



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS PONCE (LPD-15)  
FPO NEW YORK 09501

IN REPLY REFER TO  
LPD15:203:1d1  
5750  
Ser: 234

26 MAR 1974

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD-15)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History (Report Symbol 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) USS PONCE (LPD-15) Command History 1973

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

  
W. B. WARWICK

USS PONCE (LPD 15)  
COMMAND HISTORY 1973

---

## I. Command Organization

### A. Commanding Officers

1. Captain George W. FARRIS, USN -- 10 July 1971 to 9 May 1973
2. Captain William B. WARWICK, USN -- 9 May 1973 to present

### B. Amphibious Squadron Assignments

1. Amphibious Squadron TWO -- 1 January 1973 to 30 September 1973
2. Amphibious Squadron FOUR -- 1 October 1973 to 31 December 1973

## II. Chronological Summary of Operations for 1973

USS PONCE began operations in 1973 by sailing from Norfolk, Virginia on 4 January with the ships of Amphibious Squadron TWO for a six-month deployment to the U. S. SIXTH FLEET as the MED 1-73 Amphibious Ready Group. Enroute to the Mediterranean Sea the Battalion Commander and his staff plus other units of Battalion Landing Team 1/6 were embarked at Morehead City, N.C. on 5 January. On 15 January turnover was accomplished with Amphibious Squadron EIGHT at Rota, Spain, and PONCE chopped to operational control of Commander in Chief of U. S. Naval Forces Europe and Commander U. S. SIXTH FLEET as a unit of Task Force 61. The remainder of January saw PONCE on a port visit to Cape Ferrat, France followed by PHIBLEX 7-73 off the west coast of Italy. On 1 February PONCE commenced a 7-day port visit in Malaga, Spain, followed by PHIBLEX 8-73 at Carbonearas, Spain, in which units of the Spanish Amphibious Forces participated. On 15 February PONCE sailed from Carbonearas to participate in the National Week XV Exercise which included stops in Suda Bay, Crete, and Augusta Bay, Sicily. On 1 March PONCE entered the harbor at Taranto, Italy for five days. Following the Taranto visit another amphibious landing was conducted at Timbakion, Crete, on 6 March, followed by a port visit in Athens, Greece, from 14 to 21 March. Upon leaving Athens, PONCE proceeded to Izmir, Turkey, in company with USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12) to embark Turkish amphibious troops for participation in PHIBLEX 10-73 which, in addition to TF 61, included ships and troops from Greece, Turkey and Italy. After making an amphibious assault at Porto Scudo, Sardinia, on 27 March, PONCE was detached and proceeded to the vicinity of Tunis, Tunisia, to provide support for two USMC CH-53 helicopters engaged in flood relief work in the interior of Tunisia. Other ships engaged in these relief operations were USS FORRESTAL (CVA 59) and USS SAMPSON (DDG 10). On 1 April PONCE returned to Porto Scudo, Sardinia to embark USMC and Turkish units. PONCE then proceeded to Naples, Italy, on 3 April for 2 days where Turkish troops on USS SHREVEPORT were transferred to PONCE for the return trip to Izmir, Turkey, commencing on 4 April. PONCE arrived in Izmir on 7 April for 3 days of liberty. Upon departing Izmir, PONCE rejoined TF 61 at Porto Scudo, Sardinia for PHIBLEX 10A-73 from 13 to 18 April. Upon completion of the exercise PONCE sailed to Palma, Mallorca, for a tender and liberty period from 19 to 28 April. On 28 April PONCE sailed with TF 61 to Timbakion, Crete, for PHIBLEX 11-73 from 2 to 11 May. On 6 May PONCE was detached from the exercise to proceed to Athens, Greece, where Capt. W. B. WARWICK relieved Capt. G. W. FARRIS in change-of-command ceremonies on 9 May. After the ceremony PONCE sailed for Timbakion rejoining the exercise on 10 May. Upon completion of PHIBLEX 11-73, PONCE commenced a series of port visits, first to Venice, Italy, from 21 to 29 May and finally to Athens, Greece from 1 to 7 June. On 8 June,

participated in a number of community relations activities that were designed to maximize the individual exposure of crew members and foreign nationals. The types of activities employed were general visiting, sporting events, special tours (orphans, scouts, etc.), luncheons and dinners, as well as visiting with several of our foreign hosts. During general visiting or special tours, sufficient tour guides were made available to make guests feel welcome. Basketball and softball were always well received by crew and hosts alike. Wardroom luncheons and dinners were particularly successful in expressing our thanks and appreciation to officials of our host nations. The official status of our guests ranged from admirals and governors' aids to liaison officers assigned to PONCE. Dinner invitations always included the wives of the officials and on several occasions, civilian businessmen and their wives were also hosted.

During PONCE's visit to San Juan from 4 - 7 October, the local Navy League Chapter arranged a program aboard PONCE which involved the Puerto Rican Sea Cadets. This program was successful in promoting public relations and was felt to have been beneficial to the Navy recruiting effort in Puerto Rico.

#### B. Pilot Program of Reduced Watch Personnel

During 1973 PONCE continued to participate in the Pilot Program of Reduced Watch Personnel until the program was terminated on 1 July. In addition to the voice log recorder installed on the bridge, an automatic bell logger and an additional small EOT (Engine Order Telegraph) were installed on the bridge during the port visit in Taranto, Italy 1 to 6 March. The bell logger recorded course and speed information previously kept in the quartermaster's log, shaft RPMs previously kept in the engineer's bell log, and magnetic heading information previously kept in the magnetic log. The small EOT allowed one man to perform both the helmsman and lee helmsman's duties. On termination of the program, the voice log was discontinued and the bell logger was authorized for use only for shaft RPM information. The small EOT remained in use and our helmsmen continued to perform dual roles during normal operations.