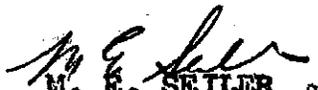


ORIGINAL

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From: Commanding Officer, USS VANCE (DER 387)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A of 31 October 1968
Encl: (1) VANCE History 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a) enclosure (1) is submitted herewith.


M. E. SEILER

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VANCE HISTORY 1968

(1) Brief Chronology

1 - 17 JAN	Holiday leave & upkeep. Change of Command 11 Jan LCDR M. E. SEILER relieved LCDR R. S. SWAN
18 JAN - 2 FEB	Enroute to West Pac
30 JAN	Brief fuel stop Guam
3 FEB - 4 MAR	Taiwan Patrol duties
4 MAR - 10 MAR	Tender availability, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
11 MAR - 12 MAR	Enroute to Market Time
13 MAR - 10 APR	Market Time operations
11 - 12 APR	Enroute to Hong Kong
13 - 18 APR	Hong Kong R&R visit
19 - 20 APR	Enroute Subic Bay
21 APR - 5 MAY	Upkeep Subic Bay
6 - 7 MAY	Enroute Market Time
8 MAY - 10 JUN	Market Time operations
11 - 12 JUN	Enroute Kaohsiung, Taiwan
13 - 25 JUN	Taiwan Patrol duties
26 - 27 JUN	Inport Kaohsiung
28 JUN - 5 JUL	Taiwan Patrol duties
6 - 8 JUL	Enroute Market Time
9 JUL - 10 AUG	Market Time operations
10 - 11 AUG	Enroute Subic Bay
12 - 14 AUG	Inport Subic Bay
15 - 17 AUG	Enroute Guam via San Bernardino Straits
17 AUG	Brief fuel stop Guam
17 - 29 AUG	Enroute Pearl Harbor
29 AUG - 12 SEP	Pearl Harbor, leave and upkeep

13 - 27 SEP	TAV, USS BRYCE CANYON
27 SEP - 4 OCT	RAV B-20 Pearl Harbor
4 OCT - 25 OCT	Drydock, Marine Railway Number 2, Pearl Harbor
25 OCT - 23 NOV	RAV B-22 Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard
14 NOV	Dock Trials
19 NOV	Sea Trials
21 NOV	Prepare for overseas movement inspection
22 NOV	Training Readiness Evaluation
24 NOV - 1 DEC	ISE
2 DEC - 19 DEC	REFTRA
19 DEC - 26 DEC	Christmas leave period
27 DEC - 31 DEC	Enroute West Pac

2) Basic Narrative

The first week of January was a busy one for all hands aboard VANCE as decks were waxed and brass polished to have her "Ship-Shape" for the big change of command inspection and ceremonies on 11 January. On the big day all hands turned out in full dress uniforms to see LCDR M. E. SEILER take command from outgoing skipper, LCDR R. S. SWAN.

We deployed for West Pac on 18 January. New hands aboard were quickly initiated to the comforts of the Destroyer Navy when we hit high winds and heavy seas enroute to Guam for our first fueling stop; and even the "Old Salts" got a fresh taste of salt water as we set the sea and anchor detail pulling into Apra Harbor--twenty foot swells were breaking over the fore-castle! A few short hours of hard work in Guam bringing aboard stores and fuel, and VANCE was underway once more. On 2 February we arrived in Kaohsiung for the first liberty in 19 days and 4,652 miles. A good time was had by all.

During February VANCE was assigned duties with the Taiwan Defense Command. It was our job to patrol the notoriously rough Taiwan Straits between the Republic of China and the Chinese Communist held mainland. On 13 February VANCE took time off to make a good will visit to Hualien, R.O.C., a city of some 80,000 people seldom visited by U.S. ships. Our visit coincided with celebrations of the Chinese New Year and the ship was met by many dignitaries in the vicinity and an authentic Chinese dragon busily scaring off evil spirits.

VANCE reciprocated in kind by entertaining the Chinese with a Western wonder--the motion picture. For each of the three nights we were in Hualein our "I.C. Men" showed American movies against the side of the ship and hundreds of children turned out for the free show. Each day it was "Open House" aboard VANCE and more than 1500 visitors were given a tour of our ship. While we were in Hualien, a local tax office team challenged the VANCE basketball team to a game, and, embarrassing as it is to report they murdered us! On 15 February we left our new found friends in Hualien and resumed Taiwan Patrol until 4 March when we were relieved by USS LOWE (DER 325).

From 4 to 10 March we were alongside the repair ship USS HECTOR for an upkeep period in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and then again we were underway. We arrived in Da Nang, Viet Nam on 13 March to assume Market Time Patrol duties as Commander Task Unit 115.1.1 in Area One. It was our duty to serve with the Navy's counter-infiltration force in Viet Nam, and to assist the Vietnamese Navy in patrolling the 1000 mile coastline between the 17th parallel and Phu Quoc near the Cambodian border, in doing this we searched over 1000 junks. On 26 March VANCE participated in a successful search and rescue mission along with a number of PCF's, two helicopter pilots were rescued. On 11 April VANCE was relieved by USS FORSTER (DER 334), and VANCE sailors (combat pay in hand) set out for Hong Kong and some well deserved rest and recreation.

We arrived in Hong Kong on 13 April and spent a week of liberty in the world's most cosmopolitan city. We dined in floating restaurants, shopped in Chinese shops, and saw the sights from Victoria Peak. The entire cruise can't be spent on R & R however, so on April we shoved off for Subic Bay and another upkeep period to get ready for more Viet Nam duty.

During our upkeep period in Subic Bay, we were chosen by Commander Escort Squadron Seven to host a change of command. Commander MURPHY relieved Commander MILLIGAN aboard VANCE in spite of an ill timed Philippino monsoon. Toward the end of our upkeep period, the VANCE welfare and recreation fund treated the crew to a ship's party on Grande Island. It was a day in the sun for us all, and we enjoyed sports from baseball to beer chugging until evening. On 6 May we were off to Viet Nam again.

We entered Qui Nhon Harbor to relieve the USS CAMPBELL as CTU 115.2.1 for more market time Ops on 8 May. While in Qui Nhon, we discovered that the "Save the Children War Orphan's Hospital" was in sore need of some yard work and painting. It was arranged for a working party of VANCE sailors to be ferried into Qui Nhon each day to remedy the situation. We may be amateurs at Yard Work, but when it comes to painting-tin can sailors know their stuff! On 10 June we welcomed our relief, USS KOINER (DER 331), and set out once more for Taiwan.

VANCE arrived in Kaohsiung on 13 June and relieved USS FORSTER (DER 334) on Taiwan Patrol, and on the seventeenth we stopped in Keelung, Taiwan for supplies. While in Keelung the crew was privileged to entertain thirty children between the ages of seven and thirteen from the Ri-Ning orphanage. The kids were treated to a tour of the ship, and later on, to ice cream and cookies on the VANCE mess decks. Some of them took home priceless treasures in the form of polaroid snapshots taken by VANCE sailors. VANCE also took home a prize of her own. We received seven kudos for our Elint collection and reporting during this patrol.

During our patrol from 24 - 30 June VANCE participated in ASW exercises with USS ROCK AGSS274. These included single ship attacks in the Taiwan Straits as well as coordinated training sessions at the ASW Attack Trainer in Tsoying, Taiwan. On 1 July the VANCE radio gang received word of a typhoon approaching. For four days we ran from the storm. Finally it abated and VANCE returned to Kaohsiung to be relieved by USS WILHOITE (DER 397). The crew had its sights set on a scheduled stop in Japan, but that was not to be as our help was needed in Vietnamese waters again. The ship left Kaohsiung for Market Time Area One on the sixth of July, not to visit a port again for forty days and nights.

On 9 July VANCE relieved the Coast Guard Cutter CAMPBELL on Market Time Ops. Three days later we bid good bye to our shipmate and Executive Officer, LCDR G. W. CROWNINSHIELD, and welcomed aboard a new XO, LT W. J. FULTON. Twice during this patrol we were able to help our forces ashore with some gunfire support.

On 15 July and on 19 July our guns opened up in support of our troops ashore. They proved to be accurate as we were able to damage or destroy all of our targets.

In our capacity as "Mother Ship" to the PCF's and WPB's, we refueled and resupplied them 44 times. On 30 August all hands welcomed the Coast Guard Cutter OWASCO as our relief and VANCE set out for home.

On 15 August VANCE made a stop in Subic Bay to give the crew time to spend the money they saved on Market Time Patrol. After buying presents and souvenirs for friends and family at home the VANCE crew sailed the ship through the San Bernardino Straits toward Pearl Harbor. The fifteen days enroute to Pearl gave VANCE an opportunity for training again, and we took advantage of it with exercises with our sister ship, FORSTER. Then on 23 August we received word of an aircraft in trouble in our area. For four tense hours we reversed course and steamed for her position but thankfully the crippled plane made Wake Island under her own power and we were able to turn for Pearl once more.

At 0930 on 29 August VANCE was home. Moored starboard side to Pier Bravo 28, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. For two weeks the crew enjoyed early liberty and we began taking our leave in rotation. Ours was a short rest, however, for on 13 September it was time to start getting the ship ready for another Westpac deployment.

First item on the road to overhaul was a two week Tender Availability with USS BRYCE CANYON (AD 36) moored at Ford Island. On 30 September the ship commenced a restricted availability at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and on 4 October moved to drydock at Marine Railway Number Two to stay until 25 October. During this period we were living amidst dust and confusion as Pearl

Harbor yardworkers began hammering on the ship's sides at seven every morning. All was not work, though, as we hosted the Canadian Destroyer MACKENZIE. Her time in Pearl Harbor October 11 - 17 was spiced by a week of enlisted and officer get togethers and highlighted by a softball game and picnic held on 16 October. During this period we also hosted the British Destroyer Escort CAPRICE.

On the afternoon of 25 October VANCE slid off the keel blocks and into the sea. Moored finally at Berth B-22 we spent three weeks painting, overhauling and preparing for dock trials.

On 14 November VANCE's engines, overhauls complete, sprung to life for the first time since 13 September. The dock trials were successful. On 19 November VANCE conducted successful sea trials which were followed by a brief week of ISE before commencing Refresher Training. In between VANCE received her POM and TRE inspections on 21 and 22 November respectively. On 2 December VANCE commenced three weeks of rigorous Refresher Training. On 19 December we passed our final Battle Problem and were pronounced fully ready to deploy. After a ship's party on 20 December and a few days of well earned Christmas rest and celebration, VANCE sailors again said goodbye to their families and friends to return to Westpac and their job of patrolling the seas in defense of the Free World.