



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS PONCE (LPD-15)  
FPO AE 09582-1717

5757  
Ser LPD 15-ADM/ 0021

09 FEB 1998

*Rec'd 2/18/98  
W/D disk  
1997*

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)  
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical Center,  
Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-5060.

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

- Encl:
- (1) Chronology of Events
  - (2) Historical Narrative
  - (3) USS PONCE (LPD 15) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
  - (4) Commanding Officer's Picture
  - (5) Ship's Picture

1. In accordance with reference (a), the annual command history for USS PONCE (LPD 15) for calendar year 1997 is hereby forwarded.

a. Command Mission. USS PONCE's mission as an amphibious transport dock is to embark United States Marine Corps and Navy support elements and, by both water and airborne means, conduct amphibious landings to obtain beach heads, prosecute further operations ashore, or deny areas or facilities to the enemy.

b. Command composition and organization.

(1) PONCE is homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, and is assigned to Amphibious Group Two, commanded by RADM G. S. Holder, USN.

(2) The ship's crew consists of 26 officers and 333 enlisted men. The ship's organization is as follows:

- Commanding Officer: CDR W. V. Scardina
- Executive Officer: LCDR T. Chassee
- Command Master Chief: YNCM (SW/AW) G. Rogers
- Chief Engineer: LT [REDACTED]
- Operations Officer: LT [REDACTED]
- First Lieutenant: LT [REDACTED]
- Air Officer: LT [REDACTED]
- Supply Officer: LT [REDACTED]
- Navigator: LT [REDACTED]
- Medical Officer: LT [REDACTED]
- Dental Officer: LT [REDACTED]

c. Chronology. Enclosure (1) is a chronology of the events and milestones reached during 1997.

d. Narrative. Enclosure (2) is an historical narrative of significant events in 1997.

*[Signature]*  
W. V. SCARDINA JR.

USS PONCE (LPD 15)  
Chronology of Events

**JANUARY 97**

06 JAN 97 CPG2 MHE INSPECTION

08 JAN 97 CPG2 RETENTION ASSIST VISIT  
REFUEL PIERSIDE

10 JAN 97 FCA CERTIFICATION  
MACS [REDACTED] RETIREMENT CEREMONY

13 JAN 97 UNDERWAY FOR THE VACAPES  
ONLOAD RHIBS

14 JAN 97 BURIAL AT SEA

15 JAN 97 CAVITATION MEASUREMENTS

16 JAN 97 RADIATED NOISE MEASUREMENTS  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR MEMORIAL SERVICE  
JO SHIPHANDLING  
FROCKING/AWARD CEREMONY

17 JAN 97 INPORT NORFOLK, VA  
OFFLOAD RHIBS

20 JAN 97 IMAV BEGINS (20-31 JAN)

21 JAN 97 CNSL PRE-DEPLOYMENT ASSIST VISIT (21-22 JAN)  
PARSE INBRIEF (21-24 JAN)  
BOILER INSPECTION (21-27 JAN)  
AMMO ONLOAD  
MOGAS INSPECTION

22 JAN 97 22 MEU HABITABILITY INSPECTION

25 JAN 97 MOGAS ONLOAD

27 JAN 97 PATG ASSIST VISIT (27-31 JAN)  
COMPHIBRON FOUR VISIT  
LATR INSTALLATION

30 JAN 97 NSWT/SBU/RHIB ONLOAD

31 JAN 97 EWTGLANT LOGISTICS OFFICER CSE STUDENT TOUR

**FEBRUARY 97**

04 FEB 97 UNDERWAY COMPTUEX PHASE II (4-13 FEB)  
EMBARK LCU/LARCS AT LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE

05 FEB 97 ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY, NC  
LAUNCH LCU TO EMBARK 22 MEU

CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
UNDERWAY

06 FEB 97 RECOVERED LCU  
CONDUCT MAINSPACE FIRE DRILL/GENERAL QUARTERS

07 FEB 97 CLOSE-IN-RIG DRY REFUELING WITH USS VICKSBURG  
(CG-69)

08 FEB 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS

09 FEB 97 CONDUCT CHAFF SHOOT, BECCES  
MAINSPLACE FIRE DRILL/GENERAL QUARTERS

10 FEB 97 ETG SPECIAL (10-13 FEB)  
PCO SHIP VISIT (10-13 FEB)

11 FEB 97 ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY, NC  
OFFLOAD 22 MEU

12 FEB 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE NORFOLK, VA

13 FEB 97 LAUNCH LCU AT LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE  
ARRIVE NORFOLK, VA

14 FEB 97 CONDUCT AWARD CEREMONY

18 FEB 97 SCIP VISIT  
CSRR PHASE II (18-21 FEB)  
INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY (18-28 FEB)

19 FEB 97 CLF POSTAL AUDIT  
REFUEL PIERSIDE (F-76)

20 FEB 97 REFUEL PIERSIDE (JP5)  
ATM/GAME MACHINE ONLOAD

21 FEB 97 PRT (21-24 FEB)

24 FEB 97 HULL CLEANING (24-25 FEB)  
SHIPBOARD LIBRARY ASSIST VISIT

25 FEB 97 CPG-2 CMD RELIGIOUS PROGRAM PRE-DEPLOYMENT  
INSPECTION  
CPG-2 CMD MEDICAL READINESS EXAM  
22 MEU CARGO ONLOAD

28 FEB 97 BATTLE FORCE E-MAIL INSTALLATION

**MARCH 97**

04 MAR 97 E-4 EXAM

06 MAR 97 UNDERWAY FOR JTFEX (6-24 MAR)  
E-5 EXAM

EMBARK LCU/LARCS VICINITY OF LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE  
DTE WITH LEAR JET

07 MAR 97 LAUNCH LCU  
ARRIVE MOORHEAD CITY  
EMBARK 22 MEU  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE ONSLOW BAY  
CONDUCT DLQ'S  
RECOVER LCU

08 MAR 97 LAUNCH LCU/LARCS/RHIBS

10 MAR 97 RAS WITH USS ARCTIC

11 MAR 97 RECOVER LCU/RHIBS

12 MAR 97 LAUNCH RHIBS/LCU  
RECOVER 14 AAV'S

13 MAR 97 RECOVER RHIBS  
SOCEX

14 MAR 97 RADM FLADD VISIT

16 MAR 97 RAS WITH USS ARCTIC  
RECOVER LCU

17 MAR 97 COMPHIBRON FOUR VISIT

18 MAR 97 PRE-ASSAULT FORCE OPERATIONS/ASSAULT REHEARSAL  
(18-19 MAR)

20 MAR 97 LAUNCH CRRCS/RHIBS

21 MAR 97 RECOVER LCU/RHIBS

22 MAR 97 ANCHOR ONSLOW BAY, NC

23 MAR 97 RAS WITH USS ARCTIC

24 MAR 97 ARRIVE NORFOLK, VA  
POM LEAVE (24 MAR-22 APR)  
PRE-DEPLOYMENT IMAV (24 MAR-25 APR)

**APRIL 97**

02 APR 97 SAFETY STANDDOWN  
ANTITERRORISM-FORCE PROTECTION TRAINING

03 APR 97 SHIP STORE ASSIST VISIT

12 APR 97 USMC MILVAN ONLOAD

22 APR 97 CONDUCT LATE ADVANCEMENT EXAM

23 APR 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE  
ANCHOR LYNNHAVEN  
EMBARK LCU/2 LARCS  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE NORFOLK, VA  
ARRIVE NORFOLK, VA

24 APR 97 ADM KATZ (COMNAVSURFLANT) VISIT  
LUNCH, AWARD CEREMONY AND TOUR FOR NORTHSIDE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
REFUEL PIERSIDE (F-76)

25 APR 97 RADM FLADD VISIT  
CONDUCT SHIP'S PICNIC (NAB LITTLE CREEK)

29 APR 97 UNDERWAY DEPLOYMENT WITH KEARSARGE ARG  
CONDUCT NIXIE STREAM

30 APR 97 LAUNCH LCU  
ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY, NC  
ONLOAD MEU/ACE  
EMBARK 4 CH-46/2 UH-1  
RECOVER LCU  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE PT "G" TO JOIN JFK BATTLE GROUP

**MAY 97**

01 MAY 97 CONDUCT GENERAL QUARTERS

02 MAY 97 UNREP WITH USS PLATTE

03 MAY 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS/GENERAL QUARTERS/BATTLE  
PROBLEM/ABANDON SHIP DRILL

05 MAY 97 CONDUCT GENERAL QUARTERS/FLIGHT QUARTERS/BECCES

06 MAY 97 CONDUCT BECCES

07 MAY 97 CONDUCT ABANDON SHIP/EMERGENCY DESTRUCTION  
DRILL/FLIGHT OPERATIONS

08 MAY 97 RAS REFUEL WITH MONONGAHELA

10 MAY 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

11 MAY 97 INCHOP SIXTH FLEET  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
TURNOVER USS CARTER HALL/USS PONCE WITH  
USS NASHVILLE/USS PENSACOLA IVO ROTA, SPAIN

12 MAY 97 ARRIVE ROTA, SPAIN. CDR [REDACTED] EMBARKS TO CONDUCT  
PAT ANALYSIS OF AMPHIB OPS DURING EXERCISE LINKED  
SEAS. REFUEL (F-76) PIERSIDE.

13 MAY 97 CATF PRE-SAIL CONFERENCE FOR EXERCISE LINKED SEAS.

14 MAY 97 UNDERWAY FOR EXERCISE LINKED SEAS (14-19 MAY)  
ENROUTE RENDEZVOUS WITH CARTER HALL AND SPS  
PIZZARRO. DEBARK 30 US NEO ROLE PLAYERS. EMBARK  
UOE, SPANISH UDT & SPECIAL FORCES. PRE-ASSAULT  
FORCES INSERT VIA HELO AND RHIBS. CONDUCT NIGHT  
TRAP MISSION LAUNCHES.

16 MAY 97 ANCHOR SIERRA DE RETIN. LAUNCH 20 CRRC'S. MEDIA  
ARRIVE TO TOUR PONCE AND VIEW OPERATION LINKED  
SEAS INCLUDING CRRC AND LCU LAUNCH AND HELO  
ASSAULT. UNDERWAY FOR VERTREP WITH USNS SATURN.  
ANCHOR SIERRA DE RETIN.

17 MAY 97 CONDUCT NEO OPERATION WITH SPANISH VOLUNTEERS.  
SEALS DETACH TO CONDUCT CROSS TRAINING WITH  
SPANISH COUNTERPARTS

19 MAY 97 CONDUCT BACKLOAD OF MARINE FORCES. UNDERWAY  
ENROUTE MALAGA, SPAIN

20 MAY 97 ARRIVE MALAGA, SPAIN

21 MAY 97 REFUEL PIERSIDE (F-76)

23 MAY 97 COMREL PROJECT CIUDAD DE LOS NINOS

26 MAY 97 UNDERWAY ARRIVE ALMERIA, SPAIN  
EXERCISE BETACOM (26 MAY-4 JUN)

27 MAY 97 LAUNCH LCU/CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
OFFLOAD 22 MEU

28 MAY 97 19 MIDSHIPMEN ARRIVE  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

JUNE 97

03 JUN 97 LAUNCH CRRCs

04 JUN 97 IMAV ARRIVAL CONFERENCE (USS SIMON LAKE)  
BACKLOAD 22 MEU  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

05 JUN 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE OPERATION SILVER WAKE  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

06 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS

07 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS

08 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS

09 JUN 97 VERTREP/UNREP WITH MONONGAHELA  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS/BECES

10 JUN 97 BECCES/FLIGHT OPERATIONS/MAinspace FIRE AND  
GENERAL QUARTERS DRILL

11 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS/BECCES

12 JUN 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE VOLOS BAY, GREECE  
COMMENCE EXERCISE "ALEXANDER THE GREAT" (12-20  
JUN)  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS/MAIN SPACE FIRE AND GENERAL  
QUARTERS DRILL

13 JUN 97 SMALL ARMS SHOOT  
BECCES/FLIGHT OPERATIONS

14 JUN 97 ANCHOR VOLOS BAY, GREECE  
LAUNCH RHIBS/MOTORWHALE BOAT/FLIGHT OPERATIONS

15 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS/LAUNCH CRRCS

16 JUN 97 RECOVER MOTORWHALE BOAT  
PHASE I MIDSHIPMEN DEBARK  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE PAGASITIKOS BAY  
ANCHOR  
BECCES/MAinspace FIRE AND GENERAL QUARTERS DRILL  
LAUNCH CRRCS/FLIGHT OPERATIONS

17 JUN 97 LAUNCH LCU/LARCS  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
AMPHIBIOUS REHEARSAL  
BECCES  
RECOVER LCU/LARCS  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE SKIROS ISLAND, GREECE

18 JUN 97 ANCHOR SKIROS ISLAND  
LAUNCH LCU/LARCS  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
CONDUCT AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT ON SKIROS ISLAND

19 JUN 97 CONDUCT BACKLOAD/FLIGHT OPERATIONS/RECOVER RHIBS  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE VOLOS BAY  
ANCHOR VOLOS BAY

20 JUN 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE VARNA, BULGARIA  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

21 JUN 97 RAS WITH MONONGAHELA  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

22 JUN 97 TRANSIT THE TURKISH STRAITS  
EXERCISE COOPERATIVE PARTNER (22 JUN-05 JUL)

23 JUN 97 ANCHOR VARNA, BULGARIA  
LAUNCH UTILITY BOAT FOR COOPERATIVE PARTNER  
PLANNING CONFERENCE  
LAUNCH RHIBS

BECCES

24 JUN 97 RECEPTION ABOARD SPS NUMANCIA  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

25 JUN 97 LAUNCH LCU/12 CRCS  
UNDERWAY  
DETACH AND PROCEED TO ANCHORAGE  
EMBARK MIDSHIPMEN PHASE II  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
RECOVER CRCS

26 JUN 97 LAUNCH LCU/CRRC  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS/MAIN SPACE FIRE AND GENERAL  
QUARTERS  
RECOVER LCU/CRCS

27 JUN 97 LAUNCH LCU/LARCS  
BECCES/MAIN SPACE FIRE AND GENERAL QUARTERS  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

28 JUN 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS

29 JUN 97 LAUNCH CRCS/RECOVER LARCS  
EMBARK MEDIA  
RECOVER CRCS/FLIGHT OPERATIONS

30 JUN 97 LAUNCH LCU/UTILITY BOAT  
BULGARIAN/GEORGIAN TOUR WITH USMC  
AWARDS CEREMONY/CAPTAIN'S CALL

**JULY 97**

01 JUL 97 FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
MAIN SPACE FIRE AND GENERAL QUARTERS DRILL

02 JUL 97 UNDERWAY TO CONDUCT VIP REHEARSAL (CASUALTY  
EVACUATION FROM HS LEMNOS, SAREX, SOFTDUCK LAUNCH,  
AND SAIL PAST EVENT)  
FLIGHT OPERATIONS

03 JUL 97 CONDUCT VIP EVENT  
ANCHOR VARNA

04 JUL 97 FULL DRESS SHIP  
STEEL BEACH PICNIC IN OBSERVANCE OF INDEPENDENCE  
DAY

05 JUL 97 COMMENCE BACKLOAD  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE TURKISH STRAITS

06 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS/BECCES/MAIN  
SPACE/GENERAL QUARTER DRILL

07 JUL 97 TRANSIT TURKISH STRAITS



CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

08 JUL 97 RAS WITH PATUXENT  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

09 JUL 97 RDVZ WITH KEARSARGE/CARTER HALL FOR PERSONNEL  
CROSSDECK (MCA TEAM ARRIVES)  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS/BECCES/MAIN SPACE FIRE  
AND GENERAL QUARTERS DRILL

10 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

11 JUL 97 COMPHIBRON FOUR ARRIVES  
LOW SLOW FLIER VULNERABILITY DRILL

12 JUL 97 MCA TEAM DEPARTS (PONCE SWEEPS MCA)

13 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

14 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
ASMD VULNERABILITY PERIOD

15 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

16 JUL 97 RDVZ FOR PACFIRE  
CIWS SHOOT (ARG) LEAR JET W/TDU

18 JUL 97 CONREP WITH SATURN  
PHASE II MIDSHIPMEN DEBARK VIA HELO

19 JUL 97 UNREP WITH PATUXENT

20 JUL 97 SEALS CROSS DECK VIA RHIBS TO USS TEMPEST  
CONDUCTED FLIGHT OPERATIONS

21 JUL 97 COMMENCE EXERCISE ATLAS HINGE  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS/LAUNCH CRRCS  
R & S INSERT VIA CH-46  
LAUNCH LCU FOR TROOP CROSSDECK  
RECOVER LCU/CRRCS

22 JUL 97 AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT  
ANCHOR COAST OF TUNISIA  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS/BECCES  
LAUNCH LCU/CRRCS

23 JUL 97 MIDSHIPMEN PHASE III EMBARK  
UNDERWAY FOR HOUSEKEEPING  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

24 JUL 97 ANCHOR COAST OF TUNISIA  
RECOVER LCU

25 JUL 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

LAUNCH LCU/RECOVER CRRCS  
RECOVER LCU

26 JUL 97 CONDUCT BACKLOAD/FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
LAUNCH LCU

27 JUL 97 CONTINUE BACKLOAD  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE SOUDA BAY, GREECE

28 JUL 97 CONDUCT OVER THE HUMP DAY CELEBRATION

29 JUL 97 RAS WITH PATUXENT

30 JUL 97 SOUDA BAY PORT VISIT CANCELLED

31 JUL 97 ANCHOR CORFU, GREECE FOR 2ND LIBERTY PORT (31  
JUL - 10 AUG)

**AUGUST 97**

04 AUG 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

06 AUG 97 UNDERWAY/ANCHOR DUTY SECTION ONLY

10 AUG 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE SOUDA BAY FOR PAX PICKUP  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

11 AUG 97 RAS WITH PATUXENT  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

12 AUG 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

13 AUG 97 TRANSIT TURKISH STRAITS

14 AUG 97 MOOR CONSTANTA, ROMANIA (1ST TIME PIERSIDE SINCE  
ALMERIA IN MAY)  
COMMENCE EXERCISE RESCUE EAGLE

15 AUG 97 ROMANIAN NAVY DAY CEREMONY  
GENERAL VISITING DAY

16 AUG 97 PHASE III MIDSHIPMEN DEBARK  
UNDERWAY FOR FLIGHT OPS  
ANCHOR

18 AUG 97 UNDERWAY FOR HOUSEKEEPING  
CONDUCT GENERAL QUARTERS

19 AUG 97 MOOR CONSTANTA, ROMANIA  
CONDUCT BACKLOAD

20 AUG 97 REFUEL PIERSIDE (F-76)

22 AUG 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE ODESSA, UKRAINE

CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

23 AUG 97 COMMENCE EXERCISE SEA BREEZE  
ANCHOR DONOSLUV, UKRAINE  
CO DINES WITH UKRANIAN CNO  
LAUNCH UTILITY BOAT

25 AUG 97 HOST PRE-SAIL CONFERENCE

27 AUG 97 ANCHOR VICINITY OF PIVDENNY, UKRAINE  
LAUNCH/RECOVER LCU  
CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE ODESSA, UKRAINE  
ANCHOR

28 AUG 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

29 AUG 97 CONDUCT FLIGHT OPERATIONS

30 AUG 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE PIVDENNY  
CONDUCT BACKLOAD  
ANCHOR

31 AUG 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE ODESSA  
ANCHOR

**SEPTEMBER 97**

01 SEP 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE TURKISH STRAITS

02 SEP 97 TRANSIT TURKISH STRAITS

03 SEP 97 CONDUCT RAS WITH MONONGAHELA

04 SEP 97 MOOR RHODES, GREECE FOR 3RD LIBERTY PORT (4-10  
SEP), CONDUCT PO3 NAVY WIDE EXAM

09 SEP 97 CONDUCT PO2 NAVY WIDE EXAM

10 SEP 97 UNDERWAY FOR OPERATION HUMIDOR

11 SEP 97 CONDUCT DIVTACS WITH USS HUE CITY AND USS TEMPEST

12 SEP 97 CONDUCT CONREP WITH CONCORD

15 SEP 97 MOOR CATANIA, ITALY

16 SEP 97 CONDUCT CPO FROCKING FOR BMC [REDACTED] AND HMC  
[REDACTED]

17 SEP 97 CONDUCT AWARDS CEREMONY ON THE FLT DECK

18 SEP 97 UNDERWAY FROM CATANIA, ITALY ENROUTE RDVZ WITH ARG  
CONDUCT RAS WITH MONONGAHELA

19 SEP 97 ANCHOR AUGUSTA BAY TO CONDUCT CROSSDECK UNDERWAY FROM ANCHORAGE ENROUTE OPAREA TO CONTINUE CROSSDECK

20 SEP 97 COMPHIBRON 4 AND 22 MEU EMBARK FOR EXERCISE DYNAMIC MIX. CONDUCT PHOTO EXERCISE WITH USS KEARSARGE AND USS CARTER HALL. CONTINUE WITH CROSSDECK.

21 SEP 97 CONDUCT AIR DEPT SAFETY STANDDOWN AND ACE SAFETY STANDDOWN

22 SEP 97 UNDERWAY FOR KYPARISSIA BAY, GREECE

23 SEP 97 ANCHOR KYPARISSIA BAY

24 SEP 97 CONDUCT PRE-SAIL CONFERENCE

25 SEP 97 ANCHOR KYPARISSIA. LCU ARRIVES WITH MEDIA. UNDERWAY TO EXERCISE POINT. ANCHOR. CONDUCT COMMAND ASSESSMENT MEETING

26 SEP 97 UNDERWAY, PONCE TAKE TACON OF ATF CONDUCT 1A FOR CRRC'S RECOVERY

27 SEP 97 ANCHOR VIC BLUE BEACH. LAUNCH U-43 TO CARTER HALL, PICK UP CO CARTER HALL/CYC PROCEED TO BLUE BEACH. RECOVER U-43 W/CPR 4/CO. UNDERWAY FOR HOUSE KEEPING.

28 SEP 97 ANCHOR. CONDUCT BACKLOAD CONFERENCE. CONDUCT SWIM CALL IN WELL DECK. CONDUCT STEEL BEACH PICNIC.

29 SEP 97 LAUNCH U-43 TO BLUE BEACH. UNDERWAY ENROUTE PREVEZA

30 SEP 97 CONDUCT RAS W/KANAWAH. CONDUCT ASSAULT CONFIRMATION BRIEF

**OCTOBER 97**

01 OCT 97 ARRIVE PREVEZA. SHIP REMAIN UNDERWAY. H-HOUR TURNAWAY @ PREVEZA. CH46 PICKUP LESSONS LEARNED CONFERENCE ATTENDEES FROM CARTER HALL/RHN CHOIS. CONDUCT REHEARSAL LESSONS LEARNED BRIEF/PREP FOR ASSAULT. CH 46 TAKE LESSONS LEARNED CONFERENCE ATTENDEES BACK TO CTH/CHOIS. CH 46 TAKE 24 PAX TO CARTER HALL. CONDUCT DYNAMIC MIX OPS AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT BRIEF.

02 OCT 97 ARRIVE BLUE BEACH PT 1. FLOOD WELL. ARRIVE BLUE BEACH PT 2. LAUNCH U-43 TO BLUE BEACH. ANCHOR REMAIN ANCHOR OVERNIGHT.

03 OCT 97 LIGHT FIRES NO. 1 BOILER. RECOVER U-44. LAUNCH U-43 TO CARTER HALL. LAUNCH U-44 TO CTH. UNDERWAY. CONDUCT MSF/GQ. ANCHOR OVERNIGHT.

04 OCT 97 TACTICAL PHASE CONTINUES. LCPL ARRIVES PONCE FOR MAIL/PAX PICKUP. TACTICAL PHASE ENDS. CONDUCT BACKLOAD CONFERENCE. UNDERWAY OVERNIGHT FOR HOUSE KEEPING.

05 OCT 97 ANCHOR. LAUNCH U-43 TO BLUE BEACH. LAUNCH U-43 W/CONFERENCE ATTENDEES TO BLUE BEACH. STEEL BEACH PICNIC. U-43 RETURNS W/CONFERENCE ATTENDEES.

06 OCT 97 LAUNCH U-43. RECOVER RHIBS. COMMENCE CUSTOMS INSPECTION. RECOVER U-43. CONDUCT FLT OPS.

07 OCT 97 UNREP W/KANAWHA  
CONDUCT FLT OPS

09 OCT 97 CONDUCT MANDATORY SAFETY TRAINING ON HAZMAT

10 OCT 97 CONDUCT BECCES. ROTA NAV/STRAITS TRANSIT/BALLAST BRIEF

11 OCT 97 LAUNCH U-43. ARRIVE PILOT PICKUP POINT. MOOR PIER 1, BERTH 2, STBD SIDE. COMMENCE OFFLOAD/WASHDOWN. HYDRA OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT BEGINS.

14 OCT 97 U-43 DEPART FOR BEACH  
COMMENCE BACKLOAD

15 OCT 97 LAUNCH LCU-43 FOR CROSSDECK FOR TURNOVER BRIEF.  
CONDUCT TURNOVER

16 OCT 97 UNDERWAY FROM ROTA

17 OCT 97 OUTCHOP SIXTHFLT/INCHOP SECONDFLT

18 OCT 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS

19 OCT 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS. CROSS DECK AMMO/PAX TO CTH.

20 OCT 97 CONDUCT STEEL BEACH PICNIC. RETARD CLOCKS 1 HOUR TO +2 (O)

21 OCT 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS

22 OCT 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS  
COMMENCE SAFETY STANDDOWN

24 OCT 97 CONDUCT MSF/GQ  
COMMENCE RETURN/REUNION BRIEFS

25 OCT 97 CONDUCT BECCES

26 OCT 97 CONDUCT FLT OPS. LAUNCHED U-43/PROCEED TO ANCHORAGE. UNDERWAY MOREHEAD CITY.

27 OCT 97 LAUNCH U-43 TO RADIO ISLAND. MOOR RO-RO RAMP PORT SIDE. COMMENCE OFFLOAD. FINEX OFFLOAD. RADM HOLDER (CPG 2) AND COMMODORE ERTEL (CPR 4) ARRIVE FOR VISIT.

28 OCT 97 LIGHT FIRES NO. 2 BOILER. EMBARK TIGERS. UNDERWAY ENROUTE NORVA. CONDUCT DAMAGE CONTROL DEMONSTRATION FOR TIGERS.

29 OCT 97 LAUNCH U-43 AT BUOY CB. PICK UP PILOT AT BUOY CBJ. ARRIVE PIER 4 BERTH 1 PORT SIDE TWO. FIRST LEAVE PERIOD COMMENCES.

30 OCT 97 SNAP II TECH ASSIST

31 OCT 97 CONDUCT SEAL CONEX BOX OFFLOAD

**NOVEMBER 97**

01 NOV 97 POST DEPLOYMENT STANDDOWN BEGINS

03 NOV 97 UNIFORM SHIFT TO SERVICE DRESS BLUES. PRE-ARRIVAL IMAV CONFERENCE.

08 NOV 97 COMMENCE SECOND LEAVE PERIOD

10 NOV 97 IMAV. TECRA. AVIATION TECH ASSIST

15 NOV 97 COMMENCE MOGAS OFFLOAD

17 NOV 97 CONTINUED IMAV/OHSAT/SCLISIS

18 NOV 97 POST DEPLOYMENT STANDDOWN ENDS

19 NOV 97 IMAV/SCLISIS. REFUELING. CONDUCT NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION DINNER. APTS ANTENNA REMOVAL.

20 NOV 97 CONDUCT AWARDS CEREMONY. CHRISTMAS PARTY HELD ON SPIRIT OF NORFOLK.

24 NOV 97 NATO SECRET INSPECTION.  
CPG-2 COMMANDER'S CONFERENCE  
IMAV DEPARTURE CONFERENCE.

25 NOV 97 CPR-4 CHANGE OF COMMAND AT USS KEARSARGE  
CONDUCT FAST CRUISE. CONDUCT MSF/GQ DRILLS.

26 NOV 97 CONDUCT REENLISTMENT CEREMONY FOR BT2 [REDACTED]

**DECEMBER 97**

02 DEC 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE NAVAL WEAPON STATION EARLE, NJ.

03 DEC 97 ARRIVE EARLE WEAPON STATION, NJ.  
COMMENCE AMMO OFFLOAD

05 DEC 97 COMPLETE AMMO OFFLOAD  
UNDERWAY ENROUTE NORFOLK, VA

06 DEC 97 ARRIVE NORFOLK, MOOR PIER 4  
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

08 DEC 97 6TH MARINES ADV PARTY EMBARKS

09 DEC 97 UNDERWAY ENROUTE ONSLOW BAY, NC FOR TYPE  
COMMANDERS AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING. CONDUCT AV-8B  
HARRIER TRACKEX.  
CONDUCT FLIGHT DECK CRASH DRILL, BECCES, FLYING  
SQUAD DRILL.

10 DEC 97 ANCHOR ONSLOW BAY, NC. LAUNCH LCPL'S. CONDUCT  
AAV/LCU OPS.

11 DEC 97 LAUNCH LCU-44/LCPL'S. RECOVER AAV'S. UNDERWAY  
FOR AAV LAUNCH. CONDUCT MSFD/GQ DRILL/FLIGHT OPS.  
ANCHOR ONSLOW BAY, NC.

12 DEC 97 LAUNCH LCPLS. UNDERWAY TO CONDUCT AAV OPS/CHANGE  
ANCHORAGES, ONSLOW BAY, NC. CONDUCT FLIGHT OPS.

13 DEC 97 LAUNCH LCPLS. CONDUCT AAV OPS UNDERWAY AND AT  
ANCHOR. MAGTF SIX ARRIVES. FLIGHT OPS. REMAIN  
UNDERWAY OVERNIGHT.

14 DEC 97 ANCHOR ONSLOW BAY, NC. LAUNCH LCPLS. CONDUCT AAV  
OPS. CONDUCT MSFD/GQ DRILL. CONDUCT PROTESTANT  
WORSHIP SERVICES. FLIGHT OPS. UNDERWAY ENROUTE  
NORFOLK, VA.

15 DEC 97 ARRIVE NORFOLK, VA. MOOR PIER 2.  
CONDUCT MSFD/GQ.

16 DEC 97 COMMENCE PLOT I

18 DEC 97 PLOT I OUTBRIEF. CONDUCT AWARD CEREMONY.  
COMMENCE HOLIDAY STANDDOWN.  
COMMENCE FUEL OFFLOAD.

24 DEC 97 CATHOLIC MASS HELD ON BOARD

28 DEC 97 SECOND LEAVE PERIOD BEGINS

USS PONCE (LPD 15)  
Historical Narrative

**PONCE** commenced 1997 by completing holiday leave and upkeep period but rapidly escalated to her normal operational tempo. **PONCE** got underway for ISE operations in the VACAPES during which she conducted three burials at sea and successfully tested two prototype Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats. On January 31, 40 USMC Logistics Officer CSE students from EWTGLANT toured **PONCE**.

In February, **PONCE** conducted COMPTUEX with the 22nd MEU off the coast of Morehead City, NC. During this underway period **PONCE** hosted several PCOs for training. The engineering portion of their training was enhanced by an ETG assist visit. **PONCE** also conducted a close in rig dry refueling with USS Vicksburg (CG-69).

In March, **PONCE** conducted JTFEX 1-97 off Onslow Bay, North Carolina in preparation for deployment. On 29 April, **PONCE** got underway for her thirteenth Mediterranean deployment with embarked 22 MEU (SOC) elements. In May **PONCE** conducted OPERATION LINK SEAS with Spanish, Greek and Italian forces. After a port visit in Malaga, Spain, **PONCE** transitted to Almeria, Spain to conduct Exercise BETACOM with the 22nd MEU and units of the Spanish Foreign Legion.

At the end of May, 19 Midshipmen embarked from various commissioning sources for some excellent underway training, including OPERATION SILVER WAKE, an evacuation of 889 men, women and children from Albania, providing security for the elections, and Exercise "ALEXANDER THE GREAT" with the Greek Navy. At the end of a short port visit to Volos Bay, Greece, the Midshipmen departed and **PONCE** got underway for Pagasitikos Bay.

After the successful mid-June Training Amphibious Assault on Skiros Island, Greece, **PONCE** transitted the Turkish Straits enroute to the Black Sea to participate in Exercise "COOPERATIVE PARTNER" with units from the Greek, Dutch, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Rumanian, and Turkish Navies. Public relations efforts included a Bulgarian and Georgian tour with the embarked USMC.

Shortly after departing the Black Sea in July, the Mid-Cycle Assessment team arrived to assess **PONCE'S** engineering readiness. COMPHIBRON FOUR joined them for the last day's events, and both departed pleased with **PONCE'S** standard of excellence. During this same month, **PONCE'S** embarked SEAL team crossdecked to USS TEMPEST while **PONCE** became a key player in Exercise "ATLAS HINGE," conducting the second training Amphibious Assault of the deployment.

After a lengthy port visit in Corfu, Greece, **PONCE** again transitted the Turkish Straits back to the Black Sea to



participate in Exercise "RESCUE EAGLE" with Romania. In mid-August, **PONCE** honored the Romanian Navy Day with an impressive ceremony, and opened the ship for general visiting. Exercise "SEA BREEZE" was conducted at the end of August with the Ukrainian Navy, USS SPRUANCE and USS CYCLONE, including anchoring at Donoslav, Pivdenny, and Odessa, Ukraine. **PONCE'S** Commanding Officer had the distinct pleasure of dining with the Ukrainian Chief of Naval Operations.

In September, **PONCE** transitted back to the Mediterranean for a port visit to Rhodes, Greece, followed by OPERATION HUMIDOR, including tactical maneuvering training with USS HUE CITY, and USS TEMPEST. Later in the month, **PONCE** embarked COMPHIBRON FOUR, 22 MEU, and media in support of Exercise "DYNAMIC MIX," a third training Amphibious Assault conducted with forces from the Spanish, Greek, and Italian Navies.

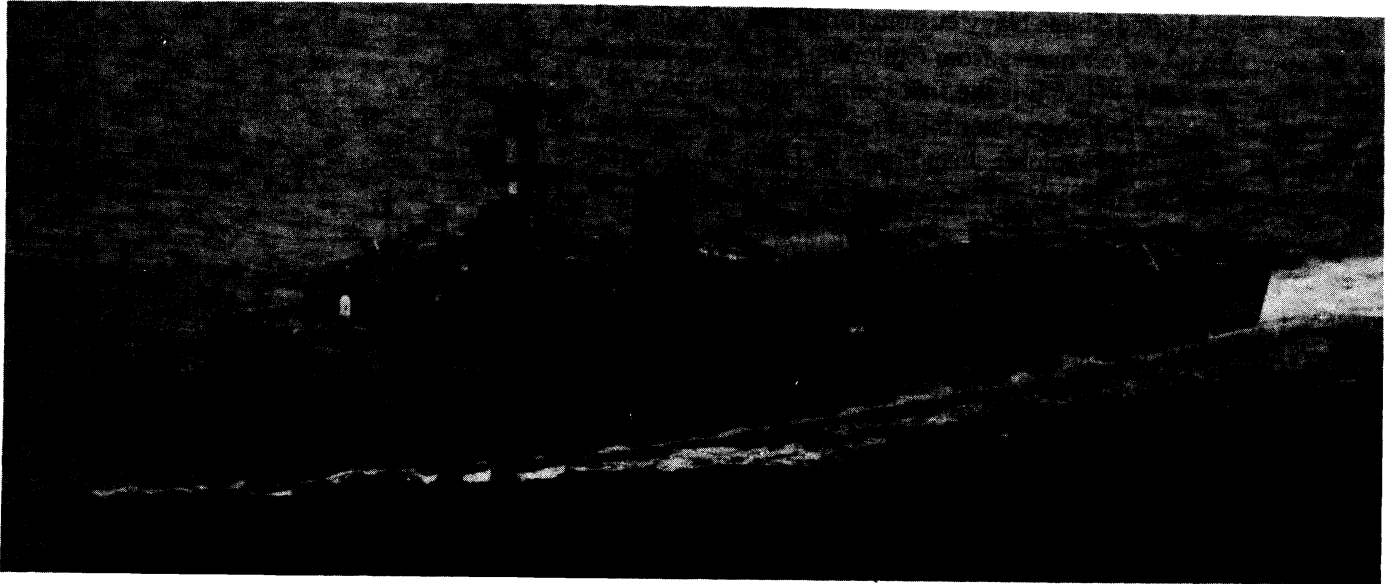
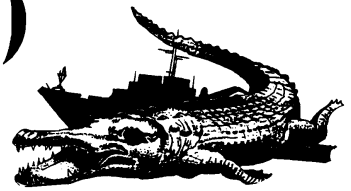
After a brief stop in Rota, Spain for turnover, **PONCE** outchopped from SIXTHFLT and inchooped with SECONDFLT to commence her transit across the Atlantic. After completing the offload of Marines and equipment at Morehead City, NC, **PONCE** was welcomed home by RADM Holder (CPG-2) and Commodore Ertel (CPR-4). Friends and family of crewmembers embarked for a "Tiger Cruise" back to Norfolk, VA. Throughout the deployment, **PONCE** displayed the professionalism and adherence to the highest standards of excellence which highlight her nickname "The Proud Lion."

Upon completion of the much deserved post-deployment standdown and ship's Christmas party, **PONCE** offloaded the USMC and ship's fill ammunition at Naval Weapon Station Earle, NJ. Arriving back in Norfolk just in time for the Children's Christmas party and the Army-Navy football game, **PONCE** departed again the next week for TCAT, Amphibious training with USS KEARSARGE and USS CARTER HALL in Onslow Bay, NC. **PONCE** ended a successful year with an outstanding performance during PLOT I assessment, and commencement of Holiday Standdown.



# USS PONCE (LPD 15)

## (THE PROUD LION)



## SHIPS CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Keel Laid:</b>	31 October 1966	<b>Draft:</b>	8,720 Tons (light) 16,320 Tons (loaded)
<b>Commissioned:</b>	10 July 1971	<b>Ship Company :</b>	28 Officers 367 Enlisted
<b>Shipbuilder:</b>	Lockheed Shipbuilding & Construction Company Seattle, Washington	<b>Embarked Marines:</b>	72 Officers 851 Enlisted
<b>Length:</b>	567 Feet, 9 inches		
<b>Maximum Speed:</b>	In excess of 20 knots		
<b>Beam:</b>	Width 84 Feet; including catwalk 100 Feet		

### Additional facts:

- ◆ PONCE carries enough fuel to steam over 10,000 miles without refueling.
- ◆ The ship has its own doctor and dentist, with a twelve bed medical ward, bacteriological laboratory, X-ray facilities, sterilization room and dental operatory.
- ◆ Storerooms and refrigerated spaces which can subsist 1,500 men for 60 days, or 500 men for 90 days.
- ◆ We can make nearly 60,000 gallons of drinking water a day from seawater in our distilling plants.
- ◆ We operate our own store in which we sell everything from candy, toothpaste, and clothes to cameras.
- ◆ Has 2 boilers which operate at 600 PSI to generate steam, which in turn drives generators, for electrical power and the two main engines.
- ◆ Has two propellers, and two shafts rated at 12,000 shaft horsepower.
- ◆ Has 4 electrical generators which can generate enough electricity to power a city of 26,000 people.
- ◆ Is equipped with a SPS-67 surface search radar, SPS-64 commercial navigation radar, and a SPS-40 air search radar.
- ◆ Has two 25mm gun mounts, manual in operation; have a maximum range of approximately 4.5 miles and fire 175 rounds per minute.
- ◆ Has 2 high speed Gatling Guns, known as Close in Weapons Systems, which can fire up to 3,000 bullets per minute.