



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS PONCE (LPD-15)
FPO NEW YORK 09582

GMK/gmk

5720

Ser

078
3 APR 1984

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD-15)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D.C. 20390

Subject: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12B

Encl: (1) Command History

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


EMORY A. ZIMMER

USS PONCE (LPD-15) COMMAND HISTORY 1983

USS PONCE began 1983 in regular overhaul at Coastal Drydock Corporation, Brooklyn, New York. She remained there until March, when she returned to her homeport of Norfolk, Virginia. During her stay in New York, the ship was under the command of Commander, Amphibious Squadron EIGHT. Upon her return to Norfolk, she was assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX.

In Norfolk, PONCE entered an RAV/IMAV period that terminated in May when she steamed to Morehead City enroute to refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. At Morehead she embarked elements of the Eighth Engineer Support Battalion and transported them to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico where they were tasked to rebuild numerous training facilities and airstrips. At Guantanamo Bay, PONCE offloaded a variety of vehicles and materials for use at the base. Among those materials were the construction materials for a new high school. While undergoing refresher training, PONCE embarked twenty-six Midshipmen for LANTRAMID II-83. Upon completion of their training, they departed from the Naval Air Station at Guantanamo Bay. At the conclusion of refresher training, PONCE steamed north to Onslow Beach where she participated in helicopter and amphibious assault vehicle operations in support of the Second Marine Division and the Second Marine Aircraft Wing. Prior to returning to Norfolk, PONCE completed Amphibious Refresher Training at Lynnhaven Anchorage with an overall average of 97.5%. She also completed her Mine Warfare certification employing RH-53 aircraft of Helicopter Mine Squadron SIXTEEN.

From July to August, PONCE prepared for and completed a triennial INSURV inspection and a variety of inport maintenance activities. In September, the ship participated in a Surface Warfare Training exercise, and ended the month undergoing an IMAV period with the USS YELLOWSTONE.

October found the PONCE again underway to Newport, Rhode Island. The

transit north was highlighted by the accomplishment of deck landing qualifications for the Seventeenth Cavalry, Eighty-Second Airborne Division flying Cobra, Blackhawk and Kiowa aircraft. The ship also performed a burial at sea ceremony for PTR2 Fred J. BARTZ, USN (Ret). After a port visit at Newport, Rhode Island, during which time the city of Taunton, Massachusetts received a research catamaran which PONCE carried in her well deck, the ship again served as a training platform for elements of the Second Marine Division and the Second Marine Aircraft Wing.

During November and December the ship prepared for a deployment to the North Atlantic and Mediterranean in February 1984. USS PONCE received an unexpected addition to her armament when a Vulcan Phalanx Close In Weapons System (CIWS) was installed during December. PONCE ended the year at NOB Norfolk, Virginia.

The PONCE was commanded by Captain Emory P. ZIMMER throughout 1983. Commander Milton R. LONG was relieved as Executive Officer by Lieutenant Commander Douglas D. HENRY.

With the concept of amphibious readiness squadrons, USS PONCE adapted to the unique requirements of a dual chain of command under COMPHIBRON SIX (tactical) and COMPHIBRON TWELVE (readiness). The "Proud Lion" entered 1984 ready to deal with any challenge that the forces of man or nature might thrust upon her.