



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS PONCE (LPD-15)
FPO NEW YORK 09801

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

Subj: Command History (Report Symbol 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) USS PONCE (LPD 15) Command History 1979

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


C. G. FELKINS

1979 COMMAND HISTORY

I. COMMAND ORGANIZATION

A. COMMANDING OFFICER'S

1. Captain Richard G. Murphy, USN, _____
12 January 1978 to 17 May 1979

2. Captain Charles G. Felkins, USN, _____
17 May 1979 to Present

B. AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON ASSIGNMENTS

1. COMPHIBRON FOUR 1 JAN - 31 MAR 1979

2. COMPHIBRON EIGHT 1 APR - 31 DEC 1979

II. CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATION FOR 1979

The year 1979 opened with PONCE moored cold iron to Pier four, United States Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia with a large percentage of ship's company on New Year's leave.

On 15 and 16 February PONCE was underway for the first time in the new year steaming independently in the VA capes operating area. On 20 February after short notice PONCE got underway to assist in a joint Navy - Coast Guard effort sent to recover a SH-3 Coast Guard helicopter which had crashed in the ocean off the coast of Massachusetts. The effort to recover the helicopter unfortunately proved to be unsuccessful. The month of February ended with PONCE conducting operations off the coast of Virginia.

Amphibious Refresher Training was conducted from 5 to 9 March. This proved to be an excellent training period as the ship enhanced its amphibious capabilities. March 14th and 15th PONCE successfully completed the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) to the credit of the Engineering Department. After spending the weekend in port following the OPPE, the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) came aboard to conduct an INSURV and again PONCE did well. In fact, PONCE, was the first ship in the Atlantic Fleet to successfully conduct the OPPE and INSURV back to back.

After an upkeep period in Norfolk, PONCE embarked marines on 9 April for training off Onslow Beach, North Carolina. This training was in preparation for deployment with the SIXTH FLEET as part of Mediterranean Amphibious Readiness Group (MARG) 2-79. After MARG 2-79 training PONCE returned to Norfolk for an upkeep period.

The month of May was a busy month. Besides making all the preparations necessary for a Mediterranean deployment the crew was also busy preparing for a change of command held on 17 May. On that day the crew said "Goodbye" to Captain R. G. Murphy and "Welcome Aboard" to Captain C. G. Felkins. On May 23rd PONCE got underway for the Mediterranean for a five and one half month cruise lasting until November 7, 1979. The first port on the cruise was Morehead City, North Carolina to embark just over five hundred marines. These embarked marines would remain with PONCE through the entire deployment.

On the fifth of June PONCE in company with other units of MARG 2-79 arrived in Rota, Spain for a turnover with the amphibious unit that had been operating in the Mediterranean for the previous five and one half months.

Throughout the period spent as a unit of the SIXTH FLEET, PONCE had a successful deployment. The ship participated in three amphibious exercises, two training anchorages, a major SIXTH FLEET exercise (National Week XXVII) and a major NATO exercise (Display Determination). Port visits were made to Malaga, Palma De Mallorca and Cartagena, Spain, Taormina,

Sicily, Naples, Italy and Athens, Greece.

Departing the Mediterranean on 25 October PONCE arrived in her homeport of Norfolk, Virginia on 7 November after a stop in Morehead City, North Carolina to disembark the marines on 6 November. PONCE spent the remainder of 1979 in homeport for a post deployment and holiday leave period and upkeep