

USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13)

FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 09501

LPD13/16:bcb
5750
Ser 76
28 FEB 1974

From: Commanding Officer, USS NASHVILLE (LPD13)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy
Yard, Washington, D.C. 20390

Subj: USS NASHVILLE (LPD13) Command History 1973

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Command History 1973
(2) Ten (10) "NASHVILLE NARRATIVES" (Command News-
letters)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2)
are forwarded.



G. A. CHURCH

BASIC HISTORY

1. Command Organization

a. The USS NASHVILLE (LPD13) remained in Amphibious Squadron SIX, commanded by Captain D. MASON WELLS, USN, for all of 1973. Except for a brief period from 20 February to 10 April NASHVILLE served as flagship.

b. The Commanding Officer of the USS NASHVILLE from 1 January 1973 until 21 February 1973 was Captain Thomas H. REPLOGLE, USN. He was relieved in a ceremony on board 21 February by Captain George A. CHURCH, USN.

2. Summary of Operations

a. CHRONOLOGY

1-11 January	Inport Norfolk, Virginia
12 January	Underway for Agile Jouster 1973
20-25 January	Port Visit San Juan, P.R.
29-31 January	Port Visit Fort-de-France, Martinique
31 January-2 February	Port Visit Bridgetown, Barbados
6-8 February	Port Visit Fredriksted, St. Croix
12-15 February	Port Visit Port Everglades, Florida
16-21 February	Inport Norfolk
21 February	Captain Thomas H. REPLOGLE, USN relieved by Captain George A. CHURCH, USN as Commanding Officer
22 February	Underway for New Orleans, Louisiana via Pensacola, Florida
26-27 February	Inport Pensacola; delivered aircraft for aviation museum
1-8 March	Inport New Orleans as Navy's Mardi Gras representative
12-19 March	Inport Norfolk
20-24 March	Underway Aloud Papa, Onslow Bay, North Carolina

24-26 March	Inport Norfolk
27 March-9 April	Exotic Dancer VI, Onslow Bay, North Carolina. Flagship for RADM W. M. A. GREENE, USN, COMNAVINSWARLANT
10-29 April	Inport Norfolk
30 April-4 May	Type Training, Onslow Bay, North Carolina
5 May-6 June	Inport Norfolk, preparation for Overseas Movement period
7-21 June	North Atlantic Transit, SEACONEX
21-22 June	Turnover from COMPHIBRON TWO, Rota, Spain
23-24 June	Amphibious Operations, Carboneras, Spain
25-28 June	Port Visit, Malaga, Spain
3-11 July	Amphibious Operations, Timbakion, Crete
14-18 July	Port Visit Venice, Italy
18-21 July	Port Visit Trieste, Italy
25-27 July	Port Visit Naples, Italy
30 July-1 August	Offload U. S. Marines for ashore training at Timbakion, Crete
2-10 August	Port Visit Athens, Greece
11-14 August	Timbakion, Crete training anchor- age; reembark U. S. Marines
16-18 August	Port Visit Corfu, Greece
20-27 August	Amphibious Exercises, Porto Scudo, Sardinia
30 August-14 September	Port Visit Barcelona, Spain
19 September-5 October	NATO Operation; DEEP FURROW

6-8 October	Port Visit Athens, Greece
9-24 October	Training Anchorage Soudha Bay, Crete
25 October-3 November	Operations Underway South of Crete
4-8 November	Training Anchorage Soudha Bay, Crete
9-14 November	Amphibious Operations, Gythion, Greece
15-17 November	Operations Underway South of Crete
18-21 November	Training Anchorage Soudha Bay, Crete
23-26 November	Port Visit Rhodes, Greece
28 November-2 December	Training Anchorage, Turnover to PHIBRON TWO, Soudha Bay, Crete
3-5 December	Port Visit Athens, Greece
9-10 December	Port Visit (Desnail); Rota, Spain
19 December	Offload of USMC personnel and equipment at Morehead City, North Carolina
20 December-31 December	Inport Norfolk, Virginia

b.

NARRATIVE

The USS NASHVILLE (LPD13) began 1973 with Exercise Agile Joust, the "administrative lift" of U. S. Marines and their equipment from Morehead City, N. C. to Vieques, Puerto Rico to conduct ashore training. Agile Joust also allowed the ship to participate in Springboard 1973 and take advantage of opportunities to sharpen gunnery, tactical and amphibious skills. The Caribbean operations allowed ample time for liberty; San Juan, Fort-de-France, Martinique, Bridgetown, Barbados, Fredricksted, St. Croix, and Port Everglades, Florida provided some of the best liberty the Navy has to offer.

Returning to Norfolk, Virginia on February 16th the ship readied itself for a change of command and two unique assignments. Captain Thomas H. REPLOGLE, USN was relieved by Captain George A. CHURCH, USN as Commanding Officer on 21 February. During the busy week preceding the change of command, the ship

loaded antique aircraft destined for the Navy Air Museum in Pensacola, Florida and prepared for the varied duties of the Navy's representative at New Orleans's Mardi Gras celebration.

NASHVILLE delivered her cargo of antique aircraft to Pensacola, Florida on the 26th and 27th of February and then proceeded to New Orleans where the ship provided "hotel" services to 3,245 military personnel over a week's period and hosted over 4000 visitors. While transiting the Pensacola OPAREA and the Mississippi River NASHVILLE held 486 helicopter qualification landings for both Naval Aviation students and local Marine Reserve pilots; recording the ship's 3000th safe landing during the Mississippi River transit. NASHVILLE grounded briefly on Santa Rosa Island on 26 February while entering Pensacola in a dense fog under the guidance of a civilian pilot.

Returning to Norfolk 12 March, the ship had a brief respite until 20 March when underway for the week-long joint communications exercise, ALOUD PAPA. NASHVILLE's role was accomplished in the Onslow Bay, North Carolina area. The week also provided an opportunity to operate extensively with Marine LVTs and conduct underway launchings, a valuable experience for the upcoming deployment.

March 24-26 provided a brief rest in homeport until underway on 27 March to 9 April for EXOTIC DANCER VI at Onslow Bay, North Carolina. NASHVILLE served as flagship for Commander Naval Inshore Warfare Force Atlantic, RADM W. M. A. GREENE, USN during this exercise and again was faced with challenging opportunities to test the ship's and crew's flexibility. Besides being a command ship, NASHVILLE was called on to salvage a sunken Marine LVTP-7 and refuel MSOs and Patrol Gunboats underway.

April 10-30 was a busy inport period for NASHVILLE. An INSURV inspection certified the ship ready and able for the rigors of the upcoming months while the crew corrected any uncovered minor discrepancies.

Amphibious Squadron SIX first operated as a unit during the period 30 April - 4 May, a short comprehensive week of type training. Although a very short period, the type training at Onslow Bay showed NASHVILLE and her companion ships with considerable "team" expertise for their amphibious functions.

On return from type training NASHVILLE began a Preparation for Overseas Movement period in Norfolk. Loading equipment, provisions, and last minute maintenance prepared NASHVILLE for the Mediterranean deployment to begin 7 June. Just prior to departure, on 4 June, a dependent's cruise provided one of the most enjoyable days of the spring for all families who could attend.

June 7th NASHVILLE was underway via Morehead City, North Carolina for the Mediterranean. On June 8th in Morehead City, U. S. Marines were embarked along with Commander of the 34th Marine Amphibious Unit, Colonel T. J. WILLIS. NASHVILLE would service as his flagship also, throughout the deployment.

In addition to the embarked Marines and their Commanders, NASHVILLE also carried Fleet Composite Operational Readiness Group TWO and Tactical Air Control Squadron 21 making the ship a particularly well suited command post for COMPHIBRON SIX and staff.

While transiting the North Atlantic the ships of Amphibious Squadron SIX participated in SEACONEX, lead by COMCRUDES-FLOT TWO. The squadron ships were basically the "convoyed" during the exercise, but also were assigned electronic and anti-air warfare roles. The exercise was one of the experiments in the Sea Control philosophy; a screen of seven destroyers and a LPH carrying ASW helicopters and Harrier vertical take off jets were to protect the convoy from low density air, sub-surface and surface threats.

Turnover from COMPHIBRON TWO occurred in Rota, Spain on 21 June and the ship headed East for the first squadron amphibious exercise at Carboneras, Spain. Throughout the deployment NASHVILLE's function during the assault phase of these exercises was primarily the underway launch of Marine LVTs; requiring precise shiphandling and expert seamanship and coordination in the ship's well deck and ballast control. An LCVP was lost during this exercise when the 10 ton hook on the B&A Crane parted, dropping the boat into the water.

June 25-28 was the crew's first liberty in the Mediterranean at Malaga, Spain.

The first major amphibious exercise occurred at Timbakion, Crete from 3-11 July. The teamwork of the squadron ships was enhanced by several assault exercises, general offloading and air operations.

Venice, Italy was visited from 14-18 July, then a midday transit of the Northern Adriatic for liberty in Trieste, Italy 18-21 July. During these liberty periods, NASHVILLE's SITE Closed Circuit TV System first went "on the air" as NVTV, bringing the crew 48 hours of news, entertainment and sports weekly. The system was also used effectively by the Commanding Officer in video taped specials keeping the crew informed of the ship's schedule, mission and liberty. Various ship's departments used the system in their training program.

From 25-27 July NASHVILLE visited Naples, Italy before putting Marines ashore 30 July - 1 August at Timbakion, Crete for ashore training. While the Marines were ashore from 2-10 August the ship visited Athens, Greece. Marines were reembarked 11-14 August at Timbakion after high winds hampered much of their training. Liberty at Corfu, Greece from 16-18 August was especially welcome for the embarked Marines after the eight days of wind and dust at Timbakion.

20-27 August was another major exercise for Amphibious Squadron SIX at Porto Scudo, Sardinia. Assaults, general off-load, air operations, direct fire shore bombardment and AAW exercises made the days at Porto Scudo some of the most profitable training during the deployment.

From 30 August - 14 September NASHVILLE visited Barcelona, Spain for an upkeep period highlighted by the dependent's charter flight.

The largest operation of the 1973 Mediterranean Deployment occurred 19 September - 5 October, DEEP FURROW, a NATO exercise with the nations of Greece, Italy, Britain and Turkey. Operating together for the first time, the ships showed considerable skill in tactical maneuvering, underway replenishment, AAW, surface reporting and amphibious warfare. The highlight of the operation for amphibious ships was a assault exercise at Saros Bay, Turkey 25 September. Reembarkation was complicated at Saros Bay by stringent decontamination procedures for all personnel and vehicles that were ashore. Evidence of hoof and mouth disease in Turkey during Autumn forced elaborate wash-down and desnail procedures for all vehicles and personnel ashore.

A brief stop in Athens from 6-8 October was interrupted by news of fighting in the Middle East. 8 October NASHVILLE was underway to a Soudha Bay, Crete training anchorage to await further orders. The port anchor was lost in 250 feet of water when it "ran away" while attempting to anchor. The ship remained in Soudha Bay until 24 October during the general world alert of U. S. Forces under DEFCON 3. NASHVILLE was underway 25 October to a holding area South of Crete to join a large, powerful task force of as many as 17 ships. The days were filled with rigorous hours of AAW drills, tactics, replenishment and refueling to keep all ships in a maximum state of readiness.

With OUTCHOP getting closer, the future grew more uncertain and plans were promulgated on almost a day to day basis. 4-9 November was again spent in Soudha Bay, Crete until clearance was received to conduct amphibious training at Gythion, Greece. The Marines welcomed an opportunity for training ashore after more than 33 days on board.

November 15-18, NASHVILLE was again underway South of Crete. Uncertainty in the schedule still prevailed, however, a gradual relaxation was apparent with a cease fire between the belligerents in the Middle East.

While in Soudha Bay from 18-21 November, clearance was granted for a port visit to Rhodes, Greece from 23-26 November. The brief port visit was the most welcome respite of the cruise after the many days of increased readiness which had curtailed all liberty since 6 October in Athens, Greece.

Schedules were still uncertain when the ship again returned to Soudha Bay 28 November - 2 December. Here, turnover was effected between the ships of Amphibious Squadron TEN. The more optimistic still hoped for "home by Christmas" and desnail operations were begun on board to facilitate rapid processing by agricultural inspectors in Rota, Spain upon OUTCHOP.

With DEFCON 5 in effect NASHVILLE visited Athens 3-5 December while waiting for the next assignment or orders to proceed home. On December 5th the detachment orders came and immediately NASHVILLE headed for Rota for desnail and OUTCHOP. The desnail-agricultural inspection was accomplished in less than two days which allowed a return to Little Creek, Virginia on 20 December after off-load at Morehead City 19 December.

c.

SPECIAL TOPICS

1. NASHVILLE received two type commander Battle Efficiency Awards for FY 1973. Honored by COMPHIBLANT were the Air Department which achieved 4000 safe landings on 4 October 1973 and the Communications Department.
2. A major habitability improvement came to NASHVILLE in 1973 with installation of the SITE Closed Circuit TV System. Receivers were placed in all divisional living compartment, CPO mess, wardroom, crew's lounge, First Class mess and Captain's cabin making it convenient to enjoy the 48 weekly hours of entertainment in an uncrowded, relaxed atmosphere. Primarily used in entertainment, the system has also proved valuable in command information and training.