



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS PONCE (LPD-15)

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20 Mar 00

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
To: Director of Naval History, (OP-09BH), Washington Navy
Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Organization
(2) Chronology of Events
(3) Historical Narrative

1. Per reference (a), the annual command history for USS PONCE (LPD 15) for calendar year 1999 is hereby forwarded.

a. Command Mission. 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) USS PONCE is homeported in Norfolk, Virginia and is assigned to Amphibious Group TWO, commanded by RADM W. G. Sutton.

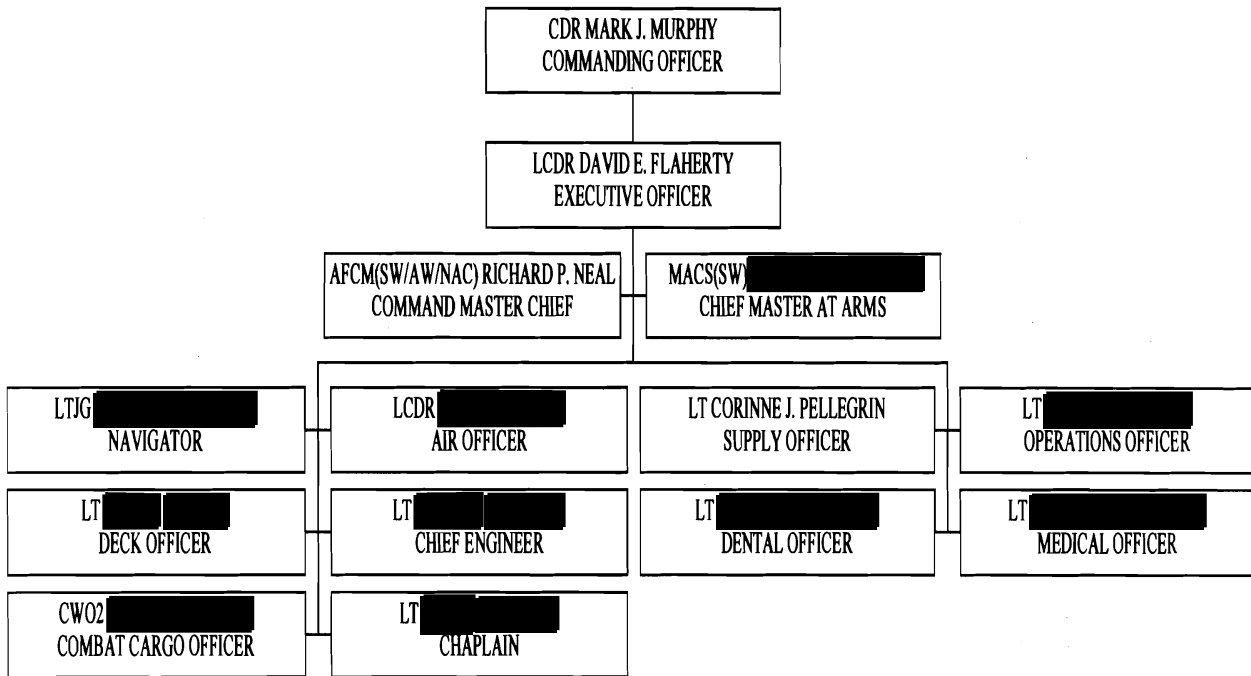
(2) The ship's crew consists of 29 officers and 327 enlisted. The ship's organization is outlined in enclosure (1).

c. Chronology. Enclosure (2) is a chronology of the events and milestones reached during 1999.

d. Narrative. Enclosure (3) is a historical narrative of significant events in 1999.

M. J. Murphy
M. J. MURPHY

USS PONCE (LPD 15) COMMAND ORGANIZATION



USS PONCE (LPD 15)
1999 Chronology of Events

January 1999

01-10 Jan 99 Holiday Leave/Standdown Period

05 Jan 99 Shiphandling Simulator Training

06 Jan 99 Shiphandling Simulator Training

09 Jan 99 Shiphandling Simulator Training

10 Jan 99 Shiphandling Simulator Training

11 Jan 99 Berth Shift Pier 23 Ammo Handling Pier
Commence Ammunition Onload

12 Jan 99 Ammunition Onload
Captain's Mast

13 Jan 99 Ammunition Onload
Indoctrination Division

14 Jan 99 Ammunition Onload
Couple's Pre-deployment Brief

16-18 Jan 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

19 Jan 99 MEUEX Onload
LFORM Onload
Singles' Pre-deployment Brief

20 Jan 99 MEUEX/JTFEX Vehicle and Cargo Onload
Singles' Pre-deployment Brief
Exercise Cooperative Partner Brief (KEARSARGE)

21 Jan 99 MEUEX/JTFEX Vehicle and Cargo Onload
Logistics / Maintenance Meeting (KEARSARGE)
PC Interoperability Brief
PCS Coordination Meeting

22 Jan 99 MEUEX/JTFEX Vehicle and Cargo Onload
MEUEX Presail Conference (KEARSARGE)
C2W Syndicate

Enclosure (2)

23 Jan 99 MEU Advance Party Arrives

24 Jan 99 MSSG 26 Arrival
Troop Space Turnover
MEU Advance Party Arrives

25 Jan - Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise Cherry Point
03 Feb 99 Operating Area

25 Jan 99 Underway for MEUEX
Small Boat Harassment Exercise
SEAL Platoon Embarks Tempest/Cyclone
PC Astern Rig Refueling (Dry Hookup)
BECCES/ITT Scenario

26 Jan 99 Transit to Onslow Bay / Morehead City
UAV Flight Operations
Chaff Exercise
RDVU with ARG
ITT Scenario/EDATF Exercise Profiles
Main Space Fire Drill
NIXIE Stream

27 Jan 99 Arrive Morehead City
26 MEU Onload
Underway Enroute Onslow Bay
Arrive Onslow Bay
Commence MEUEX Events
Flight Operations
SAR Exercise
PC Night Refueling (Dry Hookup)

28 Jan 99 Continue MEUEX Events
UAV Flight Operations
EDATF Surface/Air Exercise
SEAL R&S Insert Exercise w/ SBU-20 Det A
Information Blackout Exercise

29 Jan 99 Continue MEUEX Events
Raid Confirmation Brief
Flight Operations
Deceptive Lighting Drill

30 Jan 99 Continue MEUEX Events
Rescue and Assistance Drill

Enclosure (2)

Flight Operations

31 Jan 99 Continue MEUEX Events
Wet Well Operations
LCU Operations
Flight Operations
UAV Flight Operations
Swing Ship

February 99

01 Feb 99 Awarded 1998 CNSL Surface Ship Safety Award
Continue MEUEX Events
Flight Operations
HVBSS Exercise
UAV Flight Operations
Deceptive Lighting Drill

02 Feb 99 Complete MEUEX Events
Flight Operations
UAV Flight Operations
HVBSS Exercise
Captain's Mast

03 Feb 99 50 CAL/25 MM Checkfires
Debark LCU 1643
Q-Route Transit Exercise
Arrive NAVSTA Norfolk, VA

04-10 Feb 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

04 Feb 99 Battle Group Inport Training (TACTRAGRULANT)
BMC SHAFFER Reenlistment Ceremony

05 Feb 99 Battle Group Inport Training (TACTRAGRULANT)
MM1 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
MM3 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
SH2 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony

06 Feb 99 Battle Group Inport Training (TACTRAGRULANT)

08 Feb 99 JTFEX Intelligence Brief
NAVMETOC / UAV Brief
Captain's Mast
CPR 2 Operations Officer Meeting

09 Feb 99 Awards Ceremony

Enclosure (2)

Captain's Mast
ARG Ops Officer Meeting
ARG FOTC Coordination Meeting (KEARSARGE)

10 Feb 99 JTFEX Presail Conference (KEARSARGE)
JTFEX Schedule of Events Brief

11 Feb-04 Mar Conduct JTFEX 2-99 (Puerto Rico/Cherry Point
Operating Area

11 Feb 99 Underway for JTFEX
Embark LCU 1643
ULM-4 Range (SLQ-32)
UAV Operations
BECCEs

12 Feb 99 LCU Operations
Arrive Morehead City, NC
26 MEU Personnel/Cargo/Vehicle Onload
Enroute Puerto Rico OPAREA, Opposed Transit
UAV Operations

13 Feb 99 Enroute Puerto Rico OPAREA
UAV Operations
Flight Operations

14 Feb 99 Enroute Puerto Rico OPAREA
Photo Exercise
25MM/50CAL Checkfires
BECCEs

15 Feb 99 Enroute Puerto Rico OPAREA
CIWS PACFIRE
Flight Operations
9MM FAMFIRE
BECCEs

16 Feb 99 Enroute Puerto Rico OPAREA
Fueling at Sea w/ USS ARCTIC
SAR Exercise
Flight Operations

17 Feb 99 Arrive Puerto Rico OPAREA
Embark SEAL TEAM 2
Amphibious Assault Rehearsal Exercise

Enclosure (2)

18 Feb 99 Commence SACEX Events
Coordinated Amphibious Assault Exercise,
Vieques Island
Flight Operations
UAV Operations

19 Feb 99 Continue SACEX Events
Flight Operations

20 Feb 99 Continue SACEX Events
Launch/Recover RHIBS
Launch/Recover LCU
Close-in Rig Refueling w/ BNS Wandelaar
Arrive Roosevelt Roads, PR
Commence Offload 26 MEU Vehicles and Cargo

21 Feb 99 Continue Offload/Washdown
Ops Officer Conference

22 Feb 99 Inport Refueling Roosevelt Roads
Underway Enroute Cherry Pt OPAREA for SOCEX

23 Feb 99 Enroute Cherry Point OPAREA for SOCEX
Department in the Spotlight Inbrief

24 Feb 99 Enroute Cherry Point OPAREA for SOCEX
CIWS Pacfire
25MM/50CAL Checkfires
General Quarters/Main Space Fire Drill
UAV Flight Operations
Flight Operations/HH-46 DLQs

25 Feb 99 Enroute Cherry Point OPAREA for SOCEX
General Quarters/Main Space Fire Drill
General Quarters/CBR Training

26 Feb 99 Fueling at Sea w/USNS BIG HORN
Commence SOCEX/Amphibious Raid H-Hour

27 Feb 99 Arrive Cherry Point OPAREA/Continue SOCEX Events
Flight Operations

28 Feb 99 Continue SOCEX Events
Flight Operations

March 99

Enclosure (2)

01 Mar 99 Continue SOCEX Events
 COMPHIBGRU TWO Visit
 Captain's Mast

02 Mar 99 Complete SOCEX Events
 Navy-Wide Exam for E-4

03 Mar 99 UAV Flight Operations
 Fueling at Sea w/ USNS BIG HORN

04 Mar 99 Navy-Wide Exam for E-5
 MA2 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
 DK3 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
 Arrive NAVSTA Norfolk, VA

05-07 Mar 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

08-19 Mar 99 Combat Systems Readiness Review Norfolk VA
 Intermediate Maintenance Availability Norfolk VA

08 Mar 99 Anti-Terrorism / Force Protection Exercise
 9MM Range Qualifications
 Inport Refueling

09 Mar 99 Navy-Wide Exam for E-6
 9MM Range Qualifications
 Anti-Terrorism / Force Protection Exercise

10 Mar 99 Anti-Terrorism / Force Protection Exercise
 Logistics / Maintenance Executive Briefings

11 Mar 99 Command-Wide Information Security Awareness Trng
 Exercise Cooperative Partner Brief (KEARSARGE)

12 Mar 99 9MM Range Qualifications
 HM1 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
 COMPHIBGRU TWO Operations Officer Meeting
 COMPHIBGRU TWO Safety Officer Meeting

13 Mar 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

14 Mar - Preparation for Overseas Movement
 13 Apr 99

14 Mar 99 Commence POM Period

Enclosure (2)

15 Mar 99 Diesel Inspection

16 Mar 99 Diesel Inspection
 EURCENT Crisis Action Team Briefing
 COMPHIBGRU TWO Intelligence Conference

17 Mar 99 Diesel Inspection
 Aircraft Fire Fighting Team Training
 NAVEUR Strategy Brief
 Singles' Pre-deployment Brief
 Couples' Pre-deployment Brief

18 Mar 99 Diesel Inspection
 Office of Naval Intelligence Briefing
 Ombudsmen Assembly

19 Mar 99 Diesel Inspection
 HT1 ████████ Reenlistment Ceremony

20-21 Mar 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

22 Mar 99 Ship's Platoon Arrives
 Hull Cleaning

23 Mar 99 Ship's Platoon Arrives
 Exercise Cooperative Partner Final Planning Conf
 Luncheon for Captain Barber (CO, NAVSTA Norfolk)
 Hull Cleaning

24 Mar 99 Ship's Platoon Arrives
 Hull Cleaning
 Exercise Cooperative Partner Final Planning Conf

25 Mar 99 COMPHIBGRU TWO Quality of Life Visit
 Ship's Platoon Arrives
 Exercise Cooperative Partner Final Planning Conf
 Hull Cleaning

26 Mar 99 Ship's Platoon Arrives
 CMS Assist Visit
 COMPHIBRON TWO Visit
 Hull Cleaning

27-28 Mar 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

29 Mar 99 VICE ADMIRAL GIFFIN (COMNAVSURFLANT) Visit

Enclosure (2)

30 Mar 99 Fast Cruise

31 Mar 99 Singles' Pre-deployment Briefing
Parents'/Childrens' Pre-deployment Briefing

April 99

01 Apr 99 Underway for Sea Trials/Dependents' Day Cruise
LCAC Operations
Arrive NAVSTA Norfolk, VA

02-06 Apr 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

07 Apr 99 Command Picnic (Breezy Point)
Ammunition Onload

08-11 Apr 99 Upkeep Norfolk VA

12 Apr 99 Awards Ceremony
Quality Assurance Internal Audit
Operations Officer Conference USS KEARSARGE

13 Apr 99 Presail Conference in USS KEARSARGE
Schedule of Events / Navigation Brief

14-27 Apr 99 Underway Enroute South Adriatic Sea

14 Apr 99 Deploy Landing Force Sixth Fleet 2-99
Embark LCU 1643
ULM-4 Range (SLQ-32)
UAV Operations

15 Apr 99 Anchor Morehead City
LCU Operations for Onload 26 MEU
Onload 26 MEU Troop/Cargo/Vehicles
Underway from Morehead City
CIWS TDU Shoot
Commence Atlantic Transit

16 Apr 99 Man Overboard Drill
GQ / Main Space Fire Drill
UAV Operations

17 Apr 99 Tactical Seminar: Rules of Engagement
GQ / Main Space Fire Drill
UAV Operations

Enclosure (2)

BECES

18 Apr 99 UAV/Flight Deck Training
CSTT Drill/PACFIRE

19 Apr 99 MSSG/BLT Battle Skills Training
CSTT Scenario / FAMFIRE
Tactical Seminar: INCSEA

20 Apr 99 UAV/Flight Deck Training
MSSG/BLT Battle Skills Training
Tactical Seminar: INTEL Overview

21 Apr 99 Tactical Seminar: NOBLE ANVIL/SHINING HOPE
MSSG/BLT Battle Skills Training
SEAL Team Two FAMFIRE
UAV Operations

22 Apr 99 CIWS PACFIRE
MSSG/BLT Battle Skills Training
Drifting Mine Response Exercise
UAV Operations
Terrorist Threat Training
Tactical Seminar: OPGENS/OPTASKS

23 Apr 99 MSSG/BLT Battle Skills Training
FAMFIRE
General Quarters Drill
Tactical Seminar: Emergency Defense of the
Amphibious Task Force

24 Apr 99 UNREP/VERTREP W/ USNS LARAMIE
C6F INCHOP Safety Stand-down
Flight Operations (UAV)

26 Apr 99 FAMFIRE
CIWS PACFIRE

27 Apr 99 FAMFIRE
CIWS PACFIRE
UAV Operations
General Quarters
Tactical Seminar: CIWS/GUNS
EMCON Training

28 APR-07 JUN Adriatic Sea Operations in support of

Enclosure (2)

Noble Anvil/Shining Hope/Allied Force

28 APR 99 Arrive Adriatic ISO Operation Noble Anvil/
Shining Hope
Flight Operations
Tactical Seminar: NIXIE/TCM

29 Apr 99 Flight Operations
Tactical Seminar
General Quarters Drill

30 Apr 99 VBSS Training
Tactical Seminar

May 99

01 May 99 Launch SBU Ribs in support of
Vlore Beach Survey (Albania)
Flight Operations
Reenlistment Ceremony for MACS Thomason
Captain's Mast

02 May 99 Flight Operations
Vlore Beach Survey (Albania)

03 May 99 Fueling at Sea w/ USS MONONGAHELA
VBSS Training
Flight Operations
Tactical Seminar

04 May 99 CIWS Pacfire
General Quarters - Main Space Fire Drill

05 May 99 Flight Operations
UAV Operations
FAMFIRE
VBSS Training
COMSIXTHFLT Visit
BECCES/Main Space Fire Drill
Tactical Seminar

06 May 99 SEAL Team TWO VBSS Training
EOD MINE Pounce Exercise

07 May 99 MSSG 26 FAMFIRE
Flight Operations
UAV Operations

Enclosure (2)

SEAL Team TWO Fast Rope Training
Night VBSS Exercise w/ GUNSTON HALL

08 May 99 MSSG 26 FAMFIRE
Flight Operations
UAV Operations
Tactical Seminar: FOTC

09 May 99 SEAL Team TWO FAMFIRE
UAV Operations

10 May 99 Fueling at Sea w/ USS ARCTIC
Man Overboard Drill
UAV Flight Operations
Tactical Seminar
Day VBSS Exercise w/ GUNSTON HALL
SEAL Team TWO Sniper Shoot

11 May 99 CIWS PACFIRE
25MM/50CAL Check Fires
Lima Company Flight Deck FAMFIRE
Flight Operations
UAV Flight Operations
Day VBSS Exercise w/ USS ROSS
Night VBSS Training

12 May 99 CONREP w/ USNS SATURN
UAV Flight Operations
BECCES
General Quarters / Main Space Fire Drill
Flight Operations
Tactical Seminar

13 May 99 Launch SBU Ribs for Fier Beach Survey
Launch LCU 1643 for Fier Beach Survey
Ship's Force FAMFIRE

14 May 99 Launch LCU 1643 (Blue Water Timed Landing)
Tactical Seminar: MED MOOR

15 May 99 General Quarters (Battle Problem)
Detach ARG Enroute Port Visit Taranto Italy

16 May 99 UAV Flight Operations
Captain's Call
Captain's Mast

Enclosure (2)

17 May 99 MOOR Taranto, Italy
Port Visit Taranto, Italy

18-20 May 99 Port Visit Taranto, Italy

21 May 99 Underway from Taranto, Italy
RDVU w/ USNS Laramie for Vertrep AVGAS

22 May 99 UAV Flight Operations
RDVU w/ KEARSARGE ARG in Adriatic
Flight Operations

23 May 99 UAV Flight Operations

24 May 99 UAV Flight Operations
COMSIXTHFLT Search and Rescue Exercise

25 May 99 Launch RHIB for VLORE Beach Hydrosurvey
Fueling at Sea w/ USS ARCTIC
BECCES
General Quarters / Main Space Fire Drill

26 May 99 UAV Flight Operations
Launch RHIBs for Beach Hydrosurvey
Flight Operations

27 May 99 Launch RHIBs
UAV Flight Operations
VBSS Training
General Quarters (Battle Problem/Abandon Ship)
Embark Air Combat Element personnel

28 May 99 UAV Flight Operations
CIWS Pacfire
LAR Detachment FAMFIRE
25MM/50CAL Check Fires
Launch/Recover RHIBs / LCU 1643
Flight Operations

29 May 99 SEAL Team TWO FAMFIRE
UAV Flight Operations
SM2 [REDACTED] Reenlistment Ceremony
Flight Operations

30 May 99 Flight Operations

Enclosure (2)

Small Boat Transfer to GUNSTON HALL
UAV Flight Operations

31 May 99 MDSHIPMEN Embark (Phase I)
Fueling at Sea w/ USS ARCTIC
Helo VBSS W/ USS ARCTIC
Flight Operations
UAV Flight Operations

June 99

01 Jun 99 Flight Operations
LCU Training w/ KEARSARGE
AAV Operations w/ KEARSARGE
LCAC Operations
Petty Officer Indoctrination

02 Jun 99 Petty Officer Indoctrination
Static Line Water Jump
Flight Operations
B & A Crane Operations

03 Jun 99 VBSS Training
ST2/ACE Softduck Spie Rig Hoist
B & A Crane Operations
Flight Operations
Frocking Ceremony

04 Jun 99 CIWS Pacfire
Small Arms Checkfire
Depart Adriatic Sea Enroute Aegean

05 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Fueling at Sea / Vertrep w/USNS LARAMIE
Transit Enroute Aegean / Oper Joint Guardian

06 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Amphibious Offload Confirmation Brief
(onboard USS KEARSARGE)
Joint Guardian Offload Operations Brief
Transit Enroute Aegean / Oper Joint Guardian

07-20 Jun 99 Operations Aegean Sea ISO Operation Joint
Guardian

07 Jun 99 Flight Operations

Enclosure (2)

08 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Media Arrival

09 Jun 99 Flight Operations

10 Jun 99 Flight Operations
26 MEU Surfaceborne Offload
ISO Operation Joint Guardian

11 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Complete 26 MEU Admin Offload

13 Jun 99 Flight Operations

15 Jun 99 VBSS Training
General Quarters/Main Space Fire Drill
BECCES

16 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Vertrep w/ USNS Saturn

17 Jun 99 Launch LCU-1643
VBSS Training
Hospital Corpsmens' 101st Birthday
General Quarters (Battle Problem)
Flight Operations

18 Jun 99 Awards Ceremony

19 Jun 99 LCPL Operations
RHIB Operations
Reenlistment Ceremony, EMC [REDACTED]
Small Boat Transfer
Flight Operations
UAV Flight Operations

20 Jun 99 Small Boat Transfer

21 Jun 99 Flight Operations
Enroute Port Visit Haifa, Israel

22 Jun 99 Fueling at Sea / Vertrep w/USNS LARAMIE
BECCES
Enroute Haifa, Israel

23 Jun 99 Enroute Haifa, Israel

Enclosure (2)

CIWS Pacfire
Small Arms Checkfire
Ship's Force Rifle/Shotgun Quals
Maneuvering DIVTACS
EMCON Exercise
CO's Mast
Haifa Port Brief

24 Jun 99 Moor HAIFA, Israel
CO's Call on RADM ELI MAROM

25 Jun-
06 Jul 99 Inport Haifa, Israel

28 Jun 99 COMPHIBRON TWO Backload Brief

29 Jun 99 Petty Officer Indoctrination

30 Jun 99 Israeli Shipyard VIP Visit
Petty Officer Indoctrination

July 1999

01 Jul 99 Frocking / Advancement Ceremony
CO's Mast
Reception on USS KEARSARGE

01-05 Jul 99 Inport Haifa, Israel

04 Jul 99 4th of July Picnic / Haifa Beach

05 Jul 99 Pre-Sail Conference on USS KEARSARGE
CO Official Call on RADM Marom

06 Jul 99 Underway from Haifa, Israel
Flight Operations
Fueling at Sea w/ USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
UAV Flight Operations
CHAFF Firing Exercise

07 Jul 99 9MM Qualifications
CIWS Pacfire / TDU Shoot
EW Exercise (LEAR Jet services)
Seaman to Admiral Board

08 Jul 99 Navigation Detail for Aegean Sea
Flight Operations

Enclosure (2)

Maneuvering DIVTACS
BECCES

09 Jul 99 Arrive Modloc IVO Thessaloniki, Greece
Flight Operations

10 Jul 99 Flight Operations
Insert Ship's Ordnance Team in Macedonia
Insert EOD Support Personnel
LCU Operations
PONCE Birthday Party

11 Jul 99 Flight Operations
LCU Operations ivo Thessaloniki
(BMU2 Ramp Construction)
Precision Anchorage

12 Jul 99 LCU Operations ivo Thessaloniki
(BMU2 Ramp Construction)
Flight Operations
Precision Anchorage

13 Jul 99 VERTREP w/ USNS Saturn
Small Boat / Search and Rescue Training
Swing Ship
Flight Operations
Maritime Intelligence Training

14 Jul 99 Search and Rescue / Small Boat Training
Flight Operations
Maritime Intelligence Training
Safety Council

15 Jul 99 Anchor Thessaloniki, Greece
Backload 26 MEU Thessaloniki, Greece
LCU Operations
Recover LCU 1643 with Marines
Small Boat Logistics Operations

16 Jul 99 Continue 26 MEU Backload Operations
(Recover Ammo / Cargo / Vehicles)
LCU Operations / Sterngate Marriages
Small Boat Operations
USS KEARSARGE Change of Command

17 Jul 99 Complete 26 MEU Backload Operations

Enclosure (2)

(Recover Ammo / Cargo / Vehicles)
LCU Operations (Sterngate Marriages)
CART I Briefing
N32 Exercise Northern Approaches Briefing

18 Jul 99 Underway enroute Rota, Spain
Small Boat Operations

19 Jul 99 EMCON Exercise
Flight Operations
Intelligence Analysis Training
Schedule of Events Briefing
Critical Incident Stress Debriefings

20 Jul 99 UAV Flight Operations
CART I Strategy Meeting
XO Visits CTF 61

21 Jul 99 PONCE Mid-Deployment Day
Maneuvering DIVTACS
Flight Operations
Detect To Engage Exercise

22 Jul 99 Lima Company Famfire
Fueling at Sea w/ USNS LEROY GRUMMAN

23 Jul 99 9mm Famfire
CO's Mast
LCU Operations
ARG Photo Exercise

24 Jul 99 Lima Company FAMFIRE
50-Cal / 25mm / M-60 Checkfires
CIWS Pacfire / TDU Shoot
UAV Flight Operations
EW Exercise

25 Jul 99 Maneuvering DIVTACs
COMPHIBRON TWO / 26 MEU CO Visit
UAV Flight Operations

26 Jul 99 Mid-Deployment Safety Standdown
Rota, Spain Port Brief
Rota, Spain Port Security Brief
Flight Operations

Enclosure (2)

27 Jul- Commander's Assessment of Readiness and Training,
10 Aug 99 Phase I

27 Jul- Port Visit / Maintenance Rota, Spain
13 Aug 99

27 Jul 99 LCU / RHIB Operations
Arrived Rota, Spain
Midshipmen Arrive (Phase III)
Commence MEU Maintenance Offload
Awards Ceremony

28 Jul 99 Inport CRRC Operations
26 MEU Offload Brief on USS KEARSARGE
Continue MEU Maintenance Offload
CART I Planning Meeting
Complete MEU Vehicle Offload
COMPHIBRON TWO CO/XO Conference

29 Jul 99 Fast Cruise
BECCES / Main Space Fire Drill
CO's Mast
Diving Operations

30 Jul 99 Fast Cruise
BECCES / Main Space Fire Drill
Reenlistment Ceremony for FC1 [REDACTED]

31 Jul 99 Fast Cruise
BECCES / Main Space Fire Drill

August 99

01 Aug 99 Inport Rota, Spain

02 Aug 99 Mid-Cycle Assessment Preparations

03 Aug 99 Mid-Cycle Assessment Preparations
Berth Shift

04 Aug 99 Mid-Cycle Assessment Preparations
Backload 26 MEU
Fast Cruise
Main Space Fire Drill

05 Aug 99 Mid-Cycle Assessment Preparations
CINCUSNAVEUR Visits USS KEARSARGE

Enclosure (2)

06 Aug 99 Mid-Cycle Assessment
Exercise Northern Approaches Planning Meeting
Fast Cruise
BECCES / Main Space Fire Drill

07-08 Aug 99 Inport Rota, Spain

09 Aug 99 CRRC Operations
LCU Operations / Backload 26 MEU
Awards Ceremony
CO Frocked to Captain, USN

10 Aug 99 LCU Operations / Backload 26 MEU
Pre-Sail Conference

11 Aug 99 Inport Rota, Spain
CO's Mast

12 Aug 99 Inport Rota, Spain
Inport Refueling

13 Aug 99 Underway enroute Malaga, Spain
LCU Operations
Transit Strait of Gibraltar
Malaga Port Brief

14-18 Aug 99 Port Visit Malaga, Spain

14 Aug 99 Arrived Malaga, Spain

18 Aug 99 Emergency Personnel Recall
Respond to Turkish Disaster Relief Tasking

19 Aug 99 Underway enroute Sea of Marmara

20 Aug 99 Humanitarian Assist Planning

21 Aug 99 Vertrep Provisions from USNS Saturn
Fueling at Sea w/ USNS John Lenthall

22 Aug 99 Operation Avid Response Contingency Planning
CIWS Pacfire
SBU-20 Famfire

23 Aug 99 Operation Avid Response Contingency Planning

Enclosure (2)

Transit Dardanelles Strait enroute vicinity
Golcuk
Transit Sea of Marmara
Arrive vicinity Golcuk, Turkey

24 Aug- Operations ISO Operation Avid Response
10 Sep 99

24 Aug 99 SBU-20A Beach Landing Site Reconnaissance

September 99

01 Sep 99 DC Olympics

03 Sep 99 Underway Replenishment w/USNS JOHN LENTHALL

06 Sep 99 CRRC Operations

07 Sep 99 DC Olympics
Deck Olympics

8 Sep 99 Exercise Northern Approaches Conference,
Dogan Bey, Turkey

9 Sep 99 Backload 26 MEU from Turkey
Crossdeck ACE (for Exercise Northern Approaches)

10 Sep 99 Transit Dardanelles Strait
Arrive Dogan Bey, Turkey
RDVU With TG 441.01

11 Sep 99 Commence Exercise Northern Approaches with
Turkish/British Forces, Phase I
Launch LCU, LARCs, CRRCs
DLQ Cross Training

12 Sep 99 Transit/Arrive Saros Bay, Turkey
Commence Northern Approaches Phase II (Free Play)

17 Sep 99 Exercise Northern Approaches Outbrief
Detach/Transit Rota Spain

18 Sep 99 M60/50 Cal/25MM Famfire

20 Sep 99 CIWS Pacfire
TDU shoot
EW Lear Exercise

Enclosure (2)

21 Sep 99 Vertrep and Refueling with USNS JOHN LENTHALL

22 Sep 99 Transit Strait of Gibraltar
Famfire

23 Sep 99 Inport Rota Spain

24 Sep 99 Agricultural Inspection Completion
Washdown
Backload

27 Sep 99 USS GUNSTON HALL Moors alongside
Commence Material Self-Assessment

October 99

01 Oct 99 Pre-Sail Conference on USS KEARSARGE
USS SHREVEPORT/PONCE Turn-Over Meeting
Navigation Brief
Underway Transit Atlantic Enroute Moorhead City, NC
Recover LCU Preboat and LARCs

02-12 Oct 99 Trans-Atlantic Crossing

02 Oct 99 CHOP to COMSECONDFLT
UAV Flight Window

03 Oct 99 UAV Flight Operations

04 Oct 99 CIWS Pacfire
NIXIE Stream
Small Arms Famfire (Seal Team TWO)
50 CAL/25 MM Firing Exercise
UAV Flight Operations

05 Oct 99 Navigation in EW Environment
CHAFF Exercise
9MM Qualifications
UAV Flight Operations

06 Oct 99 Split ARG Air Combat Element returns to USS
KEARSARGE
Navigation in EW Environment
UAV Flight Operations

Enclosure (2)

01-14 Nov 99 Post-Deployment Standdown Period

15 Nov 99 Upkeep Norfolk
MOGAS Assist Visit

16-19 Nov 99 USA/USN Joint Ship Special Warfare Operations

16 Nov 99 TACAN Certification

19 Nov 99 Arrive NAVSTA Norfolk

19-30 Nov 99 Upkeep Norfolk

23 Nov 99 Inter-Deployment Training Cycle Brief to
Commander, Amphibious Group TWO

29 Nov 99 Offload LFORM
MOGAS Inspection

29-30 Nov 99 PARSE Elevator Assist Visit
Mobile Ordnance Training Team
Integrated Logistics Assessment

30 Nov 99 Combat Systems/C4I Working Group

December 1999

01-05 Dec 99 Upkeep Norfolk

01-03 Dec 99 PARSE Elevator Assist Visit
Mobile Ordnance Training Team
Integrated Logistics Assessment
COMNAVSURFLANT Shiphandling Simulator

01 Dec 99 Combat Systems/C4I Working Group

02-03 Dec 99 Supply Management Assist Visit

04 Dec 99 MOGAS Offload

06-10 Dec 99 Major Ammunition Offload Yorktown Virginia

06 Dec 99 Arrive Yorktown

10 Dec 99 Arrive Norfolk

11-17 Dec 99 Upkeep Norfolk

Enclosure (2)

11 Dec 99 Children's Christmas Party
13-15 Dec 99 Defueling
13-17 Dec 99 Boiler Disassembly
15 Dec 99 Christmas Party
18-31 Dec 99 Holiday Leave and Upkeep Norfolk

Enclosure (2)

USS PONCE (LPD 15) HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

USS PONCE's operational employments, training, and achievements were historic and unprecedented during two dynamic deployment work-up exercises and a six-month Mediterranean deployment with the USS KEARSARGE Amphibious Ready Group that had significant regional impact. PONCE and her KEARSARGE ARG counterparts completed 393 of 393 mission essential training tasks required prior to deployment, a milestone never achieved previously. Furthermore, the ship adeptly maintained M-1 training status in all primary and secondary mission areas, despite the proliferation of real-time contingencies throughout the Mediterranean. During 1999, PONCE was directly involved in combat operations in the Balkans (Operations Allied Force and Noble Anvil), humanitarian assistance building refugee camps in Albania (Operation Shining Hope), peacekeeping operations that provided a Marine Expeditionary Unit initial enabling force in Kosovo (Operation Joint Guardian), humanitarian assistance providing earthquake disaster relief in northwest Turkey (Operation Avid Response), and a complex tri-lateral NATO amphibious exercise in Turkey (Exercise Northern Approaches).

USS PONCE began calendar year 1999 with a decided emphasis on preparing the ARG-MEU team for the one-week Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise, the first major exercise that really integrated the Navy and Marine components and had a scripted intelligence scenario. PONCE sailed for MEUEX 26 January and returned 4 February feeling fully ready for the increased rigors and integration of the Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX). With the Advanced Phase of the Interdeployment Training Cycle significantly compressed due to the escalating situation in the Balkans, PONCE and the remainder of the ARG got underway only one week after the completion of MEUEX and made a simulated opposed transit to the Puerto Rican operating area to conduct SACEX, including a full amphibious landing exercise at Vieques Island. Following an abbreviated upkeep period in Roosevelt Roads, the ARG proceeded north to participate in SOCEX, which validated the ARG-MEU's special operating capabilities, including Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) and Amphibious Raiding. During the intermediate and advanced phases of the training cycle, PONCE's crew successfully integrated a diverse group of Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary warfare elements, including an Air Combat Element (ACE) detachment, a Marine Corps rifle company and weapons platoon, the 26th MEU Service Support Group (26 MSSG), an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) detachment, and Navy Special Warfare and Beach Group detachments. Moreover, PONCE became accustomed and proficient operating in a Split ARG configuration, embarking key components of the Command Element and Air Combat Element.

After a short Intermediate Maintenance Availability and the Preparation for Overseas Movement (POM) period, PONCE departed Norfolk 14 April and steamed at high speed toward the Mediterranean as events in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia unfolded. The ship transited directly into harm's way in the Southern Adriatic Sea at the height of Operations Allied Force and Noble Anvil without the benefit of a face-to-face turnover with the departing ARG. While supporting ongoing combat operations in the Adriatic, PONCE provided real-time intelligence of FRY Naval Order of Battle and potential amphibious landing sites using Unmanned Aerial Vehicle reconnaissance flights and hydrographic surveys conducted by SEAL and Special Boat Unit detachments. In addition, the ship transported and supported LIMA Company's Battalion Landing Team 3/8 during security operations at Camp Hope and Camp Eagle, refugee sites located in Albania, and provided an alternate flight deck to relieve considerable tasking placed upon the ARG Flagship. Other notable achievements in the Adriatic included six surface-borne beach RECCE missions of possible landing sites for forward-deployed and MPF amphibious forces and 75 hours of airborne RECCE over hostile FRY territory, resulting in the location and

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marking of 39 Critical Contacts of Interest, 10 merchant Contacts of Interest and the imaging of six coast defense radar and cruise missile sites for force protection.

In early June, PONCE and KEARSARGE ARG were called on short notice to place all of 26th MEU's Marines ashore as an Initial Enabling Force for peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. The transition to peacekeeping signaled the end of the combat phase of Operations Allied Force and Noble Anvil, as well as the humanitarian assistance and security provided to two Kosovo refugee camps in Albania (Operation Shining Hope). In one afternoon, PONCE retrieved its Marines from the refugee camps and commenced a high-speed transit to the northwest Aegean Sea, planning for its part in a highly-complex amphibious offload of 26th MEU two days later. On 11 June, PONCE and KEARSARGE Amphibious Ready Group completed a historic and unprecedented MEU offload across Liktokhoron Beach near Thessaloniki, Greece, putting all Marines ashore in 34 hours and establishing initial operating capability in Kosovo in 42 hours. 26th MEU served as a competent initial enabling force for six weeks while PONCE stood guard nearby in the Aegean. During this period, the ARG left station for two weeks of overdue upkeep and maintenance in Haifa, Israel while continuing to provide all required logistics support to its Marines ashore.

Following an efficient onload of its 26th MEU heroes in mid-July, PONCE steamed with the ARG to Rota, Spain for a two-week washdown and maintenance period. During the transit to Spain, PONCE conducted multiple training exercises, enabling the ship to maintain optimum readiness in six primary mission areas. Once pierside in Rota, the ship completed its first planning notice for the fiscal year 2000 Interdeployment Training Cycle, and conducted the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training, Phase One. On 13 August, PONCE made an overnight steam to Malaga, Spain for what would be its first "true" liberty port of the deployment; the timing could not have been better, as it was the annual festival week in Malaga.

In a continuation of what had become second-nature during this unprecedented deployment, the Malaga port visit was cut short by one day when the ARG was directed to provide humanitarian relief to the earthquake disaster victims near Ismit in northwest Turkey. After a swift personnel recall, PONCE sailed from Malaga 19 August, rendezvoused with USS KEARSARGE 20 August, transited the Dardanelles Strait, and arrived on station in the Sea of Marmara 23 August ready to provide the humanitarian services the Turkish people desired. Shortly after their arrival, PONCE and her special boat unit successfully located several excellent landing sites so that ARG landing craft assets could deliver Marines and logistics support to the areas hard-hit by the earthquake. Meanwhile, PONCE's flight deck crew worked around the clock supporting helicopter heavy-lift of water and supplies to the stricken areas.

The earthquake disaster relief effort continued for over two weeks and, with its mission fully accomplished, PONCE steamed back into the Aegean to participate in Exercise Northern Approaches, a tri-lateral NATO amphibious exercise involving Turkish and British ships, Sailors, and Marines. During the six-day exercise, PONCE engaged in the full spectrum of amphibious training, including an amphibious assault and several raids. Northern Approaches would prove to be PONCE's only exercise in an extraordinarily dynamic and unpredictable deployment.

Having completed all that the ARG, SIXTH Fleet, and the nation had asked of it, PONCE proceeded to Rota, Spain for its final MEU Washdown period and several days of well-deserved rest and relaxation. After a one-day turnover with USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12) 1 October, PONCE bade farewell to SIXTH Fleet and began the 10-day trans-Atlantic crossing which completed its deployment. Once back stateside, PONCE entered Morehead City, North Carolina

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for a two-day offload of 26th MEU, returned to Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia 14 October, and began a 30-day Post-Deployment Standdown period.

Following the Standdown period, the ship went back to sea to conduct one week of special warfare support operations and mission-area proficiency exercises. Following the Thanksgiving Holiday, PONCE moved to Yorktown to conduct a major ammunition offload, completed defueling, and made final preparations for the beginning of a three-month Phased Maintenance Availability at Metro Machine Shipyard in mid-January. Meanwhile, the crew was readying for a Change of Command ceremony in early January.

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