

1968

U.S.S. YORKTOWN (CVS-10)  
FLEET POST OFFICE  
NEW YORK 09501

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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
CVS-10: 32:JCC:jee  
5750  
SER: 0 0 4

28 FEB 1969

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From: Commanding Officer, USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History of USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10), OPNAV Report 5750.1, for period 1 January 1968 to 31 December 1968; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A  
(b) CO, USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10) ltr CVS-10/5750 32:JCC:wdr ser 243 of 8 February 1969 (NOTAL)

Encl: (1) Chronology of Events  
(2) Basic Narrative  
(3) Special Topics  
(4) Documentary Annex

*missing (?)*

1. In accordance with reference (a), YORKTOWN's Command History for 1968 is forwarded as enclosures (1) through (4).
2. Reference (b) provided detailed documentation to the Office of Naval History on APOLLO 8 operations.

*J. G. FIFIELD*  
J. G. FIFIELD

Copy to: (less enclosure (4))  
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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	
28 DEC 67	Departed Long Beach/Arrived San Diego/Embarked Air Group/Departed San Diego for Hawaii
28 DEC 67 - 13 JAN 68	Enroute Pearl Harbor - ORE and Special Operations.
13 JAN 68 - 19 JAN 68	In-Port Pearl Harbor
19 JAN 68 - 31 JAN 68	Enroute WESTPAC
31 JAN 68 - 1 MAR 68	Surface Subsurface Surveillance Operations (SSSC), Sea of Japan (Operation FORMATION STAR)
1 MAR 68	Departed Sea of Japan/Arrived Sasebo/Departed Sasebo for Subic Bay
1 MAR 68 - 4 MAR 68	Enroute Subic Bay
4 MAR 68 - 12 MAR 68	In-Port Subic Bay
12 MAR 68 - 14 MAR 68	Enroute Yankee Station
14 MAR 68 - 7 APR 68	Yankee Station - SSSC, Naval Gunfire Spotting (Sea Dragon), SAR, ASW Training and COD/Helo Logistic operations in support of TF 77
7 APR 68 - 12 APR 68	Enroute Yokosuka
12 APR 68 - 21 APR 68	In-Port Yokosuka
21 APR 68 - 25 APR 68	Enroute Hong Kong
25 APR 68 - 30 APR 68	In-Port Hong Kong
30 APR 68 - 4 MAY 68	Enroute Yankee Station
4 MAY 68 - 25 MAY 68	Yankee Station - SSSC, Naval Gunfire Spotting (Sea Dragon), SAR, ASW Training, and COD/Helo Logistic operations in support of TF 77
25 MAY 68 - 29 MAY 68	Enroute Singapore
29 MAY 68 - 3 JUN 68	In-Port Singapore
3 JUN 68 - 6 JUN 68	Enroute Yankee Station

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6 JUN 68 - 16 JUN 68	Yankee Station - SSSC, Naval Gunfire Spotting (Sea Dragon), SAR, ASW Training, and COD/Helo Logistic operations in support of TF 77
16 JUN 68 - 19 JUN 68	Enroute Sasebo
19 JUN 68 - 21 JUN 68	In-Port Sasebo/Turnover with USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20)
21 JUN 68 - 5 JUL 68	Enroute CONUS
5 JUL 68	Arrived San Diego/Debarked Air Group/Departed San Diego/Arrived Long Beach
5 JUL 68 - 11 OCT 68	RAV Long Beach and Sea Trials
11 OCT 68 - 25 OCT 68	Refresher Training, San Diego
25 OCT 68 - 3 NOV 68	In-Port Long Beach
3 NOV 68 - 8 NOV 68	CARQUALS SOCAL OPAREAS
8 NOV 68 - 17 NOV 68	In-Port Long Beach
18 NOV 68 - 22 NOV 68	CARQUALS SOCAL OPAREAS
22 NOV 68 - 30 NOV 68	In-Port Long Beach
30 NOV 68 - 4 DEC 68	TORA, TORA, TORA, Operations SOCAL OPAREAS San Diego
5 DEC 68 - 7 JAN 69	APOLLO 8 Operations

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BASIC NARRATIVE

1. (U) Command Organization and Relations:

a. Captain William L. BENNETT, Jr. served as Commanding Officer, USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10) from 20 July 1967 to 26 July 1968. Captain John G. FIFIELD relieved Captain BENNETT on 26 July while YORKTOWN was in Long Beach, California.

b. YORKTOWN was homeported in Long Beach, California until 1 October 1968 when her homeport was changed to Norfolk, Virginia.

c. The aircraft carrier is the key member of the Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) Hunter-Killer Team. It is the Command Post of the Hunter-Killer Team which includes: the carrier, with ASW Commander embarked as the Task Group Commander; four to eight destroyers, with a Destroyer Division Commander embarked as Screen Commander; and a Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group - consisting of two S-2E 'Tracker' squadrons, one helicopter squadron, and a detachment of three airborne early warning equipped E-1Bs.

(1) The aircraft carrier is a high speed base that can move from one troubled sea lane to another as needed, and on very short notice. It serves as the logistics center for units of the ASW Team, and as a Command Post from which operations of the Hunter-Killer Team are coordinated and by the Task Group Commander.

(2) To permit timely, effective, and efficient employment of the elements of the Task Group, the aircraft carrier provides a wide variety of surface and air search radars, high speed communications equipment, electronic counter-measure devices, and electronic navigational equipment.

d. From 28 December 1967 to 5 July 1968, COMASWGRU 1 was embarked in USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10). YORKTOWN normally has assigned Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group Fifty-five (CVSG-55) which consisted of Anti-submarine Squadrons 23 and 25, and Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 4, with a detachment from Fleet Early Warning Squadron 111.

2. (C) COMASWGRU One in YORKTOWN with COMDESRON 31 in BRADLEY with BROOKE, BOLE, CRAIG, TAUSSIG, and THOMAS departed CONUS 28 December 1967. After participating in an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) in Hawaiian waters, the task group arrived in Pearl Harbor on 13 January 1968. After a six day in-port period, the task group sailed for WESTPAC on 19 January. While COMASWGRU 1 was enroute to WESTPAC, the USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) was seized by North Korea. ASWGRU 1 chopped to COMSEVENTHFLT on 26 January and was ordered directly to the Sea of Japan to support U.S. Naval Forces positioned there in response to the PUEBLO incident (Operation FORMATION STAR).

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Arriving in the Sea of Japan on 31 January, COMASWGRU 1 assumed duties as Surface Subsurface Surveillance Coordinator (SSSC). YORKTOWN commenced around-the-clock flight operations that continued until 1 March. During this 30 day period of operations in a cold-weather environment, there was only one period of 9 hours when flight operations were suspended due to weather.

Departing the Sea of Japan on 1 March, YORKTOWN proceeded to Subic Bay, R.P. for an 8 day in-port period from 4 to 12 March and then sailed for Yankee Station. After arriving Yankee Station on 14 March COMASWGRU One assumed SSSC as CTG 77.9. YORKTOWN and her air group commenced SSSC, Naval Gunfire Spotting (Sea Dragon), ASW Training, Logistic Support/Utility and SAR operations on Yankee Station.

YORKTOWN departed Yankee Station on 7 April and arrived in Yokosuka, Japan for a 9 day upkeep period 12 to 21 April which was followed by a five day visit to Hong Kong. From 4 to 25 May the task group assumed the same tasks on Yankee Station in support of Task Force 77 which it had performed during its first line period. Departing on 25 May, YORKTOWN spent 5 days in Singapore 29 May to 3 June. This was followed by a third period on Yankee Station 6 - 16 June. The task group then transited to Sasebo, Japan, arriving 19 June. The task group departed Sasebo 21 June enroute CONUS after being relieved by COMASWGRU 3 in USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20), and arrived CONUS on 5 July.

3. (C) From 5 July to 30 September YORKTOWN underwent extensive upkeep and repair at Long Beach Naval Shipyard, Long Beach, California. On 14 August it was announced that YORKTOWN would be transferred to the Atlantic Fleet, however the date of transfer was not known. After completing sea trails and an in-port period YORKTOWN underwent refresher training at San Diego, California, from 11 October to 25 October 1968, completing refresher training YORKTOWN provided the ready deck for November to carrier qualify PACFLT A-4s and S-2s. In November YORKTOWN was told she would act as Prime Pacific recovery ship for the APOLLO 8 mission to be launched in December 1968. From 30 November to 4 December YORKTOWN was used to recreate the Japanese carrier AKAI, her Air Group of ZEKE's, VAL's, and BETTY's, and reenacted the Pearl Harbor attack for the film "TORA, TORA, TORA." On 5 December YORKTOWN departed San Diego for Pearl Harbor to participate in the first circumlunar mission (APOLLO 8) as the prime recovery ship. She arrived Pearl Harbor on 10 December and departed for her recovery station on 18 December after extensive recovery training. YORKTOWN arrived on station for launch of APOLLO 8 on 21 December and remained on station until the APOLLO 8 recovery was made on 27 December. On 29 December YORKTOWN arrived in Pearl Harbor where she remained in-port until the New Year commenced.

t. Three days were spent off the coast of Southern California for the filming of a sequence for the movie "TORA, TORA, TORA." The famed World War II "Fighting Lady" played an ironic role in the movie; portraying a Japanese carrier leading the infamous December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor.

u. Eight Honolulu news media representatives observed practice exercises with a boilerplate, a replica of the APOLLO 8 space capsule, off Hawaii in December as the YORKTOWN trained for the actual recovery. Five journalists, four photographers, one artist and two television news commentators and 60 T.V. and radio technicians were embarked aboard the "Fighting Lady" to tell the world about "APOLLO 8" recovery. Publicity highlights included the actual recovery, the Presidential call to the astronauts and a cake cutting ceremony.

15. Awards and Commendations. During 1968 the USS YORKTOWN was awarded the Commander Seventh Fleet Commendation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Group Achievement Award.

a. The Commander Seventh Fleet Commendation reads:

"FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE AND SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE WHILE SERVING IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION FORMATION STAR IN THE SEA OF JAPAN AND COMBAT OPERATIONS AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM FROM 31 JANUARY to 16 JUNE 1968. DURING THIS PERIOD, USS YORKTOWN PROVIDED CONTINUOUS SURFACE AND SUB-SURFACE SURVEILLANCE IN AN OUTSTANDING MANNER AND PROVIDED ANTI-SUBMARINE PROTECTION VITAL TO FORCES DURING THE PUEBLO CRISIS. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED DESPITE ADVERSE AND OFTEN HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS IN A DISPLAY OF DEDICATED AND EXPERT SEAMANSHIP. IN THE TONKIN GULF, YORKTOWN PROVIDED SURVEILLANCE SUPPORT, NAVAL GUNFIRE SPOTTING, LOGISTIC AND SEARCH AND RESCUE SUPPORT IN AN AGGRESSIVE AND HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL MANNER. YORKTOWN'S EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE, EXCEPTIONAL STATE OF READINESS AND SINCERE DEVOTION TO DUTY WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY."

b. On 15 January 1969 at the NASA Manned Space Flight Center in Houston, Texas, Captain John G. FIFIELD received for the officers and men of the USS YORKTOWN and her embarked air group the NASA Group Achievement Award for their role as primary recovery force, for the circumlunar mission, APOLLO 8. The citation reads:

"IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN THE RECOVERY OF THE APOLLO 8 ASTRONAUTS AND SPACECRAFT, WHICH WAS THE FINAL FLAWLESS OPERATION CLIMAXING THE SUCCESS OF THE FIRST MANNED LUNAR ORBIT MISSION."

c. Document Annex 10 includes copies of the Commander Seventh Fleet Commendation and the jacket letter that was placed in the file of each member of YORKTOWN's crew upon receipt of the NASA Group Achievement Award.