



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS PONCE (LPD 15)

FPO AE 09582-1717

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Ser LPD 15-ADM/

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
To: Director Naval Historical Center, (N09BH)
805 Kidder Breese Street, SE
Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-5060

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).

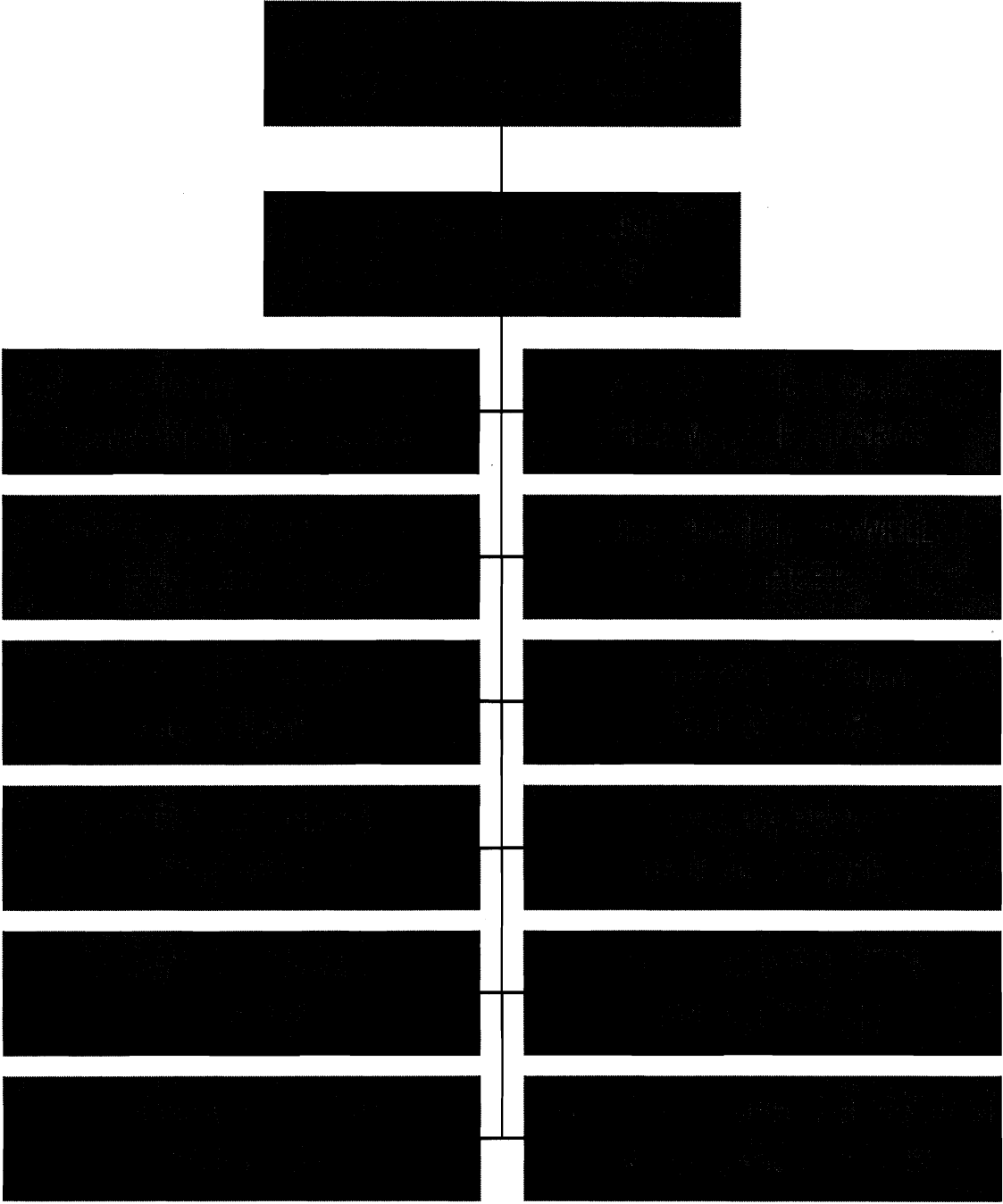
c. Chronology. Enclosure (2) outlines events and milestones for 2001.

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



**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

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

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

April 2001

01-24 Apr Preparation for Overseas Movement

02-04 Apr Physical Readiness Testing

03-05 Apr Exercise Cooperative Partner Final Planning Conference Poti, Georgia

09 Apr Ammunition Onload
End First Leave Period
Commence Second Leave Period

10-12 Apr Physical Readiness Testing

11 Apr Children's Pre-Deployment Program

20 Apr End Second Leave Period
Fast Cruise
Light Off #1 Boiler

23 Apr Light Off #2 Boiler

23-24 Apr Onload NSE Equipment

24 Apr Embark Advance Party
Pre-Sail Conference onboard KEARSARGE

25 Apr Commence MARG 01-2 Deployment

26 Apr Onload MSSG-24 Morehead City, NC

27 Apr E-4 Exam

27-30 Apr Transit Atlantic

May 2001

01-07 May Transit Atlantic

07 May ACE Fly-On (Embarked 3 CH-46E, 3 UH-1N)
Photo Exercise
Fueling at Sea with USNS BIG HORN

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 Bosphorus 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 Bosphorus 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

20 Jul Underway Enroute Valetta, Malta

23-26 Jul Port Visit Valetta, Malta

23 Jul Phase III Midshipmen Arrive

26 Jul Jesus of Nazareth Institute and Urseline Crech Orphanage Community Relations Projects

27 Jul Underway Enroute Rijeka, Croatia

29 Jul Fueling at Sea with USNS LARAMIE

August 2001

01 Aug Anchor in Vicinity of Rijeka, Croatia
Offload MSSG-24

02 Aug Moor Rijeka, Croatia

02-13 Aug Intermediate Maintenance Availability with EMORY S. LAND

03 Aug CIWS Assist Visit

06-10 Aug Commander's Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART I)

06-14 Aug Command Indoctrination

10 Aug Kindergarten Belvedere and Basketball Club Kantrida Community Relations Projects

13 Aug Phase III Midshipmen Depart
Underway Enroute Palma de Mallorca, Spain

15 Aug Replenishment at Sea with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN and USNS SIRIUS

15-16 Aug Chief Petty Officer Indoctrination

16 Aug Advancement Education Day

17-20 Aug Port Visit Palma de Mallorca, Spain

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

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

USS PONCE (LPD 15) Historical Narrative

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 unloaded 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

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 off 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 Bosphorus Straights to anchor in the

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.

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.