



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
FPO NEW YORK 09501

IN REPLY REFER TO

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From: Commanding Officer, USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: 1971 Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12B of 20 May 1971
(b) Director of Naval History ltr of 6 OCT 1972, Ser:2171P09BH

Encl: (1) Chronological Summary - 1971
(2) Command Organization
(3) Commissioning Booklet

1. Reference (b) noted that the previously submitted command history was in an improper format. Accordingly, in compliance with reference (a) and as requested reference (b) the enclosed are submitted.

Karl R. Thiele
KARL R. THIELE
CAPT USN

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CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

1 January 1971 to 31 December 1971

- 1-13 JAN TRENTON nears completion at Lockheed Shipbuilding and Construction Company, Seattle, Washington.
- 14- 16 JAN Underway in Puget Sound and Pacific Ocean for Preliminary Acceptance Trials by INSURV BOARD and some nucleus crew members (25).
- 17 JAN-11 FEB Final stages of construction.
- 12 FEB TRENTON officially accepted by U. S. Navy - towed to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, for FOA - Fitting Out Availability (12 FEB to 29 MAR). Executive Officer, CDR T. P. WHALEY arrives with 55 enlisted. Nucleus crew now numbers 155.
- 12-26 FEB FOA.
- 27 FEB Nucleus crew vacates shipyard barracks and moves aboard. Balance crew of 273 arrives from Norfolk, Virginia. Total: 428 enlisted, 26 officers.
- 28 FEB-5 MAR FOA and preparation for commissioning.
- 6 MAR Commissioning Day. TRENTON becomes United States Ship TRENTON at ceremonies in her well deck and upper vehicle stowage areas. Reading of Navy Department Orders to Commission USS TRENTON by Rear Admiral Patrick J. Hannifin, USN, Commandant, 13th Naval District. Commissioning address by the honorable Arthur J. Holland - Mayor of Trenton, New Jersey. Captain Karl R. THIELE assumes first command of USS TRENTON (LPD-14). The ship is officially manned.
- 7 MAR-2 APR FOA, Loading stores, divisional orientation and training - "School of the Ship".
- 23-25, 29-31 MAR Fast Cruise, Simulated underway training to train personnel in watchstanding. Fast Cruise conducted at night while alongside pier at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.
- 31 MAR First exercising of the crew at General Quarters.
- 3 APR Underway for sea trials, TRENTON conducts first helicopter landing, full power run and tests on all major systems. This is the first day TRENTON is ever underway as a U. S.

- Navy ship manned by a Navy crew.
- 4 APR Underway. Conducts first gun shoot.
 - 5 APR Moor at NAD Bangor, Washington, to receive first full load of 3"/50 ammunition: 4875 rounds of training and service ammunition. Underway after onload.
 - 6-8 APR Final preparations for transit to Norfolk, Virginia.
 - 9-12 APR Underway for San Diego. Gun shoots enroute.
 - 12 APR Z-17-AA acquisition and tracking exercise.
 - 13-15 APR Port visit San Diego.
 - 14 APR Admiral Richard H. Jackson (Ret) at 104 years of age visits third USS TRENTON. Admiral Jackson served on first USS TRENTON in 1889.
 - 15 APR Rear Admiral RUBEL, Commander, Amphibious Group THREE visits ship.
 - 16 APR Underway in Southern California OpArea for training, then to Acapulco, Mexico.
 - 17-20 APR Enroute Acapulco, Mexico.
 - 21-25 APR Port visit Acapulco.
 - 29 APR Arrive Naval Station, Rodman, Canal Zone. Change of Operational Command (CHOP) from CINCPACFLT to CINCLANTFLT.
 - 30 APR Transit Panama Canal.
 - 3 MAY Conducted first shore bombardment exercise (Z-40-G).
 - 3-6 MAY Port visit Charlotte Amolie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.
 - 7 MAY Arrive Key West, Florida for pickup of T-boat for transfer to Norfolk.
 - 12 MAY Arrive in homeport, U. S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia for first time.
 - 13 MAY-1 JUN Inport Norfolk. School of Ship, preparation for Shakedown Training at U. S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
 - 1 JUN Underway for GTMO. Conduct first underway-refueling and highline with USS MOUNT WHITNEY (LCC-20).

- 4 JUN Arrive GTMO.
- 7-27 JUN Intensive shipboard training both inport and underway in gunnery, shiphandling, engineering, damage control drills, etc. while at GTMO Bay, Cuba.
- 28 JUN While underway for checks on FORAC's range, the main guarding valve in number two engine room ruptures, filling the engine room with steam at 600 p.s.i. and 800° F. Four men are killed instantly, four others burned critically, two others seriously. Helicopter MEDEVAC is conducted to hospital at GTMO. Ship returns to GTMO on one boiler, one engine. Number Two plant disabled. Four critically and two seriously burned sailors are MEDEVACed by DC-9 to Burn Ward at U. S. Army Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Preliminary investigation of accident begins.
- 29 JUN One critically injured sailor dies at Fort Sam Houston.
- 1 JUL Sixth accident victim dies.
- 2-6 JUL Enroute Norfolk, Virginia on one boiler, one engine.
- 6 JUL Arrive Norfolk.
- 7 JUL Court of Inquiry to investigate the accident of 28 JUN convenes aboard. Court is headed by Rear Admiral Michael U. MOORE, Commander Amphibious Operational Support Command, Atlantic.
- 7 JUL-30 AUG Inport Norfolk for repairs to number two engine room. Court of Inquiry finds material failure of main guarding valve in number two engine room as cause of 28 June accident. Two seriously injured released from hospital. Two critically injured removed from critical list.
- 31 AUG-1 SEP Underway in Virginia Capes Operating Area (VACAPES OP AREA) for test of number two engine room repairs and preparation for Final Contract Trials. Tests satisfactory.
- 7-8 SEP Underway for Final Contract Trials conducted by INSURVLANT.
- 9-11 SEP Complete FCT inport.
- 15-16 SEP Ship depermed. Underway 16 SEP for engineering trials (full power run).
- 20-24 SEP Underway for VACAPES OPAREA for Amphibious Shakedown Training, TRENTON's first exercise in purely amphibious evolutions.

Training includes assault boat, troop and helicopter evolutions, control of ship to shore movement and Primary Control Ship (PCS exercises).

- 28-29 SEP LVT and helicopter handling training at Onslow Beach, North Carolina.
- 29-30 SEP Underway for Norfolk to evade hurricane GINGER. 30 to 40 foot seas and 70 knot winds experienced. Hurricane anchorage assigned at Norfolk.
- 1 OCT Moored Naval Station, Norfolk. No storm damage.
- 7 OCT Commenced training in Nuclear weapons handling and security.
- 12 OCT Underway for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to complete Shakedown training which was terminated by the accident of 28 June.
- 15-31 OCT Shakedown Training.
- 1-4 NOV Operational Readiness inspection:
Z-21-G Surface Gunnery shoot
Z-1-AA Air Gunnery shoot
Z-11-S Man Overboard
Z-20-C Overall Communications
Inport damage control: fire, collision, rescue and assistance.
Z-26-S Underway transfer
Z-5-N Precision Anchoring
Comprehensive Battle Problem
- 4 NOV TRENTON passes ORI with an overall EXCELLENT. Underway for Norfolk.
- 9 NOV-19 NOV Post Shakedown Availability (PSA) for correction of Final Contract Trial and subsequent material discrepancies at Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Intensive Nuclear Weapons handling, accident and intruder drills.
- 13-14 NOV Open house for citizens 66 Trenton, New Jersey - 1350 attend.
- 20 DEC Underway for Norfolk.
- 21-31 DEC Christmas leave period, Norfolk.

COMMAND ORGANIZATION
(First submission)

1. Commanding Officer:

Captain Karl R. THIELE
6 March 1971 - 31 December 1971

2. Missions and functions:

a. General - to transport and land troops and their essential equipment and supplies by means of embarked landing craft or amphibious vehicles augmented by helicopter lift.

b. Amphibious warfare missions:

(1) Load, transport and land elements of a landing force with their equipment and supplies in an amphibious assault.

(2) Re-embark and transport equipment, materials, supplies and personnel.

(3) Serve as control ship in a ship-to-shore movement.

(4) Provide boat haven facilities.

(5) Conduct helicopter operations in support of amphibious assault.

(6) Provide amphibious assault construction support for ship-to-shore operations and beach clearance.

c. Mobility missions:

(1) Repair engineering casualties.

(2) Replenish at sea.

d. Command and control:

(1) Coordinate and control the operations of the task organization or functional force to carry out assigned missions.

(2) Provide intelligence for coordination and control of the task organization.

e. 1971 functions:

(1) Training - Operational readiness for sea.

(A) Because TRENTON was a newly commissioned ship the cumulative effort of 1971 was to train a new crew, first in general ship-board evolutions, then in amphibious operations.

(B) The entire effort was directed toward certifying the TRENTON as an operational unit of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

(C) Only after completion of amphibious shakedown training in March 1972, previously interrupted by hurricane Ginger, was TRENTON certified as fully ready to assume her role as an operational unit.

(2) Shakedown - material readiness for sea.

(A) A second equally important function in 1971 was to evaluate the ship's material readiness for sea by shaking it down from March until September, documenting discrepancies during Final Contract Trials and affecting repairs during Post Shakedown Availability at Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

(B) Details of the material casualty that occurred in number two engineroom on June 28th are recorded in Record of Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry convened onboard USS TRENTON (LPD-14), ordered on July 6, 1971. The Court of Inquiry Report is on file at JAG and not releasable by this command due to pending litigation.

3. Composition of Command

a. From CHOP to the Atlantic Fleet on 29 April until 31 December, USS TRENTON (LPD-14) was a member of Amphibious Squadron SIX.

4. Homeport

a. U. S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.