

U. S. S. FORTIFY (MSO-446)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS FORTIFY (MSO-446)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command Histories

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) USS FORTIFY (MSO-446) Command History, OPNAV Report 5750-1  
for 1966.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

  
M. L. HUMPHREY *for*

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CMD 71

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USS FORTIFY (MSO-446) COMMAND HISTORY

On 11 January, the FORTIFY went into the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for a pre-deployment overhaul and the installation of five WEATHERTROL air conditioners. On 31 January, FORTIFY left the yard for a dependents' cruise and returned to Pier 9, Long Beach Naval Station for an inspection and final preparations for the forthcoming cruise.

FORTIFY deployed from Long Beach as a part of Mine Division SEVENTY-ONE on 7 February 1966 for a scheduled 10½ month deployment as a part of the Seventh Fleet. The transit was made with brief stops at Pearl Harbor, Johnston Island, Kwajalein Atoll and Guam before reaching Subic Bay on March 28, 1966. Voyage repairs were accomplished in Pearl Harbor and Guam where the FORTIFY received technical availabilities.

FORTIFY arrived in MARKET TIME on 3 April and reported to Commander Task Force ONE ONE FIVE for operational control. The first patrol was primarily in Area 4 after an indoctrination tour for two days in Area 6.

The first proved to be the busiest patrol. Coastal traffic in 30-50 foot junks was at an annual high. Cargoes of every imaginable item brought new odors and challenges to the Boarding and Inspecting Teams. Piloting and a sixth sense of where a fishstake was liable to be were developed very quickly.

The FORTIFY and MINDIV 71 arrived in Hong Kong on 11 May for Rest and Recreation. Typhoon IRMA delayed the FORTIFY's getting underway until 20 May when she sailed from Hong Kong to Subic Bay for upkeep and repairs.

On 9 June, FORTIFY proceeded again to MARKET TIME Area 4 to assume the duties of CTE 115.2.2.1. A few days after arrival on station, FORTIFY was one of the first units on the scene of a plane crash sighted off Cape Varella,

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South Vietnam. During the SAR operations which ensued, FORTIFY was able to locate much of the wreckage and debris and many documents; unfortunately, none of the crew survived the crash.

On 8 July, FORTIFY was relieved as Area 4 Patrol unit by USS ENERGY (MSO-436) and set course for Sasebo, Japan for an Interim Drydocking period. On 22-25 July, Commander Mine Division SEVENTY-ONE and his Inspecting Party administered a Management and Maintenance Inspection (MMI). Navigation, Supply, Medical and General Habitability were evaluated as EXCELLENT. Captain C. R. QUANSTROM Jr., Commander Mine Flotilla ONE inspected the ship's company on 25 July, in conjunction with the MMI.

On 27 July, LCDR Morris L. HUMPHREY, USN relieved LCDR Stewart A. RING, USN as Commanding Officer, USS FORTIFY in Sasebo, Japan.

Rear Admiral C. B. JONES, Commander Mine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet visited the USS FORTIFY on 28 July in conjunction with his inspection of all Mine Force, Pacific and spoke with the crew on the forecastle expressing his personal appreciation for the excellent job being done by the Mine Force in WESTPAC.

On 1 August, FORTIFY was underway from Sasebo to MARKET TIME Area 4 via Kaohsiung, Taiwan. While on patrol on 12 August, FORTIFY conducted three separate replenishments in two hours and forty minutes. During this patrol, the coastal junk traffic in Area 4 began to lessen and, as more PCF's were moved into the area, the FORTIFY moved further out to sea to inspect the larger merchant ships. This proved to be interesting too, because, in

addition to being reluctant to answer the flashing light, many of the merchants had a speed advantage.

On 15 September, FORTIFY returned to Subic Bay for a scheduled upkeep and repair period. Work requests were submitted to SRF and USS HECTOR (AR-7) and over 120 work requests were approved and accepted resulting in a very profitable upkeep period.

On 8 October, FORTIFY arrived on MARKET TIME Area 4 for the fourth and final patrol. The area had quieted down markedly from the first patrol due to the ban on travel during the national elections, and, probably more important, because Northern Monsoons began to move in from the northeast bringing in more storm to this part of the coast. By the end of this last patrol, with a total of 44 UNREPS to keep her on the line for 124 days, FORTIFY had inspected 8,408 junks and merchant ships and boarded and searched 1,721 for contraband. One-hundred and two suspected Viet Cong had been taken prisoner for further interrogation.

On 28 October, FORTIFY arrived in Guam for a four day voyage repair availability at the Ship Repair Facility, Guam. FORTIFY was about to complete a successful upkeep period when on the evening of 15 November, RADM BIRD, Commander Naval Forces Marianas, directed Mine Division 71 underway immediately for a SAR mission to locate three airmen who went down at sea in a Navy jet. After five days of unsuccessful searching, hampered by extremely high seas and winds, FORTIFY and Mine Division 71 units were detached to proceed homeward bound with the briefest of fuel stops in Guam, Kwajalein, Johnston Island and Pearl Harbor.

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On 13 December the FORTIFY arrived home in Long Beach, California for a holiday leave and upkeep period. In preparation for entering the shipyard in the spring an INSURV inspection was held on 18 January by the Board of Inspection and Survey from San Francisco. Independent ship exercises were conducted during the week of 23 January in the operation areas near Long Beach, California to drill the crew in minesweeping operations.