



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
U. S. S. MOBILE (LKA-115)

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS MOBILE (LKA-115)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20390

Subj: Command History, USS MOBILE (LKA-115); 1971

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12B

Encl: (1) 8" X 10" photograph of USS MOBILE
(2) Biography of Captain Edwin J. BURKE, USN
(3) 8" X 10" photograph of Captain Edwin J. BURKE, USN
(4) Change of Command Program
(5) USS MOBILE Family Grams
(6) Congratulatory Messages and Letters
(7) Authorization Letter for Green C Award
(8) Authorization Letter for Amphibious Assault Award
(9) Muster Role and Roster of Officers as of 31 DEC 1971
(10) Newspaper clippings concerning USS MOBILE

1. In accordance with reference (a), the history of USS MOBILE (LKA-115) for the period of 1 January 1971 through 31 December 1971 is submitted.

a. Basic History

(1) Command Organization

(a) Captain Edwin J. BURKE, USN, 472523/1100, relieved Captain "J" "D" WARD, USN, 504242/1310 on 10 August 1971.

(b) Missions and functions remain unchanged.

(c) USS MOBILE continues as a unit of Amphibious Squadron FIVE.

(d) Homeport remains San Diego, California.

(2) Summary of Operations

(a) Chronology of Highlights

1 - 15 January - Inport San Diego for upkeep and boiler repairs.

19 January - Participated in torpedo test operations, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia.

20 - 24 January - Visited Vancouver, British Columbia.

25 - 3 February - Returned to San Diego via Bremerton, Washington; San Francisco, and Port Hueneme, California for miscellaneous cargo lifts.

18 - 19 February - Administrative Inspection by Amphibious Squadron FIVE Staff.

23 February - 3 March - Participated in major FIRST Fleet Exercise "ADMIXTURE".

16 March - 4 May - Underway for WESTPAC on Keystone Robin (Charlie) Lift involving the redeployment of WESTPAC Forces from Yokosuka, Japan and Vietnam. Delivered cargo from CONUS to Iwakuni, Japan.

17 March - Transferred injured crewman from USS PLEDGE (MSO-492) at sea for preliminary treatment and Medevac by helicopter to USS ORISKANY (CVA-34) on 18 March for subsequent transfer ashore.

27 March - Changed to operational control of Commander, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet.

18 April - Loaded four light observation aircraft on flight deck in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines for return to U. S.

25 April - Changed to operational control of Commander, U. S. FIRST Fleet.

7 - 9 June - Enroute to Portland, Oregon for Portland Rose Festival with seven Secretary of the Navy guests aboard. On 9 June provided boat transportation for River Cruise Guests at Astoria to units of the Rose Festival Fleet steaming up the Columbia River.

10 - 13 June - Participated in Portland Rose Festival.

14 - 17 June - Enroute San Diego with 9 Secretary of the Navy guests aboard; provided boating service for debarking River Cruise Guests at Astoria.

5 - 12 July - Participated in Interim Refresher Training.

20 July - Transited to Seal Beach to load Landing Force Operational Reserve Material.

2 - 5 August - Participated in Exercise Pikepole (RESMAULEX 3-71).

10 August - Captain E. J. BURKE, USN, relieved Captain "J" "D" WARD, USN, as Commanding Officer of MOBILE at San Diego.

27 September - Completed conversion to Navy Distillate Fuel.

1 October - Departed San Diego for Western Pacific in company with other units of Amphibious Squadron FIVE. Participated in sortie phase of Convoy Exercise 3-71.

14 October - Changed to operational control of Commander, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet.

19 October - Assigned to Amphibious Ready Group Bravo (Task Group 76.5) with USS DENVER and USS SCHENECTADY.

28 - 29 October - Participated in Taiwan Straits Patrol.

31 October - Offloaded "Handclasp" and "Buddy Base" material in Danang, South Vietnam.

2 November - Arrived in Cam Ranh Bay to offload "Handclasp" material for Tan Binh Orphanage. Departed same day.

4 November - Crossed the Equator and held "Shellback" initiation ceremony.

5 - 16 November - Visited Singapore to provide boating support for visit of USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65).

20 November - Offloaded "Handclasp" material at Subic Bay.

23 - 26 November - Loaded elements of BLT 3/9 at Buckner Bay, Okinawa.

29 November - 1 December - Conducted amphibious landing exercise with USS DENVER, USS TUSCALOOSA, and BLT 3/9 in Zambales OP Area, Subic Bay.

14 - 23 December - Provided marine training services at White Beach, Buckner Bay. Offloaded BLT 3/9.

27 - 31 December - Inport Sasebo, Japan.

b. Basic Narrative

The year began with MOBILE inport in San Diego completing boiler repairs. On the 16th the ship sailed for a port visit to Vancouver, British Columbia. On the 19th, prior to arriving in Vancouver, MOBILE stopped at Nanoose Bay on the coast of Victoria Island where she served as a "target" for tests of an advanced torpedo. Upon departure from Vancouver on the 25th, that city's Chief of Police wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense praising the behavior of MOBILE's crew during the visit.

Arriving in Bremerton, Washington, late on the 25th, the ship loaded 3 LCVP landing craft, 1 54-foot AVR hull (used for aerial bombardment practice), 2 pickup trucks, 5 teletypewriters, and various other pieces of equipment. She departed Bremerton on the 26th. From the 29th to the 31st of January, MOBILE visited San Francisco. There she offloaded the trucks, teletypes, and some other equipment loaded in Bremerton. Before returning to San Diego, on February 3, the ship offloaded the AVR hull in Port Huemene. The remainder of her cargo was delivered to San Diego. In mid-February, MOBILE was given an Administrative Inspection by the Staff of Amphibious Squadron FIVE and received a grade of high excellent. From February 23 to March 3, MOBILE participated in a major fleet exercise, Exercise ADMIXTURE. During this event, MOBILE simulated a high value target which was to be protected from "enemy" forces by other units.

On March 16, MOBILE departed for the western Pacific on a Keystone Robin (Charlie) lift as part of the redeployment of U. S. assets from South Vietnam. She carried with her 31 complete pre-fabricated housing units destined for Iwakuni, Japan. The day after leaving San Diego, MOBILE was diverted to assist an injured sailor aboard the minesweeper USS PLEDGE (MSO-492), as described in the Medical section of this history. After visiting Iwakuni from March 31 through April 2, the ship arrived in Yokosuka on April 6. There she loaded personnel and equipment from Naval Beach Group ONE for return to San Diego. MOBILE arrived in Danang early on April 16 and commenced loading 1300 pallets of Marine equipment, over 300 Marine vehicles, and personnel from the 11th Motor Transport Battalion of the 3rd Marine Amphibious Brigade. The ship departed Danang late in the evening of the 16th. On the 18th MOBILE arrived in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines and loaded four OV-10 light observation aircraft on her flight deck.

Departed Subic for San Diego on the 19th. The ship arrived in San Diego on May 4 and offloaded all cargo.

On June 7 MOBILE was underway for Portland, Oregon, to participate in the annual Portland Rose Festival. On board were seven guests of the Secretary of the Navy from the Portland area. On the 9th the ship anchored off Astoria near the mouth of the Columbia River. The following morning, MOBILE's LCM-8s were used to ferry several hundred River Cruise Guests out to USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6) and other units of the Rose Festival Fleet for the journey upriver to Portland. MOBILE herself embarked 75 guests. The ship arrived in Portland during the afternoon of the 9th.

When MOBILE departed Portland on June 14 she again carried a contingent of River Cruise Guests and nine Secretary of the Navy Guests. The ship again provided boating service to debark River Cruise Guests from other units at Astoria. MOBILE returned to San Diego on June 17.

From the 5th through the 12th of July, MOBILE undertook Interim Refresher Training under the control of Fleet Training Group, San Diego, in preparation for her upcoming deployment.

On July 20 at Seal Beach, MOBILE loaded 586,000 pounds of LFORM (Landing Force Operational Reserve Material) consisting of ammunition, fortification supplies, and petroleum, oil, and lubricants.

During the period August 2 - 5, the ship participated in an amphibious exercise called Exercise PIKEPOLE (RESMAULEX 3-71) which culminated in an amphibious landing at Camp Pendleton.

On August 10 in San Diego, Capt E. J. BURKE, USN, relieved Capt "J" "D" WARD, USN, as Commanding Officer.

From the 23rd to the 27th of August, MOBILE conducted amphibious type training off San Diego in company with USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10).

The month of September was assigned as an upkeep period in preparation for deployment to WESTPAC. During this period the ship was converted to Navy Distillate Fuel. The ship loaded 160,000 pounds of Marine equipment and 110 Marine personnel from A Battery 1/12 and H & S Company 1/3 of the First Marine Division for transport to Hawaii. Also loaded were 32,000 pounds of household goods for Destroyer Squadron 15 at Yokosuka, 412,000 pounds of Project Handclasp material destined for Danang, 415,000 pounds of Handclasp material for Subic Bay, and 44,470 pounds of unconsigned material for distribution through the ship's people-to-people programs. This represented one of the largest loads of Handclasp material ever lifted by one ship.

On October 1, as a unit of Amphibious Squadron FIVE, MOBILE departed for the Western Pacific in company with USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10), USS DULUTH (LPD-6), USS DENVER (LPD-9), USS ANCHORAGE (LSD-36), USS TUSCALOOSA (LST-1187) and USS SCHENECTADY (LST-1185). The ship participated in the sortie phase of Convoy Exercise 3-71. On October 8, the ship departed Pearl Harbor in company with USS DENVER and USS SCHENECTADY. On October 19, while in Yokosuka for upkeep, MOBILE assumed duty as a unit of Amphibious Ready Group Bravo along with USS DENVER and USS SCHENECTADY. While enroute from Yokosuka to Danang in company with USS DENVER, the ship participated in the Taiwan Straits Patrol under the control of Commander Task Force 72. On October 31, MOBILE offloaded Project Handclasp material in Danang. On November 2, the ship arrived in Cam Ranh Bay and offloaded 12,000 pounds of food, clothing, and medical supplies for the Tan Binh Orphanage. The supplies had been collected by Cub Scout Pack 653 of Omaha, Nebraska. After crossing the Equator on November 4, all "pollywogs" were duly initiated into the "Order of Shellbacks". From the 5th through the 15th of November, MOBILE provided boat service in Singapore for USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65) and other U. S. Navy units present. During this around-the-clock operation, her boats handled over twenty-two tons of provisions, cargo and mail for USS ENTERPRISE and provided passenger service for over 11,000 special guests and 30,000 liberty party personnel. After a one night stop in Subic Bay on November 20, MOBILE, DENVER, and TUSCALOOSA (which replaced SCHENECTADY in ARG-BRAVO) proceeded to White Beach, Okinawa. There the ship loaded 194 Marines, 88 vehicles, and 372,000 pounds of equipment of Battalion Landing Team 3/9. From November 29 through December 1, MOBILE, DENVER, TUSCALOOSA and BLT 3/9 conducted an amphibious landing exercise at the Zambles Operating Area, Subic Bay. Upon completion of the exercise, the ship moored at Subic Bay for a ten-day upkeep period. During the period 14-23 December, the ship provided training services (wet net training, cargo handling) for Marines at White Beach and offloaded units of BLT 3/9. On December 24, MOBILE was underway for Sasebo, Japan where she remained through the end of the year.

During the year, MOBILE steamed a total of 37,630 miles.

c. Special Topics

(1) Engineering Equipment: As a result of the discovery of cracks in the third stage turbine blading of the USS CHARLESTON, it was determined that prolonged operation of LKA-113 class ships at shaft RPM in the 81 to 89 range should be avoided. This was deemed necessary to prevent nozzle resonance which would cause high stresses in the third stage blading. During June the third and fourth stage blading of the L. P. turbine were removed by representatives of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation's Marine Division. With these stages removed, the above restriction on operations between 81 to 89 RPM is not in effect. However the ship is restricted to operations at or below 95 RPM. During the ship's upcoming regular overhaul, new third and fourth stages will be installed utilizing longer shroud band segments to make

the blades non-responsive to the exciting forces present in those stages.

During September the ship was converted to Navy Distillate fuel. The advantages of this fuel are reduced air pollution and reduced maintenance on boilers and topside spaces. Disadvantages include reduction in operational radius by approximately 8 per cent, increased fuel cost, and greater difficulty in locating leaks because of transparency of the fuel. The most severe problem has been the poor lubricating quality of distillate fuel combined with the critical clearance in the fuel oil pump.

(2) Communications: During 1971, MOBILE originated 1609 messages. She also received 14,812 messages for a total of 16,421 messages handled. In April the ship was awarded the "Green C" by Commander Amphibious Squadron FIVE for excellence in both electrical and visual communications. Early in the year a second WRC-1 high-frequency transmitter was installed.

(3) Gunnery: During the year, MOBILE's 3"/50 cal guns fired 559 rounds in anti-air exercises and 299 rounds in surface and shore bombardment exercises, for a total expenditure of 858 rounds.

(4) Flight Operations: MOBILE's flight crew conducted a total of 172 helicopter landing/take off operations. The breakdown by helicopter type was as follows: CH-46 - 161, UH-2C - 1, CH-53 - 10. On Christmas Day, 119 operations were conducted, the largest number ever in one day for this ship.

(5) Medical: On March 17, while enroute to the Western Pacific and 650 miles off San Diego, MOBILE was notified that a sailor aboard the minesweeper USS PLEDGE (MSO-492) had received a [REDACTED] when a hand grenade exploded. Rendezvous with PLEDGE was effected and the injured man, [SA D. L. McATEE] was transferred to MOBILE by boat. After initial treatment and consultation by radio with a Navy ophthalmologist in San Diego, a decision was made to evacuate the man to Balboa Naval Hospital on an emergency basis. After steaming toward each other throughout the night, MOBILE and the aircraft carrier ORISKANY (CVA-34) rendezvoused on the morning of the 18th. McATEE was transferred to ORISKANY by helicopter and flown to San Diego in a C-1A aircraft.

On 1 December, the second death on board in MOBILE's history occurred when 20 year old Seaman Delbert AHLISCHLAGER, USN died unexpectedly in his sleep. He had been in good health prior to his demise. An autopsy was performed at Naval Hospital Subic Bay and a careful investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death was conducted, but the cause of death, which appeared to be from natural causes, could not be determined.

During the year significant improvements to the medical department included installation of a new Champaigne operating table and a gas anesthesia machine in the operating room as well as portable operating tables in the forward and aft battle dressing stations.

During 1971, 2,263 outpatient visits to sick bay were recorded, 781 laboratory tests were performed, 330 X-rays were taken, and 1,097 prescriptions were filled in the pharmacy.

Habitability improvements included installation of false overheads in the quiet room and ward plus carpeting of the Medical Officer's and Medical Department offices.

(6) Personnel and Legal: During 1971 the monthly average number of personnel aboard was 295; the maximum was 312 and the minimum was 285. A total of 37 reenlistments were effected, 10 of which were first term.

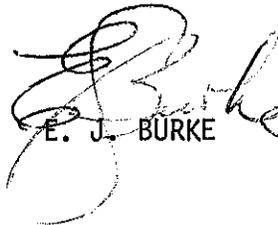
One hundred twelve cases of non-judicial punishment were handled aboard MOBILE in 1971. In addition three Special Courts-Martial and two Summary Courts-Martial were assigned.

(7) Reservist and Midshipmen Training: From May 20 through June 16 three Midshipmen from the Royal Australian Navy trained aboard MOBILE. During this approximate period 6 Midshipmen First Class and 32 Midshipmen Third Class from the Universities of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin also were assigned to the ship. In addition 58 Sea Cadets underwent ship-board training June 6-18. During August six naval reservists, including two officers, trained aboard MOBILE.

(8) Community Relations: During the year MOBILE sponsored numerous tours of the ship for various school groups and other organizations. Included among these were thirty-five visitors from the Beacon Foundation of Tucson, Arizona. During her visit to Portland, MOBILE was open for general visiting and thousands of Portlanders turned out to see the ship. While overseas, men from MOBILE volunteered their time to work in orphanages in Okinawa and Sasabe, Japan.

(9) Awards: In April, MOBILE was awarded the "Green C" by the Commander of Amphibious Squadron FIVE for excellence in all phases of communications.

On August 1, MOBILE was authorized to display the Amphibious Assault Award by the Commander of Amphibious Squadron FIVE for her demonstrated ability to meet all commitments.


E. J. BURKE

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