



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS PONCE (LPD-15)
FPO NEW YORK 09501

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From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History (Report Symbol 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) USS PONCE Command History 1972

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

W. B. WARWICK

COMMAND HISTORY 1972

Enclosure (1)

I. Command Organization

A. Commanding Officer: Captain George W. FARRIS, USN 10 July 1971 to present

B. Amphibious Squadron Assignments

1. Amphibious Squadron FOUR 1 Jan to 31 May 1972
2. Amphibious Squadron SIX 1 Jun to 30 Oct 1972
3. Amphibious Squadron TWO 1 Nov to 31 Dec 1972

II. Chronological Summary of Operations for 1972

USS PONCE's first operations in 1972, after the holiday leave period, consisted of amphibious operations training in the Norfolk area from 24 January to 1 February. Instructors and observers were provided by Amphibious Operations Training Unit, Little Creek, Va. This training was followed by a trip to New Orleans, La. for the Mardi Gras festivities. PONCE departed Norfolk on 5 February in company with USS TRENTON (LPD 14) and arrived in New Orleans on 9 February. While in New Orleans PONCE's troop berthing spaces were utilized as hotel accommodations for various military units participating in the Mardi Gras events. PONCE departed New Orleans on 16 February and returned to her homeport on 20 February.

On 7 March PONCE commenced a Post Shakedown Availability at the Naval Shipyard Philadelphia. During the availability improvements were made in habitability, especially in the mess decks area, as well as correction of construction deficiencies. Upon completion of the availability on 15 April PONCE returned to Norfolk to commence preparations for her first operational deployment.

On 1 June, PONCE became a part of Amphibious Squadron SIX assigned as the CARIB 1-72 ready force and departed Norfolk for the first of two six weeks cruises to the Caribbean. Enroute to the Caribbean, elements of Battalion Landing Team 1/8 were embarked at Morehead City, N.C. Also embarked were various Navy support units. Several minor training exercises were conducted in addition to the Escort Tiger Exercise. Port visits were made at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico; St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Port Au Prince, Haiti; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Freeport, Bahamas. PONCE returned to her homeport of Norfolk on 13 July after disembarking Marine units at Morehead City. PONCE remained in her homeport for about two months with the exception of the period 29 July to 4 August when Exercise High Boot was conducted.

On 12 September, PONCE departed Norfolk with the other units of PHIBRON SIX and again embarked the Marine units at Morehead City enroute to the Caribbean. From 1 to 14 October PONCE participated in a major exercise called Doria Salute IV with forces of the Netherlands. While operating with the Dutch ships an exchange of observers took place to promote better understanding of operational concepts.

Enclosure (1)

Port visits were made at Cristobal, Canal Zone; Cartagena, Columbia; Aruba, Netherlands Antilles; St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Freeport, Bahamas. PONCE returned to Norfolk on 27 October after disembarking the Marine units at Morehead City, N.C.

On 1 November PONCE again shifted squadrons and became part of Amphibious Squadron TWO, and commenced active preparations for deployment to the SIXTH Fleet in January 1973. PHIBRON TWO conducted two weeks of underway training from 13 to 21 November, in preparation for the up coming deployment which was the only at sea period for PONCE for the remainder of 1972. The remaining inport time in Norfolk was spent in predeployment preparations.