

USS O'BRIEN (DD-725)  
FPO San Francisco 96601

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1 March 1970

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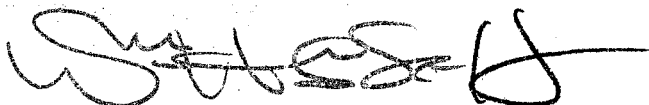
From: Commanding Officer, USS O'BRIEN (DD-725)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09139)

Subj: 1969 Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A of 31 Oct 68

Encl: (1) 1969 Chronology *- IN CLASS. SAFE*  
(2) 1969 Command History Narrative  
(3) Commanding Officer's photograph (CDR Wm H. C. SELF, USN)  
(4) Commanding Officer's Biography (CDR Wm H. C. SELF, USN)  
(5) Photograph of O'BRIEN departing Pearl Harbor May 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are hereby forwarded.



Wm H. C. SELF

Copy to:  
CINCPACFLT (less enclosures (3) through (5))  
COMCRUDESPAC (less enclosures (3) through (5))  
COMCRUDESFLOT 7 (less enclosures (3) through (5))  
COMDESRON 29 (less enclosures (3) through (5))

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[1969]

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1969 COMMAND HISTORY NARRATIVE - USS O'BRIEN (DD-725)

On the First of January, 1969, USS O'BRIEN (DD-725) lay moored in her homeport, Long Beach, California. Over twenty-four years old, O'BRIEN has seen combat action in every major war since she was launched 8 December 1943 at the Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine, and commissioned 25 February 1944 at Boston Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts.

In recent years, O'BRIEN has participated in a multitude of operations off the coasts of the Republic of Vietnam and North Vietnam as a unit of the United States SEVENTH Fleet. During these operations, the versatile O'BRIEN has performed duties with fast carrier strike forces, antisubmarine warfare groups and task units providing naval gunfire support for allied units ashore.

A ship consistently maintaining excellent performance in the last quarter of 1969, O'BRIEN was rated the number one ship in Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE by her Squadron Commander. She is displaying the "E" for Engineering Excellence, the "A" for Anti-submarine Warfare Excellence, and the "E" for Gunnery Excellence, all awarded by Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Force Pacific.

O'BRIEN operated as a unit of the United States FIRST Fleet primarily in the Southern California and Northern California Operation Areas of the Eastern Pacific and briefly in the Hawaiian Operation Areas of the Middle Pacific during the first nine months of 1969. Following the Christmas holiday season, O'BRIEN put to sea on 6 January to conduct independent gunnery and anti-submarine warfare exercises along with engineering casualty and damage control drills. After spending two nights at anchor in Mission Bay off San Diego, California, O'BRIEN returned to Long Beach on 8 January.

On 13 January, O'BRIEN departed Long Beach for the U. S. Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, California, to replenish the ammunition expended in the gunnery exercises of 6 January. Returning to Long Beach the same day, O'BRIEN was underway again on 15 January for independent ship exercises in the Southern California Operation Areas. After conducting Drone Anti-submarine Helicopter flight operations, anti-submarine warfare training, and a 25 knot economy trial, O'BRIEN returned to Long Beach on 17 January for an extended upkeep period in her homeport.

O'BRIEN was underway the morning of 4 February for the one hour trip to the U. S. Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach. After on-loading additional ammunition she returned to Long Beach that afternoon.

One week later on 11 February, O'BRIEN departed Long Beach enroute to a rendezvous with USS ORISKANY (CVA-34). After joining Task Group 17.5, O'BRIEN planeguarded for ORISKANY during flight operations in the Southern and Northern California Operation Areas.

[1969]

Enclosure (2)

Returning to Long Beach on 19 February, O'BRIEN once again made the one day trip to the U. S. Naval Weapons Station at Seal Beach for on-loading of ammunition on 20 February.

On 25 February 1969, the officers and crew of O'BRIEN celebrated the 25th birthday of their ship.

The pace of local operations was broken on 4 March when O'BRIEN departed Long Beach for the Middle Pacific in company with USS ALBERT DAVID (DE-1050) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked) and USS CUNNINGHAM (DD-752). Upon arrival in the Hawaiian Operation Areas, O'BRIEN and the other two units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE operated as Task Group 32.6, participating in HOLDEX 1-69.

Upon completion of the exercise on 14 March, the Task Group entered Pearl Harbor for a weekend of rest and relaxation.

On 17 March, O'BRIEN and CUNNINGHAM were underway enroute to the Eastern Pacific and Long Beach with Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked in O'BRIEN. The two units arrived in their homeport on 23 March, conducting independent and mutual ship exercises enroute.

O'BRIEN spent 25 March transiting to the U. S. Naval Weapons Station in Seal Beach, and off-loading ammunition in preparation for an impending shipyard availability.

On 26 March, O'BRIEN was shifted from her berth at the U. S. Naval Station, Long Beach, to the floating drydock AFDL-42, Long Beach Naval Shipyard, for the commencement of a three week restricted availability period.

O'BRIEN departed the drydock and was shifted to a U. S. Naval Station berth in Long Beach on 19 April. On 23 April, O'BRIEN was underway for the Southern California Operation Areas for engineering sea trials and sonar noise level tests. She returned that evening and was inport Long Beach until 25 April when O'BRIEN spent the day at U. S. Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, on-loading ammunition.

O'BRIEN departed Long Beach on 28 April with two other units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE, USS RAMSEY (DEG-2) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked) and USS CUNNINGHAM (DD-752), for type training in the Sothern and Northern California Operation Areas. Enroute to San Francisco, the units participated in Convoy Exercise 2-69 and O'BRIEN conducted an engineering economy trial.

O'BRIEN, RAMSEY, and CUNNINGHAM passed under the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco Bay on 2 May, mooring at Treasure Island just below the San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge. After three days of rest and relaxation, the three ships were underway once again for type training in the Northern and Southern California Operation Areas.

Prior to entering Long Beach Harbor on 10 May, O'BRIEN participated in various exercises with the RAMSEY and CUNNINGHAM including anti-submarine warfare training with USS PERMIT (SSN-594). O'BRIEN was detached 9 May to planeguard for USS HANCOCK (CVA-19).

After a ten day upkeep period, O'BRIEN departed Long Beach for the Southern California Operation Areas on 20 May to planeguard for USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20), returning to port on 23 May. During this short three day underway period, O'BRIEN was able to complete a large number of communications, gunnery and anti-submarine warfare training exercises.

On 9 June, O'BRIEN embarked 35 guests from the Long Beach Independent Businessman's Association for an orientation cruise enroute to San Diego. In company with USS RAMSEY (DEG-2), the two ships conducted various exercises before mooring at the U. S. Naval Station, San Diego, California.

From 9 June to 12 June, O'BRIEN underwent considerable repair and maintenance work performed by a DATC Team assigned to the ship. On 13 June, O'BRIEN departed San Diego, mooring in Long Beach later that afternoon.

Three days later on 16 June, O'BRIEN was again underway, enroute to the Southern California Operation Areas and planeguard duties for USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64). O'BRIEN returned to Long Beach on 20 June from the underway period which included numerous communications exercises, a synthetic anti-aircraft warfare exercise, an Anti-Ship Cruise Missile Internal procedures drill, damage control drills, Drone Anti-submarine Helicopter flight operations, and an engineering economy trial.

On 23 June, O'BRIEN departed Long Beach enroute for the Southern California Operation Areas. Prior to returning to port on 26 June, O'BRIEN conducted naval gunfire support exercises in the vicinity of San Clemente Island. In addition O'BRIEN underwent a range calibration, gunnery exercises, and engineering casualty control drills which were needed to satisfy various training requirements.

Shortly after returning to Long Beach, another aircraft carrier required the services of O'BRIEN and the ship was underway 30 June enroute to the Southern California Operation Areas. O'BRIEN rendezvoused with USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) for operations, planeguard and general training with Task Group 17.2.

O'BRIEN returned to Long Beach on 3 July for an extended inport stay through 30 July except for a ULM-4 Test Range Calibration conducted 11 July of the California coast in the vicinity of Seal Beach.

On 16 July, O'BRIEN commenced a two week tender availability with USS ISLE ROYALE (AD-29).

At the conclusion of the upkeep period, O'BRIEN was underway on 30 July for Hunter-Killer Anti-submarine Warfare Exercise 7-69 in the Southern California Operation Areas with Task Group 14.2 (Anti-submarine Warfare Group 3) consisting of USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20) (Commander, Anti-submarine Warfare Group 3 embarked), USS ALBERT DAVID (DE-1050) (Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked), and O'BRIEN. USS RAMSEY (DEG-2) joined 1 August after ALBERT DAVID was detached. O'BRIEN participated in extensive anti-submarine warfare operations as well as planeguarding for the BENNINGTON during flight operations. The entire task group participated in a Penetration Exercise prior to returning to Long Beach on 7 August.

On 21 August, O'BRIEN was enroute for the Southern California Operation Areas to participate in Exercise BEEFMASTER, a simulation of wartime operations in the South China Sea at Yankee Station. In company the first day was USS BENNER (DD-807). A Penetration Exercise was conducted with Task Force 170 on 21 August. During the ensuing six days, O'BRIEN joined with Task Group 177.5 (USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43)) for flight operations and Task Unit 177.1.2 with USS ALBERT DAVID (DE-1050) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked) for Sea Dragon Operations. On 27 August prior to returning to Long Beach, Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE, his staff, and inspectors from the ALBERT DAVID embarked and conducted O'BRIEN's Operational Readiness Inspection.

O'BRIEN experienced ten well-deserved days inport before getting underway on 8 September for Comprehensive Training Unit Exercise 26-69 in the Southern California Operation Areas. Participating ships included USS HORNE (DGL-30) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-ONE embarked) and several units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE. This was the last extended underway period in the Eastern Pacific for O'BRIEN prior to her Western Pacific deployment.

O'BRIEN returned to Long Beach on 10 September and made preparations for a number of forthcoming inspections required before deployment. On 15 September, O'BRIEN underwent her Administrative/Pre-deployment Inspection. Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE, arrived on board 16 September to conduct O'BRIEN's Personnel, Material, and Locker Inspections. The Pre-deployment Boiler Inspection and Annual Supply Inspections were conducted on 22 September.

O'BRIEN departed Long Beach on 25 September to conduct ULM-4 Test Range Calibrations off Seal Beach. She returned to port the same day.

On 29 September, O'BRIEN again conducted ULM-4 Test Range Calibrations and upon completion, moored at the U. S. Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, for on-loading ammunition. O'BRIEN spent the night at Seal Beach, returning to Long Beach the following day on 30 September.

The Family Day Cruise this year was held five days prior to our deployment. Several units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE participated in the event held on 3 October, conducting squadron tactics, underway transfers, and Drone Anti-submarine Helicopter flight operations for the dependents and friends of the crew.

On 8 October 1969, O'BRIEN, as a member of Task Unit 15.8.4 (Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE) composed of USS ALBERT DAVID (DE-1050) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked), USS RAMSEY (DEG-2), USS CUNNINGHAM (DD-752), USS EVERSOLE (DD-789), and USS BENNER (DD-807), departed Long Beach, California, and continental United States for deployment to the Western Pacific. O'BRIEN was underway for the Western Pacific in a CI training and operational status, one of the few ships on the West Coast to accomplish this feat in recent years.

O'BRIEN arrived in the Hawaiian Operation Areas (Middle Pacific) enroute to Pearl Harbor and participated in Anti-submarine Warfare Exercise 1-69 with Task Group 30.2 consisting of HMAS DERWENT (F-22) and the units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE comprising Task Unit 15.8.4. Upon the completion of the exercise, O'BRIEN moored at Pearl Harbor on 18 October for three days of rest and relaxation.

On 21 October, O'BRIEN was underway to continue her transit with Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE across the Pacific to the Western Pacific. The Task Unit made a brief stop for fuel on 24 October at Midway Island.

On 28 October, O'BRIEN and the transiting units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE chopped from the U. S. FIRST Fleet to the U. S. SEVENTH Fleet. Task Unit 15.8.4 was dissolved and redesignated Task Unit 70.0.6 in accordance with U. S. SEVENTH Fleet organization.

After twenty-three days in transit, O'BRIEN and the units of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE entered Yokosuka, Japan, on 31 October. Six days later, O'BRIEN was underway on 6 November enroute for Sasebo, Japan, with USS RAMSEY (DEG-2) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked).

After a brief stop for fuel on 8 November, O'BRIEN and RAMSEY departed Sasebo, enroute to the Okinawa Operation Areas for general training and anti submarine warfare exercises with Task Group 71.4 consisting of USS HANCOCK (CVA-19), USS MANSFIELD (DD-728), and USS COCHRANE (DDG-21) (Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-FIVE embarked), USS WADDELL (DDG-29) (Commander, Destroyer Division THIRTY-TWO embarked), and USS BUCKLEY (DD-808) joined the Task Group upon arrival in the Okinawa area. After one week of operations, the task group departed the area and headed north, arriving in Sasebo on 15 November. Upon arrival O'BRIEN commenced a five day upkeep period with USS AJAX (AR-6).

On 20 November, O'BRIEN departed Sasebo enroute for the Okinawa Operation Areas and rendezvoused with Task Group 71.5 consisting of USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43), USS HOEL (DDG-13) (Commander, Destroyer Division TWELVE embarked), USS BLUE (DD-744), USS DEHAVEN (DD-727), and USS COLLETT (DD-730).

Three days later on 23 November, O'BRIEN returned to Sasebo with Task Group 71.5 for a ten day upkeep period with USS AJAX (AR-6).

On 3 December, O'BRIEN was underway from Sasebo with Task Group 71.5. She was detached on 4 December to proceed independently to Yankee Station for operations in the Gulf of Tonkin. Except for a brief stop for fuel on 6 December at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, this underway period was to last for 41 days with O'BRIEN participating in a multitude of operations ranging from planeguarding to naval gunfire support.

O'BRIEN rendezvoused on Yankee Station, 8 December, with Task Group 77.4 consisting of USS HANCOCK (CVA-19) and USS HOLLISTER (DD-788). O'BRIEN'S primary duty was planeguarding for the aircraft carrier during flight operations.

On 16 December, O'BRIEN was detached and proceeded independently to assume Naval Gunfire Support duties in the II CORPS area, Republic of Vietnam. Enroute, O'BRIEN made a brief stop for cargo in Da Nang. While at anchor, a playground swing set was off-loaded and delivered to U. S. Naval Support Activities, Da Nang, for further transfer as Project HANDCLASP material.

O'BRIEN commenced her II CORPS Naval Gunfire Support assignment in the vicinity of Tuy Hoa. During these duties which were to last through the remainder of 1969, O'BRIEN was attached to Task Unit 70.8.9 (Naval Gunfire Support Unit) and Task Unit 77.1.2 (Surface Action Unit - SEA DRAGON Operations).

From 20 to 23 December, O'BRIEN provided naval gunfire support in the vicinity of Qui Nhon.

On 24 December, O'BRIEN was directed to proceed to the vicinity of a point approximately 15 miles north of Nia Trang. A 24-hour Christmas ceasefire was observed by American military forces from 1800, 24 December to 1800, 25 December. O'BRIEN took advantage of this lull by spending Christmas Day at anchor in Able de Van Fong. A vigil was maintained on communication circuits in the event that gunfire support would be required to repulse an enemy well known to violate truce periods.

O'BRIEN was repositioned again on 28 December and returned to the vicinity of Tuy Hoa for Naval Gunfire Support.

On 31 December, O'BRIEN proceeded to a point in the northern most portion of the II CORPS area where she was located on New Year's Eve.