From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
To: Director Naval Historical Center, (N09BH)
805 Kidder Breese Street, SE

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Organization
(2) Chronology of Events
(3) Historical Narrative
(4) Ship’s Characteristics/Commanding Officer’s Biography
(5) Award Submissions

1. Per reference (a), the annual command history for USS PONCE (LPD 15), UIC 07201, for calendar year 2001 is hereby forwarded in Enclosures (1) through (5).

   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 beachheads, 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 Kevin Moran.

      (2) Ship’s crew consists of 28 officers and 367 enlisted. The ship’s organization is outlined in enclosure (1).


   d. Narrative. Enclosure (3) amplifies Enclosure (2) and is a historical narrative of significant events in 2001.

   e. Supporting Documents. Enclosures (4) and (5) are submitted.

   T. J. CHASSEE
USS PONCE (LPD 15) COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Enclosure (1)
USS PONCE (LPD 15)
2001 Chronology of Events

January 2001

01-11 Jan  Holiday Leave and Stand Down Period
08-19 Jan  C5 Readiness Assessment Phase I/SEMAT I
09 Jan  Joint Task Force Exercise Final Planning Conference
10 Jan  Funeral Service for LT Corrine J. Pellegrin, Supply Officer
11 Jan  Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection Seminar Command Millennium Party
11-12 Jan  SPAWAR IT-21 Review
12 Jan  ARG Tactical Team Trainer
16-19 Jan  C4I Verification Checkout FOTC Seminar
18 Jan  Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise Final Planning Conference
         Chief Petty Officer Exam
         COMPHIBRON SIX AT/FP Walk Thru
19 Jan  Fast Cruise
         Final Evaluation Problem
         KSGARG Group Sail Pre-Sail Conference
20 Jan  MOGAS Onload
22 Jan  Underway from Norfolk, VA
22-31 Jan  Group Sail with KSGARG (USS PONCE, USS KEARSARGE, USS CARTER HALL)
27-31 Jan  Port Visit St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
31 Jan  Underway Enroute Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico

Enclosure (2)
**February 2001**

01-05 Feb  
Group Sail with KSGARG

01 Feb  
Moor Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico  
Offload NCW Assets

02 Feb  
Underway Enroute Onslow Bay, NC

06 Feb  
Onload MSSG 24 Morehead City, NC

06-15 Feb  
Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise

13-14 Feb  
Offload MSSG 24 Morehead City, NC

15 Feb  
Fueling at Sea with USNS SUPPLY

16 Feb  
General Shipboard Fire-fighting Training

16-26 Feb  
Battle Force Email Installation

16-28 Feb  
Fleet Maintenance Availability

19 Feb  
General Shipboard Fire-fighting Training

19-28 Feb  
Command Indoctrination

20 Feb  
Medical Readiness Evaluation  
Safety Survey

20-22 Feb  
C5 Readiness Assessment Phase II

21 Feb  
COMNAVSURFLANT Visit (RADM Foley)

21-23 Feb  
MSI Shiphandling Simulator

26 Feb  
SACEX/SOCEX Final Planning Conference

26-28 Feb  
Married/Single Pre-Deployment Briefs

27-28 Feb  
Navy Tactical Command Support System Groom

**March 2001**

01 Mar  
Advanced Fire-fighting School  
Dental Readiness Evaluation
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-02 Mar</td>
<td>Command Indoctrination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married/Single Pre-Deployment Briefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01-05 Mar</td>
<td>Fleet Maintenance Availability</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 Mar</td>
<td>OMBUDSMEN Luncheon</td>
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<tr>
<td>02-05 Mar</td>
<td>Onload NSE Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 Mar</td>
<td>Ammunition Onload</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embark Advanced Party</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Sail Conference onboard KEARSARGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>06 Mar</td>
<td>E-6 Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 Mar</td>
<td>Underway Enroute Morehead City, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>09 Mar</td>
<td>Onload MSSG-24 Morehead City, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-11 Mar</td>
<td>Transit to Mayport, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-13 Mar</td>
<td>Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection Exercise, Mayport, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Mar</td>
<td>E-5 Exam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Refuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>Underway Enroute JTFEX OpArea</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-28 Mar</td>
<td>Joint Task Force Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-19 Mar</td>
<td>Supporting Arms Coordination Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Mar</td>
<td>E-4 Exam Cancelled due to Heavy Seas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-26 Mar</td>
<td>Special Operations Capable Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Mar</td>
<td>Offload MSSG-24 Morehead City, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Mar</td>
<td>Friends and Family Day Cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moor Norfolk, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commence First Leave Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>28-31 Mar</td>
<td>Preparation for Overseas Movement</td>
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### April 2001

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-24 Apr</td>
<td>Preparation for Overseas Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>02-04 Apr</td>
<td>Physical Readiness Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>03-05 Apr</td>
<td>Exercise Cooperative Partner Final Planning Conference Poti, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Apr</td>
<td>Ammunition Onload</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End First Leave Period</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Commence Second Leave Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12 Apr</td>
<td>Physical Readiness Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Apr</td>
<td>Children’s Pre-Deployment Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Apr</td>
<td>End Second Leave Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fast Cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Off #1 Boiler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Apr</td>
<td>Light Off #2 Boiler</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-24 Apr</td>
<td>Onload NSE Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Apr</td>
<td>Embark Advance Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Sail Conference onboard KEARSARGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Apr</td>
<td>Commence MARG 01-2 Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Apr</td>
<td>Onload MSSG-24 Morehead City, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Apr</td>
<td>E-4 Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30 Apr</td>
<td>Transit Atlantic</td>
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### May 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-07 May</td>
<td>Transit Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 May</td>
<td>ACE Fly-On (Embarked 3 CH-46E, 3 UH-1N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fueling at Sea with USNS BIG HORN</td>
</tr>
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</table>
08 May

INCHOP Commander Sixth Fleet
Exercise MED SHARK Confirmation Brief
CRRC Launch/Recovery Training

09-10 May

ARG Turnover Rota, Spain
Embark Meteorology Detachment, Cryptologic
Technicians, Naval Special Warfare
Detachment

11 May

Underway Enroute Tangier, Morocco
LCU Operations

12-15 May

Port Visit Tangier, Morocco

15 May

Underway in support of Exercise MED SHARK
Insert Naval Special Warfare Detachment
Transit Straits of Gibraltar

16-20 May

Exercise MED SHARK

16 May

Exercise MED SHARK Confirmation Brief
Fueling at Sea with USNS LARAMIE

17 May

Emergency Defense of the Amphibious Task
Force Drill
Live Fire Training
Rehearsal Landing

18 May

Assault
Demolition Training at Sidi Beach, Morocco
Ground Cross-Training

19 May

Cross-Training
Mass Casualty Exercise

20 May

Wash Down and Backload

21-24 May

Transit to Gaeta, Italy

24 May

Replenishment at Sea with USNS SIRIUS
COMSIXTHFLT Visit

25-28 May

Port Visit Gaeta, Italy

25 May

Exodus House Community Relations Project
with COMSIXTHFLT
27 May
Phase I Midshipmen Arrive

29 May
Underway Enroute Dubrovnik, Croatia

30 May
Arrive Adriatic Sea
Transit Straits of Messina

31 May
Fueling at Sea with USNS BIG HORN

**June 2001**

01-04 Jun
Port Visit Dubrovnik, Croatia

03 Jun
Osnova Primary School Community Relations Project

05 Jun
Underway Enroute Black Sea and Poti, Georgia

06 Jun
Fueling at Sea with USNS BIG HORN

07 Jun
Transit Aegean Sea

08 Jun
Transit Dardanelles and Bosporus Straits, Enter Black Sea

10 Jun
Anchor in Vicinity of Poti, Georgia

10-12 Jun
Offload MSSG-24

11 Jun
CHOP to COMNAVSOUTH

11-22 Jun
Exercise COOPERATIVE PARTNER

12-14 Jun
Amphibious Cross-Training

15-16 Jun
Maritime Interoperability Training

16 Jun
Public Demonstration Rehearsal

17 Jun
Helo Insertion
Public Demonstration

18 Jun
Main Landing

19 Jun
Distinguished Visitor Day Rehearsal
20 Jun        Distinguished Visitor Day
21 Jun        Post-Exercise Discussion
21-22 Jun     Backload MSSG-24
22 Jun        CHOP to COMSIXTHFLT
              Phase I Midshipmen Depart
              Underway Enroute Adriatic Sea
25 Jun        Photo Exercise
26 Jun        Transit Dardanelles and Bosporus Straits
27 Jun        Transit Aegean Sea
29 Jun        Fueling at Sea with USNS LARAMIE
              Phase II Midshipmen Arrive
30 Jun        ACE Fly-Off
              Albanian PHIBLEX Confirmation Brief

July 2001

02-04 Jul     Port Visit Brindisi, Italy
04 Jul        “Let Freedom Ring” Ceremony
05-13 Jul     Albanian PHIBLEX
08 Jul        VBSS Exercise
10 Jul        PONCE’s 30th Birthday Celebration
12 Jul        Rendezvous with Albanian Ships
              ENCOUNTEREX
13 Jul        Offload SBU Trailers onto LCU via B&A Crane
14 Jul        Fueling at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
              Replenishment at Sea with USNS SIRIUS
16-19 Jul     Port Visit Marmaris, Turkey
18 Jul        Phase II Midshipmen Depart
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Jul</td>
<td>Underway Enroute Valetta, Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-26 Jul</td>
<td>Port Visit Valetta, Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Jul</td>
<td>Phase III Midshipmen Arrive</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Jul</td>
<td>Jesus of Nazareth Institute and Urseline Crech Orphanage Community Relations Projects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Jul</td>
<td>Underway Enroute Rijeka, Croatia</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Jul</td>
<td>Fueling at Sea with USNS LARAMIE</td>
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**August 2001**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 Aug</td>
<td>Anchor in Vicinity of Rijeka, Croatia</td>
<td>Offload MSSG-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 Aug</td>
<td>Moor Rijeka, Croatia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-13 Aug</td>
<td>Intermediate Maintenance Availability with EMORY S. LAND</td>
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<tr>
<td>03 Aug</td>
<td>CIWS Assist Visit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>06-10 Aug</td>
<td>Commander’s Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART I)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>06-14 Aug</td>
<td>Command Indoctrination</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Aug</td>
<td>Kindergarten Belvedere and Basketball Club Kantrida Community Relations Projects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Aug</td>
<td>Phase III Midshipmen Depart Underway Enroute Palma de Mallorca, Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Aug</td>
<td>Replenishment at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN and USNS SIRIUS</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16 Aug</td>
<td>Chief Petty Officer Indoctrination</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Aug</td>
<td>Advancement Education Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17-20 Aug</td>
<td>Port Visit Palma de Mallorca, Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20 Aug  Navy League Distinguished Visitors Reception
            Servi de Acolidla Shelter Community
            Relations Project
21 Aug  Underway Enroute Tarragona, Spain
22-26 Aug  Port Visit Tarragona, Spain
23-25 Aug  Offload BLT/MSSG-24
27 Aug  Underway Enroute Catania, Italy
28 Aug  Fueling at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
29-30 Aug  Port Visit Catania, Italy
30 Aug  Turnover Recovered Boats
31 Aug  Underway Enroute Limassol, Cyprus

**September 2001**

02 Sep  SBU Boat Operations
03-06 Sep  Port Visit Limassol, Cyprus
05 Sep  USDAO Visit
06 Sep  E-6 Exam
            Limassol Foundation St. Stefanos Community
            Relations Project
07 Sep  Underway Enroute Rota, Spain
09 Sep  CIWS PACFIRE
10 Sep  CIWS TDU Shoot
11 Sep  Replenishment at Sea with USNS SIRIUS
12 Sep  Fueling at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
            Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony
15-16 Sep  Onload BLT/MSSG-24 in Vicinity of Sigonella, Italy

9 Enclosure (2)
17 Sep  Fueling at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
22 Sep  Anchor in Vicinity of Rota, Spain
22-26 Sep Washdown in Rota, Spain
23 Sep  Moor Rota, Spain
        Offload SBU
26 Sep  Underway to Anchorage
        ACE Fly-On
        CTF 61 Visit
        Underway from Anchorage
27 Sep  Replenishment at Sea with USNS LARAMIE

October 2001
01 Oct  Fueling at Sea with USNS LARAMIE
        ACE Fly-Off
01-10 Oct Command Indoctrination
01-12 Oct Transit Atlantic
02 Oct  INCHOP COMSECONDFLT
04 Oct  E-5 Exam
        Chaff Launch
        CIWS PACFIRE
08 Oct  Safety Stand Down
10 Oct  E-4 Exam
        COMPHIBRON SIX/MEU-24 Visit
12 Oct  Fueling at Sea with USNS PATUXENT
        Customs Inspection
13 Oct  Offload MSSG-24 Morehead City, NC
        COMPHIBGRU TWO/MEU-24 Visit
        Underway Enroute Norfolk, VA
15 Oct  Homecoming
        Moor Norfolk, VA
        Commence First Leave Period
15-31 Oct  Post-Deployment Leave and Stand Down
30 Oct  End First Leave Period
         Commence Second Leave Period

November 2001

01-14 Nov  Post-Deployment Leave and Stand Down
15 Nov  End Second Leave Period
        Fast Cruise
        Berth Shift
19-21 Nov  Physical Readiness Testing
20 Nov  MOGAS Assist Visit
        CMS Assist Visit
26 Nov  Thanksgiving Feast
27 Nov  LFORM Offload
27-30 Nov  Command Indoctrination
28 Nov  Service Dress Blues Inspection
        Boiler Inspection
30 Nov  LPD-17 Seminar

December 2001

01 Dec  MOGAS Offload
01-07 Dec  Command Indoctrination
03 Dec  CIWS Assist Visit
        Command Wide Zone Inspection
04 Dec  IDTC Brief at COMPHIBGRU TWO
05 Dec  Underway Enroute Yorktown, VA
05-07 Dec  Ammunition Offload Yorktown, VA
08 Dec  Underway Enroute VACAPES OPAREA

09 Dec  CIWS PACFIRE
        Boiler Trend Analysis
        Weapons Safety Stand Down

10 Dec  Replenishment at Sea with USNS BIG HORN
        Nixie Stream

11 Dec  Moor Norfolk, VA
        CBR Scenario

13 Dec  LCDR Wayne R. Brown relieves LCDR Larry J. A. Felder as Executive Officer
        Command Christmas Party

14-31 Dec  Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period

15 Dec  Children's Christmas Party

25 Dec  Christmas Feast
The year 2001 began on a sad note for PONCE. In early January, PONCE lost one of her dearest crewmembers. LT Corrine J. Pellegrin, gifted Supply Officer and mother of four, passed away suddenly from complications due to a heart attack. A memorial service was held on 10 January. She would truly be missed.

Preparing for a deployment and in the middle of workups, there was little time to grieve. The crew had to focus on training and readiness. Following a Fast Cruise and Final Evaluation Problem, PONCE was underway on 22 January for Group Sail with the USS KEARSARGE and USS CARTER HALL. This exercise including an outstanding port visit to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Following a brief stop in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico to offload NCW Assets, PONCE arrived in Morehead City, NC on 06 February. Here she offloaded MSSG-24 for Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise. MEUEX provided an opportunity for the KEARSARGE ARG to flex their operational and C4I capabilities under the direction of COMPHIBRON SIX.

On 15 February, after Fueling at Sea with the USNS SUPPLY, PONCE returned to Norfolk. A three-week FMAV period began the following day, and the crew labored to complete its final preparations for deployment.

The next underway came all too soon, and PONCE headed back to Morehead City on 08 March. MSSG-24 re-embarked in less than a day, and she transited to Mayport, Florida. From 11-13 February, the ARG participated in an Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection Exercise directed by COMSECONDFLT. All three ships dealt with swimmer attacks, bomb threats, and small boat approaches. PONCE received high praises for her crew’s attention to detail and quick response to potential threats.

On 14 March, the ARG was underway for Joint Task Force Exercise with the Enterprise Battle Group. JTFEX brought PONCE into the roughest seas she would experience all year. Heavy rolls reaching up to 36 degrees led to the cancellation of many events and postponement of the E-4 exam. SACEX and SOCEX were completed prior to offloading MSSG-24 in Morehead City on 27 March.

The following day, PONCE anchored at Lynnhaven anchorage for a Friends and Family Day Cruise. Friends and loved ones arrived in the well deck via LCU, and were shown true Proud Lion hospitality. The day’s events included

Enclosure (3)
numerous static displays, flight deck and man overboard rescue evolutions, and an LCAC fly-by. Nothing was more appreciated than the eagerly awaited transit back to Norfolk, where the first POM leave period would commence.

From 28 March to 20 April, PONCE continued its Preparation for Overseas Movement. Working parties moved stores, food, and ammunition below decks. Sailors attended married and single pre-deployment briefs. Time was becoming a precious commodity and each spare moment was spent with family and friends.

Second leave period ended on 20 April and the entire crew returned for a Fast Cruise. Watchbills for each steaming condition were double-checked. General Quarters and Man Overboard drills were called away. The Engineering plant was lit off. Soon PONCE would be ready to leave.

The morning of 25 April brought rain and fog. Teary goodbyes became hurried and a crew dressed in whites quickly changed back into coveralls. The CO ordered all lines taken in, and PONCE was underway for her fifteenth Mediterranean Deployment. After re-embarking MSSG-24, she began her arduous transit across the Atlantic.

On 09 May, the ARG anchored of the coast of Rota, Spain, and began a two-day turnover process with the BATAAN ARG. Meteorology, Cryptologic, and Naval Special Warfare Detachments embarked. Following a brief transit, PONCE arrived in Tangier, Morocco, for a four-day port visit.

Bi-lateral Exercise MED SHARK took place from 16-20 May with the Royal Moroccan Navy and Marines. PONCE was conducting split-ARG operations at this time, but used the opportunity to deploy embarked assets for training. EDATF drills, live fire training, mass casualty exercises, rehearsal and assault were followed by wash down and backload.

PONCE proceeded into Gaeta, Italy, after a Replenishment at Sea with the USNS SIRIUS. On 25 May, sailors and Marines visited Exodus House, a drug rehabilitation center for men and women. COMSIXTHFLT joined the volunteers for an evening of dining, dancing, and socializing.

On 29 May, PONCE began the transit across the Adriatic Sea through the Straits of Messina to arrive at Dubrovnik, Croatia on 01 June. Sailors participated in a Community Relations project on 03 June, scraping and painting a fence at Osnova Primary School.

Following the brief port visit, PONCE got underway 05 June and crossed the Aegean Sea. She headed through the Dardanelles and Bosporus Straights to anchor in the

Enclosure (3)
vicinity of Poti, Georgia on 10 June. Under the operational control of COMNAVSOUTH, PONCE took part in Exercise COOPERATIVE PARTNER from 11-22 June. The exercise included eight countries and more than 30 ships of NATO and Partnership for Peace nations. Events ranged from Amphibious Cross-Training and Maritime Interoperability Training to a Public Demonstration and Amphibious Landing. As CTF 903, PONCE hosted Distinguished Visitor Day on 22 JUN. The entire exercise was a complete success.

From 22 Jun to 02 July, PONCE steamed the route to Brindisi, Italy, for a three-day port visit. The Fourth of July was celebrated with a “Let Freedom Ring” ceremony. On 05 July, she was underway again, this time for Albanian PHIBLEX. PONCE rendezvoused with Albanian ships to conduct ENCOUNTEREX and VBSS exercises.

The next stop for PONCE was Valetta, Malta, from 23-26 July. On the final day, sailors visited the Jesus of Nazareth Institute, where they sanded, primed and painted the orphanage’s entire playground. At the same time, embarked Marines chipped and painted an immense trellis and a number of doors at the Urseline Crech Orphanage.

On 27 June, the ship transited to Rijeka, Croatia for a 12-day Intermediate Maintenance Availability with the EMORY S LAND. During this time, the crew conducted Command Indoctrination, Commander’s Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART I) and a CIWS Assist Visit. On 10 August, sailors from PONCE and EMORY S LAND refurbished a large fence and several classrooms at Kindergarten Belvedere. More good times followed as the volunteers played the home team of Basketball Club Kantrida. A reception at the clubhouse followed.

Back at sea, PONCE refueled and resupplied with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN and USNS SIRIUS. She visited Palma de Mallorca, Spain from 17-20 August. Here, volunteers scraped, spackled, and painted the kitchen and dining room at Servi de Acolidla, a shelter for abused women and their children. Two pallets of Project Handclasp toys and clothing were also donated.

A brief transit brought the ship to Tarragona, Spain on 22 August for four days. During this time, MSSG-24 and the BLT departed for operations in Kosovo.

PONCE got underway again on 27 August, and arrived two days later in Catania, Italy. The next port visit was 3-6 September in Limassol, Cyprus. Here PONCE sailors painted offices and hallways at Limassol Foundation St. Stefanos, a home for mentally challenged adults.

Enclosure (3)
From 6-22 September, PONCE transited to Rota, Spain for turnover with the BATAAN ARG. The deployment was winding down, and preparations for homecoming were in progress. She conducted several Replenishment at Sea evolutions, a CIWS PACFIRE and TDU shoot, and re-embarked MSSG-24 and the BLT in the vicinity of Sigonella, Italy.

In Rota, the washdown process began and equipment was offloaded. Meteorology, Cryptologic, and NSW assets debarked. CTF 61 visited on 26 September to congratulate PONCE for a job well done.

On 01 October, PONCE was headed home. Since the events of September 11, the crew was especially eager to return to friends and love ones. Following a customs inspection and offload in Morehead City, they arrived to open arms in Norfolk on 15 October.

Post-deployment leave and stand down was a much-needed break for the crew. The cruise had been outstanding, with three major exercises and 13 port visits. But the nation had changed in PONCE's absence, and there was much work to be done regarding Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection.

On 05 December, the ship got underway for Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Virginia, to offload ammunition. This was followed by a brief training period in the VACAPES OpArea. She returned to port on 11 December.

As the year came to a close, it was time to say goodbye to one of PONCE's finest. LCDR Wayne R. Brown relieved LCDR Larry J. A. Felder as Executive Officer on 13 December. The crew bade him a fond farewell at PONCE's annual Christmas party that evening.

Holiday leave and upkeep commenced 14 December, and there was nothing left to do but look back with pride on a job well done. PONCE's dedication and teamwork during 2001 would reward her with the Safety Pennant, the Health Promotions Award, the Golden Anchor, and the prestigious Battle E.

Enclosure (3)