

U. S. S. HERMITAGE (LSD 34)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS HERMITAGE (LSD34)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05A5G)

Subj: OPNAV REPORT 5750-1; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) Chronology of Outstanding Events of 1967
(2) Narrative of Ship's History for 1967
(3) People to People Programs
(4) Biography of Commanding Officer
(5) Photograph of Commanding Officer
(6) USS HERMITAGE Newsletter, July 1967
(7) CTG 76.4 080218Z SEP 67
(8) Photograph of USS HERMITAGE

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are forwarded.


D. R. JEX

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CNO (OP-09B9)(w/o enclosures)

CHRONOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS OF 1967

1. 27 November 1966 - 24 January 1967 Member of CARIB 4-66
2. 27 January 1967 - 21 March 1967 - RAV Little Creek in preparation of Vietnam Deployment
3. 25 April 1967 - 8 November 1967 - Member Amphibious Ready Groups ALFA & BRAVO U.S. SEVENTH FLEET

SHIP'S HISTORY

HERMITAGE returned from the Caribbean on 27 January 1967 after having been a member of the Amphibious Ready Group during CARIB 4-66. A two month availability immediately began at Little Creek upon return to prepare for a forthcoming eight month deployment in Southeast Asia.

On 14 April 1967 Captain H. Spencer Matthews, Jr. relieved Captain J. E. McCauley as the eleventh Commanding Officer of HERMITAGE. On 25 April HERMITAGE departed Little Creek for a WESTPAC deployment. Enroute, HERMITAGE picked up 10 MSB's in Charleston for delivery in Long Beach, California.

On 30 April 1967, about 300 miles from Panama, HERMITAGE received a message that a small pleasure craft was sinking. She was directed to proceed to the area and conduct a search and rescue operation. HERMITAGE arrived on the scene, took the eight (8) passengers aboard and towed "Billy H" to Panama. HERMITAGE transited the Panama Canal on 1 May and proceeded to Long Beach where the 10 MSB's were off-loaded. In San Diego, HERMITAGE embarked Marine Air Control Squadron FOUR and proceeded to DaNang, Republic of Vietnam. On 4 June, HERMITAGE relieved USS POINT DEFIANCE at sea and became a member of Amphibious Ready Group ALFA (TG 76.4). OPERATION BEAR CLAW was in progress at the time and was the first of six combat operations in which HERMITAGE participated as Primary Control Ship for the waterborne assaults and Area Defense Control Ship.

HERMITAGE completed her first period of operations on 12 June and sailed for Subic Bay, Philippines for 12 days of upkeep and rest. The first two days in port were spent participating in various sporting events with the men from the other ships of the Amphibious Ready Group: USS OKINAWA, USS DULUTH and USS SEMINOLE.

HERMITAGE departed Subic Bay, Philippines on 26 June 1967 for South Vietnam and more combat operations.

HERMITAGE arrived at Chu Lai, Vietnam just two days later and backloaded Marines. On 3 July, the ship proceeded to the DMZ and landed the Marines beginning OPERATION BEAR BITE. This operation lasted until 18 July when Marines were re-embarked. Just three days later, OPERATION BEACON GUIDE began with the landings of the landing force some twenty miles north of Danang. On 26 July 1967, HERMITAGE hosted the village chief, officials, school teachers and 45 school children of the village of Thon Dong Am. A demonstration of well deck operations was provided, followed by the showing of cartoons and refreshments for the children. The adults were given

Enclosure (2)

rides over their village in helicopters. Upon returning to the ship, all were given gifts and the school children were given paper and pens. A few days later, Robert Stack, the movie and TV star visited HERMITAGE. The first week in August found the ship in Danang preparing for another landing which took place on 7 August, thirty miles to the north. OPERATION BEACON GATE lasted a week and on 15 August the ship sailed for Subic Bay, arriving two days later, having been at sea for almost two months. While in Subic, necessary maintenance and repairs were conducted. HERMITAGE remained in Subic until 27 August and on 1 September landed the Marines near the DMZ in OPERATION BEACON POINT. Rear Admiral Vannoy, Commander Amphibious Forces, Seventh Fleet and Rear Admiral Lacey, Commander Naval Support Activity, Danang were aboard HERMITAGE to observe the landing. On 5 September, HERMITAGE suffered a material casualty which caused the complete flooding of the after engine room. In an all hands effort, the engine room was dewatered then cleaned to save as much machinery as possible. Upon arrival in Subic Bay on 10 September, all hands assisted the ship repair facility personnel to return HERMITAGE to the Amphibious Ready Group as quickly as possible. On 6 October, HERMITAGE, fully repaired and ready for sea, departed Subic Bay enroute Vietnam as a member of Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO (TG 76.5). HERMITAGE then began her last combat operation, FORMATION LEADER. On 8 November she was relieved by a Pacific Fleet LSD and proceeded to Hong Kong for liberty. After 5 days in Hong Kong, HERMITAGE sailed for Yokosuka, Japan, but was diverted two days for Typhoon evasion. HERMITAGE arrived in Yokosuka on 21 November for a restricted availability. HERMITAGE departed Yokosuka enroute Pearl Harbor, arriving 3 December. The ship stayed long enough for refueling and sailed for Panama. After transiting the canal, HERMITAGE set course for Little Creek, Virginia, arriving on 19 December.

Enclosure (2)

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE PROGRAMS

HERMITAGE, while deployed as a member of Seventh Fleet's Amphibious Force undertook 5 community relations projects. 1. On 26 July 1967, the officers and men of the USS HERMITAGE (replacing battle dress with white uniforms) hosted key village officials, school children and teachers of Thon Dong Am village, Republic of South Vietnam. The visiting officials were the Village Chief, the Voting Registrar, the Chief Administrative officer, each of these three officials principal executive assistants, and the Chief of Police.

The forty-five children, four teachers and seven officials arrived at HERMITAGE via a WPB. Upon arrival, each child was provided a "sailor" escort and the visitors went to the flight deck where they were welcomed officially by the Commanding Officer. This welcome briefly tied U.S. objectives (peace with freedom) with those of the South Vietnamese.

Following their welcome they were given a demonstration of well deck operations. The well deck had been flooded (HERMITAGE was maintaining a boat haven in OPERATION BEACON GUIDE) prior to their arrival and assault craft lying to near by. First, the stern gate was lowered and a LARC entered the well at maximum speed and drove onto the dry forward portion of the well. Immediately following the LARC was a LCM-8 with a truck embarked. The LCM-8 grounded out, the truck drove off, the LCM-8 raised its ramp and debarked, and the stern gate was closed, terminating the demonstration. This demonstration of well deck operations, was followed by a tour of the ship. The children then went to the mess decks and were treated to a showing of cartoons. Popcorn, potato chips, and finger sandwiches, were served during the movie. Following the movie, the ship's band played while ice cream and cookies were served.

The Village Chief and officials were escorted to the wardroom where refreshments were served. Command presentation slides were shown and the Commanding Officer gave a brief talk. This group of officials was then given helicopter rides over the Task Group and their village.

Upon their return, they joined the children in the mess decks for the presentation of gifts. Each child received soap, pens, pencils, and writing paper. The presentation to each child was personally made by their enlisted host escort who never left the child's side. The village officials were visibly moved by this small but sincere act. Teachers were presented pen and pencil sets and considerable writing materials. The village chief and officials then returned to the wardroom with the Commanding Officer for the presentation of mementoes of the visit and final speeches while the others embarked in the WPB alongside.

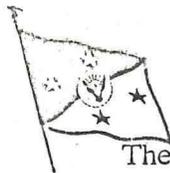
Enclosure (3)

2. HERMITAGE's second community relations project took place on 27 October and was directed toward the same village. The RVN Navy Executive Officer and the naval advisors of Coastal Group 13 which is based adjacent to Thon Dong Am came aboard and were given swing sets, seesaws and rubber athletic balls for use by the children of their village.

3. While in Hong Kong, on 12 November, HERMITAGE hosted 35 children from the Bishop Ford Center. The children toured the ship, were shown cartoons and were served ice cream. The director of the center Rev. C.A. Hirst, MM, commented that the children truly enjoyed tours of U.S. Navy ships. The Rev. Hirst was also given rubber inflatable balls to augment the playground equipment of the center.

4. On 21 November, children of the Kobo Cottage Orphanage near Yokosuka, Japan, came aboard HERMITAGE and were presented rubber playground balls. Three teachers, a student, and Captain McCloughlin, senior Catholic Chaplain in Yokosuka came aboard HERMITAGE to accept the gifts.

Enclosure (3)



CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the
MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to

USS HERMITAGE (LSD-34)

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For meritorious service from 26 May to 29 November 1967 as a unit of the Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet, serving consecutively as a member of Amphibious Task Groups 76.4 and 76.5, in connection with operations against enemy aggressor forces in the Republic of Vietnam. As the Primary Control Ship during six combat amphibious operations along the littoral of the Republic of Vietnam, USS HERMITAGE was primarily responsible for the orderly, timely, and effective conduct of the waterborne ship-to-shore movement of the U. S. Marine Corps Special Landing Forces. HERMITAGE was also responsible for the inshore and transport area defense of the assigned Amphibious Ready Groups, including defense against infiltration and exfiltration of enemy forces into and from the amphibious objective area by sea, as well as serving as the controlling ship for the subsequent backloading of assault troops and supporting arms. When HERMITAGE experienced a crippling material casualty in her engineering spaces during Operation BEACON POINT, all personnel exercised spirited teamwork in saving the ship, minimizing the damage, and restoring the ship to combat capability in minimum time. Throughout her tour of duty, HERMITAGE rendered highly effective support to and coordination with all participating units during these combat operations, and conducted extremely effective civic actions with friendly South Vietnamese ashore. The outstanding initiative, flexibility, stamina, esprit de corps, and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and men of HERMITAGE reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Naval Service.

All personnel attached to and serving on board USS HERMITAGE (LSD-34) during the above designated period, or any part thereof, are hereby authorized to wear the Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon.

Copy to:
Citation Files
Pers-16 (4)
All Hands
OPO9B1

For the Secretary,

T. H. Moorer
Admiral, United States Navy
Chief of Naval Operations