

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS SHREVEPORT (LPD-12)

FPO NEW YORK 09501

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OPNAV REPORT 5750-1

From: Commanding Officer, USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20390

Subj: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) 1971 History of the USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12)

1. In compliance with reference (a), the 1971 command history of the USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12), enclosure (1), is forwarded herewith.



PEHR H. PEHRSSON

Copy to: (w/encl)
CINCLANTFLT
COMPHIBLANT
COMPHIBGRU TWO
COMPHIBRON TWO

1971 HISTORY OF USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12)

Shreveport, Louisiana Mayor L. Calhoun Allen's commissioning day (12 December 1970) injunction to modernize the fleet was but six weeks old when USS SHREVEPORT completed her fitting out at Bremerton, Washington. The Pacific Northwest's wet cold weather embraced the ship as welders made last minute installations of equipment, the tanks were filled with three-quarters of a million gallons of fuel, stores and parts to keep the ship at sea for months were loaded, and the magazines were stuffed with thousands of rounds of ammunition for the ship's eight 3" rapid fire guns. The crew was anxious to go. They had not sailed together before, only practiced at sea type drills alongside the pier. Then, on 22 January 1971 all preparations were completed and the last workmen left the ship.

"Take in all lines." "Underway." The namesake ship of the Louisiana city was headed fair on her maiden voyage around the North American Continent, her first course shaped to clear Puget Sound.

Later, halfway down Oregon's craggy coast, the weather abated and warmed, the deck force went to work with a chipping and painting of topside areas in the never ending battle against rust from which even the newest of ships is not exempt. The engines hummed on well oiled bearings. General Quarters was sounded, and the first faltering steps made toward organizing the crew into a fighting unit. The guns were snapped in, and a few trial rounds pumped into the blue Pacific. Lots of promise, but a long way to go. Incessant drilling will cure all problems.

The warmth of San Francisco was a welcome change from the blustery winds of the Pacific Northwest. On 27 January, the crew enjoyed the day of liberty to absorb the atmosphere of Chinatown, hippie heave, and the most cosmopolitan city on the West Coast.

San Diego's subtropical climes were but another day's steaming down the coast. The ship took her place at the piers (29-30 January 1971) alongside veterans of Vietnam and other wars. Who in the Pacific Fleet had ever heard of SHREVEPORT? The Marines had. They brought hundreds of tons of cargo to the pier to be loaded for shipment to the East Coast in SHREVEPORT's cavernous well deck. Less than twenty-four hours after she first sailed under San Diego's new blue cross bay bridge SHREVEPORT passed under it again, outbound. As the ship left port, naval helicopters practiced touch and go landings on her half-acre flight deck under the guidance of brightly garbed aviation division personnel.

SHREVEPORT spent two days in Acapulco, Mexico (3-4 February 1971). It was the first foreign port for her in which official calls were exchanged between Mexican civil and military officials.

On 7 February, the day before the scheduled equator crossing, the 450 "pollywogs" aboard rebelled against the impending initiation rites proposed by 80 "shellbacks." A shellback flag was run up the halyard, and groups of dissident pollywogs led by the Chief Master at Arms sang "We shall overcome."

But desire to join Neptune's chosen, caused the rebellion to be short lived. The shellbacks worked all night to prepare costumes and apparatus for their flight deck initiation ceremony. Early reveille for pollywogs was followed by a breakfast of sardines and saurkraut. Then King Neptune and his court arrived on board with appropriate honors, and the first pollywogs began their tortuous progress through the "reception line." That afternoon, when the ceremony was over and Davey Jones had departed the ship, the officers and crew celebrated the events by holding a hearty cookout on the flight deck.

SHREVEPORT arrived in the Cana Zone on 9 February and officially joined the Atlantic Fleet. She bravely passed through the locks without incident.

After three days of independent steaming, SHREVEPORT started up the Mississippi River to tie up at New Orleans' Poland Street Wharf. It was outstanding liberty for those sailors who had never seen a Mardi Gras. Government and city officials of Shreveport, Louisiana came to see their namesake ship. They were given tours of the ship. Mayor Allen and his guest were entertained by the ship's officers.

Back through the Gulf, around the Keys and past the lights of Miami, still blessed with favorable seas and balmy airs, SHREVEPORT arrived at Morehead City, North Carolina on 20 February. A crew of marines and landing craft began off loading bulldozers and blades from the well deck. This is the kind of work the ship is designed to do.

Some 8,000 nautical miles after leaving Bremerton, Washington, the ship headed fair up the channel to historic Hampton Roads. On 21 February 1971, SHREVEPORT completed her maiden voyage and her crew working as a team, came of age.

Early March, SHREVEPORT set sail for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for her first refresher training (9 Mar - 9 Apr 1971). The final day was climaxed by a five hour battle problem in which SHREVEPORT scored the highest marks ever recorded in damage control and communications (Annex A refers). While in the Caribbean, the ship visited Montego Bay, Jamaica (26-28 March 1971) so that the crew could have a few days of rest and relaxation. SHREVEPORT returned to Norfolk 14 April, with a brief stop over Easter evening at Mayport, Florida. Upkeep and training began in April and the training group from Norfolk instructed the crew in underway amphibious operations, while at the same time, a safety film documentary was being made aboard SHREVEPORT showing common safety dangers encountered in amphibious operations. The crew acted their parts well and learned more about safety at the same time. A post INSURV inspection was held in late April. Underway amphibious operations and training with Marines was conducted on Onslow Beach, 11-13 May 1971 (Annex B) in which SHREVEPORT displayed outstanding showmanship.

On the 16th of June, SHREVEPORT and USS RALEIGH (LPD 1) departed Norfolk with 375 midshipmen from the United States Naval Academy for the NATRONLANT 71 cruise to Northern Europe.

Embarked in SHREVEPORT was COMPHIBRON EIGHT and his staff. The midshipmen were trained in ship control, gunnery, and other phases of shipboard training. SHREVEPORT participated in Project RICE (Annex C) during the crossing. The ship visited Lisbon, Portugal (29 June - 2 July); Copenhagen, Denmark (9-12 July), and Portsmouth, England (16-22 July) returning to the States the 4th of August to debark the midshipmen at Annapolis, Maryland. (Annex D refers). SHREVEPORT returned to Annapolis for a visit to the Naval Academy giving lectures and familiarization tours of the ship to the Class of 1975, (30 Aug - 2 Sep).

On 28 September 1971 SHREVEPORT participated in a NATO Sea Review as the amphibious ship for COMPHIBLANT. Postshakedown availability began the 6th of October at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. She returned to Norfolk, 24 November 1971.

On 9 December 1971, COMPHIBRON TWO and his staff embarked in SHREVEPORT, and made SHREVEPORT Flagship of Amphibious Squadron TWO. She became a part of the Caribbean Ready Group on 29 December.

USS SHREVEPORT is commanded by Captain PEHR H. PEHRSSON, U. S. Navy, who became her first skipper on 12 December 1970.

Annexes:

- A - COMPHIBLANT 141825Z Apr 1971
- B - CG FORTRPS FMFLANT 171350Z May 1971
- C - CINCLANTFLT ltr 1650 ser 5635/332C of 23 Sep 1971
- D - SUPUSNA ANNA ltr of 22 Sep 1971