



USS INCHON (LPH 12)
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK 09501

USS INCHON
1973
"B"

LPH12:GWG
5750
Ser 35/222

1 MAR 1974

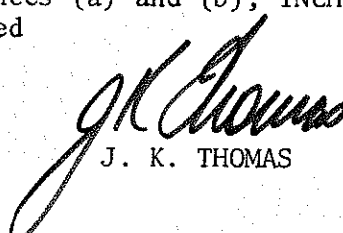
To: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (ATTN: OP 05D2),
Washington, D. C. 20350

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1); forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5750.2B

Encl: (1) Command History for Calendar Year 1973

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), INCHON's Command History for calendar year 1973 is forwarded


J. K. THOMAS

Copy to:
Director of Naval History
CINCPACFLT

1973 COMMAND ORGANIZATION

1. 1973 Command Organization

- a. Commanding Officer
CAPT John K. THOMAS, USN; 9 November 1972-31 December 1973.
- b. Basic missions and functions remained unchanged during this period. However during the period 1 February 1973 - 26 July 1973, INCHON was assigned to Task Force 78 as a helicopter support ship for airborne minesweeping operations (Operation "ENDSWEEP") in North Vietnam's Coastal Waterways.
- c. On 1 October 1973, USS INCHON (LPH-12) was shifted from the administrative control of Amphibious Squadron TEN to Amphibious Squadron EIGHT.
- d. INCHON's homeport remained Norfolk, Virginia

2. 1973 SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

A. INITIAL COMMENTS

1. While returning from the deployment to the Western Pacific (9 NOV 72 - 1 SEP 73), USS INCHON (LPH 12) became the first LPH to circumnavigate the world. The trip to the Gulf of Tonkin was from Norfolk, Virginia via the Panama Canal and the Pacific Ocean. The return trip from the Gulf of Tonkin was via the Indian Ocean around the Southern tip of Africa into the Atlantic, and then home to Norfolk once again. (ANNEX A.)
2. A history of 1973 helicopter landings is included. (ANNEX B.)
3. On the night of 17 March 1973, USS INCHON (LPH 12), then assigned as a unit of Task Force 78 and participating in Operation ENDSWEEP, was anchored in Haiphong Roadstead. A report was received that USS ENHANCE (MSO-437), also a unit of the minesweeping force, had an out-of-control fire on board. Details of assistance rendered by INCHON crewmembers appear in ANNEX C in the summary of action for the helicopter pilot who was dispatched to the scene.

B. 1973 CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

1-31 January 1973 Operations in the Vietnam Area with Task Group 76.5, Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO.

- 1-6 JAN 73 Operations in Gulf of Tonkin with TG 76.5, Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO, (USS FRESNO, USS TULARE, USS CLEVELAND, USS INCHON) Units embarked aboard INCHON were HMM 164; H&S Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines; A Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines; D Company 1st Battalion, 9th Marines.
- 4 JAN 73 The crew of a battle damaged B-52 aircraft returning from a mission was forced to bail out into the Gulf of Tonkin. Embarked helicopters aboard INCHON were responsible for recovering three of the B-52 crewmen. B-52 crewmembers rescued were CAPT W.E. FERGASON, USAF; MAJ R.A. CLINGBEIL, USAF, and CAPT M.J. McTERNAN, USAF. Capt FERGASON was rescued by the crew of CARSON 373, the ship's organic helicopter. Maj CLINGBEIL and Capt McTERNAN were rescued by helicopters attached to HMM 164, the Marine Squadron embarked aboard INCHON. (ANNEX D)
- 7-8 JAN 73 Enroute Subic Bay Naval Base, Republic of Philippines (Subic Bay)
- 9-16 JAN 73 Inport Subic Bay
- 15 JAN 73 Shift to anchorage E-19 for L-Form shift
- 17-19 JAN 73 Underway for OPAREA Alpha - CARQUALS, GUNEXS w/HM-12, HMH-463
- 20-21 JAN 73 Enroute Gulf of Tonkin
- 22-25 JAN 73 Amphibious Ready Group Operations in the Gulf of Tonkin with TG 76.5
- 26-28 JAN 73 Enroute Buckner Bay, Okinawa, in order to debark Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/9
- 27 JAN 73 Vietnam Peace agreement announced
- 29 JAN 73 Arrive & depart Buckner Bay, Okinawa. Debark BLT 1/9.
- 30 JAN 73 Enroute Subic Bay
- 31 JAN 73 Inport Subic Bay

1 February-16 April 1973 Operations with Task Force 78, the Mine Countermeasures Force. The initial phase of Operation ENDSWEEP.

- 1 FEB 73 Change operational control to Task Force 78, INCHON's Commanding Officer assigned as CTU 78.0.4
- 10 FEB 73 Underway for sea trials

11-25 FEB 73 Inport Subic Bay

13 FEB 73 Debark HMM 164 except for SAR detachment, Embark HMM 463, TACRON 13, AMCM Unit CHARLIE.

16-22 FEB 73 Minesweeping exercises at anchor, SUBIC

26-27 FEB 73 Enroute Gulf of Tonkin. Divert to Minesweeping holding area

28 FEB-2 MAR 73 At minesweeping holding area.

3 MAR 73 Enroute Haiphong area

4-31 MAR 73 Participate in initial phase Operation "ENDSWEEP", Haiphong area

17 MAR 73 First minesweeping by HMM 463. Rendered assistance to USS ENHANCE (MSO-437). (ANNEX C).

1-3 APR 73 Enroute Subic Bay

4-13 APR 73 Inport Subic Bay

14-15 APR 73 Enroute Gulf of Tonkin

16 APR 73 Arrive Gulf of Tonkin

17 April - 17 June 1973 Suspension of Operation ENDSWEEP

17 APR 73 Depart Gulf of Tonkin, "ENDSWEEP" suspended.

18-22 APR 73 Proceed to MODLOC holding area located at sea, east of the demilitarized zone.

23 APR 73 Enroute Subic Bay

24 APR-1 MAY 73 Inport Subic Bay

2-4 MAY 73 Underway for inter-ship exercises and enroute Manila, Republic of Philippines

5-8 MAY 73 Visit Manila

9 MAY 73 Depart Manila, arrive Subic.

9-13 MAY 73 Inport Subic Bay

14-18 MAY 73 Participate in amphibious exercise PAGASA I, off the Philippine coast. INCHON used as helo platform only with no Marine ground troops embarked.

19-21 MAY 73 Inport Subic Bay

22-23 MAY 73 Enroute Hong Kong

24-28 MAY 73 Visit Hong Kong
29-30 MAY 73 Enroute Subic Bay
31 MAY-6 JUNE 73 Inport Subic Bay
5 JUNE 73 HMH 463 Change of Command. MAJ J. VAN NORTWICK, USMC, relin-
quished command to MAJ W.J. SMITH, USMC.

7-11 JUN 73 Enroute Singapore

12-14 JUN 73 Visit Singapore

15-17 JUN 73 Enroute Gulf of Tonkin

18 June-25 July 1973 Resumption and Completion of Operation ENDSWEEP

18-25 JUNE 73 Arrive Haiphong Harbor Roadstead for minesweeping operations.
"ENDSWEEP" resumed

26 JUNE 73 Enroute to area off Vinh, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV),
for minesweeping operations.

27 JUN-5 JUL 73 Minesweeping operations off Vinh

6 JUL 73 Shift anchorage to vicinity HON-LA, DRV, for minesweeping
operations

7-8 JUL 73 Underway for Typhoon "ANITA" evasion

9-11 JUL 73 Anchor vicinity HON-LA for minesweeping operations

12-17 JUL 73 Anchored in Haiphong Roadstead for control of C-130 aircraft
enroute to and from CUBI POINT Naval Air Station.

18-19 JUL 73 Enroute Subic Bay

20-25 JUL 73 Arrive Subic Bay, prepare for return to CONUS. Debark HMH 463,
onload HM-12 equipment and maintenance personnel for
further transfer to Charleston, South Carolina.

25 JUL 73 Task Force 78 dissolved. Changed operational control to
Task Group 76.5 (ANNEX E includes congratulatory messages
which INCHON received while returning to the Atlantic Fleet)

26 July - 1 September 1973 The voyage home via the Indian and Atlantic Ocean

26 JUL 73 Underway, enroute Lourenco Marques, Mozambique, via the
Sunda Straits and the Indian Ocean.

29 JUL 73 Crossed the equator at longitude 106 48E

30 JUL 73 Enter Indian Ocean

- 5 AUG 73 Changed operational control from the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the U.S. Second Fleet.
- 9-10 AUG 73 Visit Lourenco Marques, Mozambique
- 11 AUG 73 Underway for Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico. INCHON was originally scheduled to visit RECIFE, Brazil, but was diverted because this port lacked adequate fueling facilities for an LPH.
- 13 AUG 73 Depart Indian Ocean, enter South Atlantic Ocean
- 22 AUG 73 Crossed Equator, enter North Atlantic Ocean
- 26-27 AUG 73 Refueling and recreation stop at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico
- 28 AUG 73 Underway for Charleston, South Carolina
- 31 AUG 73 Arrive Charleston, South Carolina; offloaded Anti-mine countermeasures equipment, then underway again for Norfolk, Virginia

1 September - 30 September 1973 Post-deployment stand down at Norfolk Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

- 1 SEPT 73 Arrived at homeport of Norfolk, Virginia.
- 27 SEPT 73 Awards Ceremony aboard INCHON. INCHON receives Admiral Flatley Memorial Award, Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Fund Prize and the Battle Efficiency Award. (ANNEX F)

1 October - 31 December 1973 Assigned to TU 44.0.4

- 1 OCT 73 - Shifted from administrative control of COMPHIBRON TEN to COMPHIBRON EIGHT
- 9-12 OCT 73 -3M Inspection visit
- 9-10 OCT 73 -Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS) installation. (Initial introduction)
- 10-11 OCT 73-Visit by Naval Ordnance System Support Office, Atlantic, to verify status of ordnance alterations.
- 15-18 OCT 73-Shipboard Aviation Maintenance Space and Support Facilities Team Survey (SAMST)
- 23 OCT-24 NOV 73 -Tender availability (TAV) with USS VULCAN (AR 5)
- 25-30 OCT 73-Defense Condition III set as a result of Middle-East situation.
- 5-16 NOV 73 -Ship's Equipment Configuration Accounting System (SECAS) validation by Naval Ship Engineering Center, Norfolk, Virginia.

6-8 NOV 73 Continuation of Personnel Qualification Standards installation.

14-15 NOV 73 Nuclear Weapons Technical Assistance visit by COMPHIBLANT.

26-30 NOV 73 Inspection by Naval Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV)

26-27 NOV 73 INSURV trials at sea in VACAPES operating areas.

1-31 DEC 73 Project operations in port. Inspections and other miscellaneous requirements.

3-31 DEC 73 Restricted availability.

6-7 DEC 73 Annual Supply Inspection by COMPHIBLANT Force Supply Officer.

10-18 DEC 73 Current Ship's Maintenance Program (CSMP) installation.

12-14 DEC 73 Individual Material Requirements List (IMRL) conference hosted aboard INCHON.

3. DOCUMENTARY ANNEXES

- A. Short summary of Western Pacific deployment
- B. History of 1973 Helicopter landings
- C. Fire aboard USS ENHANCE (MSO-437)
- D. Search and Rescue for crewmembers of downed B-52
- E. Congratulatory messages to INCHON while returning from Western Pacific deployment
- F. Awards received by INCHON during calendar year 1973
- G. Brief History of USS INCHON (LPH 12)
- H. Welcome Aboard Pamphlet for USS INCHON (LPH 12)

The Amphibious Assault ship USS INCHON (LPH-12) returned to Norfolk today, 1 September 1973, after completing a ten month deployment which took her around the world. During this period she made more than 6700 helicopter launches and recoveries in fulfilling operational commitments while deployed to the Western Pacific in support of U.S. Amphibious and Minesweeping efforts in Vietnam. INCHON and her crew departed Norfolk in early November 1972, only nineteen days after returning from a two month North Atlantic deployment. The Commanding Officer Capt J.K. THOMAS, relieved Captain (now Rear Admiral) F.T. BROWN during a change of command ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk the morning of 9 November 1972 and later the same day the ship and her crew were underway via the Panama Canal to join the Seventh Fleet. Upon arriving in the Western Pacific, she embarked Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 164 (HMM 164) and Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/9 (BLT 1/9) and was assigned to Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO (Task Group 76.5). Shortly thereafter, enroute to spend the Christmas Holidays in Singapore, she tested her newly installed Basic Point Defense Surface Missile System by firing two training missiles at high speed target sleeves. Both shots were direct hits. Enroute to Singapore, INCHON dipped below the Equator and initiated all lowly pollywogs into the mysteries of King Neptune's realm. After Christmas, Task Group 76.5 headed for the Gulf of Tonkin. There INCHON operated with Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO off the coast of Vietnam. During this period the crew of a battle damaged B-52 aircraft returning from a mission was forced to bail out into the Tonkin Gulf. INCHON's swift implementation of SAR procedures was instrumental in the rapid recovery of three of the B-52 crewmen from the water by embarked helicopters. When the peace agreement was reached in late January 1973. INCHON proceeded rapidly to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, to offload BLT 1/9. Immediately afterward, she got underway for Subic Bay and reported for duty with the Mine Countermeasures Force. Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron Four Sixty-Three (HMH 463) was embarked; and, after a minesweeping orientation period, INCHON proceeded to Haiphong Harbor to participate in operation ENDSWEEP, a six month long mine sweeping operation in North Vietnam's major harbors and waterways, involving the unprecedented employment of helicopters. During the initial negotiation phase which preceded actual sweeping, INCHON held the first known Bar-B-Q and swimcall by a U.S. man of war in Haiphong Harbor. Also during this initial line period, when a severe fire was reported at night aboard USS ENHANCE (MSO -437), INCHON vectored embarked rescue helicopters to the burning and distressed minesweeper through adverse weather conditions and unfamiliar terrain. The immediate and professional response ensured the expeditious delivery of urgently needed fire fighting equipment and assistance, and contributed significantly to saving ENHANCE from a possible disaster. When 'ENDSWEEP' was temporarily suspended during May and the first half of June 73, the ports of Manila, Hong Kong, and (once again) Singapore were visited. INCHON then returned to the Gulf of Tonkin and the terminal phase of ENDSWEEP. When ENDSWEEP was completed on 18 July, the ship proceeded to Subic Bay and rapidly offloaded and onloaded equipment for return to the U.S. HMH-463 debarked and equipment and personnel from the Norfolk-based Anti-Mine Countermeasure Squadron HM-12 and Charleston-based Mine Countermeasures Command moved on board. On 26 July, INCHON began the long trip home. By completing this journey she is the first LPH to transit the world; returning to Norfolk via the Indian Ocean, Africa's Cape of Good Hope, and the South Atlantic Ocean. While on the way home the crew had the opportunity to sightsee in the African port Lourenco Marques in Mozambique and Puerto Rico in the West Indies. INCHON also crossed the Equator two more times on the way back, ensuring that her crewmembers were "Shellbacks" to a man. Upon reaching the U.S., mine countermeasures equipment and personnel were offloaded at Charleston, S.C. on 31 August, and the ship proceeded to Norfolk on the following day.

ANNEX A

ANNEX B

SHIPBOARD HELICOPTER LANDINGS
DURING CALENDAR YEAR 1973

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
		11,678 helicopter landings had previously been made aboard INCHON.
17 JAN 73	HMM 164	12,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
21 FEB 73	HMM 164	13,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
19 MAR 73	HS-6	14,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
21 APR 73	TACRON 11	15,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
23 MAY 73	HMM 164	16,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
5 JUL 73	HMH 463	17,000th helicopter landing aboard INCHON.
31 DEC 73		17,347 helicopter landings at end of Calendar year 1973.

TOTAL HELICOPTER LANDINGS DURING CALENDAR YEAR 1973----5669

ANNEX B

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before completing this form see SECNAVINST 1650.1D.
 - a. Para 121 and 122 explain the preparation and submission of a recommendation.
 - b. Chapter 2 contains the criteria for each award.
2. Insure all blanks are filled in and the form is dated.
3. The Summary of Action (Item 24) is required in all cases in addition to an attached proposed citation. (double space)
4. This form should be forwarded directly to the authority authorized to approve the award recommended or to the appropriate Fleet/Force CINC (whichever is lower in the chain of command).

24. SUMMARY OF ACTION

At 2230 on the night of 17 March 1973, USS INCHON (LPH 12), a unit of Task Force 78 taking part in Operation End Sweep while anchored in Haiphong Roadstead, received a report that a fire was out of control aboard USS ENHANCE (MSO-437), also a member of the minesweeping force.

LT BEOUGHER, Aircraft Commander of Carson 373, INCHON's organic CH-46D helicopter, expeditiously pre-flighted and performed his other pilot duties with maximum efficiency so that the launch was effected only eight minutes after the Search and Rescue (SAR) alert was sounded. Take-off was accomplished in darkness and under instrument flying conditions which consisted of a three hundred foot ceiling and visibility of one mile in rain and fog. Carson 373 then proceeded under radar control of INCHON's Helicopter Director Center to the reported position of ENHANCE anchored twelve nautical miles away in a narrow waterway in close proximity to many islets, one of which was approximately seven hundred feet high. Unable to establish radio communications with the minesweeper, Carson 373 made an instrument radar-controlled descent to two hundred feet through driving rain before breaking out under the ceiling and thereafter making several searching orbits until a flare was sighted and visual contact with ENHANCE was finally achieved. Weather conditions at the scene were a two hundred foot ceiling with visibility of one half mile in rain and fog.

When LT BEOUGHER had maneuvered the helicopter to a hover alongside ENHANCE at an altitude of seventy-five feet, it was discovered that the ship had lost all power. As On-scene Commander, LT BEOUGHER expeditiously dispatched a swimmer with an emergency radio who was lowered by hoist into the water at 2305. After the swimmer had boarded the minesweeper, vital communications were established between the distressed ship, Carson 373, the Task Force Commander, and assisting units enroute to the scene. At that point ENHANCE reported that the fire was still out of control and more "light water" was urgently needed.

By this time USS SAFEGUARD (ARS-25) had arrived at the scene and was able to make an approach alongside the stricken vessel while Carson 373 provided illumination with hover and spot lights. Carson 373's lights also assisted Spanish Fly 61--a CH-46D helicopter assigned to HMH 463--in locating the scene and arriving at a hover alongside ENHANCE to deliver the crucially needed "light water". LT BEOUGHER then moved his hover to the port bow of ENHANCE, precariously near a whip antenna, in order to provide the most effective smoke dispersal and illumination during the emergency evacuation of personnel and material to SAFEGUARD. This difficult hover was maintained for approximately forty minutes while the fire was being brought under control. Upon reaching low fuel state, Carson 373 departed the scene and climbed to a safe altitude where radar control was re-established, and the aircraft vectored to CCA approach for landing aboard INCHON at 0028, 18 March.

Throughout this one hour and fifty minute flight conducted under very demanding conditions, LT BEOUGHER performed in a most professional manner. He displayed superb airmanship throughout this mission which included prolonged low-level instrument flying and protracted hovering in an aircraft not considered to have an instrument hovering capability. His notably incisive and commendably adroit coordinating ability as On-scene Commander while controlling the SAR radio circuit clarified a confused situation and

Item 24. Summary of Action. Cont'd

materially aided in expediting rescue efforts. Without exception, his response to every requirement placed upon him proved effective, and his intrepidity in a prolonged, stressful situation doubtlessly aided in inspiring his crew to their best efforts.

LT BEOUGHER's superb airmanship and timely response to the nearly disastrous fire aboard ENHANCE were major factors in averting a catastrophe at sea.