postponed until the next day at 0530. CLEVELAND waited for weather conditions to abate off Numazu in order to continue on-load of BLT 1/9. Finally, on the evening of 11 June 1976, conditions improved such that back-loading could be continued. Loading operations via assault craft were conducted throughout the night. The back-load was completed at 0645, 12 June.

CLEVELAND and THOMASTON got underway for Okinawa shortly thereafter.

CLEVELAND and THOMASTON arrived at Ora Wan, Okinawa at 0600, 14 June and commenced selective off-load of BLT 1/9 assets. The remainder of BLT 1/9 was off-loaded later in the day, while pier-side at White Beach. On-load of BLT 3/9 commenced immediately thereafter and was completed on 15 June. CLEVELAND was underway from White Beach in the afternoon enroute for Numazu with CTF 76 embarked.

As the week commenced TG 76.5, less USS PEORIA (LST 1183), had their first opportunity since reporting to the Seventh Fleet to exercise together as an amphibious tactical unit. This opportunity was exploited in a Turn Away Landing (TAL) at Numazu on 17 June. The landing was scheduled in conjunction with the off-load of BLT 3/9. While enroute to AOA, CLEVELAND embarked RADM RUSSELL, USN, COMNAVFORJAPAN, by helicopter. H-Hour was scheduled for 1700 Local and was met. Considering the artificialities imposed by the geography of Numazu and the requirement to hold the TAL to a minimum time (in order to expedite the off-load), the ship-to-shore was conducted in a highly professional manner.

Upon completion of the BLT 3/9 off-load CLEVELAND commenced on-load of 3/12 ARTY for OPLIFT to Okinawa. Numazu beach operations were concluded about 1830Z on the 18th when CLEVELAND finished her on-load and was underway for Okinawa.

3/12 ARTY was debarked on 21 and 22 June and CLEVELAND then departed for a port visit to Keelung, Taiwan. CLEVELAND arrived in Keelung on the morning of 24 June. That evening the Commanding Officer was a guest at a dinner hosted by VADM TSOU CHIEN, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Chinese Navy, in honor of RADM and Mrs. WHITMIRE. The following day RADM WHITMIRE hosted a Luncheon and tour of the flagship for VADM TSOU CHIEN and several Chinese Navy Admirals. Also on the Guest List was VADM E. K. SNYDER, Commander U.S. Taiwan Defense Command. CLEVELAND's scheduled departure from Keelung on 28 June was delayed due to Typhoons RUBY and SALLY. The flagship remained in Keelung through the 30th keeping a close watch for weather conditions which would be favorable for the return transit to Okinawa.

CLEVELAND continued storm evasion (Typhoon RUBY) by remaining in port Keelung on 1 July. The storm had cleared sufficiently by 2 July so that the flagship was able to get underway at 0630 and proceed to White Beach. Prior to departure from Keelung a ship's plaque and other momentos were presented to the District Commandant, RADM SHEIN LIU, Chinese Navy, in appreciation of the Chinese Navy's hospitality.

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The ship arrived in Okinawa at 0900 on 3 July and commenced preparations for an Open House to be held in conjunction with Fourth of July festivities at White Beach. The Open House on July 4th attracted over 6,357 visitors in a four and one half hour period. Many of the visitors were embarked via the well deck from LCM-8's. The festivities at White Beach attracted over 40,000 Japanese and Americans. Five Destroyers from the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force also held Open House to help commemorate the American Bicentennial. After a brief recovery period on July 5th, CLEVELAND was underway on the afternoon of July 6th enroute to Hong Kong.

CLEVELAND continued enroute Hong Kong on 8 July. The flagship arrived in Hong Kong at 1000 on the 9th and commenced a five-day port visit. During her visit, the ship's softball team split a two-game series with a local Chinese team representing the Hong Kong Softball Association. Community relations were fostered as the Hong Kong team was awarded a ship's plaque and each member was presented a CLEVELAND ball cap by his counterpart. A tour of the ship was also part of the exchange program. The local Red Cross Chapter conducted a Blood Drive aboard CLEVELAND and collected 46 pints of blood. A contingent from the Christian men of CLEVELAND made a call on a Children's Home to visit an orphan supported by the CLEVELAND's Chapel Fund. Prior to sailing for Yokosuka on 14 July, CLEVELAND received thirteen members of the Pre-Overhaul Test and Inspection (POT&I) Team from Long Beach Naval Shipyard and one man from Planning and Engineering for Repairs and Alterations (PERA) from Norfolk. These personnel embarked to conduct machinery condition analysis tests in connection with the ship's overhaul scheduled for JAN - SEP 1977. Tests conducted on the 14th included a full power run, main engine/hull vibration tests, feed pump capacity tests, quick reversal from full power ahead to full power astern and an astern steering test.

On the afternoon of 16 July, while in the vicinity of Okinawa, CTF 76 re-embarked aboard his flagship by helicopter. Due to threatening storm conditions generated by Typhoon THERESE, the flagship was forced to commence storm evasion and to divert to the south after CTF 76's arrival. As THERESE passed to the north of Okinawa and headed toward Japan, CLEVELAND altered course and again headed for Yokosuka.

Due to the storm evasion, commencement of CLEVELAND's upkeep period at Yokosuka was delayed by one day. Over 200 work requests were submitted to NAVSHIPREPFAC, Yokosuka and the USS DIXIE (AD 14) for this upkeep period, CLEVELAND's first since arrival in the Western Pacific. An additional 50-60 civilian personnel conducted further tests and inspections in conjunction with ship's force to determine the extent

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of work to be planned for CLEVELAND's upcoming yard overhaul, scheduled to commence 14 January 1977. In addition to upkeep maintenance projects and POT&I checks the ship took advantage of the numerous Navy schools available in Yokosuka. On 21 July, representatives from BLT 3/9 arrived to commence a three-day planning conference for our next exercise, BLT-EX 1-7T. A "fast" cruise and light-off were held 1 August in preparation for getting underway on 2 August. The flagship was underway on the evening of the 2nd.

CLEVELAND arrived at Numazu early on 3 August to commence back-load of BLT 3/9 elements. Satisfactory weather conditions permitted expeditious back-load operations and CLEVELAND was underway enroute Buckner Bay by early evening on the 3rd. During the morning of 4 August underway refueling operations were conducted with the USNS MISPELLION and several junior officers received along-side ship-handling training. The refueling was terminated by the delivery ship executing an emergency break-away exercise.

The flagship arrived at White Beach on the morning of 6 August. However, her period in port was abbreviated as Typhoon BILLIE forced CLEVELAND to sortie late on 7 August for storm evasion. During the at sea period ship's company officers and embarked BLT 3/9 officers were briefed on BLT-EX 1-7T, the ARG Bravo amphibious exercise to be conducted 23-29 August in the Zambales Training Area at Subic. BILLIE's track permitted CLEVELAND to return to White Beach during the afternoon of 10 August.

On 11 August, the Air Department and Flight Deck Crash and Rescue Crew (Repair 2A) commenced intensive training for AV-8 (Harrier) operations. On 12 August, twelve landings/take-offs were conducted pierside. Underway flight operations for final AV-8 qualifications were conducted on 13 August with twenty successful landings/take-offs completed. The flagship spent the remainder of the week in port White Beach preparing for the CTF 76 Change of Command. Representatives from BLT 2/9 were aboard 16 August for a Planning Conference in preparation for the ARG Bravo BLT Turnover in mid-September.

The CTF 76 Change of Command was held on board the flagship on 19 August. VADM R. B. BALDWIN, USN, COMSEVENTHFLT was the Senior Officer in attendance as RADM R. E. MORRIS, USN relieved RADM WHITMIRE as CTF 76 (COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT). Numerous other senior Navy and Marine Corps officers, as well as local civilian dignitaries and officials attended the traditional ceremony. The flagship was underway for Subic Bay later that day.

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There were indications that Tropical Storm ELLEN might pose a threat; however, the ship was able to cross the "T" early enough to preclude the danger of heavy weather. CLEVELAND arrived in Subic on the morning of 22 August. Final coordination meetings for BLT-EX 1-7T were conducted in the early afternoon. The pre-sail conference was held at 1600 with enthusiastic interest displayed by all participating units in anticipation of a full week of operation, this ARG's first full operation together. This exercise provided an excellent opportunity for the ships of the ARG to operate as an integral unit and develop the requisite coordination to conduct amphibious operations. The BLT 3/9 landing plan for movement of forces and equipment ashore in the event of contingency operations was thoroughly tested with two Turn Away Landings and the final D-Day assaults. Overall, BLT-EX 1-7T was considered to have been an excellent training exercise as each participant substantially enhanced its state of training and readiness. The exercise was officially concluded at 1200 Local on 29 August. Upon conclusion of the tactical withdrawal back-load on 28/29 August, all ships returned to Subic.

CLEVELAND commenced a nine-day upkeep period with SRF Subic, the flagship's second availability in four months. CLEVELAND remained at Subic in an upkeep status through 6 September; this would be the last scheduled upkeep prior to arrival CONUS. A two-day ship's party was held at a nearby Beach Resort on 4-5 September. On 9 September, CLEVELAND was enroute White Beach, Okinawa from Subic Bay on the heels of Typhoon FRAN. Storm conditions forced the flagship to slow down and delay arrival White Beach until late evening 10 September. Due to the non-availability of tugs, CLEVELAND anchored that night and went piersonside the following morning.

High winds still prevailed on 11 September, assault craft operations were not possible and off-load of BLT 3/9 was limited to crane operations only. Upon completion of BLT 3/9 off-load, loading of BLT 2/9 commenced. CLEVELAND was enroute from Okinawa to Numazu, Japan on 13 September. Amphibious operations were conducted at Numazu on the 15th and 16th of September, debarking BLT 2/9 and embarking BLT 3/9. CLEVELAND was again underway 17 September enroute to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, arriving 20 September, debarking BLT 3/9 and embarking 2/12 ARTY.

On 21 September, CLEVELAND was enroute to Inchon, Korea, arriving on the afternoon of 23 September, debarking 2/12 ARTY and embarking First Radio Battalion.

On 25 September, CLEVELAND was enroute for her last trip to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, arriving 27 September and debarking the First Radio Battalion.

On 29 September, CLEVELAND, five and one half months after departing San Diego, departed Okinawa for the long trip back to San Diego. CLEVELAND made a brief stop in Subic Bay on 2 October, then transited to Kwajalein, Marshall Islands (2-9 October). On 10 October, COMPHIBFORSEVENTHFLT shifted his flag to USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19) at Kwajalein. CLEVELAND anxiously waited at Kwajalein for the USS DUBUQUE (LPD 8). On 16 October, CLEVELAND was enroute for turnover of CTG 76.5 duties to DUBUQUE. The turnover was effected on the high seas enroute to Hawaii. CLEVELAND then moved on to provide MIDPAC training services on 22 and 23 October for the First Marine Brigade which climaxed with a Dawn raid exercise. CLEVELAND spent 23-25 October in Pearl Harbor conducting a Work Definition Conference for the upcoming overhaul. Male relatives and friends were embarked for the brief trip home.

On 26 October, CLEVELAND was enroute under Sail Order "Tiger Express" with THOMASTON and PEORIA. Ship's exercises were conducted enroute for the benefit of our embarked guests and on Tuesday, 2 November, loved ones lined Pier 3 in San Diego, waving at familiar faces manning the rail of CLEVELAND as she returned home, six months and two weeks after her departure.

1976 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 in preparation for the yards, but now the crew members were enjoying leave and liberty and the joy of post-cruise reunions at home.